No. 16

TRONDHEIM STUDIES
ON EAST EUROPEAN CULTURES & SOCIETIES

MUDDLING THROUGH IN THE LONG 1960S
IDEAS AND EVERYDAY LIFE IN HIGH POLITICS AND THE LOWER CLASSES OF COMMUNIST HUNGARY

Edited by Janos M. Rainer and György Péteri

The Institute for the History of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, Budapest Program on East European Cultures and Societies, Trondheim

May 2005

ISSN 1501-6684
ISBN 82-995792-6-0

Trondheim Studies on East European Cultures and Societies
Editors: György Péteri and Sabrina P. Ramet
Editorial Board: Trond Berge, Tanja Ellingsen, Knut Andreas Grimstad, Arne Halvorsen,

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János M. Rainer and György Péteri

Chapters 1-3 and 5-8 were translated from the Hungarian
by Brian McLean

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Preface

The present publication is the fruit of joint efforts on the part of the Institute for the History of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, Budapest, and the Program on East European Cultures and Societies, Trondheim. The essays in our volume represent a selection from the papers written for the project "The 1960s in Hungary" organized by the 1956 Institute and sponsored by the National Program for Research and Development of Hungary. An earlier version of these essays were included, in Hungarian, in János M. Rainer, ed., *"Hatvanas évek" Magyarországon. Tanulmányok* (Budapest: 1956-os Intézet, 2004). Since then all the essays have undergone a number of revisions on the basis of comments from the process of anonymous peer review, translation into English, and editing. We are grateful to all our colleagues who undertook to act as readers and helped us by their comments to improve the quality of our papers. Brian McLean's careful and excellent work should be credited for the translation into English of all but one of our essays. As usual, his contribution has been more than simple translation – his questions and suggestions have helped us to produce greater clarity and precision in our texts.

György Péteri and János M. Rainer

Budapest and Trondheim, May 2005

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János Rainer

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The Sixties: East and West

The concept of the Sixties in historical and political thinking appeared very early, almost in the decade itself. For the Sixties (in a broader sense than the period of the 1960s) were distinguished not just from events in a previous decade, but in a sense, from those of several previous decades. This applied primarily in America, which had emerged unscathed from the two world wars. But the decade had obvious special qualities in Europe as well, where the world wars were the main dividing lines of the modern period, while the post-Second World War period was marked by the conflicts and internal events of two great world systems.

There is still contention about the character and substance of the Sixties, but its importance is scarcely questioned. The events in the political history of the Sixties—especially those of the Western Europeans and Americans—and the social movements, conflicts, clashes and 'campus revolutions' that culminated in 1968, have lost much of their significance, although there is still a literature dealing with them.[1] Neo-Marxist movements in Western European and American universities, cults of Castro, Mao and Che Guevara, the 'Renaissance' of Marxism in that period—these were just fairground bustle, a colourful end to the sobering story of communism.[2] After that, left-wing 'critical' thinking lost impetus, became empty and 'turned primitive'.[3] What really marks the decade a generation later is the change in way of life or lifestyle that took place in the Sixties—their revolution in values or cultural revolution. This is the principal meaning of 'the Sixties' in historical discourse today.[4] The continuing influence of this is singled out by political scientists.[5] Indeed, they may even see the Sixties as the decisive change in the 20th century: 'If… the century is seen in terms of social history, we encounter a caesura that obviously divides the 20th century into two parts in a chronological sense, irrespective of where we set the beginning or the end. This caesura is formed by the Sixties, with the lifestyle changes that occurred—or if you like, accelerated—during them, and the ubiquitous generational revolution in related habits,

1 A recent general critical appraisal appears in Mausbach 2002.
2 Furet 2000, 819–49.
3 Rév 1998.
4 It features in this sense in university curricula in Europe and in America.
5 For instance by Gitlin 1996 in relation to US politics.

morals and all areas of culture.'[6] The unprecedented prosperity caused by seemingly undisturbed economic growth and the specific reactions of an ensuing, younger generation to the boom did indeed change the complexion of the Western world.[7]

Beyond the United States and Western Europe, the Sixties take on a different, no less striking character. For Africa and parts of Asia, this period (starting in the mid-1950s or in some cases right after the Second World War) brought traditional colonial arrangements to an end, with no few accompanying dramatic and bloody events and conflicting processes of emancipation and reorientation. In the communist world system, the Sixties are significant above all in political history, as the years following Stalin, in which there were shifts away from the classical system of socialism in many places[8] and talk of reforming socialism even in the Soviet Union. Meanwhile China, having adapted the Stalinist system in its own fashion, sought change through immutability when announcing its claim to lead the communist world and opposition to de-Stalinization. The historical recollection of this period of crumbling monolithic structures and incipient pluralism also seems varied and even self-contradictory. Late reform communism or reform socialism, that curious phenomenon of the twilight of communism (notably associated with the 'death throes' of the system-making dictator, i. e. the period *after* 1953 and 1961) portrayed the Sixties as some kind of Marxist renaissance, an appearance of socialism with a human face. This came closest to the truth in Czechoslovakia's reform experiment, but such presentations of Khrushchev's Soviet Union were not rare, even in the 1990s.[9] According to other approaches, the changes in the Sixties derived mainly from partial insights into the crisis of the classical Stalinist model, but as soon as these reached the basic structures of the model, the political class closed ranks. In other words, the reforms were corrective in nature, serving to keep the system operable, and the prospects presented were only apparent ones.[10] So although the concept of the Sixties exists, it is less clear and its significance less apparent in relation to the East than in relation to the West. In the West, the social, economic and mentality changes arrived as the resultant of some kind of 'revolution', whose political representation existed, but from which no political revolution emerged.[11] In the East, on the other hand, the political change (obligatory revision after Stalin's death)

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6 Kende 2003, 275–6.

7 See Marwick 1998 and Kimball 2000.

8 For a theoretical model of the classical system and shifts from it, see Kornai 1993.

9 A basic work of the kind on the Prague Spring and events of August 1968 is Mlynár 1987, which mixes personal recollection with analysis. One such concept of the Soviet Union in the Sixties appears in Vayl and Genis 1996; Geller and Nekrich is similar.

10 This emerges in Czechoslovakia's case in the analysis of Pithart 1993, and with the Soviet Union in Kenez 1999.

11 This was clear also to contemporaries committed to the changes. See Moore 1969.

offered an opportunity; the experiments, which developed into revolutionary events, were put down with violence (in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968), but the changes in social, economic and mental structures remained relative. Yet significantly, the connotations of the Sixties, unlike the Fifties of Stalin's iron age, remain to this day decidedly positive in most of Europe's state-socialist countries. It is seen as a decade of thaw, breathing more freely, hopes, chances and greater freedom, by comparison with the previous one. There was a marked similarity between East and West in the Sixties, in the directions and critical nature of political and social thinking. For the decade's cultural revolution managed to slip under the Iron Curtain, despite the different conditions and political constraints.[12] The revolution in lifestyle and values in the Sixties is self-evidently opposed by present-day conservatives in the West,[13] and they self-evidently confound with the post-World War II communist iron age the new conservatives of the post-communist societies.

The Sixties in Hungary: after '56

This chapter is concerned with the place and significance of the 1960s in Hungary's history after 1956. The question of periodization (when the Sixties, rather than simply the 1960s, started and finished)[14] is also essential, but perhaps more vital still is whether the Sixties as such can be distinguished in Hungary at all. Two other problems are then examined. The starting point is the classical Stalinist system emerging at the end of the 1940s and settling in the early 1950s, for it decided, or at least influenced decisively, all that befell society, the economy, human relations, thinking, culture etc. in Hungary. The initial supposition is that the political system is still the key to understanding the Sixties in Hungary even in the absence of such conspicuous changes, reorganizations and upheavals, as there had been earlier.[15]

Hungary in the Sixties was part of the Soviet empire; Hungarian policy was fundamentally, and often directly influenced by the policy of the Soviet Union. The feature specific in the region to Hungarian history was that the continuity of the Soviet political model had been broken in 1956, for a very short period in historical terms. Its significance was mainly psychological, for the revolution did not (and could not) give rise to new structures; some new arrangement was only outlined. The staffs and infrastructures of the old

[12] See Vajda 1991. István Rév writes of 'very intensive dialogue' between the Western New Left and the conspicuously democratic critical thinking in the East: Rév 1998, 40. Kozák 2001 sees things similarly.

[13] Scruton 2003 is a good example.

[14] The usual reckoning in the West is from the end of the 1950s—1958—to the mid-1970s—1974 in Marwick's case. A shorter period is usually considered in the East—1961–8 in the case of Vayl and Genis, for instance.

[15] The basic idea of Kornai 1993 is followed here.

institutions and the knowledge and techniques necessary to run them remained available. But every participant in the events of 1956, and not just the political events, experienced a momentary cessation of validity in everything that had determined the life of Hungarian society hitherto (or at least that it came appreciably, measurably close to cessation.) This very strong experience led to certain insights, although the model survived the severe crisis and ultimately remained valid. The revolution was crushed by an underlying political will to restore the earlier system and bridge the continuity gap. However, that ideological construct also allowed there to be a clean sweep in some fields and respects, allowing restoration of the *ancien régime* also to be interpreted as starting from scratch again.

The Hungarian Revolution was a product of a general crisis after Stalin's death, brought on by the internal dynamics of the corrective processes in the policy of each Central and Eastern European country under Soviet control. The Hungarian leadership designed its policies within this framework and to a great extent under the impressions and insights obtained from the 1956 revolution. The signs are that some of these approaches were accepted by Moscow, whose relative flexibility derived basically from the international (bloc) shock of 1956 and the corrective inclination that emerged in the thinking of the Soviet political elite after Stalin's death.[16] All this played into the hands of János Kádár and the bulk of the Hungarian leadership, by making it easier for them to gain acceptance from their 'allies', especially the 'great ally', for new solutions that departed from the classical patterns. But another observation is also necessary: the Hungarian political leadership possessed the political weight and autonomy to obtain acceptance from the Soviets for the insights they derived from 1956. Kádárite Hungarian policy generally kept ideology at a distance and showed no affection for doctrinaire theory.[17] A further advantage of this was that the leadership refrained from attempting to place Hungary's solutions in any new theoretical framework. They eschewed 'programmes' or even occasions for latently offering models. Each political step could be presented on a scale between two none-too-distant points, as an integral continuation, an innovation or anything else.

[16] The signs and limits of this inclination to reform, seen even during Soviet 'treatment' of the crisis of the Hungarian Revolution, are discussed in Orekhova, Sereda and Stikalin 1998.

[17] On the ideological course of the early Kádár period, see Kalmár 1998.

Dividing lines: repetition in a consolidated way

The period between 1956 and the beginning of the 1970s can be divided in terms of political history into two differing, but overlapping stages. The almost seven years from November 4, 1956 to 1962–3 repeated, *mutatis mutandis*, the 1947–53 period, when the Soviet system was being installed in Hungary, and the period affected all the elements of the classical system. János Kádár set out to regain political power[18] through a bloody, protracted campaign of reprisals against political opponents—all who had taken part in the revolution, including heretical communist 'revisionists' in 1956–9, the Catholic church in 1961[19] and orthodox Stalinists in 1961–2.[20] The confiscation of agricultural property was completed in 1958–61.[21] After a short economic-policy interlude, the old strategy of forced industrialization and a centralized command economy returned in the preparations for the Second Five-Year Plan.[22] The intellectual campaigns of the late 1950s and early 1960s were intended to restore ideological monopoly.[23] As in the original process of establishing the system, there was discrimination, exclusion and marginalization. (The second wave of collectivization again began with slogans against the rich peasants; discrimination against children of the 'former ruling classes', as 'class enemies', continued in higher education until 1963, and so on.)

The period 1962/3–1972/4 came as a rather blurred 'remake' of the policy correction of 1953–4 and its reversal in 1955–6. There was marked political relaxation. The 1962 party congress resolution (recalling that 'classes' and strata directly opposed to the system had ceased to exist now the foundations of socialism were laid)[24] brought the political amnesty of 1963. The agricultural reform package continued to distance the functioning and operation of the cooperatives from the Soviet *kolkhoz* model by introducing coexistence between collective and private property.[25] The comprehensive economic reform prepared in 1964–7 was introduced in 1968, strong though the 'brakes' on it were.[26] A measure of intellectual pluralism and openness appeared without any announcement to that effect, in fact in the face

[18] The best account is still Kis 1992 [1986]. For the main documents, see Baráth, Ripp et al. 1995 and Németh, Soós et al 1997.
[19] Balogh 1997.
[20] Baráth 1999.
[21] On the second collectivization, see Pető and Szakács 1985 and Varga 2001.
[22] Pető and Szakács 1985.
[23] Standeisky 1996; Révész 1997.
[24] MSZMP 1959.
[25] Varga 2001.
[26] Literature on the economic reform introduced in Hungary on January 1, 1968 is very sparse. Much relates to a new political offensive by reformers during the crisis of the 1980s, most obviously in the case of Berend 1988 and Antal 1982. The best impression of the historical background is still in the Ferber and Rejtő 1988 volume of interviews. The reformer stance is exemplified in Kovács 1990 and in Kornai 1987, which makes an early approach via strict economic logic. There are good summaries in Pető 1986–7 and Szamuely 1985.

of some of the assertions made. There was an abatement of direct discrimination against social groups assumed to oppose Soviet-style socialism.

In the early 1970s, many reforms and corrective measures of the Sixties, declared and tacit, were reversed in economy policy (from 1972) and in intellectual and cultural life (from 1973),[27] albeit not all or in full. But it interrupted an effort, seemingly continuous since the beginning of the 1960s, to alter and rationalize the structure of the Stalinist system and build up direct contacts with society.[28] Dividing the Sixties in Hungary into two periods of different characters—one a repeat of the earlier period known popularly as the Fifties, the other of Imre Nagy's New Course, the first Hungarian correction, which deepened into a reform in some respects—the question becomes more cogent still: do the Sixties in Hungary have a specific character? The remainder of this paper will argue that the second stage, in following up some of the initiatives of the second period of establishment and adding new elements to the process, has a complexion of its own. But it should be underlined that these distinguishing marks have no kind of absolute value. In daily life, people pay little attention to the structural background to tiny changes, yet many recollections draw a clear distinction between the Sixties and the earlier period.[29] However, the second period of establishment of the communist regime, the political processes of the same character and the actions and campaigns of a similar nature were *differently* felt and experienced by Hungarian society. In this sense, the Sixties—interpreted as extending from 1956 to the beginning of the Seventies, however defined, as almost two decades or hardly more than half, depending on how they are remembered by the one presenting the period and the question—were the same, in terms of the essence of the system and its policies, as the period from the last third of the 1940s to the mid-1950s. The Sixties caused Hungarian society to suffer the same vicissitudes and nurse the same hopes as the Fifties. And in the end, society became disillusioned again for the same reasons. In the light of the experiences accumulated earlier, however, the new period of

[27] Huszár 2003; Soós 1984.

[28] Such dynamic, convulsive cycles of tightening, crisis, correction, reform, retreat and resumed tightening continued through the rest of the Kádár period. After the tightening of the mid-1970s came further reform initiatives at the end of the decade, and political cooling again in the mid-1980s and second third of that decade. The final years of the 1980s (and of the regime) brought hyperactivity like a *danse macrabre*. So cycles of orthodoxy and reform, tightening and loosening, copying the classical Stalinist system and departing from it can be shown throughout the history of the communist system in Hungary, although the fluctuations and periodicity varied widely. The crudity and speed of the first cycle were followed by milder, longer waves. This is well portrayed in Huszár 2003, the biography of the man for whom the period is named. As for the point made about the cyclicity of political development under communism, this is discussed in more general terms (although in relation to academic life) by Péteri and David-Fox 2000, 23–27.

[29] The length, start and finish of the Sixties are set in as many ways as there are memories of the period. In writing this section, use was made of a selection made by Adrienne Molnár from life-interviews in the Oral History Archive of the 1956 Institute, as part of the Sixties Project. See Private history: 1956 and the Kádár period, http://server2001.rev.hu/oha/index_eng.html.

establishment appeared less intolerable and the new correction (reform) more hopeful than the earlier one. Why? Perhaps because Hungary had been through it once already. Perhaps because the new confrontation was between the authorities and a society curled up in a ball like a hedgehog. Perhaps because both sides had 'learnt something'. In simplified terms, the lesson of 1956 for one side was that you cannot sail directly into the wind, and on the other that the same had to be done again, but more cautiously.[30]

The long Sixties in Hungary?

The Sixties in Hungary were a period of correction and reform of the Hungarian version of the Soviet-type system, indeed the longest and most successful such period in the whole region, leaving a lasting impression on the system. This statement clearly applies only to the second period in the long Sixties after 1956 as just described, in other words from the early 1960s to the early 1970s. Attention will be concentrated hereafter on this 1962/3–1972/4 period, although reference will be made in one respect to the restoration period (or second period of establishment) after 1956.

For one feature of the Sixties in Hungary is that the corrective intention was already present in the restoration period (1956–62/3), if not continuously or consciously in all cases or by any means in all respects.[31] So in that sense, the Sixties were less a repeat of an earlier period (1953–6) or a break with the second period of establishment than an integral continuation of the latter. The most important manifestations and features of this corrective intention, in chronological order, were these:

• *The possibility of discontinuity with the Soviet-type system* was expressed by the Provisional Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP), in its December 1956 resolution,[32] which listed the anti-Marxist policies of the Rákosi-Gerő clique among the prime causes of the 1956 'counterrevolution'. The resolution was never withdrawn, indeed steadily became an ideological canon of the Kádár period. This left open, throughout the period, the political door to dissociation from classical Stalinist policies. The MSZMP never chose to formulate openly what followed in theory or practice from the

[30] Gyáni 2003 notes the disturbing variety of the past, rather than dubbing the whole Kádár period, not just the Sixties, as one of reform (Földes 2000).

[31] On the separate paths Hungary took at the end of the 1950s, see Szabó 1989.

[32] Baráth, Ripp et al. 1995, Vol. 1. Discontinuity was even more obvious in the symbolic field: the name of the Communist Party changed during the days of the revolution and it remained MSZMP after 4 November, 1956. Furthermore, Parliament introduced a new national coat of arms in spring 1957; it replaced the Soviet-inspired 1949 coat of arms with a design that also ignored the first revolutionary ('Kossuth') coat of arms.

famous first point in the resolution—what had to be done, what could not be done, what the party was promising, etc.—but the possibility of such a shift in position remained open.

• *An occasional, inconsistent tendency towards revision* was discernible in the process of re-establishing the classical Soviet system. For instance, when the new government programme was prepared at the turn of 1956 and 1957, the authorities toyed with the idea of reviving a 'sham' coalition similar to the one in 1947–9.[33] Other signs were the specialist committees set up to prepare for reforming the economic mechanism. These produced relatively coherent reform plans in the first half of 1957, although little of them was implemented and charges of 'revisionist deviation' were made against their authors.[34] The reprisals against '56-ers might have broken all bounds if the MSZMP leadership had not periodically curbed the vengeful state-security apparatus, whose aim was complete restoration.[35] The wish to counterbalance the traditional Stalinist forces within the party and the state-security apparatus also had a moderating impact on the ways in which the new drive of collectivization of agriculture was carried out from 1958 and onwards. The plans for this campaign by Minister of Agriculture Imre Dögei followed the 'classical' Soviet pattern. But the objective of steadily raising the standard of living was adhered to throughout, even during the collectivization. (The Soviet recipe would have allowed temporary setbacks in the living standard of some strata, or even of the whole 'working people', though this would only have been mentioned behind closed doors.) In 1957, Kádár emphasized the priority for living standards when addressing the first national meeting of the MSZMP and this remained even when forced industrialization was resumed in 1959.

• *The repression was lightened by inconsistencies.* From the outset, the ideological rigour underlined in public was coupled with less stringent treatment of the intelligentsia. 'Deviants' and 'fellow travellers' were stridently condemned in party resolutions (against economic revisionists, Lukács-ites, populist writers, etc.) and the positions taken at the top explained in more detail in relatively widespread campaigns, but no mass showdowns or expulsions ensued. György Lukács was able to return in the spring of 1957 from internment in Romania and the criticized populist writers received high marks of official recognition. On the other hand, there were writers' trials, a measure not resorted to under the Rákosi regime.[36] The repression peaked in 1959 and was lifted somewhat in 1960 with limited political amnesties, but the revenge did not cease immediately and was even extended to new targets.

[33] Ibid., Vols 1 and 2.
[34] See Berend 1988.
[35] Ormos 1989.
[36] Standeisky 1996; Péteri 2002.

Both the revisionist inclinations and the inconsistencies obviously contributed to the shock and anxiety caused by the revolution and its aftermath. Re-establishment of the system necessarily meant conflicts, as the Kádár leadership knew, but it likewise feared and sought to avoid certain conflicts.[37] There were recent memories of the 1953–6 period of correction and reversal—generally condemned and rejected, but sometimes employed indirectly. (The thinking on the economy and debates over it were full of references to differences of opinion at that earlier time.)[38] The tone of the 1956–62/3 period was not set directly by the inconsistencies of the leadership, but by the things on which it *was* consistent—not its temporary corrective enthusiasms, but what it tried, albeit partially and temporarily, to alter.

A decade of reform

Prominent among the stimuli behind the policy shift and reform ideas adopted in the early Sixties, in 1962–4, as in the summer of 1953, was recognition of the signs that economic growth was running out.[39] Yet the differences between the two periods are striking. Hungary now had a more sensitized political leadership with 1956 and 1953 behind it, able to identify *for itself* the looming economic crisis and take account of its likely social consequences, which had not been managed in 1953. Another difference from 1953 was that Kádár's team in the early Sixties were faced with a concurrent need to raise living standards and to pursue growth in a collectivizing, accumulating economy based on forced industrialization. The former goal came from the lesson of 1956 and the latter from the Soviet Union of the late Khrushchev period, coupled with China's unrealistic plans for a Great Leap Forward at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s. But it is not certain that internal recognitions would have sufficed to produce a change of paradigm. There was no dramatic consultation in Moscow, as there had been in June 1953, but there were outside factors at work again ten years later to induce change. The major symbolic steps to political détente—Kádár's catchword of December 1961 ('those not against us are with us'), the patchy purge of Stalinists between November 1961 and August 1962,[40] the declarations of the 1962 party congress,[41] and the 1963 amnesty—can all be linked mainly with external stimuli. But again, there are essential differences from 1953. The second wave of de-Stalinization associated with the 22nd Soviet

[37] Kornai 1996 underlines the 1956 origin of this conflict-avoiding behaviour.
[38] Péteri 1998.
[39] These are described in detail in Pető and Szakács 1985, 369–433.
[40] Rainer 2003, 73–115; Sipos 1994.
[41] Tyekvicska 1997 gives a splendid account of these and the whole period of change.

party conference in 1961[42] gave a good opportunity for a virtual and real reckoning with the 'Stalinist opposition'. The programme of peaceful construction of communism reduced the class-warfare psychosis. But Soviet policy did not impel or recommend the Hungarian government to call an amnesty, allow travel abroad, including the West (and visits by Westerners to Hungary), stop jamming Western radio stations, and in general end the hermetic isolation from the West.[43] There was no question of following a Soviet example; such measures had not even been considered there. The same applied in 1964, when discrimination in access to higher education ended and steps were taken to normalize relations with the Catholic Church. Hungary's political leaders were anxious to relieve social tensions and thought they could do so by changing some aspects of the social policy introduced with the Soviet system and retained in the re-establishment period. Another factor was the example of some neighbouring countries. (Poland and Czechoslovakia also liberalized the issue of passports to some extent in the early 1960s.)

But the real novelty was the effort to improve Hungary's image in the West. Historians and the public alike see the 1963 political amnesty as a watershed in this regard. The documents show that the Kádár leadership had intended to conclude the reprisals with the earlier, limited amnesties of 1959 and 1960, but did not wish to release the '56-ers who were thought to be most dangerous (those sentenced to six or more years' imprisonment), even in easier times. The 1963 amnesty resulted from United States pressure. The Kádár regime expected to earn from it international legitimacy and an end to the country's international isolation and stigmatization, although not for their own sake, but because economic relations with the West were becoming increasingly important for modernization. Both sides offered and made concessions in the bargaining process. The Americans, for instance, refrained from pressing for settlement of the Mindszenty case, so that the archbishop, still held, like one or two hundred armed revolutionaries,[44] was the only quasi-political prisoner to which the general amnesty did not apply.[45] Western policy became a point of reference in the thinking of Hungary's political leaders. This and the partial success of the American efforts were not altered by the fact that Kádár naturally consulted with Khrushchev before making the move.

The prior conditions for reform (and the reform process) were created in 1962–3, but it was still quite uncertain how deep or radical the changes would be. The Hungarian formula

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42 *A kommunizmus…* (1961). For an assessment, see Vayl and Genis 1996.

43 See Cseh, Kalmár and Pór 1999; Cseh, Krahulcsán et al 2004.

44 The omission from the amnesty of those convicted on criminal as well as political charges was raised by István Bibó in his letters to János Kádár. Bibó 1983, 909–25.

45 The process is admirably conveyed in Borhi 2002.

that had emerged by 1968 was (apart from the Yugoslav reform process)[46] the one lasting reform in Eastern Europe and the deepest and most radical. Parts in this were played by further outside and inside factors beyond those at work in the period of re-establishment or the years of change.

For one thing, the Soviet 'milieu' for Hungarian politics had become much more favourable than expected by the mid-1960s. Although the Hungarian leadership and Kádár personally were extremely disturbed by the successful ousting of Khrushchev in October 1964,[47] there were not direct, short-term disadvantages for Hungary in the change of leadership in Moscow. In fact it was more of an advantage, for Khrushchev's fall put an end to the policy of *dognat i peregnat* (catching up and overtaking [the capitalist world, especially America]) and the fantastic seven and twenty-year plans for building communism. This placed the Hungarian economic reform and thinking about the economy in general back on a realistic basis. Another advantage was that ideas of economic reform were receiving publicity in the Soviet Union in the early 1960s, and Aleksei Kosygin, who succeeded Khrushchev as prime minister, was himself supposed to be a 'reformer'. It was not by chance that economic reforms were also being planned in that period in Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Poland, on the Western borders of the Soviet empire.

Secondly, the inner world of the decision-making elite was developing similarly to the broadest political environment.[48] The upper, operative sphere of Hungary's political leadership (the Political Committee, Secretariat, government, and Central Committee department heads) had been remarkably stable since the defeat of the revolution, with no great change in their composition even during the 1962 anti-Stalinist purge. But having been relatively united, this sphere began in the first half of the 1960s to undergo a process of political grouping, for the time being along the new line of special-interest representation, through 'specialization'. One of the earliest and most important to become apparent was the 'agricultural lobby' headed by Lajos Fehér. Actually a specialist policy group, it brought to the surface an important, but never openly expressed continuity of personnel and policy, by reviving in the MSZMP leadership Imre Nagy's 1947–9 economic and agricultural theories and the New Course of 1953–4. Having imposed total collectivization of agriculture in 1959–61, the party and government apparatus, coupled with new bodies representing cooperative interests, oversaw the preparation in 1963 of reform plans designed to remedy the production

[46] See Soós 1981 on this.
[47] See Békés 1998, Földes 2001a, and Gati 1990, 153–174. On the dismissal of Khrushchev, see Pikhoya 2000.
[48] Pető and Szakács 1985, 370–374; Tőkés 1998.

fall that had necessarily followed the reorganization.[49] The connection with the priority given to living-standard policy ever since 1956 is obvious. After 1962, there grew up around Central Committee Secretary Rezső Nyers (whose entry into the inner leadership had depended largely on György Marosán's momentary mental illness)[50] a team of economists who were sufficiently members of the *party* intelligentsia not to arouse suspicions among the functionaries, but sufficiently intellectual to make an intellectual approach to the problems of the Hungarian economy. This group managed to stay together and grow steadily during the critical examination of the economic mechanism (1964–6), then the devising of the reform (1966–7) and the assessment of its consequences.[51]

Thirdly, opening the economy up to market forces and the world market (the West) was impelled by the hard fact that the proportion of Hungary's national income realized through international exchange of goods was steadily increasing. Moves towards allowing Hungarian prices at least to be affected by international markets was at least as important as removing plan directives. Furthermore, foreign trade with the capitalist market, though smaller in absolute value, was vital and above all indispensable in raising living standards and even from the point of view of trade with the East, primarily the Soviet Union.[52] A benign effect on the expansion of international economic relations was exerted by the continuing international détente after the Cuban crisis of 1962. (Although détente had been apparent in international politics since 1953, it had been interrupted by periodic crises.)The Hungarian leadership did not attempt to put forward any line or opinion of its own in the most sensitive areas, which in the 1960s would have been the divisions within international communism. Kádár came down on Moscow's side in the dispute with the Chinese. In international diplomacy, he preferred small steps that gave small, direct advantages.[53]

Thanks to the experience (or rather, trauma) of 1956, the Hungarian leaders were better than the leaders of the other satellite countries of the Soviet Union at detecting and reacting sensitively to signs of crisis. So the elite, though far from predisposed towards reform, could be convinced that its changes were inescapable. Fear of '56, ideological relaxation and a leaning towards practicality played an important part. But the same factors left the reform and its adherents vulnerable to changes in Soviet policy, the same factors led to

[49] Varga 2001, 104–149, provides a detailed and accurate account of the process.
[50] On the Marosán affair, see Huszár 2003, 104–112; Németh and Sipos 1994; Marosán 1989.
[51] Several interviewees stress the group's importance in Ferber and Rejtő 1988.
[52] Kozma 2001.
[53] Ruff 2001.

Kádár abandoning the reform course in 1972 (and subsequent years).[54] The 1956 syndrome left Hungary's political leaders anxious about confronting both the Hungarian public and the Kremlin. Since the reform lacked a coherent ideology, domestic difficulties or serious criticism from Moscow could easily lead to the view that objectionable elements of the reform could be dumped. After all, the reform was seen as just one pragmatic manoeuvre (perhaps the biggest)[55] to promote the post-'56 priorities. Kádár's Hungarian leadership had never been reformers or reform communists, but he accepted the political burden of reform when he adopted the proposals of the real pragmatic reform communists (Nyers and Lajos Fehér and their groups, and to a lesser extent, György Aczél and his courtiers in the party intelligentsia).[56] The words acceptance and burden were emphasized equally in that action, which called only for pragmatism, not reforming inclinations. A pragmatic communist politician is like a chameleon, reformist or conservative in colour as required, but his true colour is nearer to the latter. This schizophrenia of behaviour and attitude is simply the best known of many 'brakes on reform'. On countless occasions in the domestic political disputes of the Sixties, the subject was how to squeeze some released genii back into its bottle.[57] The anti-reform camp did not emerge as a result of the reform or because some group or other suffered disadvantages from it. The ideological limitations played a part in the mounting anxiety that not even the splendid 'brakes' could stop the cart from rolling down the hill. Most of all, the risk of conflict with the Soviet leadership seemed greater in the early 1970s than the seemingly remote dangers of halting the reform. Sober, short-term calculation won again, as it had at the beginning of the Sixties. It was not a questioning of 'recruiting' by the anti-reform camp after 1968; it simply lay dormant and 'convinced'.[58] The more surprising and significant development in the Hungarian political leadership of the Sixties was the development of a pragmatic camp of reformers.

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[54] Huszár 2003, 233–56; Pető 2001, 118–120; Földes 2001b.

[55] The 1966 party congress resolution identified the three great tasks of the decade since 1956 as consolidation of power, collectivization of agriculture and reform of the system of economic control.

[56] Nyers 2001.

[57] A typical example occurred in 1965–6, when the Interior Ministry apparatus, fearing liberalization, attacked the relatively new practice of allowing travel to and from the West, warning against 'weakening' and consequent activity of 'inimical domestic forces'. After a long debate in 1966, the Political Committee of the MSZMP allowed tourist travel to the West once in three years and travel as a guest once in two years, which was a retreat from unlimited opportunities. However, it caused no abatement in travel to the West, which rose again after temporary stagnation. The restrictions appeased the state security service and turned something ostensibly unlimited but reliant on official favour into something semi-institutionalized as a right. Magyar Országos Levéltár (Hungarian National Archives), M-KS 288. f. 5. cs. 386. ő. e.

[58] There was an almost exact repeat, over a longer period, of 1954: first triumph, then failure of corrective measures. In October 1954, the whole Central Leadership of the Hungarian Workers' Party supported Imre Nagy's policy against Ernő Gerő and Mátyás Rákosi. Two-and-a-half months later, the same members unanimously condemned Nagy—having learnt that Moscow thought the reform efforts had gone too far. Nagy was dropped from the party leadership six months later.

On balance

It is not easy to draw up a balance sheet of the Sixties, not least at this relatively early stage of research. Instead, this section examines only two aspects—the Hungarian version of the Soviet socialist system, and the mental state of Hungarian society. The question is how far the former became open in the Sixties and what prospects the changes in the Sixties opened for the latter.

It seemed between 1962/3 and 1968 that the Hungarian version of the Soviet system *might* become somewhat more open due to the reform, which was still seen as a process. That impression fades when the next four years, 1968–72, are examined. The conjunction of two groups of events—Hungary's participation in the 1968 occupation of Czechoslovakia and Kádár's reception of the Soviet move against reform policy in 1972—showed that nothing had changed, quantitatively or qualitatively, in the determinants of the system. Hungary's policies were governed by the Soviet Union. The decisive moment was not Brezhnev's February 1972 criticism of Kádár, the reformers and the Hungarian reform, and the consequent 'sliding devaluation' of the economic part of the reform, but the events of the summer of 1968.

The exceptionally active military disciplining of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet leadership and its faithful satellites and sometimes surprisingly gruff attitudes towards the Hungarian leadership point to a feeling in Moscow, East Berlin, Sofia and Warsaw that Hungary might stay out of the military action. So that too was within the bounds of possibility for Kádár and his team. The main decisions in 1968 were taken by Kádár alone: in that respect, the regime showed itself no more open *at the decisive moment* than Rákosi's had been. Kádár would have liked to avoid military intervention in Czechoslovakia, but if it was going to be inevitable, he did not dare to stay out.[59] There was no life beyond the Soviet Union for him, and *that* conviction he almost certainly shared with the vast majority of the Hungarian political elite.[60]

The prospects of opening up remained from 1962/3 to 1968 and the shift from the classical system can be considered continuous and reform policy speedy during that period. The reform was not withdrawn between August 1968 and the mid-1970s, but there were no

[59] The process is described in detail in Huszár 1998.

[60] On the fringes of the elite were a few who would not keep silent, such as András Tömpe, András Hegedüs and György Lukács. Nineteen sixty-eight was a turning point for oppositionism in Hungarian politics, for 1968 in Czechoslovakia, like 1956 in Hungary, made opposition topical within the system and its parlance. Later, the opposition took a different path from the one taken in 1956, expressing its criticism outside the frames of Marxist socialism. On the role of 1968, see Csizmadia 1995, Kis 1988, and Kenedi 1992 [1988].

more prospects of opening up and reform policy, though still operating, could not be called speedy.

Hungarian society entered the Sixties in a fractured, fragmented, levelled state.[61] It was a lonely, neutralized society hardly thinking in political terms and robbed of many of its identity-shaping factors (property, tradition, success, dynamism) that survived the compulsions of the first cycle of communist assumption of power and corrective measures, the revolution, and the stage of resumed consolidation of power. Compared with that zero point, the Sixties brought reassurance, modest prosperity, slow colouring, differentiation and opening, from every point of view.

While the project of 'building socialism' remained a lively force with a coherent, policy-directing ideology, society was moving down a one-way street, so to speak. Society was then pacified during the re-establishment period after 1956. But this was not the most important result of the Kádárite 'neutralization' policy. What proved far more essential was neutralization of the very party that bore the ideology. Once that had ensued, it became possible to dispense little portions of the confiscated freedoms, or substitutes for them, without involving any long-term concept or ideology. These concessions—family land holdings, passports, writers' self-expression, Western journals, the private sector, television satire, French films, leased restaurants, auxiliary activities by cooperative farms, trading with Arab countries, almost equal opportunities for higher education, amnesty—became part of an integral, but ideologically unexamined whole.[62] The Kádár leadership had exceptional luck, in fact, because the relieved intelligentsia and then the wider public in daily discourse began to turn this curious mixture into a socialism that was feasible, bearable, human and specifically Hungarian.[63] It became a socialism whose 'design' bore a strong resemblance in several ways to the streamlined vehicles for ideas that were entering from the West through a chink in the Iron Curtain: trust in boundless technical modernization, moves towards a consumer society, the theory of convergence, and so on. The critical movements that immediately followed the new freedoms also bore a resemblance to those in the West: the 'youth problem' appeared,

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[61] This paper does not discuss the social mobility-related modernization phenomena habitually included in the Kádárite success story. They are discussed realistically by Valuch 2001, relying on a rich source material.

[62] Among the best and richest treatments of Sixties history is the summary of daily life, personal recollection and subsequent historical analysis, including political history, in Révész 2000 and the 'Telling Years' articles that appeared in the journal *Beszélő* in 1996–9.

[63] A typical example is Lukács 1988 [1968]; the later constructions also derive from that period and are the basis for comparison and source of the hopes that socialism could be reformed. An experimental model of this kind appears in Hankiss 1986. Not long after, in the Seventies, literature, cinema, fine art and some social sciences (economics, sociology) reached their heights (see Vitányi 1982, for instance), and according to some accounts, appear as some kind of Renaissance continuing to this day. So far there has only been partial re-examination of this. See, for instance, the account by Yvette Bíró in the introduction to Bíró 1991.

some people tried out new (critical) lifestyles, and Western-style subcultures emerged.[64] The opening could never reach a point where the ultimate frames of Soviet-style socialism were questioned. That remained a matter for the police. Indeed, the political leadership and the state-security services thought it was dangerous to allow signs of 'life beyond the Soviet Union' to appear. The well-known and doubtfully successful process of 'squeezing the genii back in the bottle' already began in the Sixties.[65]

This remains the weightiest factor in the balance of the Sixties. The history of the mentality changes in society has sharper characteristics than the history of politics, although the former derived in many ways from the changes in politics. Political publicity and democratic political thinking did not exist in Sixties Hungary either, but recovery of some social and intellectual autonomy seems to be part of politics. On the other hand, the political origin of the recovery fades in the light of the achievements. The spheres of social existence become blurred in the Sixties. Perhaps the conclusion can be risked that an open society never came closer during the history of the communist system than it did then, or a shift in the requisite political system more apposite to it. (The shift might have ended or taken on a different character otherwise.) Perhaps for the last time, there was some kind of synchronism with the main trends of critical thinking in the West. This chance of opening up was lost to the *system* in Hungary in August 1968. But the space and time that were opening up to society turned opportunities and concessions into irreversible freedoms (islands of limited freedom). There was a spatial opening towards the West (Western Europe), while the temporal opening was simultaneously backwards—conception and digestion of the past and reclaiming of traditions—and forwards—to the one future momentarily conceivable. The intoxication of the little freedoms regained after the grave previous events shaped a generation in Hungary, the generation whose members encountered the opening consciously as they became adults, after opposite, visceral experiences in childhood. The '68 generation in Hungary could speak the same language as '68-ers anywhere else in the world. They had a common tongue and a common music,[66] and they had meetings to which they could look back. The question is to what extent this generation and the Sixties imbued society and fertilized it, on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Nor was the Hungarian regime behindhand in quelling and commercializing the rebellion, which was not comparable in scale with that in the West.

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[64] A colourful and interesting picture of the latter emerges from Kenedi 1992 [1989], Klaniczay 2003, and several documentary films—András Kisfaludy's *Törvénytelen Muskátli* (Illegitimate geranium) and *Elszállt egy hajó a szélben* (Ship blown away in the wind), Gábor Kresalek's *A vízüzemű Moszkvics utasai* (Passengers in the water-powered Moskvich, etc.) See also the study by Sándor Horváth in this volume.

[65] 'Filozófus-per, 1973' 1989; Klaniczay and Sasvári 2003.

[66] A new treatment of Hungarian rock history is needed. An earlier attempt: Sebők 1983.

The Hungarian society of the Sixties was open in space and time. It emerged in subsequent years that in neither respect could the openness become complete under the communist system. But the gate to the West or the gate to the past could never fully close again. Perhaps that is the most important legacy of the Hungarian Sixties, and no small one by comparison with other Soviet-type societies, where the gates remained closed for far longer.

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Gábor Kovács

Revolution, lifestyle, power and culture—features of political thought in the Sixties

This study examines whether there were any common features of political thought in the 1960s that warrant applying the attribute 'Sixties' in this field. The question itself becomes especially interesting when placed in the context of Hungarian political thought at the time, not just the politics of the West. But that presents another problem: whether it is possible to refer to political thought at all in the post-Stalinist, bureaucratic socialism-building Hungary of the Sixties. There really is no explicitly stated political theory to mention, apart from the work of István Bibó, who was insulated from the public and forced into internal exile. Mária Ludassy, recalling at a 1988 round-table discussion the Renaissance of Marxist philosophy in the 1960s, rightly concluded, 'With today's eyes, we need to observe self-critically that we had a splendidly dynamic anthropology and an emancipating philosophy of history, but political philosophy or how the system of institutions for freedom should be did not even crop up in the 1968–73 period.'[1]

The same applies to the pre-1968 period, although it could be said that certain concepts of political theory appeared in coded, covert form in periodical debates on matters of Marxist philosophy. It applies still more to unpublished works of the end of the period, such as *How Is Critical Economics Possible?* written by György Bence, János Kis and György Márkus in 1970–72 and known widely as the *Überhaupt* book,[2] or György Konrád and Iván Szelényi's 1973–4 *Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power*, whose quality is clear from the official offer of emigration passports made to its authors.[3] Another important document of the period in this respect is György Lukács's *Present and Future of Democratization*, written in German in 1968 but published only in 1985 in German and 1988 in Hungarian.[4]

The question of periodization also needs clarifying. When did the Sixties start and finish? Like other contributors to the research programme that gave rise to this book, the author finds the Long Sixties a workable concept. That gives in a Hungarian context boundary years of 1958 (the beginning of the 'Kádárite consolidation') and 1973 (suspension of the economic reform). The latter, incidentally, seems relevant from the point of view of history of

1 'Kiűzetés…' 1988, 3.
2 Bence, Kis and Márkus 1992.
3 The story can be read in Szelényi's preface to the book: Konrád and Szelényi 1979, xiii–xix.
4 Lukács 1985.

political ideas as well, as 1973 was the year of the so-called Philosophers' Trial, which put an end to plurality in ideas on Marxism. With Western political reflections on political events in the period, it is less easy to set the bounds; there too, the dates in relation to political, social or economic history did not necessarily coincide with the 1960s in a calendar sense either. At least not the end of the period, which certainly has to be 1973, the year of the oil crisis that started a sharply defined economic and social transformation, alongside which a gradual change was taking place also in what was the characteristic political and ideological medium of the Sixties. Of course, 1968 is an important dividing line in the West and East, for the Paris student rebellions and the invasion of Czechoslovakia respectively. The two works mentioned earlier[5] are interesting precisely because they were written after that boundary line, although the intellectual and existential experiences of the authors are typical products of the Sixties.

That brings us to the heart of the matter, for the question concerns the political and intellectual milieu that defined the political thought of the period. Well, the Sixties were accompanied by dominance of left-wing political theory. The assertion applies to both East and West, but with different meanings. There was not a hint of a free market in political ideas in the countries under bureaucratic socialism, of course. The demand for a renaissance of Marxism, as Hungary's case will show, referred to an expansion of the bounds of canonized Marxism, with no question of another kind of philosophy. For in the West, the Left, especially the New Left, gained a temporarily dominant position on a plural philosophical, political and ideological market. The thematic questions from the New Left central to political thought in the period were the ones included in the title of this chapter: revolution, lifestyle, power and culture. These were usually combined. Favourite formulae in the period were lifestyle revolution and cultural revolution, while discourse on the authorities could hardly avoid referring to the Establishment and the System. As these concepts combined, a characteristic style of thinking emerged and demanded the attention even of political thinkers who did not otherwise belong to the New Left.

[5] Bence, Kis and Márkus 1992; Konrád and Szelényi 1979.

Western political thought in the Sixties

The appearance of the New Left on the political scene, after the ideological ebb of the later 1950s, took contemporaries by surprise. It was generally thought at the time that the era of ideology was over and political issues could not arouse the passions they had in the past.[6] It soon turned out that the prophecies of the demise of ideology were wrong. The New Left arose in the United States but soon appeared in Western European countries and had a marked influence on Marxism in Eastern Europe. Official Marxism was ambivalent. It was seen as an ally in the battle against world capitalism, but concurrently a dangerous heresy. East European thinkers seeking a renaissance of Marxism found it a major inspiration, however. The debate on alienation and the anthropology debate in Hungary, for instance, reflected similar debates in France, to such an extent that some studies from the latter appeared in Hungarian journals in translation. But in this respect, the Hungarian debate was obviously affected by the Polish one too (by Adam Schaff and others.) The appearance of the New Left in countries as socially and politically diverse as the United States, France and West Germany and its ubiquitous association with student movements shows that in spite of the differences, there had to be a common social and ideological factor to explain its appearance. This question greatly concerned thinkers of the time, left wingers and non-left wingers alike.

Many were already pointing out in the 1950s that the methods by which modern capitalism operated had changed markedly since the Second World War. The theories of C. Wright Mills and J. K. Galbraith in the United States or Raymond Aron and Jacques Ellul in France differed in many ways, of course, but the main elements of their explanations were remarkably similar. Most importantly, they agreed that modern capitalism led to a society of mounting material prosperity, not mounting impoverishment as Marx had predicted. Despite contradictions in the social-stratification statistics for various developed countries, they showed that the proportion of the population belonging to the traditional working class, engaged in manual labour, was declining. But there was a rapid increase in the number of employees handling technical tasks or providing technical services, in other words, the rule of knowledge and expertise was burgeoning. This drew attention to the role of technology. Jacques Ellul, with his influential 1960s New Left critique of technology, asserted that the imperative of technology was outstripping all other factors and determining the structure of

[6] Aron 1977, 309; Bell 1988, 402–3.

modern technological society.[7] He came up with technocracy, a concept that became hugely influential. He argued that the technocracy was the new era's ruling class, engaged in elbowing aside the old capital-owning ruling class and in leading society according to the all-powerful principle of technological efficiency.

The theorists of the New Left argued that the working class was no longer a revolutionary force—it had become integrated into capitalism.[8] But this meant revising a basic tenet of Marxist theory: the overthrow of capitalism was the historic calling of the working class; this class had to carry out the socialist revolution, and to use a phrase often repeated ironically, be the gravedigger of capitalism. Attempts were made in two directions to avoid this problem. Either other groups were designated to undertake the revolution instead—at that time, students or various marginalized strata were candidates—or an attempt was made to deny that the working class had lost its function as a potential force for revolutionary transformation, though its social function had changed. That idea led to the concept of a new working class, to which the American New Left writers had referred, although Hungarian political thought was influenced mainly by the form devised by André Gorz and Serget Mallet of France. The starting point was the idea that the development of technology led to a sharp rise in the expertise of the working class, but this brought new needs and demands that gave the new working class a motive to overthrow capitalism.

But what did New Leftism mean in the Sixties and how did it differ from the traditional left wing? The United States held a special place in the story, for that is where the movement began. Massimo Teodori, a researcher into the American New Left, produced in a monograph-length introductory study to a collection of source materials five criteria for distinguishing the New Left from the old.[9] (1) A strong demand for a moral revolution of the individual became linked to nonconformity in all areas of life and ultimately to a lifestyle revolution. (2) Over time, isolated protests developed into a comprehensive movement that condemned the technocratic system of corporative liberalism and became increasingly radical in its rejection of the System. (3) In radicalizing, the movement turned progressively from policies of pressurization and interest-based coalitions to direct action as the appropriate political method in the specific context of a post-industrial society. (4) The movement was expressly non-ideological in nature in the sense that it offered no coherent, compulsory doctrine for solving political problems, although its various groups all espoused the idea of

7 Ellul 1964.
8 Touraine 1971, 40.
9 Teodori 1969, 36–7.

participatory democracy. (5) Organizationally, the New Left distanced itself from the old Left while rejecting the idea of an avant-garde ideological party and the party discipline that would have entailed. Its belief in organizational and structural pluralism of a decentralized nature called for self-governing principles of direct democracy in the operation of its branch organizations. It rejected institutionalized political bureaucracy and any distinction between officers and members. Finally, the movement was not exclusive, in other words it rested on ideological pluralism. Teodori shows that the sociological composition of the American New Left differed strongly from its Thirties predecessor, as its social basis was among children of the Anglo-Saxon middle class, not immigrant groups with various ethnic affiliations.

The loose, network character brought a number of problems as well. The spontaneity, ad hoc reactions and decentralization meant great flexibility, but the movement could never develop into a national political party in a traditional sense and did not want to, although there were sharp disputes about that. The American case set a precedent in this respect, as very similar issues arose in West Germany, and in 1967–8 in France as well. The question asked everywhere was what type of political activity would be desirable. The dilemma was that traditional parliamentary politics, according to the philosophers and student theorists of the New Left, was tantamount to integration into the hated System, irrespective of whether the System was Johnson's America, De Gaulle's France, or Erhard's West Germany. Political activity based on activists and direct action could not sustain a lasting influence. The idea was raised in America and elsewhere of building counter-institutions as starting points for branch organizations in the movement. Rejection of traditional politics and the leitmotiv of a revolution transforming all human life and transcending the political sphere were combined with the idea of creating a counter-culture. But the central feature remained individual freedom and freeing.[10] From the last derives the idea of revolution that frees the individual, which meant two things for New Left thinkers. On the one hand, they talked of a revolution of political institutions, which was expected to destroy or at least reform the sham institutions of bourgeois representative democracy and allow decentralized exercise of power through direct or participatory democracy. But they did not think political revolution was sufficient—it had to be linked with a lifestyle revolution. Here they emphasized the role of the younger generation, often as a revolutionary class that takes over the task that Marxist theory had envisaged for the working class, which was now integrated into the System.

[10] Scruton 1985, 1–9.

These ideas—revolution, alienation, participation and anti-capitalism—were imbedded in a specific constellation of the history of ideas. The one to mention first is the tradition of Marxism in a loose sense, centred on the alienation theory Marx expounded in his 1844 *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, thus contrasting the younger Marx, the philosopher, with the older, the economist. Mention must also be made of Trotsky and the ideas of anarchist socialism. There was a strong influence, particularly in West Germany, from the so-called left-wing communism of the 1920s, especially Karl Korsch and Georg Lukács, in the latter case mainly his early work *History and Class Consciousness* (1923). In West Germany, the Frankfurt School had a direct influence on the New Left and on the student movement, although relations between them were far from free of conflict, as the debates of Habermas and Marcuse with the students exemplify.[11] The critical theory of the Frankfurt School inspired to a large extent the American New Left's critique of capitalism. This was not fortuitous, since the School had fled from Nazism to America, so that American experiences were incorporated into the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947). The chapter on the culture industry, perhaps the one most commonly cited, criticized primarily the manipulation mechanisms and social-integration methods of modern American capitalism. Herbert Marcuse (a first-generation member of the Frankfurt School and celebrated philosopher of the New Left and the student movement for a time) sustained this critical tone in *Eros and Civilization* and *One-Dimensional Man*, works with a conscious admixture of Marxism and Freudianism, written in English in the 1960s. An attempt to reinterpret Marxian theory was made in France in the Sixties by Jean-Paul Sartre, who tried to blend Marxism with the Existentialist tradition.

So there was a strong eclecticism about the political ideas of the New Left, in their intellectual sources and in their content. The same applies to the two undoubtedly decisive thinkers of the New Left in the West, Marcuse and Theodore Roszak, whose ideas were taken up in Hungary as well. The two most influential books were Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* (1964) and Roszak's *Making of a Counter Culture* (1968).[12] The conclusion of the former reflects that this is indeed a work of hopelessness. The 'Great Refusal' is no more than a spectacular, heroic gesture and it does not emerge at all why this should lead to a transformation of the system. The losers and critics of the affluent society, dice in hand and the concepts of a critical theory in their heads, make an absurd picture indeed. Theodore Roszak, who also exercised a great influence on the New Left, rightly pointed to the unreality of this idea when he remarked that the marginal strata from whom Marcuse expected a

[11] On this, see Weiss 2000, 128; Wiggershaus 1995, 597–655.
[12] Marcuse 1964; Roszak 1969.

revolution wanted to join the affluent society, not overturn the system. A concise and apposite account of Marcuse's views was given in 1971–2 by the Hungarian István Bibó, in his great essay *Reflections on the Social Development of Europe*. Bibó certainly knew *One-Dimensional Man*, because he quotes from the initial line of argument just mentioned: 'Marcuse showed that the organized working class itself, under the shade of this clever capitalism, became an albeit second-class participant in power, and ceased therefore to be a stratum inclined to extreme revolution. Thereupon Marcuse, arguing from the dogma that there had to be revolution, there being no other way decisive change could occur, made a bitter, tortuous survey of marginal factors outside society's basic production apparatus—university youth, oppressed racial groups, various marginal or excluded strata—but said neither how nor by what these strata together might convey revolution leading to the assumption of power.'[13]

Roszak essentially agreed with Marcuse that modern industrial society was a one-dimensional society capable of absorbing into itself the forces and trends directed against it, of consuming the alternatives to itself. But he had very different ideas on what to do about it. It has been seen that he rejected the idea of a revolution by the marginalized. It was fundamentally flawed, he opined, because what society's marginal strata wanted was not to eradicate the affluent society, but to partake of its affluence. The two thinkers are divided by their assessments of the role of technology. Marcuse saw modern technology as a means of breaking out of the one-dimensional world, Roszak as the source of all the trouble, a view from which he directly derived his political notions and concept of revolution. The starting point of his argument is Jacques Ellul's technocracy concept: modern industrial societies, whether capitalist societies based on private ownership or collectivist, self-styled socialist societies, are essentially technocratic. Roszak largely agrees with Marcuse that the system's totalitarian character derives from its perfected assimilation ability, which led to total integration.[14] The dominance of the technocrats could be ended only by demolishing the scientific world view that gave them their ultimate legitimacy, and the way to do that was through 'counter culture'. Only in that environment could the psychological revolution that Roszak thought necessary come about. He was convinced that this revolution could eliminate alienation, which a purely political revolution that changed institutions could not.[15] Roszak took one by one the cultural movements from which such a counter culture could be created—

[13] Bibó 1991, 461.
[14] Roszak 1969, 14.
[15] Ibid., 97.

from psychoanalysis and the hippy movement to the use of psychedelic drugs—so that a therapeutic revolution bringing freedom to the individual would result. The ultimate goal, as the slogans in Paris in 1968 reflected, was to restore imagination and creativity; the development of new communal and political forms could only rest on a new human personality obtained in this way. Roszak saw in the New Left a possible ally in this objective, because of its personalist approach.

Roszak's political option was a strongly transcendental society of small communities built on the new lifestyle models, able to present alternatives to the industrial, big-city lifestyle. These could be accomplished by relying on anarchist socialist traditions, he thought.[16] This did not mean a return to some primitive type of tribalism, simply techniques on a human scale and communities based on them. (Roszak's later works take on an increasingly mystical tone, and in any case fall outside the period being examined. But it must be said that his political ideas found some response, becoming an ideological source for the Green movements that strengthened in the 1980s.)

Political thought in Hungary

It is hardly necessary to demonstrate that Hungary's economic, social and political conditions in the Sixties differed fundamentally from those in the West. Here, the affluent society was just a distant ideological objective. Nonetheless, the debates and ideas of the Western New Left did not go unnoticed. There were no political debates in the sense of various political options being presented as they were in America or Western Europe, for the communist party held a monopoly of political theory and practice. But once the 8th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP) had stated in 1962 that conditions for restoring the capitalist system no longer pertained, some leeway was allowed to the social sciences.[17] Changes ensued in the cultural and scientific policy of the MSZMP and in its relation to the intelligentsia. The concept, drawn up for the Political Committee in materials prepared by the party Central Committee's Agitation and Propaganda and Scientific and Cultural departments and the Cultural Policy Collective in 1964–5, was that the party had to encourage social-scientific debates as a means of winning over the intelligentsia.[18] A 1964 party resolution declared that there would be free choice of subject matter, but that this must not infringe the principles or practice of the party. It was hoped that these debates would bring an increase in

[16] Roszak 1973, 388.
[17] Csizmadia 1995, 17–77.
[18] Lehmann 2003.

Marxist party spirit and raise the standard of Marxist-Leninist ideology. The two studies with the greatest ideological and political charge, on sociology and philosophy, opened opportunities for participants to discuss specialist issues. The specialist literature, especially during the debates on economic reform, went on to advance some political ideas that could not be expressed openly, only as a tacit message. Matters were impeded by the fact that the leeway available varied according to the current state of faction-fighting within the party, which would become apparent to the intelligentsia at the time when certain editors were dismissed and certain publishing opportunities curtailed.

These debates in the periodicals will not be described in detail in what follows, except where they are relevant to the subject. The first, the debate on alienation in the periodical *Valóság* (Reality) in 1964–5, was initiated by its editor-in-chief, András Hegedüs, who lost his job a year later. Its origins went back to 1962, when Mihály Vajda gave a lecture entitled 'Communism and Alienation' to the Institute of Philosophy. The year 1962 is also an important date for the appearance in Hungarian of Marx's early *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*. This long-hidden work, which had appeared only in the 1950s, stirred up debate about the Marxist canon not only in Hungary, but abroad as well. Which Marx was the authentic author, people asked: the young philosopher or the older economist? How were his writings in the two periods related? In Hungary, György Lukács and his disciples then aimed to produce a renaissance of Marxism through a return to Marx. Alienation was a central topic in the *Manuscripts* and there was debate about whether it existed under socialism.

The first contributor to the *Valóság* debate was the young Miklós Almási, a disciple of Lukács. Having defined the term, he concluded that alienation existed in socialist society.[19] It could not be eliminated—modern society and a modern economy were inconceivable without a complex division of labour—but its effects could be reduced. He recommended as a remedy effective social action and personal participation in social processes. Here he was actually pointing to workers' self-management, a technique often referred to in New Left discourse in the West and already being implemented in Yugoslavia, although he did not say so directly.[20] Drawing on *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, he then criticized French Marxism for failing to distinguish between reification and alienation. More important, however, was the passage in which he contributed to the question of the so-called socialist petty bourgeoisie, rejecting, with reference to a 1963 article in the journal *Kritika* by Ferenc Erdei, the view that rising personal consumption was something alien to socialism. Tying this issue to the problem

[19] Almási 1964, 10.
[20] Ibid., 12.

sphere of alienation, he identified as a possible source of socialist alienation the bureaucracy, not consumption.[21]

Two views developed in the debate. One side disputed Almási's argument that alienation was a phenomenon deriving from the nature of socialism. Stating instead that certain contradictions resulting from remnants and traces of capitalism still found in socialism were not identical with the alienation found in capitalism, they concluded that socialist alienation did not exist. This viewpoint was espoused at the concluding discussion in the Kossuth Club and in his 1965 book by Gyula Vörös,[22] and by György Fukász.[23] According to József Lick, there was alienation in socialism, but it was not identical with the alienation found in capitalism.[24] Representatives of the other viewpoint, supporting Almási, included Attila Ágh, who considered that the question of alienation should be approached from the angle of formation theory. There was socialist alienation and its source was commodity production, because socialism contained at once a planned economy and commodity production, and the contradiction between the two. At the same time, he criticized Almási's anthropological approach and his assumption that social participation might be a remedy for socialist alienation, for in his view, it could be overcome only by ending the division of labour.[25]

The Lukács disciple György Márkus contributed to the debate indirectly in a study analysing the works of the young Marx.[26] Anticipating his ideas in his 1966 book *Marxism and 'Anthropology'*, Márkus saw the historical anthropological approach as the essence of the life work of Marx. The works of the young Marx were important because they expressed explicitly the philosophical positions that became subordinated to the economic approach in *Capital*. This explication is worth noting because it really contains one of the underlying ideas in the *Überhaupt* book, since it centres on the contradiction between emancipatory Marxian philosophy and Marxian economics. Márkus criticized those who saw the essence of Marxism in a social scientific regularity analogous to the laws of pure science. For this led to fatalism and contradicted Marx's intentions about human freedom. At the end of the study, Márkus stated that Marxism was above all a specific method. That feature again pointed forward, to the kernel of his 1968 study advancing a pluralistic concept of Marxism.

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[21] Ibid., 17.
[22] Vita 1965, 5: Vörös 1965.
[23] Fukász 1964, 51.
[24] Lick 1964, 35–6.
[25] Ágh 1964, 60.
[26] Márkus 1964, 9–26.

The alienation debate certainly had a political outcome: the 1964 Ideological Conference condemned the periodical and its editor-in-chief, András Hegedüs, and branded his study 'Optimization and Humanization' as revisionist. He was replaced by Gyula Ortutay, who was in turn succeeded in the editorship by Ádám Wirth in November the same year. The journal launched concurrently a new debate, on the subject of anthropology, which lasted for several months and spread to other periodicals besides *Valóság*. More instructive on the subject of this chapter, however, is the 'Optimization and Humanization' article, which András Hegedüs wrote while he was still editing the paper and published in the 1965/3 number, intending it as an introduction to a debate on modernizing the system of management. The problem discussed, which recurs in the *Überhaupt* book, had obvious political and political scientific overtones, since it compared various political and management methods. The two main criteria, as the title suggested, were optimizing efficiency and emancipation, and the relation between the two. Hegedüs compared one-man leadership with management by committee and concluded that the latter was still not *per se* a guarantee of greater democracy, because it was often a hothouse of bureaucracy. This was clearly a political criticism. Hegedüs contrasted the committee form with direct democracy.[27] The author, who was obviously familiar with Western left-wing sociological writings, turned at the end of the study to the problem of socialist managers and specialists, raising the question of whether they could constitute a privileged stratum under socialism. He thought this was a very real possibility.[28] Ultimately, the study was an early Hungarian statement of the technocracy problem, which was to become a central issue a decade later in Konrád and Szelényi's book

In Hungarian terms, 1968 is interesting not just as political history, but because events in Czechoslovakia and Western Europe and the debates about the economic reform tended to strengthen the political dimension in sociological and philosophical writings of the period. Political history and theoretical reflection were related in scope and method, of course, and some event aspects will have to be explored in a moment, notably the changes in the positions of two social sciences: philosophy and sociology. By 1968, the Agitation and Propaganda Department had considered several times the position of the Institute of Sociology that Hegedüs headed and of the Institute of Philosophy. Criticism of the first focused mainly on Hegedüs himself, whose work in 1968 gave new cause for condemnation, with political and ideological concern expressed especially about 'Alternatives for Social Development', a study

[27] Hegedüs 1965, 19.
[28] Ibid., 32.

that appeared in *Kritika* in June. Meanwhile the party organizations were troubled by the debates between the dogmatic and the reform wings that went in the Institute of Philosophy. Eventually the tactics of a war on two fronts were chosen and both sides reproved.[29]

After the entry into Prague in August 1968 came some personal reprisals as well. The invasion had been condemned at the time by philosophers attending a conference at Korcula in Yugoslavia, in an interview with the French news agency AFP. The five who signed a statement to that effect were Ágnes Heller, György Márkus, Mária Márkus, Vilmos Sós és Zádor Tordai.[30] The invasion was also condemned at a party meeting in the Institute of Sociology. Members were expelled from the party and a state disciplinary investigation was started against all signatories, who were forbidden to travel abroad and had publication restrictions imposed on them. But no other administrative measures were taken and it was decided that right-wing revisionist philosophers had to be defeated in political debate. András Hegedüs was dismissed as head of the Sociological Research Group, but in line with the war-on-two-fronts principle again, József Szigeti, the leading figure in the dogmatic Marxist side, was removed from the directorship of the Philosophy Institute. The situation did not shift clearly or finally towards repression until the philosophers' trial of 1973.

Hegedüs's 'Alternatives for Social Development', which drew attention in the party apparatus, had appeared before the events of August 1968. It continued the argument of his study *Optimization and Humanization*. The starting point was to distinguish between three possible power structures: a centralized, qualified bureaucracy representing the interests of the whole society, a system of social self-management, or a mixture of the two, which Hegedüs defined in Weberian terms as a combination of bureaucratic power and social authority. The typology is followed by a historical account of the three types.

The prime examples given of bureaucracy representing the interests of the whole society were the Soviet Union and the East European people's democracies. The main lesson, according to the author, was that socialism is required for a qualified bureaucracy. It was also essential to have alongside the movement's cadres and technical intelligentsia the figure of a socialist manager as *tertius gaudens*.[31] Hegedüs saw as the main drawback of this power structure the observable fall in the proportion of direct producers (workers or peasants) among

[29] Lehmann 2003.

[30] The statement runs, 'As Marxists and communists responsible for the development of the socialist system, we consider that interference by some member-states of the Warsaw Pact presents a grave danger to the recently commenced development of socialism and regeneration of Marxian theory. Whatever repercussions there may be, we deem it our duty to do everything for the development of authentic socialism and real socialist democracy.' Csizmadia 1995, 13.

[31] Hegedüs 1968, 847.

the members of the East European communist parties that provided the cadres. This clear criticism of bureaucratic socialism makes it clear why the Agitation and Propaganda Department found the article so disturbing. Hegedüs presented the model of social self-management devised in Yugoslavia as an attempt to remedy the faults in the first type of power structure. But he saw ambivalent results: managers of local production units retained their decision-making position, but responsibility for the decisions passed to the self-management bodies. What was needed was a third type, in which the power of the qualified bureaucratic apparatuses could be checked by the authority of the direct producers. The requirement there was for the direct producers to be able to hire independent specialists to oversee the apparatus. (It will be seen that this concept is taken over in the part of the *Überhaupt* book dealing with the feasibility of a society of direct producers.) The concept of the party's role in Hegedüs's article elicited a declaration of ideological anathema. For the author thought the time had come for the Leninist party to change from a factor of power into a means of social control over the bureaucratic apparatus. In Hungary's case, he saw an excellent opportunity for it to do so with the introduction of the new management system.[32]

The urgency about political reform expressed in Hegedüs's piece matched well with an interview with György Lukács that had appeared a month earlier, in the May issue of *Kortárs* (Contemporary), where the elderly philosopher, calling for a 'return to Marx', argued for pluralization of Marxist philosophy.[33] The July issue of the periodical carried an article on the same subject by the Lukács disciple György Márkus.[34]

György Lukács presented a subject specifically concerned with political theory in his 1968 essay *The Present and Future of Democratization*, originally published in German. Although the study disappointed the master's much more radical disciples, according to the recollection of Mihály Vajda,[35] Lukács sketched a political model that differed from East European bureaucratic socialism. He started by saying that Western-type bourgeois democracy was not a feasible choice for the socialist countries, because it would lead, under the prevailing international conditions, to a political coup similar to Greece's and rule by the generals.[36] Lukács, incidentally, held views on Western democracy very similar to those of some figures in the Western New Left.[37] So the socialist countries had to choose between Stalinist bureaucratic socialism and true social democracy, which meant direct democracy

[32] Ibid., 853.
[33] 'A békés…' 1968, 748.
[34] Márkus 1968.
[35] Csizmadia 1995, 39 and Note 5, 467.
[36] Lukács 1988, 58–9.
[37] Ibid., 43–4.

drawing on the traditions of the 1917 Soviet system. Here Lukács was unusually sharp in his criticism of existing socialist practice,[38] but still concluded that the leading role of the party had to remain.[39]

Also important to the history of political thought are the 1968 and 1969 writings of György Bence and János Kis, members of the Lukács Kindergarten and disciples of György Márkus, who belonged to the Lukács School.[40] These in fact were forerunners of the imminent *Überhaupt* book. Bence examined the relationship of Marcuse to the New Left student movement.[41] He began by picking out the crisis of the universities as one cause of the Western crisis. The students were protesting effectively at the bureaucratization of the universities and at the mega-university as a form of organization. Like Western analysts, Bence underlined the transformation of the universities into specialist factories, which followed from a change in the nature of capitalism. Turning to the attitude of the New Left to East European socialism, he found it important to emphasize that the New Left was making criticisms from the left of East European conditions.[42] (This subject returns in the introduction to *Überhaupt*, where the authors note the discrepancy between the Eastern and Western movements.) Bence then followed the career of Marcuse up to the Sixties, when a pessimistic tone began to dominate his writings. Bence criticized the theory of repressive tolerance because its one-dimensional depiction of developed industrial society left the philosopher's thinking one-dimensional as well. This, he thought, prevented Marcuse from noticing the radical needs created by the new capitalism, which tied in with the new working class. The most notable aspect of that line of argument is the concept of radical needs and the new working class, which became central to the argument in the *Überhaupt* book. Bence concluded that the New Left had to transcend beyond Marcuse.

János Kis's 1969 article 'Concealed Revolution' takes further the set of problems treated in the Bence study. The piece, designed simply as an outline, looks at the theoretical antecedents of the French student movement in the light of the events of May 1968. The analysis is concentrated on two works: Serge Mallet's 1963 *The New Working Class* and André Gorz's 1965 *Strategy for Labour: a Radical Proposal*. Kis goes through the specifically New Left concepts in these works, from neo-capitalism and the subject of revolution to the set of issues surrounding the new working class and radical needs. At the

[38] Ibid., 163.
[39] Ibid., 192.
[40] On the relations of the Lukács School and Lukács Kindergarten, see Csizmadia 1995, 29–31.
[41] Bence 1968.
[42] Ibid., 97.

centre of the argument is the proposition that the autonomous existence of the abilities of the new working class gives rise to the radical needs deriving from its creativity. This leads directly to the need for participation. Since the radical needs of the new working class cannot be satisfied under conditions of capitalism, the problem of how to change it arises. The slogan of seizing power has to be re-evaluated. It can no longer mean an ultimate goal superior to daily objectives. It has to be integrated into everyday praxis. That is the essence of the policy of revolutionary reforms devised by Gorz, which Kis saw as important because it went beyond the old revolution/evolution dichotomy and did so in a way that linked the two together. The activity of reshaping the system had to start in the places of work, where workplace democracy could be exercised through the organs of worker control and steadily expanded beyond the factory gates. At some point, the evolution would bring about a qualitative change of a revolutionary nature.[43] The lines of argument and categories in János Kis's outline return again in discussions in the *Überhaupt* book, with the considerable difference that the authors view far more critically the expectations attaching to the theory of the new working class.

The third formula to appear in Western New Left writing towards the end of the decade, alongside the problems of the new working class and radical needs, was the lifestyle revolution. János Kenedi, in his 1969 essay, counted the hippy movement as important precisely because it tried to oppose consumerism with a new lifestyle model centred on love, while the apolitical stance of the hippies pointed to the bankruptcy of traditional politics.[44] The problems of the lifestyle revolution were addressed theoretically by Ágnes Heller and Mihály Vajda in a joint October 1970 study that was intended by *Kortárs* to open a debate.[45] The starting point was the need to strive consciously to transform all forms of contact, as changing the power structures was not sufficient. The crystallization point of everyday forms of contact was the family, so that from a communist perspective, the family was where to start. On the other hand, the Utopian communist ideas about state child-raising institutions were faulty because they wrongly dissociated raising children from relations between the sexes. That, however, did not mean the monogamous bourgeois family was the only option. First, a distinction needed to be made between the economic and the social functions of the bourgeois family. The social function—still very much alive—was essentially to reproduce a conformist type of personality. But the authoritarian nature of the family was preventing

[43] Kis 1969, 96.
[44] Kenedi 1969, 127.
[45] Heller and Vajda 1970, 1655–65.

children from learning to live in a community. Furthermore, it was the family that implanted awareness of ownership.[46] The authors noted Stalinism's express support for the bourgeois monogamous family. They recommended the commune, the family type of communist society, as the only type that would not reproduce an ownership-oriented type of personality. But the commune they envisaged would not be a production unit or anything like Fourier's phalanstery, but a theatre of daily cohabitation. A commune differed from a traditional monogamous family in having no value preferences to govern sexual relations: promiscuity and monogamy would be equally legitimate. This, they argued, would reduce the empty routine and the instances of cohabitation based on material considerations. The commune's children, while retaining ties with the adults, would live in a children's community that would help them develop democratic abilities early in life. There would be no fixed emotional preferences, for they would be treated as their children by all adult commune members, not just their biological parents. This too would counter the development of an ownership attitude or awareness of mine and thine. The commune Heller and Vajda envisaged would be pluralist in world view, prescribing nothing for its members but the common principles of cohabitation. Ultimately, the authors attached importance to the commune as a new point of crystallization for social structures of a communist nature, on a level of daily cohabitation, but they did not view it as a social panacea.

The Sixties, in terms of political thought, in Hungary ended with two monographs that remained unpublished for some time: Bence, Kis and Márkus's *Überhaupt* book or *How Is Critical Economics Possible?* and Konrád and Szelényi's *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power*. The *Überhaupt* book is a synthesis, representing a demand for Marxist renaissance, theoretical elaboration of the views of the Western New Left, and an account of the philosophical and sociological debates in Sixties Hungary. Publication was not permitted; indeed the book formed one of the main charges in the 1973 Philosophers' Trial. It started from a comparison of the Sixties in Eastern and Western Europe: the left wing in the East and in the West interpreted socialism in different ways. From that arose the book's basic question: were commodity relations compatible with socialism? It is worth concentrating here on two central concepts in the argument of this weighty book, for their consequences for political theory: the question of radical needs and the problem of inducing association among free producers.

[46] Ibid., 1659.

The authors see problems in applying the Marxian theory of crisis to the relations of modern capitalism, especially the thesis about the falling rate of profit.[47] From this derived Marx's second error, his forecast about the impoverishment of the working class, which was empirically refuted by later events. The main trouble was that Marx's model of operation for the socialist economy assumed the meagre and unchanging need structure of the working class in his time, and that concept provided the theoretical basis for the economic system of existing socialism and the bureaucratic shortage economy. Marx did not countenance the idea that the living standards of the working class might rise. His assumption of stagnating needs, however, could not be the basis for the radical needs pointing outwards from capitalism. That also meant there was an inherent contradiction in the body of Marx's work, because the ideas of Marx the philosopher of history, assuming dynamically increasing human needs, were opposed to those of the economist Marx, who started from the static need structure of the working class in his time.

This conflict between Marxian theory and reality was apparent by the end of the 19th century, as the working class, through economic and political counter-institutions, was managing to raise its wage levels and living standards. But this reduced its revolutionary potential. The labour movement responded with three different attempts at an interpretation of the Marxian theory: orthodox Marxism, revisionism and anarcho-syndicalism.[48] The first resolved the discrepancy between theory and practice by turning Marxism into metaphysics, with its doctrine of the objective contradictions in capitalism. Revisionism accepted the obvious facts but abandoned the Marxian intention of superseding capitalism. Anarcho-syndicalism assumed that there existed radical needs despite the facts and that these could be brought to the surface by forced revolutionary actions. All three tendencies, according to the authors, were bankrupted in the Sixties. But there could be a solution if the concept of radical needs could be backed up. Despite the defeat of the Western European New Left in 1968, there was still hope in this respect in the lifestyle movements that were bringing up new life problems. That gave feminism, the ecological movement (in today's terms, the various identity movements) and youth counter-culture their significance. The problem sphere of radical needs—as in the version by János Kis touched upon earlier—tied in here with the theory of the new working class. The latter was seen as essential by the authors, because it sought to ground radical needs in production, not consumption.[49] Even so, they warned

[47] Bence, Kis and Márkus 1992, 223.
[48] Ibid., 261.
[49] Ibid., 284.

against the excesses of the theory, because they led to the possibility of some kind of science-fiction socialism or technical Utopianism. For the level of technical expertise achieved by a high degree of creativity and autonomy, which would not be coupled under capitalism with sufficient radical needs, would be a real factor only for a small proportion of producers. But the theory provided sufficient grounds for ascribing 'some empirical likelihood to the assumption that radical needs of a new type may develop out of the conditions of modern capitalism.'[50]

The last chapter of the book, on the feasibility of association among free producers, brought a changed perspective. The relevance of Marxian theory in the discussion of radical needs cropped up in relation to modern capitalism, while this chapter referred to East European socialism. Was the choice really between a rational, dynamic society based on commodity relations and a society that aimed to humanize social relations? If so, it had to be said that Marxian socialism was unattainable.[51]

The example of Eastern Europe showed how socialism without market mechanisms became socialism without freedom, so that the theory of market socialism met Marxian requirements of humanization. But in that case, did not socialism–market linkage mean that alienation survived? The authors agreed this could not be ruled out if the link between the market and socialism was accepted as a premise, but more relevant was whether a system of institutions to control and confine alienation could be installed. In other words, the profit principle had to be retained, because there could be no market forces without it, but assertion of it had to be regulated.[52] Then a new problem arose. Since this regulatory role was performed by the state, what was the difference between neo-capitalism, which also operated with state intervention, and market socialism?[53] This, it emerged, had less to do with the economy than with the relations of the economy to society. But that still did not really answer the question, as the relations were governed by the state. How could a state whose economy operated on an essentially capitalist basis not be capitalist itself? It was no good saying the state in a socialist market economy was not a state of private capitalists, because power might derive from management as much as ownership. That led to the problem of managers and technocrats, the underlying question in András Hegedüs's study, considered earlier. The authors' solution resembles Hegedüs's in asserting that the power of the state had to be under social rule, exercised in local economic units through self-management bodies overseeing the

[50] Ibid., 292.
[51] Ibid., 296.
[52] Ibid., 314–16.
[53] Ibid., 328.

apparatus of the state. One necessary, but not sufficient requirement for such self-management was employment of independent experts. Also needed were communities of a new type: individuals in modern societies were at the mercy of the media, through complex concentrations of means of education and organization, regardless of whether these were in public or private hands.[54]

At this point in the argument, the authors put forward a concept found also in several Western New Left thinkers, including Theodore Roszak. While not explicitly taking sides on the issue of a multiparty system, they expressed a need for new-type communities that would not be political organizations, but instead grow directly out of daily activity and daily life. These were required to avoid the leader–led divide found inescapably in modern political organizations. This was again a matter of participation and direct democracy. The authors listed the areas of life in which such organizations could be established. The place of residence and the family were seen as unsuitable, but they applied André Gorz's theory in nominating the place of work as ideal terrain. So the concept returns to the idea of worker self-management.[55] These new-type organizations would provide democratic bases of production, furthering criteria of humanization and of profit-motivated rationalization—the latter because the direct producers would share in the profits of their economic unit, giving them a stake in raising its economic efficiency. The fundamental question is whether such self-management bodies could employ independent experts, as self-management bodies themselves would be unable to reach competent decisions under modern conditions. But what would guarantee that these bodies would not prefer profit-motivated rationalization to the criterion of humanization? Workplace democracy would simply provide the institutional frames for this, as a necessary, but not a sufficient condition.[56]

The final section tried to provide some kind of answer to the question. The authors saw a solution in changing the structure of daily life and transforming individual attitudes and goals, i. e. in a revolution in daily life. Meanwhile, the scene changed again almost imperceptibly, for the question of counter-culture and lifestyle experiments that arose was typical of the Western New Left in that period (see Roszak's book, for instance), while the article by Heller and Vajda counted as exceptional in Hungary. This was obviously because the counter-culture was a response to the lifestyle of a consumer society, assuming an

[54] Ibid., 341–2.
[55] Ibid., 353.
[56] Ibid., 365.

abundance of consumer commodities that the market socialism outlined by the authors was supposed to create in Eastern Europe.

Unlike the *Überhaupt* book, György Konrád and Iván Szelényi's *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power* was written after Hungary had crossed the Rubicon of the 1973 Philosophers' Trial and the authors had no hope of getting it published at home. It set out to refute the doctrine of the leading role of the working class, which was one of the main ideological taboos of East European socialism. The initial hypothesis was that East European socialist societies had dual structures: the intelligentsia was the ruling class and the exploited class the proletariat. The authors classified their ideas among the theories of a 'new class' and claimed to have expanded on the theory of Milovan Djilas. The proposition that the intelligentsia appeared in Eastern Europe as a class was debatable, of course, and the focus of most criticism of the book, and Szelényi himself tried to refine the thesis in the 1980s.[57] The question is what common denominator provided a basis for identifying the disparate groups of the intelligentsia as a social class. Since it could not be their relation to property, the only possible trait that remained was a common class culture.[58] This is how Szelényi described the purpose of the book in his introduction in 1978: 'There is much to be learned from critiques of state-socialist societies, yet their negative lessons should not lead us to reject the idea of socialism. Our next task is to work on the theory of an alternative socialism. Though the present study refrains from making explicit the ideological implications of our analysis, we hope that it too will ultimately contribute to the theory of a new, self-managing socialism – a "free association of direct producers", rather than the class rule of intellectuals organized around the redistributive planning process '[59]

The conceptual framework of the book is Marxian class theory augmented with Weberian bureaucracy and legitimacy and Károly Polányi's redistribution theory. It is also inspired by the Sixties bureaucracy critique of András Hegedüs. To the initial hypothesis attaches an essential auxiliary hypothesis. East European socialism based on rational redistribution was seen not as some kind of distortion of Western development, but as an economic, social and political system growing organically out of East European tradition. It was a sovereign civilization pattern, alongside the Western market economy and the Asian mode of production recently made familiar by the work of Ferenc Tőkei.[60]

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[57] On this, see Vajda 1990; Szelényi 1990, 51–98.
[58] Konrád and Szelényi 1979, 82.
[59] Ibid., xv–xvi.
[60] Ibid., 11.

Szelényi and Konrád intended their concept of rational redistribution to be a formula that differed from archaic redistribution. Although also intended to produce economic growth, the operation of the economy was decided neither by custom nor by commodity markets, but by political will manifested in plans. The operator of this was the intelligentsia in the role of teleological redistributor, for the essence of socialism was social teleology aimed at growth.[61] The essence of the book was a phenomenology based on Hungarian experiences of the East European intelligentsia. The authors tried to resolve the contrast between the bureaucracy and intelligentsia, which they strongly rejected, by distinguishing between transcendent and historical-genetic concepts of the intelligentsia. The authors admitted to deriving the former from Károly Mannheim's concept of a freely floating intelligentsia, while the latter meant an intelligentsia imbedded in specific social roles and interest relations. For the intelligentsia, in these essay-like treatments describing the historical route, appears in three states: as an estate in a medieval, pre-industrial society, as a stratum in a West European market economy, and as a class in East European societies espousing rational redistribution.

The intelligentsia's class power is hard to recognize under Stalinism—the first stage of socialism in Eastern Europe but the third variant form of the East European redistributive system. The power was possessed by the estate-like party bureaucracy, which was only a minority of the intelligentsia. What is meant here by estate-like is that an intellectual nature—performance-based legitimacy gained by expertise—was far from enough to secure management positions in the redistributive system. Also needed was previous merit gained in the labour movement, i. e. possession of a privileged status. Thus the second stage of socialism—its early years associated with Khrushchev—meant the intellectuals who had monopolized power so far had to compromise with other groups of the intelligentsia treated hitherto as political enemies to be ousted, notably the technocracy, and be content with hegemony instead of monopoly. So the substance of the second stage of socialism came from a struggle for position between the earlier intellectual estate and the technocracy. Here the latter displayed two faces. Its servile historical reflexes inclined it to recognize the leading role of the party bureaucracy, but it would have liked autonomy, although it did not generally recognize that the economic reforms it sought would bring political reforms as well. It had a chance of winning its struggle for independence only if it could recruit as allies the other strata of the intelligentsia or those of the working class with a stake in accentuating the market features in the system. Konrád and Szelényi, in the summer of 1974, did not yet know

[61] Ibid., 87.

whether the party bureaucracy could consolidate its gains made throughout Eastern Europe at the expense of the technocracy in the early 1970s. They might just be a prelude to another *Ausgleich* like the one in 1867 that followed the neo-absolutist gains of the 1850s and 1860s. If that was the case, the authors opined, there was a chance that this *Ausgleich* would open a third stage in East European socialism. It could bring not just a rational division of power between ruling party bureaucracy and technocracy, with professionalization of the former as a political bureaucracy, but qualitative development involving the pluralization of society. In that case, the intelligentsia could take off its masks and express itself openly. Furthermore, some marginal intellectual groups might help the working class to articulate its interests and create institutions of its own, so that evolutionary change turned the system into something else, seen tacitly as some third road between capitalism and repressive socialism.[62]

There is one other far from inconsiderable figure to consider briefly here. István Bibó, mentioned earlier, was actually the one true political thinker in Hungary at the time, but his position was peculiar. Released from prison in 1963, he then lived in total isolation until the second half of the 1970s, when his work was discovered by the newly forming Hungarian opposition. The discovery resulted from what began as a *Festschrift*, but was turned by the thinker's death into the *Bibó Memorial Book*, the first Hungarian *samizdat*. The part of Bibó's work that fell in the period treated here was not unaffected by Sixties political thought or the subjects and characteristics considered so far. He paid attention to the political events of the Sixties, and as an acquisitions librarian at the Central Statistical Office, he had access to Western literature on political theory as well. The book lists and abstracts he left behind give quite an accurate picture of what he read and what questions concerned him in that period. His already quoted opinion of Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* shows he was following attentively developments in the Western New Left. Gyula Benda has related that on his return from France in 1968, his account of the student movements was heard with great attention by Bibó. He also kept up with events at home. He gained access to the Konrád–Szelényi manuscript and told Iván Dénes how strongly he disagreed with the idea that the last of the intelligentsia's historical changes of shape would turn it into the ruling class.

Bibó's last comprehensive work, the *Reflections on the Social Development of Europe*, was an essay dictated into a tape recorder. It sums up his life's work and shows that his political concept bore in many respects the marks of Sixties political thought. He was not particularly interested, of course, in domestic and foreign debates on the renaissance of

[62] Ibid., 249.

Marxism and a decidedly critical attitude towards Marxism was one characteristic of the work. For he defined himself as a socialist, not a Marxist thinker, close to the tradition of anarchist socialism and mingled with liberalism, popular radicalism and Christianity. He was akin in many respects to New Left ideas, in his criticism of existing socialism and capitalism for their functionless, mammoth-scale property—whether in state or private ownership—and value-free efficiency, his attraction to worker self-management and a decentralized system of power, and his critique of technocracy: 'Unlike the intellectuals who construct political and moral ideologies, their organizing counterparts frequently reveal that they consider interference by non-experts as well as plebiscites, parliamentary representation, democratic forms, self-determination, or workers self-government to be nothing more than attempts to meddle with their own lofty intellectual efforts. Again we are talking about a danger that exists in both capitalism and Communism. In capitalism it is presented by the technocrats of economic life, in Communism by the functionaries of the single ruling party, one might say, the technocrats of political organization…The strange situation arose that in the shadow of the program calling for the building of socialism the same dictatorship of the intellectuals developed as the one that exists in a technocracy. This is the case even if the dictatorship is exercised by men of working-class origin. After all, the crucial point is not the background of the dictatorial power-group, but the fact that those in intellectual functions are practicing dictatorial and suppressive supremacy over those in non-intellectual positions.'[63]

Bibó also had strong criticism for New Left aversion to parliamentary democracy and antipathy for institutions: 'It is no accident that student movements in the West are incoherent, confused and at times impractical to the point of frivolity, while their counterparts in the East are quite sober, realistic and contain concrete libertarian programs. The reason for this is that the institutions of liberty are relatively intact and operational in the West…They attack the entire existing social order, the ruling establishment (and establishments everywhere) forgetting that no reform program can exist without some kind of an establishment.'[64] His concept can be described briefly as entrepreneurial socialism combined with parliamentary democracy, to give a society of mutual services that ensures equal human dignity for all by eliminating functionless great wealth. This idea, incidentally, was not far from the theory of market socialism propounded in the *Überhaupt* book, but Bibó underlined the inescapable need for institutions of political freedom, above all multiparty parliamentary democracy. For him, direct democracy cannot stand in for parliamentarianism; it is simply a means of

[63] Bibó 1991, 483 and 508–509.
[64] Ibid., 494.

correcting its faults and complementing it. He explained how the liberal parliamentary system consisted of a chain of linked institutions whose operability assumed the existence of every link in the chain.

But Bibó's essay, again in a way characteristic of left-wing political thought in the 1960s, slid into Utopia. He could not cite any real socio-political practice as a workable model of his political option. The model he offered of self-managing socialism, a society of mutual services, proved as unworkable as the bureaucratic East European variants. In the end, by rejecting both capitalism and existing socialism, he too was left only with a Utopia.[65]

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Melinda Kalmár

An attempt at optimization. The reform model in culture, 1965–1973

> 'It is still not quite clear what censorship's role is to be.'
> *Basic principles of reform of cultural management*[1]
> 'Culture with us is an ideological, not a commercial matter.'
> *Experiences with introducing new economic management in the cultural field*[2]

The workings of the reform

Impetus

The countries of East Central Europe were plunged into crisis in the first half of the Fifties, by structural distortions in their socialist economies. There was no way to achieve the living-standard targets set for the working masses. It was impossible to meet the growing needs of the public in agriculture (then undergoing collectivization) or consumer-goods manufacturing. Initial attempts at reform in the mid-Fifties simply addressed disproportions in the model, mainly by shifting the industrial structure towards consumption, ceasing to neglect agriculture, lessening centralized political control and bureaucracy, and raising living standards to an appreciable, if not spectacular extent.

The Soviet and East European leaderships, though obliged to alter certain aspects of their economies, did not yet attempt any radical change in the socialist model, although the shift away from some previous principles of operation had irreversible effects on the system's integrity and survival. The reforms, inconsistently applied, had effects beyond the economic structure by influencing views on spontaneity and social activity, and indirectly, the scope for democracy. These reforms, driven by economic necessity, also altered social awareness to a degree greater than their initiators had expected. They necessarily rearranged ideological components hitherto seen as consistent, which altered the received image of socialism. After

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1 Magyar Országos Levéltár (Hungarian National Archives = MOL) M–KS–288. f. 41/75. ő. e. January 19, 1967. Discussed by the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (= MSZMP) Agitation and Propaganda Committee on May 18, 1967.

2 Ibid., 41/117. ő. e. Submission to the MSZMP Agitation and Propaganda Committee, May 1969.

several years, the idea matured of a comprehensive reform of the political system that would eventually transform everything.[3]

Optimization

The Hungarian party, having survived the first difficult decade after '56, adjusted itself in the Sixties to a spirit of reform that was almost ubiquitous at the time. The 9th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP) in late 1966 stated that the prime task in the early years of 'armed subjugation of the counterrevolution and consolidation' had now changed. It was to concentrate henceforth on reorganizing agriculture and reforming the economic system.

One major purpose of the reforms from the outset was to relieve the economic and political tensions surrounding sustainability. The changes were not confined to the ways in which material and financial costs were distributed. They were also intended to reduce the technical, managerial and operating costs, which were reaching levels perceived as insupportable. Apart from seeking to ease pressure on the public purse, the leadership wanted to reduce the excessive technical burden on central management, which had become unwieldy, by giving economic actors greater freedom of manoeuvre within the system. The two aims were linked. The reformers envisaged an economic structure that could reduce the persistent social demands on centralized funds and central administration, by giving various economic actors incentives to be self-sufficient and act independently in production and commerce.[4]

But expanding the scope for social and economic action had dangers for what had been an arrangement strictly confined to the superstructure. The leadership had to make successive concessions to initiate independent action at the base. The main incentive to show initiative was enterprise profit, but that raised the spectre of mounting social inequalities, which in turn questioned further ideological tenets and destabilized the main cohesive

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[3] The author has been engaged on a monograph examining the relations of communist ideology and formation in the 1948–89 period and the operation of party and state. The book, nearing completion, analyses in detail the expansion of the state and secularization process, on which reform of the economic mechanism had a strong effect. Also important to the work is a comparative examination of various areas of ideology (book publishing, mass media, arts, foreign-policy propaganda etc.) On this, see the author's *Ennivaló és hozomány. A kora-kádárizmus ideológiája* (Food and dowry. Ideology of early Kádárism), (Budapest: Magvető Kiadó, 1998).

[4] 'Under the present budgetary system, the "interest" of organizations is manifest mainly in their support for making greatest demands on the budget. They therefore have to be given a stake in discovering sources of income and operating in the thriftiest, most efficient way.' MOL XIX–I–4–ggg. 36. d. Papers of Károly Polinszky, deputy minister/minister. Guidelines on reform of the management system of budgetary organizations. May 1966 (= Guidelines… May 1966).

elements. Seeking to avert that danger, Soviet and East-Central European party leaderships looked at optimization models devised by the now flourishing discipline of sociology, to see if the aims of *stabilization and dynamization* could be met concurrently. In effect, ideological buffers were installed in fields affected by the reform, with culture a conspicuous example. They were designed to block or localize in some way uncomfortable but inevitable side effects of transformation. Among the salient features of the period, therefore, was a widely noted ambivalence,[5] reflecting concurrent concern for efficiency and ideology. This took specific institutional forms in culture in the second half of the Sixties. While the operating frames of culture, or the conditions for them, were altered directly, those reforms also brought appreciable indirect changes in ideology and cultural awareness.

The mechanism

Initially, the cultural sphere was affected by the economic reform only insofar as it had to contribute to its general ideological foundations. The introduction of the reform was accompanied by broad, differentiated, carefully prepared central propaganda, designed to impart factual, practical knowledge and replace—by central direction, but ultimately through the whole people—archaic political and ideological views of society with another interpretation responsive to an essentially different period. The change became known at the time as 'adopting an economic outlook.'

Publishers were instructed to include presentation, application and popularization of the new mechanism in their publishing plans. Among the items issued were placards and tableaux displaying the main objectives of the reform. Simple animated films were made for television, which was rapidly becoming influential, featuring a slightly abstract, but congenial figure called Dr Brain, who explained and interpreted the reform concepts, their assumed advantages, and to a lesser extent, the possible difficulties. The series became familiar to a generation, so that the phrase 'I'll explain the mechanism' outlived the semi-success of the reform itself, as a way to explain the constant tinkering with socialism.

[5] Thinkers in both Cold War camps in the Sixties were concerned to optimize their systems. East European political leaders drew on such research or even prompted it several times. András Hegedüs, for instance, contributed a study to the periodical *Valóság* 3:1965 entitled 'Optimalizálás–humanizálás' (Optimization, humanization) about principles and conditions for altering the management system. In the same year, the Polish press published discussion about mathematical means of optimum planning and decision-making (O. Lange, K. Porwit and H. Grenieski's articles in *Nowe Drogi* 2:1965). Soviet, Polish and Hungarian sociological researches were loosely coordinated in that period, so that efforts at optimization were probably not a specifically Hungarian move in politics either.

The economic medium

The cultural sphere continued to perform its propaganda tasks, with existing institutions unaffected, until plans for major changes appeared in the latter half of the Sixties. Situation reports then began to comment on obvious changes in the pattern surrounding culture, which provided a decisively *economic* medium by the end of the decade, which altered the concept of culture itself. One feature was the appearance of a strong rival to culture in the developed civilizations of the twentieth century: science, which had an open line to the market, so that its usefulness could appear directly in society. Nor was the rivalry confined to the market, for science became increasingly conspicuous as a recipient of state subsidies, in the East and the West alike. These changes seemed to loosen the concept of socialist culture in a context of market forces, as the economic medium became globally decisive.[6] The other marked change relating to indoctrination was sudden extension of the bounds of education and culture. The relative importance of various cultural actors also altered.

The interpretation and assessment of culture moved strongly towards forms and institutions with mass influence. Teaching and public education were stressed, rather than the elite genres preferred hitherto. Yet an apparent anomaly will be examined later in the chapter: the fields now seen as important were those least affected by reform. The Hungarian party leadership in the second half of the Fifties sensed the changes in more developed parts of the world and reassessed the role of culture. A 1958 resolution on cultural policy placed the concept of culture in a wide and complex framework of fields. Its order of priority was significant. First came education, then 'popular cultivation' (adult education and dissemination of culture), then sports and the arts. The pole position for education was justified by its direct contribution to the reproduction of labour. Popular cultivation and the arts were immediately concerned only in indoctrination and shaping public awareness, which gave way to urgent matters of production efficiency. Book publishing and distribution, film-making and distribution, theatrical and musical institutions, and the fine arts were classed as strictly artistic fields in the Sixties, while literature, hitherto privileged, was subsumed into book publishing, not least for organizational and ideological reasons. Placing literature as one of the sub-sectors of the cultural-enterprise sphere exemplified the spread of the economic mechanism and economic outlook. A decade and a half later, minister of culture Béla Köpeczi was to remark, 'It can be said, of course, that the guidelines [of 1958] overestimated *to some*

[6] 'This is the economic medium under whose conditions we have to live and do business.' MOL XIX.–I–4–ggg 48. d. Minutes of augmented meeting of the party committee and heads of offices at the Ministry of Culture, July 7, 1967 (= Minutes… July 7, 1967).

extent the significance of ideas in the world-view education of society. That is true, and it has been found particularly since 1968 that economic processes have sometimes exercised a greater, more decisive influence with a stronger effect on everyday life.'[7]

Dependent socialism

The way reform of the economic mechanism and the principles of socialist cultural policy came to be at odds at the end of the Sixties has special, almost hallmark significance to ideology and the socialist model. For culture served as an indicator of how an ideological 'sector', hard to change but extremely sensitive, reacted to the reform. Throughout the period, the ideas for cultural reform started from the system-creating measures of education and health care, whose essentials were immutable, so that economic efficiency could not be the main criterion in their case, even under the new mechanism. So reform ideology in culture swung constantly between the two aims of reforming the economy and maintaining policy. The reform was self-limiting and the bounds within which the system of political institutions could be transformed were set by the conflicting relations of culture and the market.

Before those engaged on the cultural implications of the reform began to devise principles, they looked at how other socialist countries had tried to harmonize the major criterion of cultural direction with the ever-harder task of financing culture. Two main approaches were found. Most socialist countries subsidized all cultural products passing through the filters of censorship, so combining administrative political compulsion with economic incentive. The advantage this had over a market mechanism was the scope it left for censorship and supervision of culture. But weightier problems were beginning to appear in the mid-Sixties, for in no way could such a system be commercially viable. One country where a different system had developed was Yugoslavia, where the direction and financing principles for culture had been changed by economic reform. Central supports and the principles for financing them were minimized in the summer of 1965 and the immunity of cultural enterprises and institutions was removed. This laid cultural production open to market forces and obliged it to operate along commercial lines. Market forces were similarly introduced in Czechoslovakia in the following year, notably in film-making and distribution. This improved

[7] Köpeczi 1984, 30. Béla Köpeczi, a historian and literary scholar specializing in 18th century, had a number of prominent cultural and academic political positions during the Communist era in Hungary: among other such roles, he was head of the Cultural Department of the Central Committee (1963-66), deputy of general secretary and then general secretary of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (1970-1982), minister of culture and education (1982-1988).

efficiency and commercial viability, but reduced the scope for censorship or broader influence over culture. The Yugoslav and Czechoslovak approaches left Hungarian party leaders concerned about the future of socialist culture. Liberalizing the market might oust the ideological works designed to recondition people's minds, allowing popular entertainment such as pulp fiction and comics to carry all before them.[8] This appraisal immediately placed constraints on how indoctrination in Hungary might be transformed under the planned reform.

Letting market forces loose on culture posed a still greater danger than the inevitable commercialization. It could loosen the system, in other words, cause spontaneity to appear. Many of those preparing the reform feared that spontaneous processes, even if they appeared according to plan, would become uncontrollable and escape central sway, making the model ungovernable and the economic, social and intellectual processes difficult or impossible to influence. Still worse, such processes might erode the salient features of the system and endanger its integrity. Socialist society could not, as they put it, afford the luxury of too much spontaneity or self-propulsion in the economy. It was necessary for socialist criteria to prevail in the cultural field.[9] The other danger from a spontaneous market mechanism was that all would publish what they wanted in an uncoordinated way. This would affect both the cultural policy-makers and the monopoly cultural enterprises, which also had an interest in restricting marketization, therefore. The deputy director in chief of the Publishing Chief Directorate argued for partial retention of economic planning, saying it was irrational for competition to develop among publishers, which 'would confuse the battle lines and lead to occurrences damaging to the national economy in their overall economic effect.'[10]

These many special interests and considerations prompted hybrid solutions for the cultural market in what ultimately appeared as the fundamental dilemma in the economic reform. How could market measures of value be introduced into socialism without weakening the model, so that they helped instead to operate it more safely and cheaply? They were seeking an *optimum model*, in which both the vital conditions of governability and profitability would apply. It was to be socialism supported partly by localized, limited capitalism built into the system.

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8 MOL XIX.–I–4–ggg 48. d. Records of Culture Minister Károly Polinszky. Foreword to principles of reform of cultural management, January 12, 1967 (= Foreword… January 12, 1967).

9 Ibid. Minutes… July 7, 1967.

10 Ibid. Abstract for institution and enterprise heads of minutes taken at the consultation held on July 14, 1967.

Framework criteria and conflicting criteria

One assumption behind the Hungarian cultural reform was that culture should contribute more to its own upkeep. Another was that central means of exerting influence should be increased rather than curbed. Relatively conservative members of the apparatus, concerned for political and ideological stability, agreed in this respect with the incipient cultural lobby, which wanted to retain a socially based notion of culture. Both argued that the reform should not damage cultural interests. So the new fabric of economic management became woven with authoritarian strands. To achieve the double purpose, the new economic mechanism in the cultural field was divided into two sectors: socialist and market. The main idea was for an *enterprise* cultural sphere operating largely on market principles to contribute much to maintaining a *socialist* cultural sphere, where social and ideological criteria would prevail. It seemed for a while as if market profitability and ideological protectionism could be turned into a harmonious unity.

The MSZMP leadership had taken a different approach during a previous attempt to connect the economy and culture at the beginning of the Sixties. The goal in cultural policy then had been to reduce the number and severity of administrative interventions, as a disturbing force in society. Instead, mainly economic incentives were to be given for the production and distribution of works that met ideological and political expectations. In this respect, later Hungarian reformers had experience to draw upon when devising their ideas on the cultural aspects of the economic mechanism. But there were considerable differences of principle and approach between the two periods. The cultural sphere had previously been financed directly by the state. In other words, the state had paid out of its own pocket for ideological effectuation, including all the costs of culture, but under the new economic mechanism, the market segment had to cross-subsidize the non-commercial cultural actors. The reform of the late 1960s thereby opened a new period in socialist economic coercion, in culture, and in general interpretation of the model.

Reforming the way economic management would apply in culture was discussed on February 21, 1966 by the College of the Ministry of Education, which ordered preparations to begin. These became dogged by an ambivalence typical of the period. In the first round, the experts still recommended that commercial criteria should apply and profitability be enhanced.[11] In later plans, it was seen that satisfying spontaneous market demands could not be the sole determinant of 'cultural production'. This shift from economic to ideological

[11] Ibid., 36. d. Proposal for reviewing the economic management system in cultural affairs, for commencing work relating to devising proposals for necessary modifications.

issues became more pronounced as the launch of the reform drew near.[12] Responses to the mounting pressure on the budget tended to take the form of partial ideological concessions that left the structure largely unchanged. It was suggested, for example, that the film and book trades re-examine expensive international obligations undertaken within the socialist camp for reasons of cultural policy and which Hungary might shed by pleading a need to economize. It was also proposed that textbook prices should rise, despite their special social and ideological importance, and that losses on textbook production should not be shouldered by book publishing in general.[13]

The position statement prepared for the government in May 1967 proposed dividing culture into two groups: a greater, requiring comprehensive reorganization, and a lesser, suited to more rapid reform. Into the greater went education, including 'popular cultivation' and even sports, for these fields had been dubbed typically and irrevocably 'socialist' ever since socialism had appeared. To the lesser group belonged the arts. The apparatus's assessment of the scope of the reform included a survey of the risks entailed in the alterations envisaged. It was decided to postpone transforming areas that called for relatively comprehensive, considered reforms and greater financial resources, and confine the major changes to the narrowly cultural sphere. Efforts would also be made to rationalize planning, management and financial control in education, 'popular cultivation' and sports, but the government order of August 1967 confirmed there would be no major changes in these during that decade, apart from rationalization to bring them into line with the new system of management.[14] Subsequently, reform of the arts institutions, one of the costlier areas, went no further than calls for economy. The underlying requirement was to sustain current levels of provision: cultural goals had to be in line with the means and funds available. But the principle of economy would suffice only to postpone the solution of increasingly urgent

[12] The cultural 'lobby' stressed in every submission that the area had to be declared protected even amidst the changes and could not be subjected to market forces. Cheap prices of culture had to be kept and there could be no switch to profit-making or even a principle of covering costs, which would jeopardize social or cultural-cum-ideological objectives. In the view of cultural policymakers, if it turned out later that too much had been done to protect bastions of culture, it would still be easier to make later concessions than to take back what had once been conceded. When the operation of the mechanism was reviewed in 1970, it would emerge in which direction it go. After the collegiate decision, proposals on the principles of an economic mechanism in cultural life were devised in four working groups directed by a main committee, with some 60 experts involved. The proposals put forward, and endorsed by the party apparatus, prepared for a government decision on August 8, 1967 that finalized the ways of applying the principles in the cultural field. By then, they had also been discussed by the MSZMP Economic Policy Committee and Agitation and Propaganda Department on May 18, 1967.

[13] MOL M–KS–288. f. 41/75. ő. e. Basic principles of reform of cultural management, January 19, 1967 (= Basic… January 19, 1967).

[14] *Határozatok Tára* (Corpus of decisions) 27. Decision 2046/1967 (August 8) of the Hungarian Revolutionary Worker-Peasant Government on applying the principles of the economic mechanism in the field of cultural affairs.

problems, such as renovating theatres, cinemas and cultural centres, whose condition was deteriorating. Policy-makers felt that to postpone these demands would cause them to bunch in a few years' time and bring a long-term funding crisis in the sector.

The other large, similarly costly field was education. This inspired the greatest number of reports, while the government order remained ambiguous in its references to future reform. No essential changes were planned before the Seventies in the system of provisions and concessions to the public or the standard of them, but it was noted that they would be reviewed later as well.[15] For reasons of ideology, politics and principle, the eight years of primary education, as well as remedial and secondary education, would remain free, as would primary education for adults. There were no plans to change that. In the short term, social benefits granted to students (hostels, study rooms, canteens, after-school care etc.) would be unchanged, but there were plans to divide them later into free and differentiated self-financing categories, with means-related parental contributions to cover all, half or a quarter of the costs. Although action was postponed, the social criteria were clearly and consistently aligned with the logic of the system. But the principles governing fees and scholarships were confused by factors pulling in opposite directions: sometimes conflicting budgetary criteria and often diametrically opposed market and ideological criteria. These cases showed the inconsistencies in the reform period. The law began by assuming a separation of study scholarships from social benefits, and accordingly prescribed that fees in higher education should be differentiated primarily to reflect the grades each student obtained, but it retained the principle of considering social situation carefully as well. An equally important political and ideological yardstick was applied to the system of scholarships. The stated purpose was better planning of supplies of qualified labour for the provinces, while assisting talented, but socially deprived students to continue their studies. So there was no question, under the new economic mechanism, of abolishing them, only of rationalizing them.

Intra-party political groups

Although reform of the economic mechanism affected only narrowly defined culture—cultural and creative 'production and service-provision'—which would serve for experimenting in reforming relations between culture and the economy, the law placed

[15] Some aspects of supervision were already being outlined. The long-term plans were aimed on the one hand at applying the principles of efficiency and quality in education (above all in study), along with their financial implications. On the other, some of the costs of training were shouldered by society directly, if to different extents. The principles applying in education were still mainly decided by political and ideological considerations at that time and the economic aspect appeared only in a few areas. MOL XIX–I–4–ggg. 36. d. Guidelines… May 1966.

operation and funding of culture in a new structure. Cross-subsidies for desirable products were to come from siphoning off profits from undesirable products.[16] This combination of Cultural Levy and Cultural Fund stayed within the frames of socialism, as an idea that could be represented as both professional and optimal, by letting economy into the cultural sphere and relieving some fields of the pressure to make a profit, by using funds from the commercial sector.[17] The perception behind the reforms suggests that a model of socialist mass culture different from the Western one was envisaged. It would include control or censorship on political, or more rarely, taste grounds, and make quality culture (mainly classics) universally available at affordable prices. This specifically socialist mass culture moulded by the state had a Utopian character there was no sense in denying, but there was mounting competition for quality culture coming from less than ideal products of capitalist mass culture.

One argument used by the cultural lobby advancing the proposals for retaining a protectionist cultural policy was that much of society still had no cultural access. According to Central Statistical Office data for 1966, 40 per cent of workers and only 18 per cent of manual workers in agriculture were regular readers and the quality of their reading matter still left much to be desired. An analysis by the party apparatus in 1967 spoke of much cultural demand still reflecting an inadequate level of public taste.[18] Such arguments about the masses lagging behind were backed in the early Sixties by sociological researches. Social mobility was indeed declining and the various strata in society did not have equal chances to obtain economic or cultural goods. Cultural policy-makers and the cultural apparatus underlined that the principles behind the economic mechanism should be adapted 'appropriately' to cultural

[16] The minister, with the finance minister's and National Materials and Prices Office president's agreement, could set (and exact) levies on certain cultural products and services. These served, in the minister's view, only as entertainment or were not in the public interest and attracted only a narrow circle, but did not come within the competence of censorship. The levies went to the Cultural Fund, over which the minister alone disposed. It was used to support artists and their works (i. e. publishers directly) and direct participants in sales. The principle prepared for the Economic Policy and Agitation and Propaganda committees was this: 'At our present level of social development and today's standard of cultural demand and taste among much of the public, culturally tolerated works are in general profitable; [but] works important in terms of cultural policy require financial support. *One means* of coordinating social and enterprise interests and influencing the public is support from the *Cultural Fund* [and] *the other means* to impose a cultural levy on culturally tolerated products. When giving support from the Cultural Fund, a clear distinction must be drawn between support for the product and for the public (certain social strata).' MOL M-KS-288.f. 41/75. ő. e. Submission to the Economic Policy and Agitation and Propaganda committees on cultural aspects of the economic mechanism, May 12, 1967 (= Submission… May 12, 1967).

[17] 'Cultural and economic interests are currently contrary, if not antagonistic, and unlimited satisfaction of market demands would notably enhance economic success, but damage what we have built culturally.' MOL XIX-I-4-ggg. 48. d. Problems in the cultural field relating to reform of the economic mechanism, January 9, 1967 (= Problems… January 9, 1967).

[18] On the way Hungary's consumption structure failed to develop in an up-to-date way, see Berend 1980.

institutions, not applied mechanically, the most important thing being to shield the chances for cultural access and political control (censorship) from the spontaneous market forces.

But the emphases differed between groups, revealing two complementary sides to the concept of culture in socialist mass society. One was indoctrination, in which culture was intended to act as a medium for securing continuity of power and stability. The other side of the ideological concept of culture was equality and social provision. Culture was not seen as a commodity and it was not accepted that it should be beyond the means of the masses. A close combination of these two—the censoring approach and the Utopian—could be discerned in one concept of culture that managed to give rise to two different political lines during the attempts at reform in the Sixties. One saw the censoring, indoctrinating function as vital and tried to contain the reforms within appropriate ideological and political frames. The other stressed the need to defend the notion of socialist culture, allow cultural products to remain cheap, and perform quality selection on them, centrally, of course, not through the market. The ideas of the latter, faced by conflicting political arguments in the reform debates, slowly turned from power and legitimacy-driven ideology to a reflective notion with Utopian overtones, intent on preserving current political conditions and ostensibly optimal solutions.[19]

The lines of argument and definable positions of the two groups developed gradually out of the atmosphere of reform. Meanwhile defenders of socialist culture made a shadowy appearance in the economics field, suggesting outlines of a leftist virtual platform within the communist system. In the second half of the decade, these emergent groups in the party cultural leadership combated—for dissimilar motives arising from different approaches—a third group that appeared or became visible: economic managers and experts. They differed from the first two groups in seeing market forces as exerting a refreshing influence on the system.

The system-specific character of culture and the nature of the ideological yardstick led in the second half of the Sixties to ideological disagreement. The clashes of main criteria and the first battle between the technocratic lobby and the left-wing socialist lobby, with its increasing ideological emphasis on socialist values, already signified the development of strong differentiation among the ideological and political trends within the party.

[19] On the integrating-legitimizing and reflective-Utopian content of ideology and distinguishing its function, see Riceour 1997.

Cultural enterprises

Because of the conflicting criteria involved, reform of the economic mechanism in the Sixties largely spared culture, but not entirely. The government order on the system of institutions meant that non-profit cultural institutions still received full or partial support, but it was stated that production and service provision of a cultural nature would adjust gradually to the new management system. One form was for such institutions or production facilities to be converted into profit-making or self-financing enterprises. But the reports that preceded the order already implied that the switch to commercial operation would be partial, as the ideological preferences remained clear in this respect. The cultural policymakers had dug in their heels, insisting the new situation should not leave scope for influencing culture: there would be no further 'concessions' by culture on economic grounds. This preventive ideological action kept the cultural enterprises protected, which left it likely that central subsidies to them would continue to increase. The plea was that the reorganization of producer prices, the new taxes and other dues meant that profits from hitherto profitable cultural fields would fall or even disappear. But a relative rise in subsidies was not all the cultural lobby achieved. It gained exemption for much of the field from the high levy on fixed assets, designed 'simply to cream off profits', and from the payroll tax.[20]

In the incentive proposals for firms to transform themselves, the drafts distinguished between profit-oriented enterprises and those that sought simply to break even. Firms involved in book, film or record production and distribution belonged to the profit-oriented group, as did the art enterprises, which operated in a similar way to other production enterprises and could salt their profits away in development and distribution funds. But they differed from firms in other sectors in being eligible for support from the Cultural Fund 'for fulfilment of cultural-policy purposes', while at the same time paying cultural levy on certain of their products. Again unlike other firms, they performed certain ideological (opinion-forming) and censorship tasks as well. The theatres, the music institutions (such as the National Production Bureau, the National Concert Agency and the Philharmonia), the Circus and Variety Enterprise, and the educational supply and sales firms were intended to be self-financing. This meant they had to break even. They did not generate profits and so they had no development or reserve funds, but they received central funds for the management fund. Even so, their aim was for them to increase their earnings or raise funds in other ways, in which case the state support they received could be reduced. For instance, they could take out

[20] MOL XIX–I–4–ggg. 48. d. Problems… January 9, 1967.

bank loans or open catering establishments in their sports or educational facilities 'to enhance their income'.[21]

Cultural policy-makers seemed to show greatest hesitancy over the theatres. Theatre was both a commercial and a high-priority cultural activity of great ideological significance. Alternative proposals for reforming the operation of the theatres were prepared. One was for them to remain protected from commerce but to introduce some elements of enterprise management into them. The other was to turn all but the Hungarian State Opera and the National Theatre into cost-covering enterprises.

A new feature was to have been to group cultural institutions into trusts—an arrangement typical of the reform period—but the cultural lobby fended this off in most cases, arguing that to place market and non-market institutions together would be detrimental particularly to the latter. However, such mergers took place in films and in cultural foreign trade.

The inconsistent transformation of the institutional system showed up clearly the web of interests in the fields that were tied both to the cultural and to the semi-marketized groups. One such was book publishing. The publishers tried at least to gain some advantage from the confused conditions by putting forward increasingly obvious plans for independence. They were squeezed between the profit orientation of the printing industry and the ideological criteria of the political leadership. Perhaps for that reason, they came up with demands of two kinds: for freedom from the commercial pressures from the printers and for the censorship prescriptions of the apparatus. While the cultural reform was being prepared, they lobbied on the one hand for the printers to be brought under the wing of cultural policy, as the publishers were. If the printers were not subject to market forces, they would not transmit the effects of that subjection to the publishers. As the minutes of one important ministry meeting put it, 'If the cultural criteria stop at the gates of the printing presses, because another mechanism applies there, then the whole system of the cultural field *[sic]* that we want to protect will fail.'[22] On the other hand, the Publishing General Directorate voiced general concern among publishers that the cross-subsidizing Cultural Fund would extend rights of censorship, so that enterprise autonomy was reduced, which went against the advertised principles of the reform.

[21] MOL M–KS–288. f. 41/75. ő. e. Submission … May 12, 1967.
[22] MOL XIX.–I–4–ggg 48. d. Minutes… July 7, 1967.

Reform prices

Despite threatening sides to the reform system, with its opposing principles, it seemed decidedly promising for cultural policy in some respects. The party leadership hoped that some decentralization and continual reallocation of resources would shift prime economic responsibility to the creative workshops themselves, while major political decisions—and budget subsidies—remained under central control. The state would fund the works most important ideologically, but the costs of cultural products that 'simply' met consumer demand would be covered by commercial earnings.

Ideological and commercial yardsticks were constantly overlapping in the cultural field, as were administrative and economic aspects,[23] so that there could never be close ties between production costs and product prices. Before the reformed price system was decided, experts placed the existing prices in a very simple system of coordinates. They established that the prices of cultural products and services in Hungary were favourable compared with other countries: low compared with capitalist prices, but relatively high compared with those in some other socialist countries. However, most people in society were still not reading books, despite the affordable prices of them and the taste and cultural requirements of the socialist masses had not changed essentially. It was assumed, therefore, that social and cultural policy considerations would remain important. So the drafts preparatory to the government order insisted that the prices of cultural products and services could not be tied to production/provision costs. With books and films, it was recommended that production costs should be reduced, but underlined that the prices could still not be linked to costs and that state subsidies would be needed. It was proposed, for prices of cultural products in the public interest, that theatre, musical performances and the lowest three or four categories of cinema seats should be held, although cinema prices could rise from time to time, and prices in other categories rise to varying degrees. The government order stated that the prices of cultural goods and the fees paid for them could be reviewed, but this could not result in a sizeable increase in the price level. Bearing these points in mind, the ideologically based prices in the cultural sector proved firm during the preparations for the reform, as the Price Office gave priority to matching them to the cultural-policy objectives. It recommended keeping consumer price rises 'within the planned income relations of the population'. But it also put up for consideration the idea of a flexible price system that would be 'in line with the value assessments of the population' and help to increase earnings by the sector. Initial estimates for

[23] Only for the Fine Arts Fund was there a tentative proposal to separate the economic and administrative functions. Ibid.

book publishing, for instance, suggested that if the prices of finer, more sought-after editions were raised by some 20 per cent, an earnings increment (and subsidy reduction) of 30–40 million forints could be obtained without an administrative price increase. Supporters of income redistribution, meanwhile, were using cultural propaganda to combat the idea that 'cheap' necessarily meant 'valueless'. They pointed to the 'Cheap Library' series of paperback classics as an example of how value and cheapness could coincide. Fine art products in general no longer enjoyed uniform protection. Purchasing them was not seen as a mass occurrence and free (in effect, higher) pricing was recommended. Price reductions could be expected only in picture postcard sales, where the proposal was to abolish the distribution monopoly.

Planned for cinemas and theatres was a sliding price system with administrative stipulations, but the detailed orders for this pointed far beyond the pricing problems. The reports proposed raising the price of dearer seats in better positions for patrons who were 'better able to pay and more demanding'. This was an acknowledgement of the principle of stratification and strata awareness,[24] latent acceptance of material and cultural differentiation in society, emphasized for some years by sociologists, but in stark contrast to orthodox ideology. The party leadership, now thinking in economic terms, was tacitly acknowledging the distinction between socialist luxury consumption (no longer so narrowly confined) and mass consumption. This justified sizeable price increases in books expressly for entertainment and in those whose production was expensive or required foreign exchange. The same principle was applied to the press. Fixed prices were recommended for dailies and ceiling prices for most of the widely read political, cultural and public educational periodicals, while the prices of a smaller group of social, cultural, economic, technical and public educational periodicals would be freed. Costume hire was also placed in the elite, luxury-consumption

[24] Intensive examination of social stratification and inequality began in the 1940s after the appearance of Talcott Parsons' study "An Analytical Approach to the Theory of Social Stratification" (*American Journal of Sociology*, May 1940), on values and assessments of stratification, which became influential in Hungary in the second half of the 1950s as sociological research started to flourish again. Political decision-makers could make use of such research, but the leadership tried to limit its range of conclusions and the publicity it received, as it often impinged on basic ideological standards. That dichotomy in the relations between politics and social sciences remained throughout the Kádár period. For instance, there was criticism of this strand of sociological research in the MSZMP Central Committee, during the debate on the ideological resolution. It was said to rely on the methods of 'bourgeois' sociology and 'reduce the role of class structure by referring to the complexity of social stratification.' MOL M-KS-288. f. 4/73–4. ő. e. Central Committee guidelines on topical ideological tasks of the party. Minutes of debate, March 11–13, 1965 (= Central… March 11–13, 1965). But the openly published ideological and sociological resolutions refrained from airing this question. (The relationship is discussed in detail in the author's forthcoming monograph mentioned in Note 3.) The surveys begun at the time in various frameworks were continued later. One from the MSZMP Social Science Institute was summarized in Kolosi et al., eds, 1980.

category, so that its fees would be freed of central controls after the new economic mechanism was introduced.

Incomplete though the reform was, there was an attempt in most fields to make best use of the economic-cum-market and ideological scope available. This dual, optimizing principle applied also to rethinking the system of remuneration. The existing system of setting upper and lower limits on fees for each genre was to be changed to increase the gap between intellectually and artistically acceptable works and those that were 'simply entertaining'.[25] The new upper limit on the authors' fee per gathering (40,000 letters and spaces of text) was to be raised by 50 per cent. So were the fees for theatre directors and television and broadcasting fees. There would also be greater financial incentives for commercial employees in the cultural sector, who were in direct contact with the public for books being preferred for ideological reasons. Greater profit margins, bonuses and premiums would certainly encourage bookshops to place preferred works in conspicuous places: 'What differentiated price margins were for books became differentiated hiring fees for films. In films, the cinema operator would pay 50 per cent of box-office takings for a copy of *Snow White and the Seven Toughs*, but not pay at all for some other films; meanwhile there would be some, but not a large number of important socialist creations for which [distributor] MOKÉP received a share of takings.'[26] Apart from all that, the intention of increasing incentives lying behind the new economic mechanism brought changes in other fields that left small, but not trivial cracks in the edifice of socialism. One objective, in line with overall economic policy, was to increase potential exports of cultural and intellectual production, especially to the West. To encourage this, it was thought creative artists, scholars and scientists should be given their rightful foreign-exchange earnings. It was proposed that some of the copyright, patent, licence and performance fees should go into the foreign-exchange accounts of authors/inventors etc., giving them valued access to convertible currency.[27] 'It is another matter that we have to find a method of solving this in relation to the people's democratic countries and the Soviet Union.'[28] So if the mechanism of the reform did not grant obvious freedom of expression, it did provide some artists, scholars and scientists with a modicum of extra foreign currency.

[25] MOL XIX-I-4-ggg. 48. d. Problems…January 9, 1967.
[26] Ibid. Foreword… January 12, 1967.
[27] MOL M-KS-288. f. 41/75. ő. e. Submission… May 12, 1967.
[28] MOL XIX.-I-4-ggg. 48. d. Minutes… July 7, 1967.

Effects and studies of effects

It was typical of the changing atmosphere surrounding the economic mechanism that the main assessments of the processes resulting from political and economic decisions made in that period should be cautious, subjective analyses, not mood reports by the party apparatus. Proper follow-up studies of the conscious changes ensued. These covered structural and attitude changes and assessment of likely developments, and their serious, expert vein made them an influential form of report.

Early cultural experience with the new economic reform was analysed in the spring of 1969 by three committees, covering mainly film, book publishing and theatre. In publishing, the proportion and print runs of contemporary Hungarian literature had not fallen as feared, but there were obvious shifts. Crime titles, for instance, had increased beyond expectations. The proportion of almanacs and literature among the orders received at Kossuth Könyvkiadó, the party publisher rose to 80 per cent. Those received at Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, a literary publisher were divided among only five popular writers. But the shifts had more to do with the new freedom than with market benefits of the new economic mechanism. Cross-subsidization through the Cultural Fund reduced publishers' profits and some began to apply for compensatory sums for special purposes. In general, publishers saw the Cultural Fund as a curb on their independence, although the planned cultural and ideological effects were not yet felt. Nor did the levy come up to expectations. According to a report, the 11,813,700 forints collected in the first year did not suffice for the kind of effective cultural regulation that was planned. Serious and protracted debates about provinces and finances arose, for instance because some enterprises making cultural products came under other ministries—the Hollóháza and Herend porcelain factories, for instance—and escaped the levy. The subsidies had little economic orientating effect on cinema either, only effects to do with awareness and freedom. Some changes in distribution, for instance, were clearly towards 'free-thinking'. The number of cinema-goers generally declined, mainly because many small, uneconomic cinemas showing 16 mm films were closed. Within the attendance total, however, there was a 20 per cent (2 million) increase in the audience for Western films, while the audience for films from socialist countries fell to the same degree. This could only be offset in part by some successful Hungarian films. Again, suddenly freeing consumer demand contravened requirements of taste that formed part of cultural policy. The cracks in the new mechanism were shown in imports of kitsch. The aim of the levy on applied art was to squeeze tasteless articles off the market. Factories duly reduced production of them, but distributors had surplus

stocks adequate to continue satisfying the market, and the system of cross-subsidies did not apply to imports, which soon filled the 'kitsch gap' in domestic production.

The tendencies towards commercialization were clear. The effect of the reform was to show pronounced cultural differences between social strata. An initial report in 1969 expressed dissatisfaction about the way the profit motive let 'more backward demands appear more strongly than hitherto.' The mechanism was bringing out and reflecting to some extent the actual cultural state of consumers—Hungarian society.[29] 'It is not just some social strata failing to develop a demand for cultured entertainment, but also that entertainment in the second half of the 20th century, in the period of building socialism, should be more discriminating than it had been a hundred or thirty years ago.'[30] Seeing the unfavourable trend, the Ministry of Culture in May 1969 recommended to the MSZMP Agitation and Propaganda Department placing on a principled basis 'a system of yardsticks for the satisfaction' of purely commercial demands. But by that time, such a theoretical demand did not induce the committee members from the party apparatus to cobble something together in a couple of weeks or months. The proposal was to commission scientific institutes to define the characteristics and 'beneficial and harmful variants' of the entertainment role of the arts, art by art and genre by genre. This was then hoped to yield 'scientifically grounded' criteria for deciding the right line to take in the matter. [31]

The outcome of the reform faced the cultural and political leadership with new problems, of which Western-style mass entertainment as a genre was but one risk, albeit the greatest. The social situation and role of culture had to be reconsidered in close connection with transformation of the economic reform as a whole. There could be no avoiding a thorough assessment of the changed constellation of events and the ideological conclusions to be drawn from them.

[29] MOL M-KS-288. f. 41/117. ő. e. Submission to the Agitation and Propaganda Committee. Experiences with introducing New Economic Management in the cultural field, May 1969 (= Submission… May 1969).
[30] Ibid. 41/75. ő. e. Basic… January 19, 1967.
[31] Ibid. 41/117. ő. e. Submission… May 1969.

The ideology of reform

The arts and the dual opening

Imminent reform of the economic mechanism also brought greater independence for ideology itself, which emerged from its earlier literary and cultural framework as a separate system in Central Committee guidelines issued in 1965.[32] Instead of skulking behind literature, cultural policy or other texts, it began to define itself openly as a distinct field of theory. The search for more professional expression culminated in the late Eighties in a political decision-making mechanism and image-shaping device that drew on political science and on other specialist fields. Literature's officially emphatic role as a vehicle of ideology had been in political abeyance for a decade, but as economic reform and enhanced professionalism of management came to the fore in the mid-Sixties, the social vocation of literature and the arts was codified once more.

The guidelines were followed by successive statements of position on Socialist Realist outlook, educational reform, sociology, the running of television, and scientific organization and research. These followed, like appendices of applied ideology, from two definitive programmes of guidelines from the party on economic policy and ideology, respectively, which clearly encompassed all other quasi-ideological interpretations. According to the new system of coordinates, literature and the arts were given a place in the principles of ideological and economic reform.[33] The clarification of principle and policy mainly covered (i) the place and weight of the arts and literature in the socialist formation and ideology, and (ii) cultural interpretation of ideological problems arising out of the changed political environment and coexistence.

Not long after the policy document on literature and the arts came the Central Committee Resolution and Policy Guidelines on the Reform of the Economic Mechanism of

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[32] 'Az MSZMP néhány időszerű ideológiai feladata. A KB irányelvei. 1965. március 11-13' (Some topical ideological tasks of the MSZMP. Central Committee guidelines, March 11–13, 1965). In: Vass, ed. 1968, 125–64.

[33] István Szirmai, speaking on the guidelines at a March 11–13, 1965 meeting of the Central Committee, stated, 'Political clashes today occur mainly in the economic and social fields and only at second or third remove in aesthetic and artistic fields. So we have tried in the document before us to encapsulate the ideological side of economic and social questions and have not dealt in detail with various stylistic trends of literary and artistic creations or with aesthetic problems.' MOL M–KS–288. f. 4/73–4. ő. e. Central… March 11–13, 1965. The same was said earlier before the Political Bureau, where Szirmai added that these things should be known and members could read up on them in a study of socialist realism carried by the party journal *Társadalmi Szemle*. MOL M-KS-288. f. 5/359. ő. e.

May 1966.[34] The propaganda surrounding the reform set out to show how the central position in ideology had gone to the economic outlook and associated economic and scientific thinking. The ideological and political upheaval linked with the need to transform the socialist economy was clearly depriving literature and the arts of their importance as ideological vehicles. Literature, having given way to the press ten years earlier, now suffered a second big loss of standing, as its culture was inexorably and ubiquitously replaced by a technical one that preferred the mass media and the forms and logic of science instead.

Yet cultural policy-makers still treated the field cautiously, for culture, being 'expressly ideological in character,' was seen as a sink of dubiety,[35] a field of consciousness where antagonism or deviancy could appear more openly and obviously than they could in the economy or politics. So literature and the arts gained a special place in the system, not as means of indoctrination any more, but as indicators or measures of the urge for freedom. Separation of politics and literature was called for. Although politics no longer required literature and the arts as conspicuous ways of conveying ideology, one group within literature fought shy of withdrawing from politics and abandoning its traditional role in public affairs. Ideas from the Age of Reform in the first half of the nineteenth century reappeared, as did various theories about writers as prophets, the false sensation of the early 1950s that they constituted the elect, and strong recollections within the arts world of the rebel writers of 1956. The cultural leadership felt that literature might come to express incipient opposition ideas and forms of behaviour, especially in an uncertain, transitional economic and political environment.[36] The policy document was intended to blunt that process in some way by carefully segregating ideas and forms of expression compatible with socialism from schools, trends, forms and views incompatible with it.

Important to making the distinction was the ideological and intellectual influence of the openness in two directions that became apparent by the mid-Sixties. On the one hand, the internal, economic reform was opening doors by unwittingly spreading a spirit of liberalism

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[34] A gazdasági mechanizmus reformja. A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt Központi Bizottsága 1966 május 25-27-i ülésének anyaga (for "internal distribution" ["Belső Használatra"] among members of the party-state apparatus), issued by the Department of Agitation and Propaganda of the Central Committee of the HSWP, Budapest, 1966.

[35] Vass, ed. 1968, 484.

[36] 'The covert exaggeration of the political role of literature, still present latently, can be traced back to the combined effect of a revisionist, nationalistically tinged interpretation of tradition and to dogmatism. Equally in thrall to this prejudice are those stressing the special role of literature with opposition intent and those doing so in the ostensible interest of [party] policy... Both extremes often recall actions by some writers connected with the counterrevolution. But many forget how those writers were then second fiddles to revisionism that appeared as a decisive political force. It is wrong, even unconsciously, to link the role played by some literature at that time with assessment of [literature] today, as political conditions have altered radically since.' Ibid., 492–3.

that extended to literature as well. The policy document criticized art criticism for intellectual rigidity while expressing anxiety about the liberalizing tendencies. 'It is thought that "many things that were forbidden and condemned yesterday are possible and praiseworthy today."'[37] On the other hand, the reform made an opening to the outside; coexistence made narrow paths between the two systems, by which both dubious products of Western capitalist mass culture and Existentialist literature could seep in. Both were unwelcome. One because it competed with socialist mass culture, conflicted with the socialist way of life, and ultimately constituted a critical alternative to socialism. The trouble with the other was that Existentialism and the closely allied culture of the Western New Left was committed to concepts that differed from Eastern communist standards. Gruppe 47, for instance, cited Camus and Dürrenmatt. Some strands of the Western New Left and most products of mass culture were referred to collectively as bourgeois decadence. It was thought that this was the most 'exposed' area of the ideological warfare between the two systems, for behind it there lay a pronounced disagreement about world view, not just formal questions. As for the influence of modern, largely Existentialist literature and of mass-cultural entertainment on socialist recipients, the concern was understandable because they were thought to resemble to the point of confusion truly thought-provoking or truly entertaining artistic creations.

Socialist mass culture

The cultural policy document drawn up in the atmosphere of the economic reform continued to argue for mass culture of a socialist type. But it took a subtler and more complex approach to so doing. Even under conditions of partial marketization, more open expression of cultural demand revealed differences in taste and cultivation hitherto disguised by a cultural policy designed to demonstrate unity. The emerging socialist market emphasized the cultural patterns currently characteristic of Hungarian society, with which cultural leaders were far from satisfied. The need was not just to address an unprecedented spread of 20th-century entertainment, with the practical and theoretical problems that entailed, or with the political, social and cultural effects of mass entertainment in a Western vein. It was also disquieting that the communist system had created, with the cultural revolution it had conducted in the Forties and Fifties, traditions of education and taste that had become a real burden, which the Sixties' leadership was trying to shed. The communist party-state elite of Hungary had come to realize by the 1960s, that state socialism could only play an effective part in the

[37] Ibid., 494.

competition with the West if socialist society became better qualified and its outlook on the world more comprehensive and refined. For the tastes and cultural demands of the majority of society at home fell far short of meeting the challenges from the outside world.

The latent market pluralism of the reform environment encouraged cultural policy-makers not to confine themselves to expressing preferences on levies and pricing, but to set desirable courses in matters of taste, with greater or lesser clarity. This still being a culture of central distribution, they had to clarify what artistic approaches could serve as a prospective pattern. The conclusion they reached may seem surprising to posterity. As a theoretical starting point, they surveyed what cultural conditions were to be expected and received a mixed, hardly reassuring picture for their pains. They saw how the cultural condition of society reflected, fundamentally, the tastes of three generations. The first had been to school between the wars and to this was ascribed, to some extent, its conservative, classical tastes or petty-bourgeois cultural patterns. The next generation had been raised under the people's democracy. It would have accepted the fresh cultural influences of the 20th century, but early indoctrination had led it to reject them. Instead, it espoused didactically expressed epic works based on 19th-century realism, in accordance with the cultural policy of the turn of the Forties and Fifties. For these had proved to be viable ways of ostensibly raising the cultural standards of the masses and imparting ideology to them. 'The task of the cultural revolution was to make the domestic and foreign classics of literature and the arts known to the masses. Accomplishing that weighty historical task raised to an enormous extent the standard of artistic culture and taste, but it also conserved in many a 19th-century notion of taste. This was assisted by the dogmatic view of art and cultural policy that deprived the public of the values of socialist (and bourgeois) art resting on the isms of the 20th century. The situation in this field changed especially after 1957, and one consequence of that has been increasingly obvious differences in taste between generations. Adult young people in the last ten years have been much more at home in the realm of 20th-century art than those whose tastes developed under the economic and cultural oppression of the Horthy system, or were shaped very one-sidedly during the first decade of people's democracy.'[38]

This range of taste increasingly became an impediment to discrimination, cultivation and a subtle, comprehensive interpretation of the world. There was the danger of a Hungarian labour force that lagged culturally failing to keep up in the decisive economic race with capitalism. This was the crucial recognition on which redefining the patterns for culture and

[38] Ibid., 501.

taste during the economic-reform period was based. Policymakers effecting the change had to consider three problems: (i) the effect of mass culture and mass demand on entertainment in a politically more lenient period, (ii) establishing tolerable political frames for elite culture, and (iii) official backing for a change in the epic world view, now an anachronism.

As for the spread of mass culture, the expansion of the economic outlook helped to convince even the paramount leadership that the natural demands of the masses in culture should not be underestimated. 'The conclusion must be drawn very directly from the reform of economic management that we have to reckon with demands and needs more realistically when shaping art policy.'[39] Most of the public received with relief the arrival of entertaining books, films and plays of uneven standard that resulted from the liberalization. So the cultural policymakers' view of mass culture was ambivalent. On the one hand, it was restrictive: work inimical to socialism or not supportive of it was restricted or censored for political and ideological reasons. Attempts were made to stem the flow of Western commercial cultural products, for instance with the Cultural Levy, and to redress the proportions in favour of high culture. On the other, the cultural leaders in the reform period were more indulgent, for instance in recognizing the right of socialist man to entertainment. 'All working people have a rightful claim to 'lighter', humorous, entertaining, cheerful works, books, plays, pieces of music, films, television programmes, etc. Satisfying this realistic demand to a high standard is among the prime tasks of our cultural and artistic life.'[40] One recognition followed the other. The party leadership proposed using sociological methods to survey the stratification of taste and artistic culture among the public. In this respect, the 1966 document on art reflected the new features of the future political decision-making mechanism and displayed the ideological trends of the period. The leadership had accepted that a professional scientific survey, not ideological presupposition, was the way to a realistic picture of the situation,[41] for instance to transforming, 'if need be structurally,' cultural programming and distribution policy.

The plan for structural change presaged the recognition of a new era in mass culture. This would have far-reaching consequences for the rankings of the various media of cultural

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[39] Ibid., 502.

[40] Ibid., 500.

[41] 'Literature and the arts, in their approach to theory, criticism and arts policy, need to give greater importance to all questions associated with the relation between art and the public, including the demands and views of the broad artistic public. They need to measure by scientific methods the structure and situation of artistic cultivation and taste among the public and the directions they are moving, to reveal the financial, social, lifestyle and world-view conditions of these and the generation-related factors. The work of establishing a realistic view of the situation needs to be aimed primarily at exploring the difference of standard of artistic culture between village and town and the cultural situation of the working class. Encouragement in this respect needs to be given to the sociology of literature and the arts, which is still in its infancy. Ibid., 509.

transmission. In terms of perceived political utility, the traditional arts steadily lost ground to the broadcast media and the daily press. The reform period's new concept of culture changed media/culture relations. It was suggested at the Central Committee meeting called to discuss the ideological guidelines that this document, so typical of its period, should emphasize the role of the media more forcefully and pay less heed to traditional means of cultural expression such as literature, preferred in the Fifties.[42] The policy statement appearing in parallel with the guidelines for the economic mechanism, expressed even in its title that its aim was to reinterpret the role of literature and the arts. It stated plainly that with the huge importance of television to cultural policy, national experience showed it was inevitable for the role of other cultural fields to decline.[43] Theorists were urged to attend to the new manifestations of culture and devise aesthetic theories applicable to them. Similar priorities were advised in higher education. 'In this field, aesthetic training in understanding film especially and television and radio needs to be developed. This would also transform the narrower aesthetic training based on literary research, whose enrichment is increasingly required by social and technical development.'[44] If not in a spectacular way, there began, under socialism as under capitalism, a media era, in which politics and the media, and a stratum of culture, began long-term cooperation.

But the air of reform breathed ingenuity into cultural policymakers in utilizing the popularity of the mass media to cross-subsidize: 'Cultural fields profitable before television was introduced into Hungary should be financed from the rising profits of television broadcasting, to further a nationally unified system of cultural management.'[45] Similar profit-oriented ideas influenced cultural leaders to consider the scope for real advertising, instead of political agitprop and ideological slogans. The shift was proposed cautiously in the 1966 document: promotion of arts products should be subtler, wittier and more consciously applied,

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42 'Géza Révész: The role and importance of radio, television and perhaps cinema, in developing socialist self-awareness need to be underlined more thoroughly than hitherto. I wouldn't belittle the role of literature, but [the periodicals] *Kortárs* and *Új Írás* and others are read by a small circle, who are very important because they are intellectuals and are influential, but television, they say, is watched by three-and-a-half or four million people, and that is very influential… So the role of radio and television as exceptionally important factors influencing the masses needs to be better elucidated.' MOL M–KS–288. f. 4/73–4. ő. e. Central… March 11–13, 1965. There were about 2,300,000 radio subscribers at that time, so that there was a set in almost every family. The number of television subscribers was 700,000.

43 MOL XIX–1–4–ggg. 48. d. Foreword… January 12, 1967. A briefing document was also issued about television, as an auxiliary ideological resolution, but its tone was uncertain and it lacked accurate guidelines, confining itself largely to stating the importance of the medium itself. 'Az MSZMP KB Politikai Bizottságának határozata a televízió munkájáról. 1966. május 23' (Resolution of the Political Committee of the MSZMP Central Committee, on the work of television. May 23, 1966). In: Vass, ed. 1968, 292–8.

44 Vass, ed. 1968, 500.

45 MOL XIX–1–4–ggg. 48. d. Foreword… January 12, 1967.

and thereby become more effective. Real advertising later became increasingly prevalent on the socialist market and extended to cultural products as well.

Socialist mass culture in a more modern form seemed again to be gaining over socialist elite culture. Political attention was turning to cultural forms with mass influence, while all that seemed to interest policymakers about high culture was how to cope with undesirable artistic or political tendencies. But the situation was an involved one. Elite culture may have been losing to mass culture, capitalist or socialist, but it still gained from the dual strategy of the reform period. The statement on the new position of literature and the arts explained that works seen as tolerable but uncongenial might still find a public, albeit limited and not through mass channels. There were still low-circulation publications and private or small-scale exhibitions and film showings.[46]

Post-modernism in communist ideology

Hungary's cultural leadership in the Sixties set out to make their views on literature and the arts reflect something of the changing world around them. A curious situation arose, in which creators passionately exploring modernism were closely restricted in their activity by the biased and somewhat backward and anti-modernist attitudes and tastes of the Hungarian public. The party document argued for efforts to shift tastes away from the mimetic (based on direct comparison) and epic (based on linearity) view of the arts apparent both in 19th century taste 'reared on classical realism' and in mass cultural entertainment of the kind favoured by many young people. The authors of the policy statement felt that Ferenc Sánta's controversial novel *Twenty Hours* or József Somogyi's statue of the peasant hero János Szántó Kovács had been criticized less for ideological or political reasons than for techniques of depiction more abstract than customary. The novel, for example, was said to 'diverge from the continuous structure of 19th-century epic,' making it incomprehensible to many people.

So the party leadership, at least in principle, was leaning towards dissemination and ideological expression of an artistic view of the world that was more abstract, complex and non-linear. They did not want Hungarian culture choked with invasive modernism or efforts at 'socialist Existentialism', but they saw in the ideological loosening of the reform period a

[46] 'The party and state leadership needs to assert socialist ideas, artistic democracy and the demands of socialist realism in general primarily in the work of wide-ranging forums with great mass influence, above all television, radio, the press, dissemination of artistic knowledge and public education. By differentiation in distribution policy (book publication in limited numbers, studio performances), scope and opportunity can be given for publishing domestic and foreign creations that can be expected to have a more limited sphere of interest.' Vass, ed. 1968, 505.

specific, regulable culture, half market but not Western in type, basically modern but committed to socialism. And this, they felt, could be made acceptable by restricting elite culture on the one hand and shaping public tastes on the other, to produce a high-quality socialist mass culture. In seeking an ideology for this, the cultural policymakers of the MSZMP had to steer between the Scylla of modern Western modernism and mass culture and the Charybdis of prevalent backwardness in Hungarian taste.

Profit motive and achievement motive

The effect of the economic reform on culture was re-examined in 1973, following a Central Committee resolution in November 1972. Budget funding for culture had risen by 9 per cent between 1968 and 1972 and prices of cultural goods and services were broadly unchanged. It could be stated in the proposal that management of the cultural field had been 'brought into alignment' with the post-reform economic environment without damaging cultural assets. The general introduction of the profit motive on which incentive was to be based had remained largely formal, because the business results obtained and the size of the incentive funds were influenced predominantly by the amount of government funding received.[47] The reform had not met expectations. The report concluded glumly that the reform had not helped to influence culture to the extent forecast. The enterprises in the cultural field, sensing market forces, had begun to assert their separate interests, but without renouncing their claims on central funding. The analysts thought the enterprises were interpreting the profit motive wrongly by placing business advantage before cultural criteria, so that central organizations had eventually had to 'correct' such decisions and processes. Correction meant, for instance, maximizing the print runs of entertainment books, intervening directly in theatre programming, or making interim changes to the incentive system in film distribution. Nor were the sums of subsidy, price structures of cultural services or payments for products differentiated enough to motivate creators or studios to produce the awaited socialist works. The subsidies were less effectual because they did not follow cultural demand. In 1972, for example, two-thirds of the net state subsidy went to maintaining and operating cinemas. So the reform needed adjusting to cultural policy and ideology if it was to 'assist clearly the cultural and artistic activity important and valuable to socialist society.' This meant raising the allocation further and largely ending its profit-motivating function. Instead, the document declared, let there be a

[47] MOL M-KS-288. f. 41/211. ő. e. Submission by the preparatory committee on amendment of the economic regulations in the cultural field, to the Agitation and Propaganda and Economic Policy committees of the Central Committee. September 27, 1973

system of motivation that considered both cultural and business results, with financial rewards for managers and staff of cultural institutions and enterprises tied primarily to implementation of cultural policy.

Similar plans for adjusting the reform of the price system also mingled cultural, political, ideological and taste-related constraints with social considerations. The latter dictated that low prices of works and products intended for workers and young people could not change. Meanwhile taxation of 'luxury' cultural articles and reading matter increased. Rewards for creative work were differentiated and a system of payment in two parts was introduced. The first part was paid according to criteria of cultural policy to assist creation of the work, and the second according to the professional and public evaluation of it, in other words according to market criteria.

The order stated that the changes required were to be implemented gradually, by January 1, 1976 at the latest. The amendments to operative enterprise statutes had to be made to a decisive extent by January 1, 1974.[48]

Conclusions

Culture was one of the notably system-specific areas of socialism. The dual structure and mixed economic model devised for it reflected the ambivalent thinking and strong ideological content behind the reforms. In line with the dual aims of stabilization and dynamization, the ideologically less important part of cultural production was conceded to the market, while the other part had its socialist features strengthened. Admitting mass culture of a non-socialist type detracted from the consistency of the system, but held out the promise that the profitable, capitalist-type sector could support the socialist sector. The political leadership hoped that market forces could be localized and the socialist sector cross-subsidized in this way without affecting the sector's essential features.

The party apparatus preparing the reform placed the cultural field—otherwise narrowly defined as the arts—in the very broad context of relations between the ideological standards of the system. Some of the sections of society most concerned to retain its socialist features had developed by the reform period, while others were shaped by its influence. The former included party leaders who took a conservative ideological stance and those of the apparatus with a strong stake in the pre-reform power structure. The other, new interest group

[48] Ibid.

or lobby professed socialist values with greater or lesser conviction, defending the quality and social interests of fields such as culture that were hitherto preferred or supported, especially against the new economic technocracy lobby. Social support for this section began to grow as well, on various grounds. The appearance of the cultural lobby meant also that a socialist trend with a left-wing tinge was emerging. For it represented, from within the apparatus of power, a Utopian comment on existing practice, or put another way, an intellectual check on ideology. Yet the cultural field, strongly dependent on central subsidies, clearly had less interest in carrying out radical reform, which would jeopardize the influence of the cultural (and indirectly the whole political) leadership on ideology and indoctrination, while conflicting with proclaimed or firmly held left-wing cultural beliefs.

The alien, market element added to the system was not contained successfully enough, so that the reform had numerous irreversible side-effects, especially in the sphere of consciousness. Especially important are the following. (i) It separated profitable from unprofitable forms of culture. These it placed in correlation, with the longer-term effect of devaluing those less successful in business terms. It can be said that the significance of culture rapidly decreased in an increasingly utilitarian society. (ii) The reform concurrently emphasized the modernity of cultural-cum-ideological and political media whose significance had been underestimated by the party leadership. It began the media era in the East-Central European region as well, though it did so within limits, in a socialist way. That move brought knock-on effects on the system of ideological transmission, greatly influencing the language of indoctrination, the nature of political thinking, and latently, the development and scope of political publicity. But it did not favour culture in the narrow sense, in relation to which the role of the mass media—television, radio and the daily press—strengthened. (iii) The appearance of Western-type mass culture on the limited Hungarian cultural market induced the political and ideological leadership to express more plainly what was meant by socialist mass culture. Theoretical researches were promoted in almost every related discipline (sociology, social psychology, art theory, art history, literary theory, etc.) On the other hand, an education policy took shape that also provided a socio-cultural network for the broad masses in society. (iv) Whether socialist mass culture ever existed or whether there was at least a circumscribed vision of it may be answered best of all by the debates of the period. Socialist mass culture was largely directed centrally. It allowed ideological, political and censorship interests to apply almost to the same extent as social criteria and central selection according to taste preferences. These the system more or less implemented, and although it could not be entirely satisfied with them (any more than we can), it provided for an interim

period what was known as socialist mass culture. (v) What may have been the most significant was the conscious effect of the reform. It released a spirit of liberalization, with both structural and appreciable conscious results. Articulating these new principles in ideology did not simply involve confirmation of previously developed processes. It led, willy-nilly, to the induction of processes that in turn would lead eventually to breakdown of the system itself.

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György Péteri

From Purge to Scandal: The MEGÉV-affair and the changing political style in communist Hungary[1]

> "It has to be said that the MEGÉV-affair has distinguished itself among the everyday affairs in our work in the party and state administration, it has grown into a gigantic sea serpent basically because some comrades in high positions wanted to 'settle' the differences of opinion between them not in accordance with the well defined rules, with what is in tune with partiinost' [pártszerüség], but arbitrarily, by bringing their power and influence to bear." (János Kádár, "Report to the Political Bureau on the 'MEGÉV-affair'", Budapest, 8 November 1973)

The thesis of this paper is that the establishment and consolidation of reform communist positions in Hungary – a process commencing with the New Course of 1953 and gathering, after major setbacks, new momentum upon the conclusion of Kádárist restoration in 1963 – had significantly modified (civilized) the political style prevalent among the party-state's apparatus elite by the 1970s. This change of political style – manifest in the taming of purge to political scandal – proved to have been strong enough to survive the conservative leftist backlash of the early 1970s. Indeed, as I am going to show, the ways and manner in which the conflict between the network of conservative leftist and the network of reformist apparatus elites was handled and solved between 1968 and 1974 constitute the very evidence for the change this paper claims to have taken place.

The post-1968 conservative offensive and the MEGÉV-affair

a./ Preludium: the *Népszabadság* uncovers "the furtive spread of capitalism"

On April 26 1972, Károly Szamosi, the deputy chief of the editorial board of the party daily *Népszabadság*, posted a 15 page long note about some "displeasing tendencies"

[1] Much of the research for this paper was done while I was a Fellow of the Collegium Budapest, Institute for Advanced Study, 2002/2003. An early draft was presented and discussed at the Fellow Seminar of the Collegium. My thanks are due to Jonathon Moses, Mark D. Pittaway, János M. Rainer, Sabrina P. Ramet, Vera Tolz, and Zsuzsanna Varga for their careful reading of and useful comments on previous drafts of this paper! I am also grateful to Ingeborg Stensrud for her assistance with regard to improving the English of the text.

("visszás jelenségek") in the Hungarian economy. The addressee of the note was Béla Biszku, Secretary of the Central Committee and member of the Political Bureau of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. Biszku, formally the top party supervisor of the country's public administration and armed forces (including the Ministries of Interior, Justice, and Defense), was arguably the most central personality of the conservative leftist network in the party-state apparatuses. As Szamosi explained, the note of the *Népszabadság* summarized the experience acquired by the party daily and its journalists in the course of two years of investigations of various "affairs" published by them or by other media.[2] The diagnosis produced by the *Népszabadság* had hardly been meant to show party soldiers the "bright side of life" – on the contrary, they claimed that thanks to the New Economic Mechanisms (the economic reforms) and to the passive posture assumed by the various competent apparatuses of the party-state, the socialist economic and social system in Hungary was confronted by a lethal challenge. In the world depicted in the note, as if through a process of metastasis, corruption had been spreading in the relations between state companies and (mostly agricultural) cooperatives. Managers and their cronies pocketed illegitimate gains and "in various fields of life, the private sector, hiding behind the socialist sector and under the latter's guise, acquires gigantic incomes." The authors of the note used the words "anti-state [!] fraud" when they wrote about tax evasions, and in one of their concrete "cases" they emphasized that "under the guise of the Hermész General Consumption and Marketing Cooperative [Általános Fogyasztási és Értékesítési Szövetkezet – ÁFÉSZ], large capitalist speculators [nagykapitalista üzérek] conduct their business". These "large capitalists" repeatedly pop up in the note. The authors didn't even shy away from using the ominous word "chain-trading" (profiteering) when relating the story of the so-called "slops scandal".[3]

Szamosi and his friends at *Népszabadság* put part of the blame for the diffusion of the capitalist evil on the deficiencies of legal regulation and on the unsatisfactory capacity of the apparatus to hunt down and prosecute economic crime (such as the police, the Central Committee of People's Control and their local/regional units). The true cause and deep-seated

[2] National Archives of Hungary, [hereafter: MOL] 288. f. 31/1972/1. őe. The *Népszabadság* note is entitled "Some experience originating from our activities related to economic crimes". In a letter accompanying the note and addressed to Béla Biszku, Szamosi wrote the following: "Enclosed herewith, please find the requested [!] summary based on the collective experience of our editorial office ... Our aim with this summary is to call the attention to some tendencies that are harmful to our socialist development and evoke annoyance in our public opinion." (Szamosi to Biszku, 26 April 1972).

[3] The main character of the "slops scandal" was the manager of transportation at the Inner City Restaurant Company of Budapest, who bought up, in the name of his relatives and friends, the total slops production of all the restaurants run within his company and sold it on, with a substantial profit, to small-scale private pig-farmers.

root of the alleged pathological deformations were, however, localized in the opportunistic complaisance exhibited by party-state apparatuses and, in many cases, even in the active policies of the latter promoting the expansion of capitalist socio-economic relations. The note mentioned and criticized these tendencies in several places. It complained about the fact that police investigations of "economic crimes" were often "obstructed by [high] economic and political officials" [sokszor állami és társadalmi vezetők ellenállásába ütköznek]. It was vehemently critical of the Attorney General suggesting that "what used to be his personal opinion has been turned into a [political] line with grave practical consequences". It objected to the fact that the Attorney General and his apparatus of prosecutors refused to criminalize such economic activities that did not violate the Law of the country. Even worse, the *Népszabadság* note went on, the Office of the Attorney General had repeatedly stopped police procedures against such activities.

While Szamosi & co. maintained that the apparatus of prosecution had "legalized" activities undermining the socialist state and socialist economy, they also emphasized the responsibility of the party-state's economic administration. They mention the minister of agriculture and food industries, Imre Dimény by his name because Dimény talked in a TV-interview approvingly of practices in agricultural cooperatives whereby out-of-function machines were sold at strongly reduced prices to private persons whose services then, after they repaired the machines, would be contracted by the same cooperatives. For Szamosi and his comrades it was obvious that "It brings with it the liquidation [!] of socialist relations of production [A szocialista termelési viszonyok felszámolását jelenti] if the hiring of privately owned means of transportation and machines penetrates our agriculture again."

According to the note, the local authorities of the party-state had been participating in the conspiracy against the socialist economy. The authors of the note deplored that the municipal council of Budapest and many provincial cities had been issuing, in increasing numbers, permissions to small private retailers (shops/boutiques owned and run by a person and his/her family). According to the note, these shops had no role to play in improving the situation for socialist Hungary's consumers: "For example, all these new fashion boutiques and drug shops – who needs them?!" the authors of the *Népszabadság* note asked rhetorically.

Besides insinuating the "pro-capitalism" of the party-state apparatuses, the note stressed the need for new legislative measures. It revealed that there existed no legal restrictions upon the private sector outside industry – the prevailing law failed to set a limit on

the size of labor force private firms may employ[4] and it also failed singularly to confine to "acceptable levels" the volume of production and sales by such private enterprises. Neither their discretion in price setting nor the profits attainable for them were limited by law, the note mentioned disapprovingly. The question of taxation was not settled either – "several big capitalist [nagykapitalista] producers pay taxes as if they were small scale traditional farmers and not in proper proportion to their actual incomes." While the size of arable land that could be owned privately was restricted by legislation, landowning for the purposes of flower-gardening was not limited, complained the saviors of socialist economy. They claimed in general that "the big capitalists exploit all the advantages of the socialist sector – the only thing they have to do is to become members for 100 forints in one of the General Consumption and Marketing Cooperatives [ÁFÉSZ]."

Needless to say, the reception of this document is just as important as its contents. Béla Biszku forwarded the document on, without comments, to János Borbándi, the director of the Administrative Department of the Central Committee. In his response to Biszku, Borbándi objected to the insinuations included in the document with regard to the allegedly "wrong attitudes" exhibited by the organs of criminal justice and to the one-sided presentation of the prosecution's activities. While he admitted that some of the troubling phenomena listed by the Népszabadság were real, he emphasized that action taken against profiteering was successful in most of the cases and where it was not, the source of the problem was the complexity of the issues requiring not only juridical but also economic expertise, where "the same economic phenomena is judged differently by the various leading [ministerial] officials."[5] In other words, Szamosi and his co-authors failed to make Borbándi excessively concerned about the fate of socialist economy in Hungary.

The leaders of Népszabadság, however, were relentless in their efforts to mobilize the party-state apparatuses against reformist politics "serving the capitalist evil". Soon they presented to Béla Biszku a new affair (the MEGÉV-affair) and in 1974 they sent off again their above discussed report from 1972 to Sándor Rácz who replaced Borbándi as the head of the Administrative Department.[6] Sympathetic to the arguments of the conservative left, Rácz forwarded the report to some of his high-ranking colleagues with the following remark: "This

[4] "A private entrepreneur could employ as many as a thousand men!" -- the note exclaimed, to scandalize its readers.
[5] János Borbándi, "Note for comrade Béla Biszku", 28 June 1972, MOL 288. f. 31/1972/1. őe.
[6] János Borbándi took over Lajos Fehér's responsibilities (goverfnmental supervision of the armed forces and jurisdiction) as deputy prime minister from 28 March1974. Sándor Rácz received "the document promised" (the April 1972 summary report of the editorial board of Népszabadság) from Károly Szamosi with an accompanying letter from the latter dated 17 August 1974 – MOL 288. f. 31/1974/4. őe.

is still a very useful document deserving attention."[7] Opinions in the Administrative Department were, however, divided, to say the least. Gyula Czili[8] remarked in his note that the document was full of factual errors and that it must have been conceived in the spirit according to which it was quite all right to mete out severe sentences to people for acts and deeds that no existing legislation had criminalized yet. Czili obviously did not think that delivering verdicts over "cases" there had been no legislation for was a good idea. He was also greatly troubled by the fact that the editorial board members of the Népszabadság "were preoccupied not with their own work but, alas, with the work of a lot of ministerial organs and their personnel". Particularly, Czili found the tone of the Népszabadság report quite objectionable in the way that they attacked officials of the party and state "as if all these people had been either counter revolutionaries or uneducated idiots." He stressed how unfortunate Népszabadság's unprofessional intervention was with matters demanding professional competence: "to assess these complex matters greater circumspection is required. The editors of the Népszabadság should not assume the role of a judge, nor should they try to provide general political management for legislative policies or for the practices of law enforcement. Exactly due to its [unprofessional] subjectivity, this document might generate hysteria and mislead comrades in top positions. [Az anyag éppen rendkívüli szubjektivitásánal fogva alkalmas arra, hogy hangulatot keltsen, megtévesszen vezető elvtársakat.]"[9] Needless to say, the significance of this reaction lies not simply in its concluding warning but in the general manner in which Czili was defending the professionally competent apparatuses against the accusations, whereby, at the same time, he emphasized the importance of professional knowledge embodied in, and the autonomy/integrity of, such apparatuses. It is also important to note that Gyula Czili was not simply a lawyer in Budapest, but also a senior official in the administrative department of the central committee.

The story of the Népszabadság report highlights several important circumstances in the offensive of the conservative left. One such circumstance, described above, was that important segments of the party-state apparatuses not only refused to buy into, but also offered resistance to, the anti-capitalist demagogy of the leftists. Significantly, this resistance manifested itself not only in such sectors of the party-state apparatuses that were directly involved in economic management, but also in such domains where the conservative left had

[7] Sándor Rácz "to comrades Borics and Gál", 1 October 1974. MOL 288. f. 31/1974/4. őe.
[8] Dr. Gyula Czili transferred from the apparatus of prosecution to the Administrative Department of the Central Committee in 1973. Here he soon advanced to the rank of head of sub-division. Then he transferred again, in 1975, to the position of deputy president of and president of the Penal Collegium of the Highest Court of the People's Republic (cf. Open Society Archives, HU OSA Biographical Card Files, 300-40-6, Box. nr. 3).
[9] Dr. Czili Gyula, "Feljegyzés dr. Borics Gyula elvtársnak", 1974. október 8., MOL 288.f. 31/1974/4. őe.

traditionally prevailed: as the apparatuses of prosecution and judiciary or, even, the Administrative Department of the Central Committee. This impression is corroborated by the fact that Béla Biszku, the leading personality of the conservative left, relied on Károly Szamosi and the editorial board of the Népszabadság to produce the report on "economic criminality" instead of relying on "his own" apparatus.[10] "Normally", it should have been a task for the Administrative Department of the Central Committee to produce such a summary report for their supervising Central Committee Secretary. The close cooperation between Biszku and Szamosi reveals the relative weakness of the positions of the conservative left within the central party and governmental apparatuses.[11] As we shall see, the cooperation between Biszku and Szamosi played an important role even in the so-called MEGÉV-affair that brought down the reform-communist leaders in Hungary.

b./ The MEGÉV-affair[12]

On 16 September 1972, a division head at the MEGÉV (Agricultural Machinery and Spare Parts Marketing), reported the director of his company to the HSWP party committee of the XVth district of Budapest. The person filing the report was himself member of the named district party committee. According to the report, the director, due to his earlier successes and all the distinctions and bonuses he had been receiving from higher authorities, became heady

[10] Béla Biszku was member of the Political Bureau and Secretary of the Central Committee responsible for all so-called administrative affairs. He supervised, on behalf of the ruling party, the country's public administration, its military, police, prosecution and judiciary.

[11] I should emphasize here that the reception of the conservative offensive in the party organizations, especially at the regional and local (county and district) levels, varied strongly. As we'll see, even in the capital city organization of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party there were significant supporters of this tendency (like secretary Richárd Nagy). Thanks to Zsuzsanna Varga, we are aware of the wave of processes launched against leaders of agricultural cooperatives in the course of which member of the local (county and district) party apparatuses often exhibited their approval of the ideology of the conservative left. But even among the various counties and even among the various districts within one and the same county there was a considerable variation in evidence! (Cf. Zsuzsanna Varga's email message to the author, 5 January 2004, and Zsuzsanna Varga's contribution to this book, "Questioning the Soviet Economic Model in the Sixties").

[12] In writing the story of the MEGÉV-affair, I have been relying first of all on the documentation of the closed session of 13 November 1973 of the HSWP CC Politbureau (MOL 288. f. 5/623/1. őe.). Most of the details of the story are provided by the "Summary note on the MEGÉV-affair" produced by the Editorial Board of the Népszabadság at the request of Béla Biszku. It is dated 31 August1973 and signed by István Sarlós, chief editor, István Földes and Károly Szamosi, deputy chief editors. Biszku, in his "Report to Comrade Kádár" of 16 October 1973, writes the folllowing: " In the end of August ... I asked the Népszabadság to inform me about the ramifications of the affair [az ügy összefüggéseiről], on the basis of [their] knowledge. ... They wrote a summary report about the affair signed by comrades Sarlós, Szamosi and Földes (enclosed)." The objective of this essay is not to reconstruct the history of the MEGÉV-affair and to satisfy all the curiosities related to the question "wie es eigentlich gewesen", but rather to offer an analysis of the construction of a political scandal under state socialism. Therefore, while I have to remind the reader that the documents referred to in this paper, and especially the summary report of the Népszabadság, are rather tendentious, I would like to emphasize that the significance of these distortions, from the point of view of the agenda of the present essay, is quite limited.

and started managing the company more and more arbitrarily, ignoring the views of the "collective leadership" in the company, and committing serious errors (including errors of omission). The report also mentioned some criminal acts committed by the director: to the detriment of the state (as owner), he illegally transferred valuable tools and a car owned by the company (the state) onto the hands of influential people, some among his important business connections and others among the supervising authorities of his own company. Furthermore, he involved the company in foreign trade transactions that violated the law.

With regard to the latter, the single most important episode that led to most of the debates between various organs and leaders of the party-state, was that MEGÉV imported complete maize-harvesting adapters in the form of "spare parts" from the West German firm Claas.[13] They then assembled the spare parts and marketed the machines in Hungary. They embarked on this project at a time when another firm in Hungary, the Budapest Factory of Agricultural Machinery (BMG), had already been producing similar maize-harvesting adapters on the basis of a licence bought from a French firm, Braud. While the MEGÉV sorted under the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries as part of MEZŐGÉP Tröszt (a trust-like combination established by the Ministry to take care of all trade and industrial activities pertinent to the machine supplies of Hungarian agriculture), BMG was a company supervised by the Ministry of Metallurgy and Machine Construction. BMG's understanding of their own position within the Hungarian market of maize-harvesting adapters had been that of a monopolist, very much in line with what used to be regarded the normal practice in the pre-reform economic regime of centralized planning without market. Therefore, and especially after they too got transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries (and to the MEZŐGÉP Tröszt) in 1973-74, they mobilized all their resources and connections to eliminate the import competition created by MEGÉV. BMG, a representative of old style state-socialist industry, could benefit greatly from bringing down MEGÉV and, especially, from stopping its import activities.[14]

[13] Obviously, MEGÉV had the entitlement to import spare parts for agricultural machinery, independently of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and its "companies", but this entitlement did not cover the import of complete machines.

[14] There was a certain amount of sympathetic publicity created by such articles as the otherwise pro-reform economist Antal Máriás' "Befejezetlen tanulmány a Budapesti Mezőgazdasági Gépgyár meggszüntetéséről" [Incomplete essay on the termination of the Budapest Factory of Agricultural Machinery] *Valóság* Vol. XX, Nr. 5 (May 1977), 37-47; also, the director of BMG invested a great amount of time into writing long letters to various top party- and state leaders explaining the plight of his company and seeking to reinforce the comfortable position of "profilgazda" (monopoly by governmental decree): see the several letters to various authorities by BMG's general manager, Sándor Dobos, copies of which are held in KNEB, MOL XVII-2-d, 59-60. d.

The HSWP's XVth district committee forwarded the report to the general director of MEZŐGÉP Tröszt, suggesting them to carry out a disciplinary procedure against the director of MEGÉV. However, the disciplinary procedure conducted by the Tröszt and completed on 25 October 1972, failed to verify the accusations against the MEGÉV director and, therefore, the party committee of the XVth district refused to accept it. The first secretary of the district party committee approached now the Minister of Agriculture and Food Industries, Imre Dimény, suggesting to suspend the director and to conduct an inquiry into the affairs of MEGÉV. Dimény suspended the director on 4th December, and the ministerial inquiry was completed by 14 December. The director was subsequently reinstated into his position by Jenő Váncsa, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food Industries. The report from the inquiry explained the complaints reaching the XVth district party committee as the results of ongoing intrigues against the director within the company management - which was then fiercely rejected both the party committee of MEGÉV and by the HSWP's XVth district committee.

From 20 October 1972 on, concurrently with the above mentioned disciplinary inquiries, the Police Headquarters of Budapest were conducting a criminal investigation against the MEGÉV director. According to the summary report prepared by the Népszabadság, the police investigation "uncovered and documented in detail" the corrupt acts of the company director as well as a number of foreign trade and foreign monetary transactions of the company which violated the law applied to those fields. In spite of this, as Szamosi and his colleagues' report put it, the General Attorney's office, "without ever telling why", took away all the documentation of the affair from the Division of Investigations of the Police Headquarters on 22 February 1973. Following direct instructions from the General Attorney, Dr. Géza Szénási, the Office of Prosecutors of the Capital City, with reference to § 60. of the Penal Code (in the absence of criminal acts), cancelled the procedure against the director of MEGÉV and his accomplices on 16 March 1973.

In the meantime and after consultations with the XVth district party committee, the division leader who reported his director turned, together with his friends within MEGÉV, to Népszabadság. Having done their "research" into the matter, Károly Szamosi and József Sólyom, a journalist of Népszabadság, paid a visit to Richárd Nagy, a secretary of the HSWP's Budapest Committee. On the basis of the discussions with Nagy, Sóyom completed his draft article entitled "The conscience makes itself heard" (Megszólal a lelkiismeret). The article is a socialist realist story about morality: the good guys are the MEGÉV party secretary, the division leader (who reported on the director of MEGÉV), and the member of the MEGÉV party leadership. The "conflict" is constructed as the tension, tormenting the

positive heroes, between honesty, conscientiousness, loyalty to the party resolutions, on the one hand, and loyalty towards the company and its director on the other. The bad guys are the corrupt company director and his corrupt connections in the ministries. The story reaches its cathartic culmination and conclusion when "conscience makes itself heard", i.e., when the positive heroes approach the district party committee to let them to decide who is right – they themselves or the corrupt company director?

Copies of the draft article were sent to János Venéczi, Secretary of the Central Control Committee of the HSWP (the highest disciplinary organ of the party), to Richárd Nagy, and, "in order to check the foreign trade aspects of factual material underlying the article", to József Bíró, Minister of Foreign Trade. There can be no doubt that, similarly to earlier occasions, the circulation of the draft article by the Népszabadság among different party-state apparatuses served not simply to confirm the "facts" or to provide neutral information, but also -- and more importantly -- the search for and mobilization of new allies.

Even though the Budapest Office of Prosecutors stopped and cancelled the police investigation against MEGÉV on 16 March 1973, an "expert study" on MEGÉV's foreign trade activities solicited by the Budapest Police Headquarters was delivered on 22 March 1973. On the basis of this report and the draft article of Népszabadság, József Bíró, Minister of Foreign Trade, filed criminal charges against the MEGÉV-director with the Budapest Police. This did not, however, lead to a new police investigation.

In background, pulling strings had been top-ranking political leaders. The Népszabadság had planned to publish its article in the supplement to its 11 March 1973 issue. On 8 March, Lajos Fehér[15] rang up István Sarlós and asked him to stop the article. Fehér described the MEGÉV-affair as a "politically motivated invention of the police" [rendőrségi koncepció] and told Sarlós that he had ordered the immediate stopping and cancellation of the police investigation. On the same day, the general director of MEZŐGÉP Tröszt dismissed the director of MEGÉV from his position and hired him as economic advisor in the Tröszt. On 9 March 1973, on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries, Minister Imre Dimény sent a strongly worded critical commentary on the draft article of Népszabadság to István Sarlós, Béla Biszku, Rezső Nyers[16], and Miklós Óváry.[17] The day after, 10 March, Miklós Óváry contacted Sarlós to tell him that, due to an imminent party investigation, the

[15] Lajos Fehér, one of the leading reform communist politicians, was deputy prime minister supervising, on behalf of the government, the country's armed forces, the police and the whole judicial apparatus; he was also member of the HSWP CC Politbureau and the nr 1 authority of the party in agricultural policies.
[16] Central Committee Secretary and Politbureau member Rezső Nyers was the leading personality of the reform-communist tendency during the Kádár era.
[17] Miklós Óváry was the head of the Agit-Prop Department of the HSWP Central Committee.

article should, for the time being, not be published by the Népszabadság, and that any decision concerning any future publication of the article should be expected at a later point in time.

On 6 April, Sarlós, Károly Szamosi, and István Földes called on Rezső Nyers and had a long conversation with him. According to Népszabadság, the objective of the conversation was to discuss what could be learned from the MEGÉV-affair and the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries and the MEZŐGÉP Tröszt. As Nyers wrote in his note to Kádár, Szamosi dominated the conversation and it was revealed early that Szamosi's views on matters of economic policy were radically different from those of Nyers.

Nyers and Fehér emphasized all the way, as the MEGÉV-affair unfolded, that their interventions purported not to defend corruption. What they intended was to prevent that the corruption of the MEGÉV director and MEGÉV's foreign trade activities were treated under the same hat. In their opinion, the latter was a matter of economic policy outside the domain of criminal law.

At his meeting with the leaders of Népszabadság, Nyers promised to launch a party investigation into the MEGÉV-affair. The Department of Economic Policy of the HSWP Central Committee issued on 19 April 1973 a note in which they stated that no criminal acts had been committed in the MEGÉV-affair. At the same time, Nyers himself initiated the exclusion from the party of the director of MEGÉV and of a high official of the Ministry of Foreign Trade, because of corruption. Subsequently the CC Department of Economic Policy sent out a committee to inquire into the economic-political dimensions of the MEGÉV-affair. The committee was led by Ernő Csizmadia, chief of the agrarian and food industrial section of the Department of Economic Policy, and among its members we find Gyula Páles, vice president of the Hungarian National Bank, László Akar, head of main department at the Ministry of Finance, and János Szép, department head in the Ministry of Metallurgy and Machine Construction. The objective of this party investigation was to study MEGÉV's imports of spare parts for agricultural machinery. In their report delivered on 20 June 1973, the committee emphasized that MEGÉV's imports were in accordance with the prevailing law as well as with macroeconomic interests and they urged the leaders of the Ministries of Foreign Trade and of Agriculture and Food Industries to keep regularly in touch with one another in order to identify early on and solve cooperatively the various issues they both needed to address.

The report of the Csizmadia-committee was sent over to Szamosi and his colleagues at the Népszabadság by Béla Biszku. Two-thirds of the summary report of 31 August 1973 from

the Népszabadság was then devoted to refuting the Csizmadia-committee's report claiming that the latter was not the result of a serious investigation but of "the distortion of facts" and that it "failed to address the most important issues of economic policy" [nem vizsgálati anyag, hanem az ügy tényeinek elferdítése; nem ad választ a leglényegesebb gazdaságpolitikai kérdésekre]. For Szamosi and his friends, these "most important issues of economic policy" were the same as the main political objections to the reforms of 1968 on behalf of the conservative leftist opposition: On the one hand, they found it hard to accept that in the new system of economic management the Ministry of Foreign Trade (KKM) was only one of several functional economic ministries and stressed that in the case of the MEGÉV-affair "the KKM acted not as a ministry, but as a national authority, as the protector of the foreign trade monopoly of our socialist state"[18] (emphasis added - GP). On the other hand, they were alarmed by the growing power of the reform communist networks (especially of the so-called "Agrarian Lobby") in the party-state. Indeed, they wished to see the MEGÉV-affair as an indication of the food-industrial network's getting out of control: "The crimes committed (because crimes they are!) indicate that certain people [egyesek] tend to believe that they are a state in the state and that they can do as they please."[19]

Upon Béla Biszku's request, on 11 May 1973, Minister of Interior András Benkei sent over to Biszku the experts' report solicited by the Budapest Police on MEGÉV's illegal foreign trade activities. Biszku maintained that it was on this occasion that he learned from Benkei about the cancellation of the police investigation by Lajos Fehér. Biszku instructed Benkei to continue the investigation. At about the same time, Lajos Fehér also summoned Benkei and handed over to him the 19 April note of the Department of Economic Policy of the Central Committee, in which it was stated that no criminal act had been committed. On 30th May 1973, the deputy of the Attorney General, Károly Csendes ordered the Budapest Police to launch an investigation on the basis of the charges filed by Minister of Foreign Trade József Bíró – but he forbade them to pursue the themes of the previous investigation, i.e., he left the previous decision of the Attorney General in force. The results of the new investigation (incriminating the director of MEGÉV on several points) were sent by the Budapest Police to the Attorney General's Office on 30 June.

According to Béla Biszku, the Attorney General, Géza Szénási intervened and stopped the police investigation in the MEGÉV-affair twice - on 26 February and 16 March. On 16 September, Biszku requested Szénási to make himself familiar with the documentation of the

[18] Sarlós István et al., "Összefoglaló feljegyzés a MEGÉV-ügyről", 27.
[19] Ibid., 28.

MEGÉV-affair (including, by this time, the strongly biased 29 pages long summary report of the Népszabadság solicited by Biszku) and let him know what he thought. In his response of 8 October, Szénási wrote to Biszku that, concerning the Penal Code, he considered the charges sent by the Minister of Foreign Trade to the Budapest Police groundless, and that for him the decisive documents were the declaration of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries concerning the report and draft article of the Népszabadság and the report of the party investigation organized by the Department of Economic Policy of the Central Committee. In his view, the problems could and should be solved by cooperation between the two ministries.

Not long after these exchanges, on 16 October 1973, Biszku wrote a report to Kádár.[20] He asked for Kádár's "opinion" (actually, for his intervention), because the matter "cannot be brought to a conclusion thanks to the interferences". He urged Kádár that "Order should be restored, so that we can prevent misuse of power" ["Rendet kell teremteni, hogy hatásköri túlkapások ne legyenek"]. He also added one episode to the account of Lajos Fehér and Rezső Nyers: "Comrade Benkei told me on 19 June 1973 that comrade Nyers paid an informal visit on the previous Saturday (16 June) to the Budapest Police Headquarters where he had a conversation in comrade Csehik's office, in the presence of comrade Tihanyi, with deputy chief Sándor Bíró. He asked comrade Bíró about the MEGÉV-affair and, when Bíró told him that an investigation was on its way, he said, according to the information I received from comrade Benkei, the following: "Well, you just go on and try to prove [that criminal acts were committed], while we have shown that the 'affair' was beneficial from a macroeconomic point of view."

Biszku suggested to Kádár that the political responsibility of Fehér and Nyers should be stated, that the legal "procedure should be allowed to take its own course in order to create clarity in this affair", and that Géza Szénási "who, in spite of several warnings, failed to change his behavior, should be, as and when it is opportune, dismissed and replaced by a new General Attorney".

It was not Fehér or Nyers, but Béla Biszku who drew Kádár into the MEGÉV-affair so that he should bring "justice to bear". Apparently, Biszku informed Kádár originally in a conversation – his report to Kádár was signed one day after Kádár had requested reports in writing, on their role in the MEGÉV-affair, both from Nyers and Fehér. Having lost the chance to take the initiative, Fehér and Nyers had to defend themselves from a position of disadvantage while Biszku managed to achieve that, from the time he approached Kádár, it

[20] Béla Biszku, "Jelentés Kádár János elvtársnak" [Report to comrade János Kádár], Budapest, 16 October 1973, part of the documentation of the 13 November 1973 meeting of the Politbureau, MOL 288. f. 5/623/1. őe.

was no longer the activities of MEGÉV that constituted the focus of attention, but the scandalous role of Fehér and Nyers in the management of the MEGÉV-affair – "scandalous", because (mis)using their power they brought due process out of play. This way of seeing the MEGÉV-affair was indeed what Biszku (Károly Szamosi, Richárd Nagy, and other members of the conservative leftist grouping within the apparatus elite) actually presented Kádár with. Kádár was to play the role of supreme judge not in relation to the actual "MEGÉV-affair" but in relation to the way in which Fehér and Nyers were managing this affair.

At this point, *the affairs of MEGÉV* – the corrupt transactions of the company director and the questioned imports of spare parts – *become* distinct and different from *the MEGÉV-affair*. The MEGÉV's affairs were subjected to an inquiry by the Central Committee of People's Control (KNEB), ordered by Prime Minister Jenő Fock, as decided in the Politburo resolution closing the conflict within the political top-leadership.[21] The KNEB inquiry resulted in a 39 pages long report, delivered on 21 March 1974, inculpating the leaders of MEGÉV and emphasizing the responsibility of the leaders of MEZŐGÉP Tröszt and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries as well.

Needless to say, a historian should be careful with this report too. Firstly, because in an irrationally over-regulated and bureaucratized economic system violation of the rules is in most cases a precondition to the successful functioning of a company or, indeed, of a whole economic sector. Secondly, the concepts of "macroeconomically useful" or "macroeconomically damaging" (or what is "in the interests of the people's economy" and what is not) are elastic discursive constructions. In their definition, the relative power positions of the stake-holders play a much greater role than any "objective criteria". Significantly, Béla Biszku was so eager to secure that the KNEB inquiry would confirm the harmful nature of MEGÉV's foreign trade activities from the point of view of "general social interests" that he kept almost daily telephone contact with the leader of the inquiry, István Péteri, first ranking vice president of the KNEB.[22]

But all this belongs to the affairs of the MEGÉV, rather than to the MEGÉV-affair – what actually constituted the core of the latter was the *political conflict* between the reform

[21] The inquiry concerning charges such as "illegal foreign trade activities" and "misinforming central economic authorities" was requested by Prime Minister Jenő Fock, in his letter of 19 November 1973 to the President of KNEB, Gyula Dabronaki. Both this letter and the documentation pertinent to the inquiry can be consulted in the archives of the KNEB, MOL XVII– 2– a–d, 59-60. d.

[22] Personal communications of István Péteri made in the presence of the author during the first quarter of 1974. I can also remember that the expression "manual steering" was used in this connection, to show that kádárist "socialist legality" could not fully assert itself in this *Nachspiel* of the MEGÉV-affair either: no doubt, the officials of KNEB had in this case from early on a clear understanding of the desires and expectations of Béla Biszku, the Central Committee Secretary and Politburo member supervising KNEB on behalf of the ruling party.

communist and conservative leftist networks within the top party-state leadership. This conflict took by mid-October 1973 a turn highly unfavorable for the reform communists: the strong man of the conservative left, Béla Biszku, managed to bring János Kádár into the conflict as the supreme arbiter by accusing the leaders of the reform-communist network of having tried to hush up the affairs of the MEGÉV, thereby exploiting in an illegitimate manner their power positions and violating the norms and rules of due process.

In his report to the Political Bureau, Kádár emphasized that "the MEGÉV-affair has distinguished itself from the everyday affairs in our work in the party and state administration, it has grown into a gigantic sea serpent basically because some comrades in high positions wanted to 'settle' the differences of opinion between them not in accordance with the well defined rules, with what is in tune with partiinost' [pártszerüség], but arbitrarily, by bringing their power and influence to bear."[23] Kádár hastened to add, "the MEGÉV-affair would not have gone so much astray" if only the leading politicians involved had kept themselves to the rules of procedure applicable to such cases and codified within the party in 1957. According to these rules the following procedure should apply: (1) If uncertainty or differences of opinion arise among leaders of competent organs concerning concrete criminal matters or problems of penal policy, the problem then should be brought to the so-called Coordination Committee[24] established in the party centre[25] If in this Committee no agreement can be reached the matter should be transferred to the First Secretary of the Central Committee, to the Secretariat, or/and to the Political Bureau for arbitration.

(2) Kádár reminded his colleagues in the Politburo that since the reorganization of the communist party in Hungary (the establishment of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party in December 1956), it was also a rule that in concrete criminal cases the organizations of police, prosecution, and judiciary should make their decisions free of external influences, "exclusively with regard to the law, to their own legal responsibility and conscience". (3) In such concrete criminal cases, higher party and governmental organs should very seldom, only under extraordinary circumstances, utter their opinion and it is their obligations "to allow the due process to take its own course" [kötelességük szabad folyást engedni a törvényes eljárásnak].

[23] János Kádár, "Report to the Political Bureau on the 'MEGÉV-affair'", Budapest, 8 November 1973. 7-8, MOL 288. f. 5/623/1. őe.

[24] "This [committee] is led by the Central Committee Secretary responsible for administrative matters. Its members are the following: the Head of the Administrative Department of the Central Committee, the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of Justice, the Attorney General, and the President of the Highest Court".

[25] Kádár uses here the word "pártközpont", which means physically the building where the offices of the Central Committee apparatus were situated.

Kádár deliberately highlighted those sides of the affair that turned it into a "classical" political scandal[26]: by now the assessment of the activities of MEGÉV or its director had ceased to be of interest; in focus had been the charges against Fehér and Nyers, that they tried to promote their political objectives by misusing their power and violating the norms of due process, "socialist legality".

At the 13 November 1973 meeting the Politburo resolved, in accordance with Kádár's suggestions, the following: They stated that (1) Béla Biszku did, correctly but with an all too long delay, intervene to defend socialist legality. (2) Lajos Fehér, transgressing the limits of his mandates as Deputy Prime Minister, acted in violation of socialist legality when, instead of approaching the Coordination Committee or the Political Bureau, he instructed the Ministry of Interior and, later, the Attorney General to stop the investigation of the MEGÉV-affair. He also violated the norms of proper conduct within the party [pártszerütlenül járt el] when, "bringing the integrity of our authorities and party functionaries into doubt", he maintained that "the MEGÉV-affair was an invention of the police" [rendőrségi koncepció]. (3) Rezső Nyers also took an improper course of action when he assisted Fehér to confirm the macroeconomic utility of the activities of MEGÉV by bringing together a separate committee through the Department of Economic Policy of the Central Committee. He too called the affair "a police invention" in an impermissible manner.

With regard to the affair, the Politburo had also found the activities of the Attorney General, Géza Szénási, and of the investigating party committee led by Ernő Csizmadia, highly objectionable. On the other hand, they praised the Népszabadság for the positive role it played throughout the affair.

In preparations for the XIth Congress of the HSWP, the Politburo received as early as on 29 January 1974, a proposal for personal changes from a committee of three led by János Kádár. In connection with the proposed changes (most importantly: the removal of Rezső Nyers and Lajos Fehér from the party's top-leadership)[27], Kádár was eager to emphasize "no one has been disapproved here politically ... There is no political reason [for the personal

[26] Andrei S. Markovits and Mark Silverstein argue that Athe critical feature of any political scandal is not the degree of personal gain involved nor is it the normative merit of the ends sought, but rather it is the presence of any activity that seeks to increase political power at the expense of process and procedure. .. political scandals occur at the intersection of power and process". Andrei S. Markovits & Mark Silverstein, eds., *The Politics of Scandal. Power and Process in Liberal Democracies* (New York & London: Holmes & Meier, 1988), 6.

[27] Rezső Nyers lost his position as Central Committee Secretary responsible for economic policies; Lajos Fehér had to retire from his position as Deputy Prime Minister. Both were left out of the Political Bureau in connection with the new elections of the Congress later that year. The Politburo approved their replacements on its meeting on 26 March 1974.

changes].” Kádár’s insistence on the non-political character of the personal changes of 1974 is commented by Tibor Huszár in his Kádár biography as follows: “Undoubtedly, this was not the prevalent style [hangütés] in the MDP [Hungarian Worker’s Party, the stalinist predecessor of HSWP, ruling the country under the leadership of Mátyás Rákosi between 1948-1956], and the tone characteristic of the restalinization in progress at the time in the Soviet Union was different too.”[28] Indeed, it was – but I would like to add that the ”style” characteristic of the early years of Kádár’s rule (1957-1958) was pretty different too.

Alternative interpretations

(a) The MEGÉV-affair within the frameworks of a conventional political history narrative

Within the frameworks of a conventional political history narrative, the MEGÉV-affair is of interest because of the new empirical knowledge it provides for the history of post-1968 (or, rather post-1972) conservative backlash in the HSWP: it does not only add to already known “facts” of the intra-party struggle between groupings of conservative left and reform communism, but it might also call for some adjustments.

In Tibor Huszár’s biography on Kádár there is some uncertainty as to what had actually been going on inside the HSWP between 1972 and 1974 and, especially, what Kádár’s role in all that was. This uncertainty manifests itself in the following formulae of the book: Reacting to Soviet pressures “Kádár made up his mind *already* at this point, i.e., as early as in February 1972, that he, in the hope that he would be able to preserve continuity, in order to preserve the appearance of continuity [a folytonosság megőrzésének reményében, annak látszatát megőrizve], would carry out the turn [to the left] demanded by the Soviet leadership.”[29] Of course, all this is but pure guesswork, and rather inconsistent guesswork at that: how could one and the same person, with his mind set in the same way, hope to be able to preserve continuity (with the reform policies of the 1960s) on the one hand, and wish to maintain the appearance of the same continuity (i.e., want to smuggle in change invisibly for the public) on the other? Only one paragraph later, Huszár tells his readers that Kádár “by the Spring of 1972, had become the decisive personality of counter-reform”. In Huszár’s story,

[28] Tibor Huszár, *Kádár János politikai életrajza. 1957. november – 1989. június* [The political biography of János Kádár, November 1957 – June 1989, Vol. 2.] 2. kötet (Budapest: Szabad Tér Kiadó & Kossuth Kiadó, 2003), 251.
[29] Huszár Tibor, i.m., 243.

Kádár, upon his meeting with Brezhnev in Zavidovo, February 1972, and upon the Politbureau's discussions on this meeting, also decided that the replacement of at least four Politbureau members[30] was inevitable. "However," – Huszár continues kneading his story to cover some stubborn facts – "having wished to prevent the course from taking an all too strong turn towards the left and in need of time to allow him to find such cadres whose competence could replace that of Nyers and the others, he [Kádár] was waiting".[31] One would not expect that the "decisive personality of counter-reform" be wary of an "all too strong turn towards the left", even less to be much concerned with professional competence among top-ranking apparatschiki! If Kádár indeed decided the changes to come in 1974 as early as in 1972, would he really have waited for two years before implementing the decision only to be able to replace the competence of Nyers with that of Károly Németh or the competence of Fock with that of György Lázár?[32] Huszár fails not only to deliver documentation substantiating his claims, but also to offer us a consistent and convincing guesswork in its place.

Similarly, Huszár is encountering major problems when trying to explain in a convincing manner why, between 1972 and 1974, Kádár included the already doomed members of the Politbureau in political decision-making; why he sent them to party congresses abroad; why he allowed Rezső Nyers, as the first Politbureau member in the history of the HSWP, to partake in a live TV-program on economic policy, responding to questions directly as they were coming in from the Hungarian public? All this can be seen, according to Huszár, as part of a "technique of camouflage"[33] [álcázási technika] resorted to by Kádár to hide the change actually taking place, and can be explained by Kádár's wish to preserve "the appearance of political continuity".

On the basis of the accessible documents at hand and considering the MEGÉV-affair presented above, an alternative and radically different interpretation is not less plausible than that of Huszár's. I would maintain that there had been no intention to keep appearances and that Kádár needed no "camouflage technique" to hide his tactical objectives. Putting it in a simple and straightforward way, Kádár did not want to see the counter-reform win; he found

[30] György Aczél, the ruler of the cultural domains throughout the Kádár-era, Prime Minister Jenő Fock, Lajos Fehér and Rezső Nyers. While the latter two can rightly be described as the main architects of Hungary's economic reforms during the 1960s, the politics of Aczél and Fock too was consistently pro-reform.
[31] Huszár Tibor, id. m., 247.
[32] Németh and Lázár were the men "ohne Eigenschaften" of the post-1974 top-leadership, in whom very modest talents combined with an amazing capability of being void of anything that could make them distinct from their environment.
[33] Huszár Tibor, id. m. 249.

it politically most unfortunate, rather than desirable, to produce a break by the removal of the main reform-communist personalities from the party leadership. I would suggest that he would have preferred to preserve continuity and not only the appearance of continuity. Having said that, I would not go as far as to suggest that Kádár was a reform-communist with the same enthusiasm and conviction as Rezső Nyers. But he was a genuine pragmatist (as opposed to the dogmatic, ideologically oriented type of politician) – a "realist" who understood it quite well that in the 1970s a 180 degree political and ideological turnaround would have been extremely harmful to his own and his party's power. He was smart enough to see the political weakness and intellectual-ideological impotence of the conservative group mobilizing against reform-communism; especially, he must have sensed that the ideology and policies of the conservative left no longer appealed to the party and state apparatuses to the same extent as before.

Hence, the "decisive personality" of the Hungarian counter-reform was not Kádár, but Leonid I. Brezhnev, – something, which, incidentally, is rather convincingly documented in Huszár's book. Under the circumstances of heavy and persistent Soviet pressure from 1968 on, the significance of the MEGÉV-affair (which has not even been mentioned in Huszár's book) was that it -- construed as a political scandal by the conservative left -- contributed to Biszku's and his network's success in bringing Kádár into a situation where he acted as an arbiter between the two groupings, and as such was compelled to condemn and "sacrifice" the reform-communist leaders. Kádár's deliberate and consistent distinction between the political course [political vonal] and the case of top-leaders who lost their position because of a political power-scandal, is a clear indication that he wished to contain the politically damaging consequences of the conservative left's triumph. Kádár could not but admit and accept that the way Fehér and Nyers managed the conflict which arose around the MEGÉV-affair had been *scandalous* and that it had to have its proper consequences. On the other hand, by closing the conflict between the conservative leftist and the reform-communist networks in this manner, Kádár managed to prevent the ideological and political accusations -- indeed "inventions" -- of the conservative leftist network (about undermining the economic role of the socialist state, tolerating-promoting the great-capitalist conspiracy, etc.) from being within the accepted discourses of the party-state's public life.

(b) From purge to scandal

During the 1960s, within the narrow confines of the conservative, pragmatist Kádárian version of state socialism[34], irreversible changes were taking place in the social and cultural complexion of party-state apparatuses exercising political power in Hungary. Especially in the central apparatuses of the party-state, the position of the party-soldier ethos lost its traditional strength and, increasingly, the norms and values of professionally oriented, specialized bureaucracies came to assert themselves. Needless to say, this tendency never did and never could make a full breakthrough – yet, it was both the instrumental precondition and consequence of the major reform-communist advances during the 1960s. At the cost of some inaccuracy and simplifications, we may argue that it is this tendency that manifests itself in the changing composition of the party-state apparatuses. According to a 1955 census carried out in Rákosi's Hungarian Workers' Party, only a tenth of the salaried functionaries had higher education, while no less than a third of them had failed to complete elementary school. Data concerning the HSWP apparatus in 1973 show that the share of those with elementary education, or less, had dropped to slightly under 10 %, while more than half of the personnel in the party apparatuses had diplomas from higher education. The level of education among functionaries working in ministries and other national authorities is an even stronger indication of a professionalizing tendency among the party-state apparatuses: by 1973, the share of those with higher education had already risen to almost 90 %, while cadres possessing only elementary education constituted less than 1 % of the total.[35]

If the above hypothesis concerning the ethos and socio-cultural character of the party-state apparatuses is not entirely wrong, one could rightly "predict" (expect) that this tendency would be reflected in changes of political discourses and political style. Side by side with the "classical" leninist-stalinist class-war revolutionism, and increasingly overshadowing it, we would find a pragmatically oriented and/or "scientifically" grounded policy-making and administration that incrasingly relied on professionalized competence. Testing this suggestion empirically would go far beyond the limits of the present paper. But I hope to be able to

[34] For an instructive characterization of the Kádár-era, especially the 1970s, see László Lengyel's essay, "Kádár and his epoch" [Kádár és kora], in: Lengyel László, Korunkba zárva (Budapest: Pénzügykutató Rt., 1994), 159-164.

[35] For more details and for the sources see the following works: concerning 1955 cf. György Péteri, *Academia and State Socialism. Essays on the Political History of Academic life in Post-1945 Hungary and Eastern Europe* (Boulder, Col. & Highland Lakes, NJ: Social Science Monographs & Atlantic Research and Publications, Inc., 1998) 216. For the 1973 data see Rudolf Tőkés, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution. Economic reform, social change, and political succession, 1957-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 144-145.

contribute to the work with confirming and/or refuting this hypothesis concerning the shift in political style.

Political style is an "algorithm" or pattern of behavior prevalent in the political class of a country or/and an era – a pattern of behavior that is typical from the point of view of the *Zeitgeist* and that is contingent on, and resonates with, the changing historical, social, and cultural characteristics of the political class. Political style is not so much a matter of ideas that provide the politician with orientation, as it is a matter of how politicians relate to ideas, the role and status of ideas in political activity as a whole, and how ideas are put to use in politics.[36]

One of the important assumptions in this essay is that political style, its changes, and tendencies in the history of communist politics, can with great advantage be studied through the analysis of the management and resolution (closure) of conflicts within the ruling communist party-state (its apparatuses). In the history of communist state-socialism in Hungary, a comparative study of two such intra-party conflicts can be helpful in testing my hypothesis – the conflict unfolding between 1953 and 1958, and the conflict taking place between 1968 and 1974. In this essay, I have taken a closer look at the phase of resolution/closure in these conflicts (especially in the case of the so-called "re-stalinization" of 1973-74[37], which has received little attention in the historical literature).

In both cases the clash was between two networks: an ideologically oriented, conservative leftist network and a pragmatically oriented, modernizing, reformist-revisionist network. In both cases, the conflict was concluded by a conservative victory – even if these victories tended to prove temporary. In the 1950s, the intra-party struggle starting around mid-1953 had, by February 1956, flown over the walls surrounding the apparatuses and mobilized a considerable segment of Hungarian society. An intra-party affair reached the streets and triggered off mass movements leading up to the anti-Stalinist revolution of October 1956. This escalation certainly motivated and informed the brutal, Shakespearian ways in which the

[36] Cf. the concluding chapter by Sidney Verba, "Comparative Political Culture", in: Lucian W. Pye and Sidney Verba, eds., *Political Culture and Political Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 544-545, and after.

[37] In Hungary, contemporary commentators as well as historians often describe the conservative turn in the first half of the 1970s as a stalinist renaissance, which tends to be taken for granted rather then problematized. Tibor Huszár, for example, uses the term "the period of neostalinist renaissance" (Tibor Huszár, *Kádár János politikai életrajza 1957. november – 1989. június,* Vol. 2., Budapest: Szabad Tér Kiadó & Kossuth Kiadó, 2003, 235). I find this highly problematic – firstly, because if "renaissance" why should we also need "neo"?; secondly, and more importantly, because using such terms is clearly question-begging. What is new in the stalinism of the 1970s, as opposed to the "classical" or "old stalinism"of the 1950s and earlier? Huszár fails altogether to raise this question in his otherwise useful biography on Kádár.

conflict was closed – through the political, ideological, and often even physical annihilation of the opponent. In other words: the management and resolution of the intra-party conflict 1953-1958 followed the pattern of the purges of Stalin's time. The "discovery" and identification of the "enemy within our own ranks" (reformist ideas and policies were revealed as anti-socialist and "liquidationist") were followed by political destruction (reformist leaders and their networks even at lower ranks were fired from their positions in the party-state apparatuses and were excluded from the party). These events went hand in hand with major public campaigns of ideological purification (like the campaign against revisionism from late 1957 and on), and were completed by the physical removal of leading personalities (the kidnapping of Imre Nagy and several other revisionist on 22 November 1956, their abduction to Romania; long prison sentences meted out in 1958 and later). In the end this concluded in the physical destruction of several of them (the hanging of "Imre Nagy and accomplices" on 16 June 1958). That this could happen was not simply due to the persistence of the Stalinist political style. It can better be explained by the fact that the absolute and relative size of reformist-revisionist network within the party-state apparatuses had not yet in November 1956 reached the critical minimum at which it could offer some protection to its members.

Compared to this, the conflict emerging after the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 unfolded amidst different circumstances and conditions and was resolved in a different manner and with different outcomes. Even in this case, however, the initiative came (with the encouragement and support of Moscow) from the conservative left (similarly to the post-November 1956 phase of the 1953-58 conflict). But the absolute and relative size of the pragmatic reformist network and its camp of followers within the party-state apparatuses were considerably greater in 1968, in terms of their political, cultural and professional reputation and significance. Factors other than the general level of education and the upgrading of the cultural complexion of the apparatuses, that have already been touched upon, had an important role too.

As most other agents of history, the individuals constituting these apparatuses were knowledgeable human beings and in Hungary, they certainly learned some important lessons in 1956. Irrespective of which side they would take in the intra-party conflict, few of them were ready to risk a "repetition" of the earthquake almost twenty years before. Of the general process of learning we should emphasize one particular moment: the reform-communist or revisionist network, having suffered a heavy, debilitating defeat by 1958, had also learnt from the experience of the 1950s. From 1961-62 and on, with more or less openness, they were systematically recruiting politically sympathetic and professionally competent people into the

apparatuses. This applies especially to the various levels and domains of economic management, to such (academic and cultural) fields that were of great significance in shaping the public-political discourse, and also to other domains of power of the party-state.[38] This tendency had been greatly promoted by the work of the so-called reform committees in the 1960s. Preparing the various chapters of the policy document for the economic reforms to come, these committees functioned as think tanks as much as they were forums for political discussions and negotiations. The number of members in the 60s was 200, while the committees brought together by 1971 for the further development of the reform, had 300 members.[39] After the November 1965 decision about introducing the New Economic Mechanism, the reformist ideology was elevated to the level and status of party line – it could therefore reach out to all the functionaries working at the various levels of the party-state administration as well as to Hungarian society as a whole. Large scale "enlightenment and propaganda campaigns" were organized "explaining the mechanism"[40], all contributing to an increased power and momentum for the reformist project and also having a positive effect on the relative position and status of the reform-communist networks within the party-state apparatuses.

Unlike the party-state apparatuses of the second half and end of the 1950s, this apparatus class, in terms of its thinking and its dominant discourses, had by the mid-1970s been well above the "conceptual level of the Stalinist catechism of marxism-leninism".[41]

It was in this historical environment, after the invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, with the encouragement and support of the Brezhnev doctrine and Brezhnev's policies that the conservative leftist opposition of Hungarian reform communism tried to launch an offensive. In the intra-party political struggle, this conservative offensive challenged the reform-communist positions on three "fronts": (1) By resorting to workers demagogy, by forcing through political measures of positive discrimination[42] to the benefit of the "great-

[38] György Földes mentions in his book from 1989 "the process which has been considerably enhanced and accelerated by the reform policies: the expansion of the professional intelligentsia at the expense of the cadres intelligentsia" [a szakértelmiség térnyeréséről a káderértelmiséggel szemben]" *Hatalom és mozgalom (1956-1989). Társadalmi-politikai erőviszonyok Magyarországon* (Budapest: Reform Könyvkiadó & Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1989), 110. Unfortunately, Földes fails to develop this observation any further.

[39] A great deal of information concerning these committees can be brought from the book of interviews of Katalin Ferber and Gábor Rejtő, *Reform (év)fordulón* (Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, 1988).

[40] "Explaining the mechanism" [Magyarázom a mechanizmust] was the title of a highly popular animated series broadcast by the Hungarian Television during the second half of the 1960s, within the frameworks of the campaigns mentioned.

[41] János M. Rainer, *Ötvenhat után* (Budapest: 1956-os Intézet, 2003), 81

[42] For the political decisions promoted by the conservative left, see Ferber & Rejtő (1988), 244-245. The single most important and, from the reforms' point of view, most harmful decision was the resolution taken in November 1972 by the Central Committee, "on the execution of the resolutions of the Xth Congress", document

industrial workers", they tried to highlight critically, although seldom explicitly, the negative social consequences and implications of economic reforms (undermining, one could surmise, even the class power of the proletariat). (2) They staged themselves as the defenders of the central role and significance of the socialist state in economic life (construing, implicitly, the reform-communist "Other" as a destructive force in this respect[43]. (3) Last, but not least, the repertoire of the conservative left included the "struggle against corruption" to which they wished to grant high priority thanks to its great potential for keeping the apparatuses of economic administration under control through systematically challenging the moral status and integrity of market oriented managers and their ministerial supervisors.

No doubt, the conservative offensive was successful in that it turned the 1970s into a decade of stagnation when it comes to the cause of modernizing reforms. But they had no solution for the country's acute economic ills, no idea as to how to react to the explosion of oil prices, nor how to improve the volume and efficiency of Hungarian exports. Instead of accelerating and radicalizing the badly needed reforms, the "mechanism" for the 1970s became absence of change funded by increasing indebtedness to the West.[44]

When it comes to managing and resolving the conflict within the party-state apparatus, however, the conservative left could claim even less: by the early 1970s, it was no longer possible to try to annihilate one's political opponent physically. Even in terms of its political and ideological achievements, the conservative breakthrough brought but a modest harvest. The removal of Lajos Fehér and Rezső Nyers from their operative positions in March 1974

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nr. 5 in Henrik Vass, ed., *A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt határozatai és dokumentumai 1971-1975* [Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1979, 2nd ed.], 369-394.

[43] On this point, valuable information has been provided by Professor Antal Máriás in his interviews with the author, in Budapest, between 27 October 1 December 1986.) This dimension of the campaign concentrated on three areas: (a) They tried to defend the Stalinist doctrine of the superiority of state ownership over cooperative ownership and, from this platform, they attacked the "penetration" of agricultural and consumption cooperatives into domains of industrial activity (they objected especially to cooperatives establishing so-called industrial "side-branches" [ipari melléküzemág], which worked with high efficiency and yielded high incomes for their workers). (b) The conservative left has also adopted the cause of centralized state monopoly of foreign trade and opposed to the proliferation of entitlements granted to various industrial and agro-industrial companies for autonomous export and import activities. (c) It is also well known that the so-called "agrarian lobby" (a powerful network of politicians, economists, and bureaucrats working in fields related to agriculture and food industries) was a thorn in the side of conservative leftists. One of the leading personalities of this network was Lajos Fehér. The suspicion and accusation against them was that they were building "their own state within the state", bringing under their control the whole vertical line from agriculture to food industry, including even the relevant segments of machine construction and foreign trade. The network mobilized a great deal of talent and managed to develop a coherent set of arguments for treating agro-industrial production [élelmiszergazdaság] as a macroeconomic sector on its own that requires proper adjustment of the organization and division of mandates of macroeconomic management. The economics of agroindustry got its own textbooks in economic higher education by the early 1970s [Ernő Csizmadia was one of the most prolific authors in the field] – understandably enough, it belonged to the prime targets of the conservative leftist onslaught in 1973-75.

[44] On the "substitution" of foreign borrowing for structural adjustment see György Földes, *Az eladósodás politikatörténete 1957-1986* (Budapest: Maecenas Könyvkiadó, 1995).

and, then, from their membership in the Politbureau, was presented as a change that had no political causes. The emphasis on the continuity of (reform) policies can, of course, be regarded as a "camouflage technique"; yet, this rhetoric, codified as the party line, had also prevented the conservative left from confronting the reform-communist positions openly and full-scale. On the ideological "front" for example, the conservative attack did not even achieve a half-victory. Béla Biszku tried to contribute personally to restore the authority of certain central doctrines of Stalinism such as: "the superiority of state ownership" over other forms of socialist ownership (cooperative ownership). Due to the "repressive tolerance" on the part of a majority of the apparatus class, however, these efforts fell flat.. Indeed, they could not even achieve as little as the elimination of reform-communist doctrines from the official textbooks of political economy of socialism used in the Hungary's higher education institutions. These textbooks remained basically pro-reform and continued to include, even after 1973-74, chapters on "socialist economic mechanisms" and the chapter that claimed there was no hierarchical order but equality between the various forms of socialist ownership. It is hard to believe that sizeable segments of the Hungarian apparatus class, except for some silly agit-prop folks, would approve of and take seriously Béla Biszku's pronouncements, from 1974 and 1975, that this was not the case.[45]

Besides the enumerated characteristics of the closure or resolution, we also need to consider the main features of the management of the conflict of 1968-74. In this respect the first thing that requires attention is the fact that the conservative offensive proved to be incapable of confronting reform-communist policies and ideology comprehensively and openly. Even though it could affect Central Committee resolutions, workers demagogy was no longer an appropriate means for such a confrontation; the rhetoric informed by the "class point of view" adopted by the conservative left never went so far as to accuse the reformist positions of some "anti-worker conspiracy". Policies and ideas articulated from the reformist platform could no longer be presented to the party-state apparatuses as policies and ideas "hostile to socialism". These features, combined with the insistence of Kádár's "centrism" on maintaining the continuity of the (reformist) party line, placed powerful restrictions upon the conservative left with regard to how thoroughly and brutally they could go ahead in eliminating their opponents and the positions of the latter.

[45] Cf. Béla Biszku, "Pártunk politikájának néhány időszerü kérdéséről", *Társadalmi Szemle*, 1974/3 sz. and idem, "Az irányelvek vitája elé", *Pártélet*, 1975/1. sz. Concerning the controversies around the hierarchy of socialist forms of ownership, the best work to consult is Robert Kresz, *Reformkommunismens vokabular. Økonomisk politikk og marxismen-leninismen i Kádárs Ungarn* (Hovedoppgave i historie, NTNU, mai 2002), unpublished MA thesis in history, Trondheim, 2000.

If the conflict were to be closed along the lines of an old time purge *(chistka) à la* Stalin, similarly to the conflict of 1953-58, it would have required the tacit consent of the party-state apparatuses and the shared understanding in the ranks of the apparatus class that such solutions are legitimate and reasonable. Such consent, however, on the part of the apparatus class in the 1970s could not be hoped for. By the early 1970s, purges of the Stalinist kind were no longer an option for closing an intra-party conflict in Hungary. That is how "political scandal" entered the arsenal of intra-party struggle. At the time, the MEGÉV-affair provided a splendid opportunity for the conservative left to construct a political scandal wherewith to bring down their reform-communist opponents. One could argue, therefore, that the MEGÉV-affair reflects both the strength and the weaknesses of the conservative leftist backlash concluding the long 1960s: with the support of Moscow, they could still cause serious damage in the reformist-revisionist positions; but in their ways of fighting and closing the conflict they were compelled to adjust to the new social-cultural complexion of an apparatus class, large segments of which received positively the reformist-revisionist ideology and policies better attuned to their professional (rather than party-soldier) ethos and culture.

The political turn of 1973-74 was not "re-Stalinization", even less "Stalinist" or "neo-Stalinist renaissance". It was but a Pyrrhic victory which could rightly give members of the conservative left just about as much reason to rejoice as the surgeon's message could give to the relatives waiting outside the operation theater in agony: "The operation has been successful, but the patient is beyond rescue".

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Zsuzsanna Varga

Questioning the Soviet economic model in the 1960s

The New Economic Mechanism (NEM) introduced in Hungary on January 1, 1968 constituted a new model for the socialist economy based on state and cooperative ownership. As such, it received an expectedly large amount of international attention in the East and in the West. The historical, economic and political aspects of the 1968 reform were the subject of a sizeable literature before the change of system in 1989,[1] but since then, there has been no further boost from the release of secret archive materials.

The author, in researching the process of interest assertion between the authorities and agricultural society in the first decade of the Kádár period,[2] has often encountered issues connected in some way with the NEM. This study sets out to present findings in economic and social history that complement knowledge of the reform in a few respects. It follows the course of the reform chronologically. Events in the agricultural sphere have a bearing on the antecedents discussed in the first part and the reform in action, discussed in the second part. They provide information and clarification on issues requiring reconsideration or further research.

It appears necessary to comment on the subject because works on the reform have paid little attention to the agricultural sphere so far and because it offers a new approach. Historical accounts of the NEM usually begin with the moment in 1963 when Rezső Nyers, the party Central Committee secretary for economic affairs, formed a twelve-strong informal economic advisory body known as the 'Brains Trust'.[3] Their proposals were considered by a specialist committee of economists and leading party economic officials convened in 1964 to draw up a detailed draft of what became the comprehensive reform. The formation of the 'Brains Trust' deserves attention because writers tend to view the antecedents and subsequent course of the reform 'from above', through initiatives on a party-leadership and government plane, and omit pressure 'from below' or possible exchanges of impulses between the two. This does not mean demonstrations, of course (scarcely possible at the time), but less conspicuous, though

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1 Major works include Antal 1985; Berend 1983 and 1988; Bródy 1983; Földes 1989; Hare, Radice and Swain, eds., 1981; Kornai 1987; Lengyel 1989; Pető 1986/87; Pető and Szakács 1985; Szamuely, ed., 1986; Tőkés 1998.

2 Research for this study was conducted with support from a János Bolyai Research Scholarship from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

3 Extract from an interview with Rezső Nyers in summer 1987. Ferber and Rejtő 1988, 20.

effective ways of applying pressure, including the ceaseless efforts of agricultural producers to promote their interests.

Antecedents—familiar and less familiar

In the first third of the 1960s, all COMECON countries faced the problem of slowing economic growth, inadequate agricultural production, technical and scientific backwardness, and mounting internal and external financial tensions.[4] The appearance of these difficulties produced an awkward situation, for the question of catching up and overtaking the advanced capitalist countries had been placed on the agenda just a few years before. In the words of First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev, addressing the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in October 1961,

'The CPSU is adopting the task of attaining over the next 20 years a living standard for the people that will be higher than that of any capitalist country… For the first time in history, there will be a full and final end to the situation in which people suffer from shortage of anything… The party adopts the task of making this country in the next ten years the foremost industrial power in the world, so that in terms of the absolute scale of industrial production and of per capita industrial production, we shall gain an advantage of the United States… But that is only the first stage; we will not stop there. In the second decade—up to 1980—this country will far outstrip the United States in its per capita industrial and agricultural production.'[5]

The great promises were made in the wake of the spectacular Soviet successes in rocket technology, which had prompted the CPSU leadership to state clearly its aim of overhauling the most advanced capitalist countries, especially the United States. Its proclaimed programme of being 'first in the world' rested on an ideological dogma: the socialist system was superior to the capitalist and that superiority would manifest itself in economic performance. A new phase in the historical development of the countries building socialism would bring economic ascendancy over capitalism.[6] This deceptive axiom has since been overtaken by events, but it counted as an unquestionable underlying truth at that time.

The actual economic processes were already presenting a very different picture from the Utopian targets of the CPSU. Accumulated tensions and contradictions were making

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4 Antal 1985, 89 and 112.; Hare, Radice and Swain, eds., 1981, 3–22.; Nove 1977, 85–119; Pető and Szakács 1985, 393–421.

5 *A kommunizmus...* 1961, 213–14.

6 On the main theses of socialist ideology, see Kornai 1993, 81–93; Szamuely 1987.

change essential. Debate on the reform in the Soviet Union began in the autumn of 1962; the various experiments led to a decision in September 1965 to reform the way the economy was run, known as the Kosygin Reform after the then prime minister, who presented it.[7] Meanwhile the *Neue Ökonomische System* had come into force in mid-1963 and a decision to reform the system of economic management had ensued in January 1965 in Czechoslovakia.[8]

The reforming work in the region was much influenced by the misconception that the quality of central planning could be improved by mathematical methods and computerization. Advocates of this saw the ultimate cause of the command economy's problems in the crudity of the methods used for plan calculations, for want of an effective mathematical and cybernetic basis. Rational operation of the socialist economy would come from rapid development of programming and optimization procedures.[9]

Hungary was facing similar economic and plan-fulfilment problems. Industrialization accelerated just as agricultural collectivization was resumed in 1959. The leadership had living-standard promises to keep, a start had to be made in 1961 to servicing loans raised from other socialist countries in 1957, and Hungary's undertakings under the Warsaw Pact were increasing. This bank of commitments soon caused signs of fatigue under the second five-year plan (1961–5).[10] The rise in production volume was not joined by improvements in quality or efficiency, so that the chronic shortage was coupled with mounting unsold stocks. National-income growth declined and balance-of-payments problems appeared, while the country's international indebtedness increased at an accelerating rate.[11] The tensions in the economic sphere were of particular concern in Hungary because they threatened the progress being made in domestic and foreign political consolidation.[12]

Writers on the antecedents of the economic reform explain Hungary's domestic economic problems and the favourable international climate, but not why the party did not try to solve the problems by perfecting its planning procedures. Why did the Hungarian leaders choose a different path from the other COMECON countries?

One factor was a failed attempt to transform the industrial structure in 1962–4. In Hungary too, the first reflex reaction to the operational problems of the command economy was to reorganize and change enterprise sizes and structures. This approach (not

7 Bornstein 1985; Nove 1977, 307–16.
8 Roesler 1993, 9–23; Šik 1968, 46–110.
9 Kornai 1993, 424–8; Szamuely, ed. 1986, 32.
10 Berend 1983, 414–47; Földes 1995, 27–38; Pető and Szakács 1985, 403–8.
11 The exacerbation of economic and plan-fulfilment problems in an increasingly critical situation can be sensed especially well in party Political Committee (= PC) minutes: Magyar Országos Levéltár (Hungarian National Archives = MOL) M-KS-288. f. 5/312., 337., 352., 363. ő. e.
12 For more on this, see Kende 1991, 79–95; Rainer 2003, 173–91.

independently of similar campaigns in other socialist countries) culminated in the 1962–4 campaign of industrial reorganization, which reduced the number of industrial enterprises from 1338 to 840. Contrary to expectations, this brought no improvement in productivity indices,[13] but it altered significantly the pattern of decision-making powers, giving greater scope for large-enterprise managers to assert their interests.

Another big factor was that reform proposals for tackling the problems of the planned economy had been drawn up in Hungary in the 1950s. These went back to 1953 and the chance after Stalin's death to abandon the 'war communist' policies pursued up to then. Hungary's New Course was associated with Imre Nagy, who as prime minister ordered in 1954 elaboration of a comprehensive working programme of economic policy to include the problems with central planning and economic management.[14] The solution was seen in reducing the number of compulsory plan directives, but detailed work on the concept was interrupted by intermittent power struggles and a further political upheaval at the beginning of 1955.

The question of comprehensive economic reform returned at the turn of 1956–7, amidst serious economic difficulties,[15] when the Kádár regime ordered a reappraisal of the plan-directive system. Work in 11 specialist committees gave rise to a proposal for reforming the command economy in a more radical way than ever before. The draft rested on the idea of replacing the plan-directive system (except in investment projects) with a system of economic incentives to power the economic plan—in effect, framing the principles on which the 1968 reform would be based. But the political assessment of reform was changing in the meantime. The reform plans lost immediacy, mainly because the direct compulsion to reform was lifted once the Soviet Union and other socialist countries had provided large credits in goods and currency, resolving the inherited economic problems by traditional economic-policy means.

Revival of the proposals of 1953–4 and 1957 became possible when the political climate changed in 1963–4, although one constraint was that they had never been tried in practice. This lent decisive significance to agriculture—the one sector of the Hungarian economy with several years' experience of securing production without compulsory plan directives.

[13] Vígvári 1991; Voszka 1984, 131–41.
[14] Szamuely, ed., 1986, 15 and 57–100; Péteri 2001, 47–79.
[15] Berend 1983, 33–122; Szamuely, ed. 1986, 24–30 and 189–263.

Change and continuity in agriculture

Alterations in the economic policy and mechanism relating to agriculture were grouped around two main events: the 1956 Revolution and the collectivization of 1959–61.[16]

The Kádár regime, gaining power with Soviet military aid and using brutal means to settle with its political enemies, also sought from the outset to placate society, especially in the countryside. The most effective of means proved to be the standard of living,[17] for personal consumption had been held to a very low level before 1956, as a way of paying for the forced development of heavy industry and military production.

Fulfilling the aims living-standard policy at that time (and for a long time to come) depended mainly on food supplies, on which people spent a decisive proportion of their income.[18] For large sections of Hungarian society had typically had a poor, inadequate and often unbalanced diet before 1945 and in the early 1950s. A demand for ample nutrition appeared with elemental force in the early Kádár period.

The prominence of living-standard policy after 1956 gave strategic importance to raising agricultural production and encouraging agricultural producers. The first thing that had to be done to mend relations between the authorities and agricultural society was to ease the tensions in agricultural policy that had built up. Kádár's government retained the 1956 Nagy government's order abolishing the extremely unpopular system of compulsory deliveries. It became possible to leave a cooperative farm, even for an agricultural cooperative to be wound up. Compulsory sowing plans were abolished too.[19] Dissociating itself from the agricultural policy of the Hungarian Workers' Party (MDP), the new Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP) announced that both cooperative and private farming would be supported.[20] It seemed in the first half of 1957 that the party was counting on both property forms in agriculture for some time to come.

It is worth dwelling for a minute on the abolition of the compulsory delivery system, as it removed one of the pillars supporting the whole system of plan direction in agriculture and Hungary was among the first socialist countries to make the move.[21] As peasants were no longer obliged to part with their produce, the state could only buy if it offered a realistic price. Instead of using administrative compulsion, the state was establishing commercial relations with the agricultural producers, peasants and cooperatives, and trying to provide economic

16 Donáth 1977, 160–65; Orbán 1972, 179–95; Pető and Szakács 1985, 433–9; Valuch 2000, 286–302.
17 Földes 1989, 49–73.; Kende 1991, 79–95.; Kende 2003, 9–17.
18 Forgács 1964.
19 *Törvények...* 1957, 62, 68–9 and 263–5.
20 That was also reflected in the July 1957 'Agricultural Policy Theses': Ságvári and Vass, ed., 1973, 102–122.
21 Wädekin 1982, 65.

incentives for them to sell. It meant that market forces applied, albeit to a limited extent, in one of the main sectors of the post-1956 Hungarian economy.[22]

But a sudden change in the party's agricultural policy ensued at the end of 1958, when the socialist countries (on Soviet instigation) successively set about completing the transformation of their small-scale farming into large-scale cooperative agriculture.[23] This presented the party with an extremely difficult task. Speeding up collectivization meant breaking earlier promises to the peasantry. Furthermore, both the collectivization campaigns in the first half of the 1950s had failed. Finally, yet another transformation would be a big gamble for the Kádár leadership, which had to demonstrate its competence to Moscow at all cost.

When the collectivization drive began in the winter of 1958–9, only 13 per cent of Hungary's arable land was in cooperative hands. By the end of March 1961, almost 70 per cent was. Meanwhile the number of cooperative members had risen from 169,000 to 1.2 million. Instead of 80 per cent of agricultural population working in private farms, as at the beginning of the campaign, 75 per cent were members of cooperatives in 1961.[24]

Unlike the earlier collectivization drives, this was not aimed at the poor strata of the peasantry. It set out mainly to 'win over' the wealthier strata in the villages, by promising concessions or even by menaces or occasionally violence. Once branded as kulak, they could now enter the cooperatives and even the leadership of them. It was common for a local farmer to become the chairman. The cooperative was obliged to pay a ground rent on land brought into collective ownership, which still belonged on paper to the peasants. Each cooperative member received a minimum of one cadastral *hold* (1.42 English acres or 0.57 hectares) of land for household use. The produce of this provided for the household and left a surplus that gave cash income, since the produce of household land could be freely sold. It was also an important advance to extend pension rights and social insurance to cooperative members.[25]

Formally, therefore, the collectivization was a success, but grave problems arose in the process. For the next six years (1960–65), agricultural production hardly reached the average for 1958–9. There were supply difficulties for several years because the collectivization resulted in a sharp fall in national livestock herds—except of sheep—and their condition

[22] MOL M-KS-288. f. 28/1957/13. ő. e. Food Ministry submission to the HSWP PC on the achievements and experiences with the new central purchasing system, November 19, 1957.
[23] Donáth 1977, 166–75; Orbán 1972, 217–58; Pető and Szakács 1985, 440–54.
[24] Fazekas 1976, 129 and 137.
[25] Pető and Szakács 1985, 441-54.

deteriorated. [26] Most cooperatives failed to demonstrate the advantages of large-scale production for several years, burdened as they were by initial difficulties and shortages of equipment and labour.

Similar difficulties appeared on the newly collectivized farms of other European socialist countries, which tried to resolve them by reorganizing the party and state management of agriculture. Further centralization of the sector usually led to uniform direction of collective and state farms.[27]

These reorganizations abroad were closely studied by the Hungarian party leadership, but in the end, none of them were taken as a pattern. As János Kádár told the Central Committee on February 9, 1962, 'We see certain experiences of the fraternal parties, and without any malice, we have to see and acknowledge, we have to be glad that we didn't go in for the kind of thing the Bulgarian comrades did… There have been no fewer problems in the GDR and with the Czechs… The experiences in the Soviet Union have been much more positive than those of the other fraternal parties, but the biggest trouble is that we can apply so little of these to our conditions, because the conditions are quite different, Comrades.'[28]

That marked an important juncture in the formation of the party's agricultural policy. For one thing, saved Hungarian agriculture from the kind of baneful reorganization that most socialist countries carried out at the time and that Hungary too applied in industry. For another, the party leadership was admitting in the longer term that its right to handle the situation was transitional in character, a tactical concession. The essence of the matter was that greater production could be expected of agricultural cooperatives only if producers could be given incentives.[29]

This pragmatic decision was forced upon the party leadership. Despite the formal success of collectivization and its speedy completion, the authorities knew that pressing people into the cooperatives was one thing but making them work diligently and conscientiously was another. Furthermore, mechanization could not make up in the foreseeable for the labour of the several hundred thousand people who were leaving agriculture.[30] Under those circumstances, the Kádár regime would have to import food if it was to keep to the welfare pact. That was a new development; Hungary had been a sizeable exporter of farm produce before 1945.

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[26] Ibid., 466–474.
[27] For further detail, see Komyakhov 1962; Nove 1978, 468–88; Karcz, ed. 1962, 1–21 and 29–50; Wädekin 1982, 44–62 and 119–137.
[28] MOL M-KS-288. f. 4/45. ő. e. Central Committee (= CC) minutes, February 9, 1962. The author's emphasis.
[29] Varga 2001, 58–66.
[30] Ibid., 73.

Returning from Moscow at the beginning of 1960, János Kádár had told the Central Committee, 'The situation with the compulsory cultivation of grain is that the standard is not too high in the whole camp… It was stated and agreed in this respect that each socialist country had… a primary duty to produce the country's grain requirements. Indeed, Comrade Khrushchev announced in no uncertain terms, in the name of the Soviet delegation, that they were not prepared in the foreseeable future to play the part of sole grain producer and have everyone turn to them for grain.'[31]

It became clear by 1961 that with inadequate mechanization, the industry and devotion of Hungarian peasants were needed for several more years to raise agricultural output, which was important to living-standard policy and exports, and so were tools and means of production for household farming. It has to be stressed that cooperative farming up to the mid-1960s still relied on traditional manual methods.[32]

The authorities were in a tight spot. The experience of 1956 and their living-standard commitments forced them into their first compromises with the peasantry. The cooperative members managed from that 'bargaining' position to get leave to keep more stock on the household farms, do share-cropping on the collective farm, receive their premium in kind etc. But these sober, traditional peasant demands conflicted with the Stalinist pattern of the *kolkhoz*. Since the Kádárite leadership did not want ignore the basic dogmas of this pattern, methods of remuneration and work organization that would give the cooperative members an incentive were permitted in practice, but it was years before legislation was passed to regularize them.[33]

According to the earlier official view, the essence of socialist agriculture lay in work-unit system, organization into brigades and so on, so that anyone after something else was turning against socialism. The national leadership tolerated and acknowledged provisionally at the beginning of the 1960s and later increasingly supported the idea that the agricultural cooperatives should apply methods adapted to their conditions, differing from the Soviet *kolkhoz* model. Initiating and implementing the corrective policy were increasingly well organized by an agricultural lobby, in which Lajos Fehér, Ferenc Erdei, János Keserű, Ernő Csizmadia and János Hont were prominent.[34]

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[31] Soós, ed. 1999, 420.
[32] Fazekas 1976, 187; Pető and Szakács 1985, 380–412; Stark 1973, 201–213.
[33] Varga 2001, 66–71 and 82–91.
[34] Ibid., 58–66.

Impulses from above and below

The problems of incentives at the level of individual members and cooperatives could have been eased by local initiatives. Such initiatives were hampered, however, by the prevailing legal regulations and the general economic environment, which still imposed the Soviet model. Recognizing that and under pressure from reformers grouped round Lajos Fehér, the party's Politburo launched comprehensive reforms in late 1961 and early 1962. Due for completion by the end of 1963, these covered three areas: a new regime for price setting, taxation and finances for agriculture, re-examination of agricultural management, and new legislation on agricultural cooperatives.[35]

The reforms intended to be comprehensive and introduced a new strategy into party agricultural policy, but it should be noted that they tied in with the tactic of practical concessions already described. Incentives became central to the efforts at reform because of the experiences with those initiatives from below and the financial problems afflicting the collective farms. The situation was described like this in a document from the National Planning Office, which coordinated the financial side: 'The main means of direction of agricultural production is correct application of material incentives. Major and lasting results can only be expected from applying other instruments, however important they are, if they are supported by material incentives, or at least if material incentives do not work in the opposite direction.'[36]

That recognition promoted a kind of 'dialogue' between the authorities and cooperative members during the collectivization period. The leadership monitored closely the incentive systems that developed in practice on the collective farms. The Agricultural Department of the Central Committee and the Ministry of Agriculture gathered regular information on local remuneration and work-organization initiatives and two Hungarian Academy of Sciences research institutes were drawn into the analysis: the Agricultural Research Institute under Ferenc Erdei and the Institute of Economics.[37]

Early each year, the agriculture minister would analyse the previous year's experience and make recommendations for methods of income distribution and remuneration in

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[35] Lajos Fehér (1917–1981) was a CC secretary and PC member at the time. MOL M-KS-288. f. 5/245. ő. e. PC minutes, September 26, 1961; MOL M-KS-288. f. 4/45. és 4/47–48. ő. e. CC minutes, February 9 and March 28–30, 1962.

[36] MOL M-KS-288. f. 28/1963/43. ő. e. Submission by National Price Office Agriculture and Food Department on guidelines for pricing, fiscal and financial tasks presented by the socialist reorganization of agriculture, February 1963.

[37] MOL M-KS-288. f. 28/1958/3. ő. e. CC Agricultural Department memo on the situation with agricultural economic research and tasks in this direction, June 1958.

agricultural cooperatives,[38] so giving concrete shape (and approval) to forms of remuneration and work organization not otherwise regulated in a legal sense. The recommended incentive schemes would then be made known to party and state functionaries in the press, at discussions and on training courses.[39]

This specific dialogue turned increasing numbers of local initiatives from being banned or tolerated to being supported by party organizations, which gave the agricultural cooperatives increasing room for manoeuvre. But there continued to be problems where such schemes were not reflected in the legal system. Much depended on the permission procedures of district authorities, which led to big local differences in the way the pragmatic agricultural policy of the national leadership was applied.[40]

The experiences gathered centrally in the first third of the 1960s showed that the incentive schemes tolerated in practice furthered the prosperity of the cooperative members and the interests of the state. One of the main aims of the reforms was to bring the legal regulations into line with the proven remuneration and work-
organization practices in the cooperative farms that were at variance with them. As a 1962 document stated, 'Even without legal definition, there arose a type of agricultural cooperative that the law seeks to protect and develop… So the new law will basically have to carry out the changes made necessary by the development.'[41]

The other purpose of the reforms was to remove the constraints of the Soviet *kolkhoz* model, which were impeding a solution to incentive problems apparent at membership and farm-unit level, and to point the way forward. The draft of the law established two basic principles.[42] One was that agricultural cooperatives were to be large-scale agricultural organizations that carried out enterprise-type farming activity on a principle of separate accounting. The other emphasized their organizational and commercial independence.[43]

Setting up independent accounting and enterprise-type farming activity in the agricultural cooperatives meant altering not only the economic and legal regulations, but the institutions of state direction, so that several decision-making rights could devolve onto the cooperatives. One decisive feature was the search for ways to give wider independence in

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38 Such a document appeared for the first time in 1961. See *Javaslatok...* 1961.

39 Not only the central party daily *Népszabadság*, but the periodical *Pártélet* (Party Life), addressed to communist party members.

40 The author's research revealed great differences in the application of agricultural policy between counties and even districts. See Varga 1997.

41 MOL M-KS-288. f. 28/1962./2. ő. e. Submission to Agricultural Committee on guidelines for new law on agricultural cooperatives, September 16, 1962. The author's emphasis.

42 MOL M-KS-288. f. 28/1963./4. ő. e. Debate material on new law on agricultural cooperatives, January 1963.

43 Ibid., 4. ő. e. Debate material on state control of agricultural cooperatives, January 22, 1963.

everything from production and sales to income distribution.[44] The proposals for agricultural reform were completed in 1963,[45] but approval of them was postponed at the turn of 1963 and 1964, due to the macro and micro-level economic problems mentioned earlier.[46]

Nonetheless, the agricultural reform package gave an impetus to the launch of general economic reforms. When Rezső Nyers, generally seen as the 'father' of the 1968 reform, was interviewed about its antecedents, he noted that the reappraisal of the price, fiscal and financial systems in agriculture had 'gone into issues of the economic mechanism from the side of agriculture… This had essentially raised the question of the 'original mechanism' on the agricultural side.'[47]

The draft of the agricultural reform pointed the way: 'Practical experience confirms that directing production by economic means, through price, credit and investment policy and the planning, purchasing and subsidizing system, is essential correct.'[48] The agricultural cooperatives had amassed very valuable practical experience of the market, financial incentives and the role of enterprise autonomy. So attempts were duly made, during the work on the general reform, to use the tried methods of organization, business and entrepreneurship in state-owned enterprises as well.[49]

These antecedents would be a strong influence when the Hungarian leadership decided to stick with the reform while the 'mood of reform' in other COMECON countries was waning. Thus Hungary implemented the most radical and theoretically innovative reform of any country in the region, if Yugoslavia is disregarded.

Implementation—depth and radicalism

Despite the 'mood of reform' that built up within COMECON in 1963–4, it remained taboo in most socialist countries to criticize the theory or practice of plan directives. This was not so in Hungary, where the need for such directives was questioned and denied during the reforms.[50] As Rezső Nyers, Central Committee secretary responsible for economic affairs, wrote in the

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44 For further information, see Varga 2000.

45 MOL M-KS-288. f. 5/322. ő. e. PC minutes, December 10, 1963. Agenda: 1. Submission on state control of agriculture. 2. Submission on guidelines for further development of the pricing, fiscal and financial system tasks. 3. Submission on questions of our agricultural policy.

46 MOL M-KS-288. f. 5/326. ő. e. PC minutes, February 4, 1964. Agenda: 1. Questions of our agricultural policy; MOL M-KS-288. f. 4/66-67. ő. e. CC minutes, February 20–22, 1964. Agenda: 2. Questions of our agricultural policy; ibid., 68. ő. e. Report to CC on the agricultural situation.

47 Ferber and Rejtő 1988, 20.

48 MOL M-KS-288. f. 4/68. ő. e. CC resolution on the agricultural situation.

49 Juhász 1988; Szamuely, ed. 1986, 316–40.

50 Kornai 1993, 501–4.

party theoretical journal early in 1964, 'It would certainly not be right to associate the essence of socialist economic planning to a particular method of planning or direction. A wide variety of methods of direction and periodic change in methods and mechanisms can all be accommodated and indeed belong in the Marxist-Leninist economic concept of socialism.'[51]

On December 10, 1964, the party Central Committee decided that a critical assessment of the current economic mechanism (including the systems of planning, finance, pricing and financial incentives) should be made over two years, and a plan for modernizing the economic mechanism devised on that basis.[52]

Twelve working committees set up embraced representatives of science and scholarship, the state, politics and the corporate sphere, a good many of whom had worked on reform projects in the 1950s. This reform trend in the new party had been present in the party since 1956, albeit in a disorganized way and subordinate to the conservative or middle-of-the-road group. They were augmented later by further, increasingly technocratic generations of the graduate party intelligentsia. János Kádár did more than tolerate the reformist wing of the party. On more than one occasion, he allied with them in times of economic or political tension and gave them scope.[53]

The working committees completed their critical analysis by the summer of 1965 and a set of general policy proposals founded on their assessments was promoted into a resolution at the Central Committee meeting on November 18–20, 1965. The 'Initial Guidelines' embraced the essential ingredients of the reform and informed the character of the subsequent changes. Then came the composition of the detailed guidelines, which was concluded by the spring of 1966. The final decision was taken at the Central Committee meeting on May 25–7, 1966.[54] The year 1967 could be spent on actual preparations for the introduction of the reform on January 1, 1968.

Central to the NEM were abolition of the disaggregation of central plans, 'indirect' macroeconomic management by regulators, and having an increasing range of prices set by the market rather than by the bureaucracy. Abolition of compulsory, categorical plan directives meant that although annual and five-year plans were still devised to set the main targets and proportions of economic development, they were no longer 'disaggregated' down to enterprise level. Enterprises were no longer told under the new mechanism what and how much to make or what to make it out of. The compulsory directives were replaced by

[51] Nyers 1964, 19.
[52] Vass, ed. 1968, 107.
[53] Szamuely, ed. 1986, 34–48.
[54] Vass, ed. 1968, 235–72 and 304–454.

economic regulators (price, profit, tax, credit etc.) Essentially, the state was to point the economic processes in the desired direction, mainly by financial means.[55]

The price system became the main indirect regulator. The reform required prices to signal production costs, market assessment and economic-policy intentions.[56] But with unchanged economic priorities, neither costs nor customer opinions could become prominent, since the prices were 'diverted' by the various policy considerations (such as priority for industrial development). A mixed price system came into force in 1968, in which three types were distinguished: fixed prices, prices that could move within an administratively set band, and free prices. Some 70 per cent of the domestic raw materials and semi-finished products used in the production sphere were sold at fixed or maximized prices and only 30 per cent at free prices. In the sphere of private consumption, about 50 per cent of the prices were fixed or maximized.

Profit became the decisive economic regulator in enterprise management. In principle, profit became the main yardstick of performance and the source for an enterprise's investment, for improvements in welfare arrangements at the company, and for productivity bonuses for employees.[57] The main curb on the transformation of enterprise management was fear of redundancies, the need to maintain full employment. That led to a levy on enterprise profits that was redistributed centrally to loss-making factories. Similar considerations led to the survival of certain obligations in the wage management of firms and in investment policy. The latter remained strongly influenced by the earlier axiom that investment decision-making in a socialist economy should be centralized. So the decision-making and financing processes changed little: big investments in production remained in the competence of the centre, while enterprises were able to decide only on 'standard-maintaining' and smaller development expenditures.[58]

Despite the curbs and limitations mentioned so far, the system of economic management introduced in 1968 managed to combine certain elements of central planning and market forces. The NEM broke with the classic model of a planned economy that the Soviet Union had introduced in the 1920s and the European socialist countries at the end of the 1940s. The abolition of the cumbersome mechanism of plan disaggregation decentralized many production and other management decisions, which greatly increased the scope for

[55] Antal 1985, 146–66.
[56] Kornai 1993, 535–50.
[57] Antal 1985, 220–37.
[58] Hungarian reformers adopted the idea of the Polish economist W. Brus of leaving simple reproduction to enterprises, while expanded reproduction remained in the competence of the state. Brus 1966.

independent action by enterprises.[59] The financial indicators that replaced the plan tasks expressed in volume form brought with them the need to think in terms of money, costs and attainable profit, even if these were still heavily influenced centrally. Reassessment of the role of the market and money had begun.[60] Promotion of commercial methods greatly assisted in introducing trade in means of production instead of physical allocation of machinery, means and materials. Production and sales organizations and their executives gained real, if limited independence, so that on certain questions they became decision-makers instead of implementers of central directives.

But mention must be made of the reform's shortcomings and limitations, not just its benefits.[61] Only these can explain how economic development became faster and more balanced for a few years after 1968, but many earlier problems (investment tensions, labour shortages etc.) remained unsolved.[62]

The partial nature of the NEM came about decisively because the elite in power was prepared to treat the reform only as a way of helping the economy to operate better. Neither ideological dogmas (the leading role of the communist party, the dominance of state ownership and so forth) nor economic-policy objectives (development priority for heavy industry etc.) were reconsidered. Also cautiously and purposely excluded from the reform concept was any transformation of the administrative apparatus of government or of enterprise organization. The Hungarian party leadership intended a few years later to introduce more radical measures in a second stage of reform in the 1970s. This would have covered major institutional changes, including banking reform, a new tax system, and expansion of the market sphere.

Agriculture as a testing ground?

Having looked at the main features of the 1968 reform, it is time to draw the agricultural reform into the discussion. Substantive changes in agriculture had preceded the introduction of the NEM by two years. But the phase displacement had been apparent earlier. The basic concept for management of the whole economy was only in the making in the summer of 1965, when agricultural debates were already covering practical matters of detail, such as abolishing the machinery stations and cancelling debt built up by the agricultural

[59] Antal 1985, 166–83.
[60] Szamuely 1988, 37.
[61] Fehér, Heller and Márkus 1991, 385-406.
[62] Berend 1988, 302.

cooperatives. When the Central Committee approved the detailed guiding principles of the NEM in 1966, agriculture had already reached the stage of raising producer prices and starting to close an agricultural price gap that had been widening for many years.[63] While preparations for the reform of economic management continued apace in 1967, two important pieces of agricultural legislation were passed (Act III/1967 on agricultural cooperatives and Act IV/1967 on land ownership and land utilization).[64] The bodies to represent the interests of cooperative-farm members were also founded in that year.

That significant phase displacement has usually been explained as 'using agriculture as a testing ground for the reform.'[65] But there are good reasons to doubt that the development was intentional. It emerged in the first part of the study that this 'leadership' of agriculture in the reforms arose on the one hand from below, from initiatives of the cooperatives, and on the other from interaction between the directing bodies and the cooperatives. These hitherto unexplored processes of interest assertion also explain how agricultural reform not only began earlier, but produced a more radical outcome on many issues, or affected areas from which the general reform was excluded.

Although the official ideology was taboo, as has been mentioned, and its theses were conserved unchanged, there were revisions in certain spheres, of which the most important affected agriculture. For the main shifts occurred in the assessment of interest relations and forms of ownership.

The earlier socialist axiom put emphasis on the hierarchic nature of interest relations: individual and group (enterprise or cooperative) interests gave way to those of society (the people, the people's economy). As the reform was introduced, ground was steadily gained by the idea that the existence of social groups with distinguishable interests was a natural concomitant of socialist society, which gave respectability to group interests.[66] The development of the agricultural cooperatives showed that a cooperative could be a suitable stage for reconciling individual and social interests.

According to earlier official ideology, state ownership was the sole consistently socialist form of ownership. All other forms, such as cooperative ownership, were not consistently socialist and therefore condoned only temporarily. One of the great achievements

63 Varga 2001, 129–43.
64 *Mezőgazdasági termelőszövetkezeti...* 1968.
65 Csizmadia 1984, 229–71; Fazekas 1976, 167–82; Nagy 1989, 171–91; Orosz, Für, Romány et al., eds. 1996, 503–30.
66 Vass, ed. 1968, 402–9.

of the 1968 reform was its recognition of the economy as multi-sectoral.[67] Cooperative ownership became recognized in Hungary as consistently socialist, which was a significant ideological revision. The political decision to bring about that revision was emphatically not free from risk, in the light of the outlook differences between the socialist countries and mutual intolerance of the groups espousing them. This applied especially at a time when masses of collective farms in the Soviet Union were being converted into state farms on the grounds that the latter was a superior form of ownership.[68]

Elimination of the ideological discrimination against cooperative ownership was especially timely as the party leadership had resolved to take a significant step in the field of land ownership. Collectivization in Hungary would not mean a change in ownership of the land taken into cooperative use. Almost three-quarters of the land utilized by the cooperatives was privately owned and the other third in state ownership. However, the private property rights of the cooperative members were heavily restricted.[69]

Once the collectivization process was over, the area of cooperative farmland owned by those not working in the cooperative, who could count on a ground rent or usage fee, began to increase, as members left, moved away or died. The regulations even allowed for the return of land owned or inherited, although cooperatives, with the support of the directing bodies behind them, did not actually return such land, which became a source of constant conflict and litigation.[70] Thus land use by agricultural cooperatives in the first half of the 1960s took on the character of ownership.

Act IV/1967 sought to resolve the problem by bringing in cooperative land ownership.[71] But this meant rethinking some longstanding ideological precepts, which did not go easily. Of all the issues to be tackled in the agricultural reform, this took the longest to resolve and caused most debate.[72] The tensions over the land question were described like this by János Kádár, first secretary of the Hungarian communist party:

'It has not been the socialist practice so far in the socialist countries for the land to be in cooperative ownership… That this involves confronting certain precepts of principle

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67 Ibid., 305.

68 The number of *sovkhozi* rose by 3288 in 1965–70, based on a similar decline in the number of *kolkhozi*. See Ciepielewski 1977, 278 and 281; Wädekin 1982, 44–62.

69 The owner could not sell the land and did not have effective rights of ownership over it, since the statutes of the cooperative decided what the land should be used for. The owner's rights to dispose over the land ceased in practice, except for the right of inheritance. However, a ground rent could be claimed as recognition of ownership in principle. Szakács 1989, 61.

70 MOL M-KS-288. f. 28/1965/14. ő. e. Ways, conditions and methods of developing land-ownership and land-use relations. Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Land Use Policy.

71 *Mezőgazdasági...* 1968, 265–322.

72 MOL M-KS-288. f. 28/1966/3. ő. e. Questions at issue on ownership and use of cooperative lands.

proclaimed in the past is obvious! Comrades know… the two forms of socialist property. We have called state property consistent in a socialist country and cooperative property non-consistent… We in the Political Committee have been dealing with this question a little and the view has emerged—let us hope correctly—that the precept itself is debatable and may not have been sound. Somehow, we must clarify theoretically that cooperative property is consistently socialist property in a socialist state under socialist social conditions.

'…So if we cannot answers with full conviction that cooperative property is consistent socialist property, then we are actually taking a retrograde step, because we are turning consistent socialist property into non-consistent socialist property, or allowing it to be so turned. So this is a very important question of principle for us, as communists. In the Political Committee—I repeat—the view has emerged that cooperative property should also be considered as consistent socialist property.'[73]

Cancelling the distinction between consistent and non-consistent state property allowed land hitherto cooperative or state in terms of use, but formally still private owned, to be classed as cooperative property.[74] The 1967 land law marked a new stage in the history of Hungarian land ownership. It was a weightier measure than any before in a process of abolishing private land ownership underway for almost twenty years.

Literature on economic-reform history tends to underline the immutability, in ideological and ownership relations and in the system of institutions for managing the economy, but the changes in agriculture are worth noting in this respect.

Under a Central Committee decision in February 1964, machine stations had to be wound up by the end of 1965 and replaced by repair shops.[75] This ended an important feature of *kolkhoz* feature of cooperative-farm management. The cooperatives bought about 11,000 tractors of various kinds (ploughing, universal, track-laying), 4505 threshing machines and 302 combine harvesters from the machinery stations in 1961–5.[76] The advantages of doing so eventually outweighed the great financial burden this placed on the farms, promoting them from hirers into owners able to dispose over them as their financial interests and needs dictated.

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[73] MOL M-KS-288. f. 4/83. ő. e. CC minutes, October 13, 1966. The author's emphases.

[74] The land law stated that land in cooperative use might only be inherited by a member of an agricultural cooperative. Non-members (outsiders such as those who had withdrawn from the cooperative or other heirs) had to transfer their entitlement to the land over to the cooperative. This was forced upon them in exchange for very small, five-year ground rents, so that the cooperative obtained these entitlements for very low compensation. Still, the new system left landowning cooperative members with rights of ownership acknowledged by the ground-rent payments. See Szakács 1992.

[75] Vass, ed. 1968, 63–64.

[76] Fazekas 1976, 194–5.

Another important institutional change was the establishment of a single Ministry of Agriculture and Food.[77] Amalgamation of the two portfolios produced a rational structure covering farm production, purchasing, sales and industrial processing. But it was more than a practical measure of government. It marked acceptance of a major conceptual, modernizing change that remains relevant to this day: the principle of the food economy.[78] Acceptance of the need for vertical integration appeared on the micro plane as well, for it became possible under Act III/1967 for agricultural cooperatives to engage in food processing and sales alongside their basic farming activities.[79]

Another substantive organizational and institutional change in agriculture was the establishment of a body to represent the interests of cooperative farms. The National Council of Agricultural Cooperatives and its regional alliances were founded in 1967.[80] The idea had been shelved in 1957, but regained support as relations between the state and the agricultural cooperatives shifted. After much argument, it was agreed in principle by the political leadership that the interests of the cooperative peasantry needed representing and that defending and this could best be done through elected bodies.[81]

One big objective of the 1968 economic reform was to open the economy towards the capitalist world. Entry into the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank was to have marked a stage along the way. Representatives of the Hungarian government initiated this during 1967, but a step of this magnitude necessarily involved consultation with the Soviet leaders, whose strong objections to membership of the IMF as a 'seemingly a UN institution, but in fact under American influence,' effectively ended the attempt.[82]

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77 Decree with Legislative Force No. 8/1967 amalgamated into the new ministry the Agriculture and Food ministries, National Forestry Directorate and State Surveying and Mapping Office. See Boreczky, ed. 1993, 323–6.

78 Csizmadia 1973, 39–55.

79 Zsuffa 1972.

80 MOL M-KS-288. f. 5/384. ő. e. PC minutes, January 4, 1966; ibid. f. 38/3. ő. e. Submission to Cooperative Policy Advisory Board on operating guidelines for collaboration and interest representation, February 1967; ibid. 6. ő. e. Submission to Cooperative Policy Advisory Board on creating territorial alliances of agricultural cooperatives, May 26, 1967.

81 The agricultural cooperatives joined the alliances voluntarily based on a resolution in the cooperative assembly. Each member cooperative sent delegates to take part in the work and direction of the alliance. There was no subordination or superiority in the cooperatives, so that cooperatives were not subordinate to their alliance and there was no hierarchical relation between the district alliances and the national body either. At ministry level, the National Council of Agricultural Cooperatives (TOT) had veto rights on legal regulations and price and financial measures fundamentally affecting the running and structural operation of agricultural cooperatives. If opinions differed, the minister concerned was obliged to take the dispute before the government for a final decision, even if publication of the regulation was otherwise within his/her ministry's competence. See Szemes 1970.

82 See Földes 1995, 39–53.

There is an interesting parallel in Hungary's 1967 attempt to join the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. Again there were misgivings in the Soviet Union, which was not a member, but Hungarian joined in 1967.[83] Next year the director-general paid a five-day visit, and in 1970, the FAO held its European conference in Budapest.[84]

The agricultural results obtained in Hungary at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s attracted increasing numbers of visitors: Swedish, British, West German and other delegations were followed in the mid-1970s by a visit form the US secretary for agriculture. The visit was returned in the following year, where the Hungarian agriculture minister viewed farming, farm organizations and research work.[85] Many other examples could be given to show the importance of agricultural diplomacy in offsetting the strongly Eastern orientation of the Hungarian economy. This expansion of scientific and commercial relations allowed Hungary to benefit from advanced production experiences in Western agriculture.

The measures mentioned show how the most radical changes of the economic reform occurred in agriculture, and not as the combined effect of sporadic, random circumstances, as the shift in investment structure in that period demonstrates. The Third Five-Year Plan enacted in June 1966 still gave development priority to heavy industry and raw materials, but the branch structure of the investments actually made over the five years departed in many respects from the plan. The share of industry, and especially heavy industry, began to fall in 1968, while that of agriculture began to rise in that year and those of the non-production branches, including communal fields, in 1969. The targets of the Fourth Five-Year Plan (1971–5) showed a further shift towards agriculture.[86] As one author put it, '"Magic barriers" of two decades' standing fell: the share of industry in socialist-sector investment sank below 40 per cent and that of heavy industry below 30 per cent, while those of agriculture and the non-material fields rose above 20 per cent.'[87]

Official statements made throughout the reform emphasized the immutability of economic policy, and this was taken over by the literature on the subject. Yet the shift in the sectoral structure of investment and the altering assessment of agriculture show that there was a change in economic policy after all, although it was not publicized.

This characteristic duality in Hungarian agricultural policy is connected with the fact that the Kádár regime was striving at once for continuity (to win Soviet approval) and for real

[83] The author's interview with Pál Romány, September 12, 2003.
[84] Gunst, Estók et al. 2003, 312.
[85] Ibid., 315.
[86] Pető and Szakács 1985, 531–4.
[87] Ungvárszki 1989, 48.

change (to improve economic performance and political legitimacy). Kádár and his team did not want an ideological clash over the Soviet model, which is why they repeatedly emphasized immutability in the 'outward' statements (to the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries) and in their discourse with domestic 'orthodoxy' (conservative forces). At the same time, the repeated crises of the Rákosi period and the tragedy of '56 inspired them to pursue a more independent line of domestic policy and depart from the Soviet model. But instead of reformulating theory, the party leadership took a pragmatic approach to finding a solution to the challenge.

The way pragmatic Kádárite policy operated can be seen well in agriculture, which was the area where a cautious, gradual departure from the Soviet pattern was made earliest, from the beginning of the 1960s onwards. The party leadership took into consideration the individual and group interests of agricultural producers, tolerating on the cooperative farms semi-legal elements of commodity and financial management that were superfluous to the original model of the command economy or even at variance with it.

Looking outwards—'where we stand with reform policy'

The ideological problems and clashes of interest were not resolved by the introduction of the 1968 reform; the asynchronous relations between official ideology, law and practice remained. Conspicuously inconsistent within the unchanged political structure and system of institutions was the view taken of agriculture, as the press of the time shows clearly. There was a strongly critical tone in most of the growing number of articles on agricultural subjects, especially on auxiliary activities by cooperative farms and the rising income levels among their members. The agricultural cooperatives were commonly described as 'cunning', 'aiming for unjustified profits' and 'pushing group interests'. Meanwhile criticisms of weaknesses in the cooperative form of ownership and abuses in pursuit of group interests began to appear in statements by leading politicians.

These outbursts seem all the stranger because agriculture, notably the cooperative sector of it, was the branch of the economy that grew fastest after 1968.[88] The rapid expansion of agricultural production had made possible the balanced growth of domestic food consumption, brought a conspicuous improvement in the living conditions of agricultural producers, and helped to improve the balance of trade by increasing agricultural exports. The whole population and the state itself had benefited, not just the agricultural producers. It was

[88] Fazekas 1976, 259–60.

strange indeed that the most successful branch of the economy should have been attacked from several sides in the first half of the 1970s.[89]

One decisive factor was an intervening change in the international assessment of the reform, precipitated by the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. The intended development of the NEM ran up against variously labelled measures that worked expressly in the opposite direction. Nonetheless, the basic institutions of the 1968 reform—abolition of planning directives, the market orientation of enterprises and management through economic regulators—were not endangered.

The economic, administrative and judicial offensive against the agricultural cooperatives was part of a wider process, riddled with inconsistencies, for which authors have yet to agree even on a name.[90] Among the terms found in works on the history of the reform have been retardation, standstill, suspension, and even reversal. This terminological hesitation also indicates how many problems connected with the 'semi-reversal' of the early 1970s remain unresolved. A decade and a half after the change of system, it is high time to began researching them systematically.

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[89] For more on ideological, economic and legal dimensions of the offensive against agricultural cooperatives, see Varga 2003.

[90] For issues raised by interpretation of the conservative offensive early in the 1970s, see Péteri 2004, 329–36.

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Tibor Valuch

From long house to square. Changing village living conditions in Sixties Hungary[1]

Introduction: features of the Sixties village

Frequent, often dramatic changes in the conditions governing post-war Hungarian villages brought a significant transformation in the way of life and lifestyle of some social groups. It is interesting to see how the changes in way of life followed from specific social processes and changes in stratification, mobility, thinking and values, and how they influenced the alterations in social structure, great and small. This study considers lifestyle questions connected with earnings and with housing conditions in the long decade that followed the completion of collectivization.

The rural way of life in the decades after 1945 tended to build up disadvantages that cemented a number of social differences. The historical peasantry suffered political and economic discrimination in the early 1950s, while the existing territorial impediments of the villages were exacerbated by a selective policy of territorial development. Suffice it to mention the transport problems, poor commercial services, public utilities and roads. The earnings of private farmers were confined by farming conditions that became uncertain after 1948. Often contradictory changes joined with repeated demands and opportunities for a new start.[2] Predictability and chances to plan ahead were replaced in rural life strategies by a will to survive and short-term thinking. Only at the end of the Sixties did new living conditions and stabilization emerge. This is all reflected in changing habits to do with earnings, consumption and investment, for instance in growing reliance on multiple sources of income, in changes in people's consumption goals, and in the tendency to invest surplus earnings in housing. Naturally, a part was played by reflex attempts to ease or overcome the social disadvantages. Self-sufficiency and interdependence remained characteristic of village people, for in that period it was seen as self-evident that great efforts were needed to obtain rural

[1] The chapter is taken from a longer study prepared with assistance from the National Scientific Research Fund (OTKA) and National Research and Development Competitions (NKFP), a János Bolyai research scholarship, and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences' Social Research Institute.

[2] Conditions for farming altered radically at least five times between 1945 and 1961. After the post-war land reform came the first wave of collectivization and 'anti-peasant agrarian policy' of 1948, the government programme of Imre Nagy in 1953, restoration of the Rákosi system early in 1955, a limited return to peasant farming at the end of 1956, and the final collectivization of 1958–9.

living conditions similar to those enjoyed in the towns. That may have been one reason why the urge to improve standards of civilization was strong enough to transform villages in little more than a decade.

What is the connection between collectivization and lifestyle change? With the end of family farming, changing conditions began to break down the system of an extended family spanning generations, as livelihoods came to depend on work organized on a collective, not a family basis. As one scholar put it, 'Neither in choosing a workplace to provide a livelihood nor in spending the income was there further need for close integration within the work organization of a family undertaking, binding members of the extended family to a house used in common geographically as well. As cohabiting generations became economically independent, it also became possible for people to leave the common dwelling.' From the late Sixties and early Seventies onwards, 'regular flows of hitherto unobtainable income gave new chances of changing living conditions and setting up a separate home even to strata who had shared the life of the [country's] "three million beggars".'[3] This all led to a type of consumer activity whose most conspicuous signs were house building and modernization.

Some characteristics of income and consumption[4]

During the period of limited return to peasant farming that followed the 1956 Revolution, the agricultural and net gross income of private farmers with over seven *hold* (4 ha) of land exceeded that of cooperative members and state-farm workers. It seemed to many people, in the period up to 1958, that independence could become a way of life providing a relatively stable income. And curiously, the incomes of small and medium-scale farmers grew by an average of 6–7 per cent during the 1958–62 period of collectivization, while those of cooperative members eased by 1–2 per cent.[5]

Collectivization turned rising numbers of peasant families into wage and salary earners. In some cases, this was because they changed occupation, in some because one or more family members found work outside farming, and in some because the cooperatives too, by the end of the Sixties, were making regular wage-like payments to their members. To have two sources of income became a persistent family strategy.

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3 Kenéz 1978, 6.

4 Valuch 2003a.

5 *A parasztság egyes…* 1964, 12. This is also interesting as conditions for private farming would have deteriorated in that period, yet farming in agricultural cooperatives was on a very low level during the collectivization. Smallholders in the transitional period were quick to spot sales opportunities caused by production losses during the reorganization.

Most earnings in the private farming period came in during the harvests, which meant it was concentrated into an intensive two or three-month period that coincided with the peak in production-related expenses as well. The spread of peasant incomes over the year remained uneven after collectivization as well. Years went by before work units and advances made on them were superseded by regular monthly payments.

It soon emerged that the work-unit system could not provide personal incentives. Most cooperatives tried to replace it with a system of crop sharing and rental that reflected real interests. Initially high, the proportion of payments in kind fell steadily in the second half of the Sixties in favour of cash payments.[6] Another big change came at the end of the decade. Apart from evening out over the year, earnings could be augmented with produce sales from members' domestic plots, paid for after the end of the business year, during the traditionally lean time at the end of winter.

The level of income in peasant society was generally lower than the average for other social groups, between which there was strong differentiation, of course. The Central Statistical Office income survey of 1962[7] showed a clear correlation between income and earlier social situation. Stratification according to size of earlier holding was reflected in the income distribution within the cooperative. In other words, the agricultural incomes of those who had had medium-sized or large holdings were perceptibly greater than of those who had farmed small or dwarf holdings or no land at all. This meant in consumption terms that 'a higher proportion of the consumption of peasant families living at the lowest income level'[8] was covered by their own production than was the case with higher-income families. The proportion of income in kind from agricultural cooperatives was highest where total earnings per family member were lowest. The extra income earned from selling small product surpluses or income in kind from cooperatives played an important part in ensuring a secure livelihood and in family prosperity. The proceeds would usually become apparent in a rise in private consumption. Later, income from household or smallholder production played a considerable part in restratifying society in the villages. Housing construction became the most obvious sign of improved income and greater prosperity. According to the statistics, income from household or auxiliary farming was usually higher than income from work on the cooperative, during the years after collectivization.[9]

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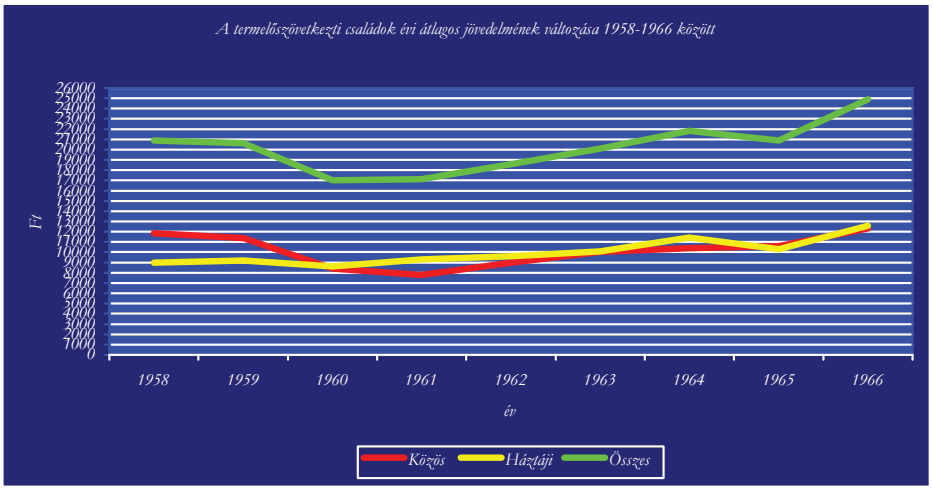
6 Varga 2001.
7 *A parasztság egyes…* 1964.
8 *A parasztság keresletváltozásának…* 1962, 9.
9 For detail, see Valuch 2003c.

Figure 1. Change in the annual average incomes of cooperative-farm households in 1958–66



Red: Collective; Yellow: Household; Green: Total

Sources: *A mezőgazdasági…* (1961); *A mezőgazdasági…*(1968).

Uncertain income relations in the first half of the Sixties[10] slowly stabilized in the second. Non-wage earnings increased in importance, especially after cooperative members became entitled to old-age pensions. By the latter half of the decade, about half the aggregate earnings increment derived from wage increases, a third from families having more than one earner, and a fifth from income outside wages, such as higher social benefits. There was an indirect improvement when cooperative members and their dependants became entitled to health insurance—earlier high health-care costs eased substantially.

Expenditure, of course, rose at about the same rate as earnings. Consumption patterns in rural families in this period[11] were influenced by a backlog of consumption postponed during the period of acute shortage in the Fifties. Urban and rural households were spending the extra in different ways in 1965. Worker and employee families spent about half the excess on food, a third on manufactures and clothing, and a quarter on services. Peasant families and those with two earners spent hardly a third of the increment on food, almost half on manufactures (mainly building materials) and less than a fifth on services.[12] By mid-decade,

[10] A full account would need to include invisible earnings (e. g. fodder and tools provided free of charge for household farming) and extra gain from reciprocal labour and services between cooperative members, for which there are not even estimates available.

[11] Vági 1993.

[12] *Háztartás statisztika…* 1967.

the caution about private investment caused by collectivization began to ease, as the growing number of houses built shows *(Figure 2)*.

Rural households lagged behind urban in level of facilities, not least because they were still, understandably, more concerned to buy tools for household farming than articles for the home. The changes in consumption structure were also affected strongly by socio-political changes. Changes in demand for various articles showed a correlation with activity and changes in that. A decisive majority of rural families in the period of private farming formed a production unit, so that their consumption preferences differed from those of the family of a wage-earning cooperative member, a clerk, an official, or an urban worker. The consumption priorities of the peasantry altered once the collectivization was over, as purchases to assist production yielded precedence to personal consumption, which became dominant. For most peasant families seemed to have lost much of their economic role, task and determination in the reorganization. It only turned out later that a complex transformation (with apparently superfluous victimization) had occurred in the farming system of rural families. Land ownership had yielded to intensive labour, and with chances of property acquisition curtailed and earnings understandably diverted to consumption and raising living conditions, as increasing stocks of consumer durables, rising expenditure on housing construction and modernization of the housing stock showed.

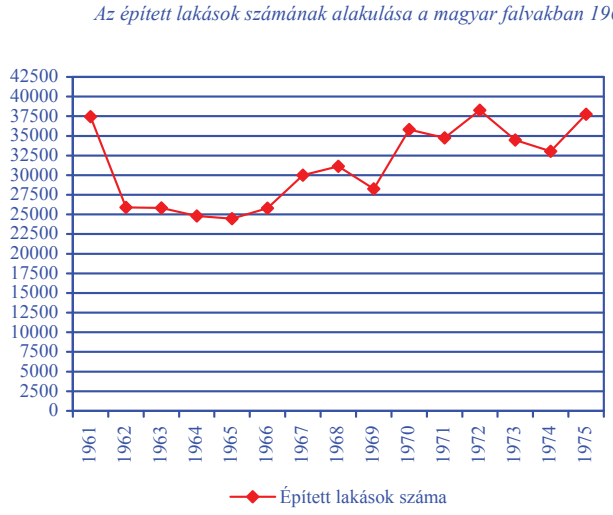
Housing construction and housing conditions

Village housing conditions improved to a small extent between 1949 and 1960, with the proportion of adobe houses declining and room numbers rising. But the level of furnishing and facilities hardly changed in the 1950s. There were 1.57 million dwellings in Hungary's villages in 1960, with 5.8 million inhabitants, i. e. an average of 363 persons per 100 homes. According to the 1960 census returns, 57 per cent of the country's residential buildings and 60 per cent of the stock of dwellings were in the villages, while the rural population had risen by 1.69 million in ten years.

The statistics show a decline in the propensity to build during the collectivization period, with the number of rural dwellings completed hardly reaching half the national average and investment propensity sharply reduced. According to a survey at the time, 'The peasantry [in 1960] is spending an ever greater proportion of its income on housing

construction, extension and maintenance.'[13] Within a year of the collectivization campaign finishing, however, there had been a sharp fall in the propensity to build, with the number of completions declining by a third. The uncertainty about future income developments deterred many people from embarking on building a house or a flat. That caution remained typical until the mid-Sixties, when the propensity to build began to rise again as the cooperatives gradually strengthened their position and cooperation developed between the household farms and large-scale farms. In 1961, the last year of collectivization, 37,454 dwellings went up in Hungarian villages. In 1965, there were only 24,461 and the 1961 level was surpassed only in 1972, when 38,263 new homes were completed, nine-tenths of them privately *(Table 2)*.

Figure 2. Construction of residential houses in Hungarian villages in 1961–75 (thousands of dwellings completed)



The relatively low level of rural housing provision is apparent in the average of 131 rooms per hundred dwellings. Most of the rural population lived in one-room dwellings in the collectivization period. The increasing size and number of rooms in new houses and demographic factors such as emigration and smaller families led to a fall in the density of occupation over the decade, but a slower one than in the national average. The 1960 census still recorded 600,000 adobe and mud-walled dwellings. Most of the rural population (93.5 per cent) had no modern conveniences at the beginning of the Sixties. Those with full

[13] *A parasztság keresletváltozásának…* 1962.

conveniences accounted for 2.5 per cent of the total and those with partial conveniences for another 4.0 per cent. These provision indices improved relatively little up to 1970.

Table 1. Dwellings according to level of facilities and type of settlement, %

Settlement type	*Modern conv.*	*Partial conv.*	*No conveniences*	*All*
Budapest	55.7	10.4	33.9	100.0
Other towns	37.0	9.0	54.0	100.0
Villages	*6.5*	*9.3*	*84.2*	*100.0*
All	24.6	9.5	65.9	100.0

Source: *Az 1970-es népszámlálás…*

Statistically, the changes in rural housing construction in the Sixties appear in 1970 figures showing that the number of one-room dwellings had fallen by 202,000 in ten years, that of two-room dwellings had risen by 264,000, and that of dwellings with three or more rooms had risen from 44,000 to 140,000. Not in every case had a new house been built, of course. The rural housing stock increased by 160,000 dwellings over the decade, so that renovations, alterations and extensions must have played an important role as well. The proportion of one-room dwellings fell from 63.6 per cent in 1960 to 45.5 per cent, while that of two-room dwellings rose from 33.5 to 46.2 per cent and that of dwellings with three or more rooms from 2.9 to 8.3 per cent. Yet 53.59 per cent of rural homes in the Great Plain counties (Csongrád, Békés, Bács-Kiskun and Hajdú-Bihar) still had a single room.

Table 2. The size distribution of village dwellings, 1949–70, %

Year	*1 room*	*2 rooms*	*3 or more rooms*	*All*
1949	73.1	24.2	2.7	100.0
1960	63.6	33.5	2.9	100.0
1970	44.5	47.4	8.1	100.0

Source: Oros 1994, p. 67.

Table 2 shows a decisive increase in the number of living rooms in rural homes in the Sixties, from alteration of existing dwellings and from construction of new housing with two or more rooms. A basic modern requirement was electricity. In January 1960, there was no electricity supply in 13 per cent of villages—almost 400 communities—and where there was, less than two-thirds of the dwellings were connected.

Access to electric power *(Table 3)* was a major instigator of change in the rural way of life. The provision of public utilities still showed very wide differences at the end of the Sixties: 53 per cent of dwellings in Komárom County had mains water *(Table 4)*, but only 8 per cent in Szabolcs-Szatmár and 5 per cent in Hajdú-Bihar County.

Table 3. Changing proportions of dwellings with mains electricity, by type of settlement, 1949–70, %

	1949	*1960*	*1970*
Budapest	89.9	98.9	99.6
Other towns	64.5	84.3	93.3
Villages	*25.4*	*61.4*	*86.2*

Source: *Az 1970-es népszámlálás…*

Lower room numbers and higher numbers of family members meant that rural homes in the Fifties and Sixties tended to be more densely occupied than urban ones. Looking at occupations in 1970, the density of occupation was highest in rural homes where the head of household was a manual non-agricultural worker: 366 persons per 100 dwellings. The figure

for those in manual agricultural work was 351, but their homes were the worst equipped: only 2.3 per cent had a flush toilet in 1970, 5.1 per cent indoor plumbing, and 78.9 per cent mains electricity.

Table 4. Changing proportions of dwellings with mains water, by type of settlement, 1949–70, %

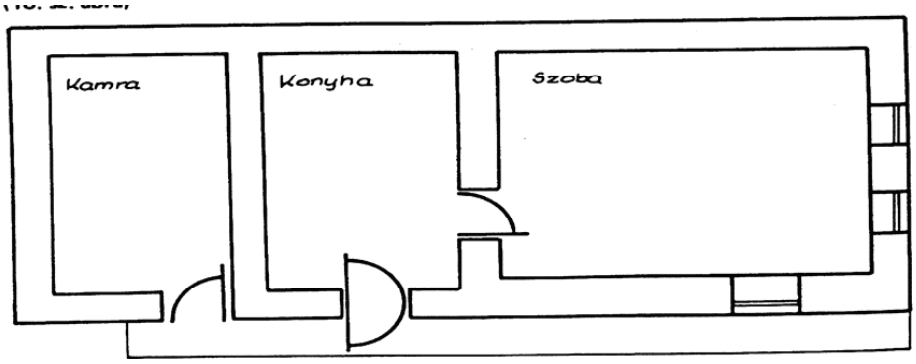
	1949	*1960*	*1970*
Budapest	6.6	73.3	84.5
Other towns	18.1	27.7	49.4
Villages	*1.1*	*3.1*	*10.8*

Source: *Az 1970-es népszámlálás…*

Adobe still dominated in rural building in 1949: 77.6 per cent of dwellings were built of it. The proportion eased to 73.4 per cent by 1960. Even in 1970, almost two-thirds of the rural housing stock (65.4 per cent) had adobe, mud or beaten earth walls, a quarter had brick, and less than 10 per cent used stone, concrete, blocks or panels.

The outward appearance of the villages altered over the period. Rural housing construction in the mid-Sixties followed earlier traditions of a usually oblong plan, end-on to the street, with the house divided into a room, kitchen and other area or store.

Figure 3. Plan of the general type of traditional village house divided into three areas



From left to right: store, kitchen, room.

Such a traditional house was an average of 6–7 m wide and 14–16 m long. The other characteristic type in the mid-20th century was a so-called bourgeois peasant house with four or more rooms. The width was similar, but it would have a veranda running its length, which might be 9–10 m. The building material was stone in the hills and adobe, or more rarely brick in the plains. The floor in a traditional house would be boards in the rooms and earth in the other premises, or more rarely, among richer peasants, a hard finish. Alterations in the first half of the 20th century meant it was no longer typical to have a free-standing kitchen hearth with a smoke hole in the rafters in the decades after the Second World War. In most places, these kitchens had been given an attic by the end of the 1940s. Such houses were designed and built so that another room, store or farm building could be added later. Each district had its architectural peculiarities, but the plans of rural Hungarian dwellings were very similar. These traditional styles of building were squeezed out in the second half of the 20th century and the materials changed radically as well. Buildings of beaten earth or adobe were steadily superseded by brick buildings and rye or reed thatch by tiled roof structures.

The first step in modernizing old houses was partial or total renovation. The roof structure would be renovated and durable plaster might be applied to the walls. The next step was to change the windows for larger ones. Then the street fronts would be rebuilt, and if the width of the plot allowed, an extra room facing the street would be added. Inside the yard, the area before the kitchen would be turned into an entrance hall. During this type of reconstruction, the separate ‘summer kitchen’ would often be demolished or moved

elsewhere, so that the plan of the house became almost square. The fourth step might be to build a new dwelling house. Such houses would have a square plan with a greater area than the old—70 or 80 sq. m— and contain at least two rooms, a kitchen and a bathroom, as well as outbuildings for household farming. The old peasant houses survived to different extents in different parts of the country. As an authority pointed out in the late 1970s, 'Two versions of modernization are found in renovated peasant houses. They either continue the straight row by adding a bigger kitchen and a bathroom or build the extension at right angles to the existing house.'[14]

The fate of traditional buildings was decided not only by fashion and changes in customs and micro-social expectations, but by their condition. Old houses in good condition were more likely to be renovated. Those that did not lend themselves to extension would be demolished. Alterations would usually increase the number of rooms. The store would often be turned into a bathroom and the oblong plan of the house into an L shape by an extra room facing the street. The kitchen and bathroom were often side by side, after conversion of the stores, or partly because the kitchen had previously been the place for washing. Windows grew bigger, so that modernized peasant houses were significantly better lit. Such houses would have electricity, mains water and a system of drains leading to a septic tank. The living area usually increased at the expense of the farm buildings or by changing their function. It was also common for verandas to be built in, turning them into corridors or storage space.

The hearths that had served for cooking and heating were often replaced in the Sixties by stoves or iron ranges, or in the Seventies by gas cookers. The big step of introducing piped water into the home had become general in houses built or modernized in the Seventies. Due to infrastructural inequalities in the settlement pattern, it was not exceptional for the bathroom and WC to be installed before the water supply. Curiously, rural families had to make much bigger contributions to installing water, sewage and gas mains than urban families did.

The scale of rebuilding or decision to build a new house depended strongly on the age structure and income of families. Members of the oldest generation usually had to make do with full or partial renovation, as they could not afford more on their small pension entitlements after a few years' membership of the cooperative. Most of them undertook the window change, which altered the appearance of the frontage, but more thorough alteration or house building was characteristically done by the middle aged or the young, with the stable earnings. This was the most capital-intensive undertaking in that period. It normally required

[14] Nagy 1979a.

at least two earners in the household, regular earnings, and for younger people, major support from parents or even the extended family.

Initially, most new houses were single-storey, but a partial or complete upper storey was becoming common in hilly districts. The traditionally spare decoration gave way to freer decorative treatment of skirtings, pillars and terraces. It became increasingly common in the mid-Seventies to add premises to the new house for additional income generation, such as a workshop, garage, tool shed or stores, and this helped to increase the number of houses with two storeys. Sometimes the expansion of living space was impeded by the building regulations and architectural attitudes of the time. According to the dominant attitudes in the early Seventies, for instance, most designers were concerned to minimize the size of home required for the size of family. This space-minimizing approach to design influenced loan conditions as well. Those building a bigger home than they were 'entitled' to were denied a loan or paid much more for it. Housing was one of the unsolved problems in Hungary at the time and many families understandably tried to build a home big enough to house grown-up children as well. Housing was also seen as a capital investment and a legitimate use of savings, so that stipulated dimensions were often exceeded.

The presence or size of outbuildings and the functions they performed depended on way of life. Where auxiliary earnings were high, a whole row of farm buildings would be built behind the house. Where self-sufficiency was the aim, a shed for garden tools and stables for small-scale livestock farming would be enough. These were not usually built to any high standard. There were problems in some cases because the new square houses built according to standard, ready-made designs could not be extended as easily as traditional peasant houses could. According to another author in the Seventies, 'The signs of lifestyle change show that the younger generation, if they keep livestock at all, will buy in fodder instead of growing it themselves. This leaves some of the earlier buildings for fodder storage superfluous. The storage required comes down to a single fodder shed, for which space can be found in the basement of the house.'[15] Multi-functional outbuildings (barn, garage and woodshed) were built in many places.

The demands and expectations of house-building altered somewhat in the years after the completion of collectivization. The production aspects had been decisive earlier, with the size and layout of the house and yard and the positioning of the outbuildings decided by the needs of the family farm. The plans and siting of houses built in the second half of the Sixties

[15] Kenéz 1978b, 28.

and the absence of farm buildings reflected the change of function, until auxiliary and small-scale farming became important again. The family served decreasingly as a production unit, so that the farming functions of the home were relegated in favour of comfort considerations. The square, pavilion-roofed houses that proliferated in the countryside reflected the changes in social, economic and living conditions in their appearance. By the beginning of the Seventies, dwelling houses built since collectivization retained only restricted, secondary farming functions. This appeared most clearly in the addition of outbuildings of gradually diminishing height.

The immediate effect of the lifestyle change also appeared in the way the new houses departed from traditional forms. A new house gave its owner a chance to express change in social status, a real or imagined advancement in local society, or a distancing from the trappings of peasant society. However, methods of building were also determined by the quality of the materials available and the money available. Nor should it be forgotten that basic civilized needs often lay behind the increasing rural inclination to build at the turn of the Sixties and Seventies. Villagers, unlike townsfolk, often relied wholly on self-organization as they set about altering their surroundings, and architectural fashion would play a strong part alongside financial constraints.

Improving their living conditions involved rural people in much greater expense of effort than urban people. Practically all dwellings in the villages were built with their owners' own resources until the end of the Fifties, except in mining villages and among workers on state farms or farm-machinery stations, who took precedence over the agricultural self-employed when it came to applying for loans. Housing loans did not become more widespread until the mid-Sixties. Even then, the modest loans available were taken out sparingly, as much out of traditional peasant caution as the relatively low levels of rural incomes, for debt was indeed an added risk few would have wanted to take amidst the economic uncertainties created by collectivization. These factors reinforced the dominance in rural housing construction of building one's own house or relying on extended family and friends. *Kaláka*, the rural system of mutual assistance in house-building and other tasks, reduced costs, but it tied up spare time for years to come as debts of work to relatives and friends were repaid.

It was still common in the Fifties and Sixties for families building a house to reduce costs by making even the wall materials themselves, so that almost everything was self-made except windows, doors and roof structure. 'Cooperative workers built in this fashion in the first decade after the cooperatives were formed because their cash earnings were still very

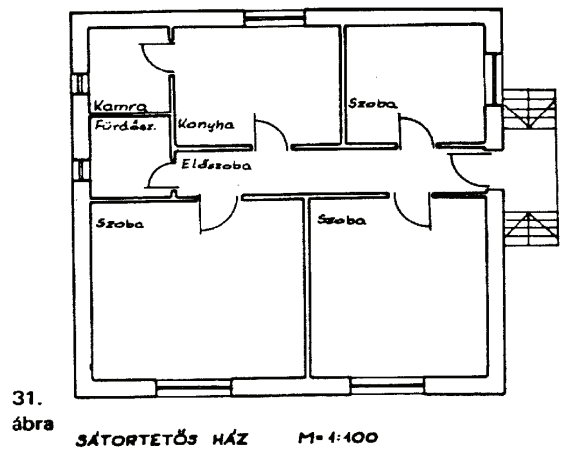
low. Their earnings in kind covered their direct livelihood, so that building costs could not be subtracted from them… The stabilization of cooperative incomes… increasingly allows village households to build out of their cash funds, but those with low incomes still use of the technique of converting expenditure on building materials into expenditure of labour, while the system of work exchanges and building in stages necessarily survive very widely, of course.'[16]

The rapid spread of the square house was spurred not only by changing conditions and ready-made designs, but by fashion and the support given to it by local bricklayers. Many people thought that the process of 'freeing themselves' from the burdens of the peasant life of previous decades should be expressed in such a radical change in their immediate environment. Moreover full or partial rejection of the shape of house associated with the standards of the historical peasantry also marked an identification with the urban way of life, an adjustment to it, and a desire for social advancement.

Early square houses with pavilion roofs had the kitchen and one room leading off the entrance hall and a further room and a store leading off the kitchen. Later designs had an entrance hall or corridor 1.5–2.0 m wide dividing the house roughly in half. There would be two rooms facing the street, with the kitchen and often a third room facing the yard, along with a store and a bathroom. Window sizes were greater, but this was often because ready-made windows were only obtainable in a standard size of 1.5 by 1.8–2.0 m.

[16] Kenéz 1978a, 68.

Figure 4. Plan of a typical square house with a pavilion roof, scale 1:400



From left to right: store, kitchen, room, bathroom, entrance hall, room, room.

The earlier oblong plan gave way to a square plan of 8 by 8 or 10 by 10 m. Moving in would take time: 'The first to be occupied would be the rear tract facing the yard, i. e. the kitchen, the small room and the store, with the corridor from which they opened. This arrangement strongly resembled the old type of building with three divisions leading off a veranda. The next to be occupied would be the room further from the entrance, which would become the living room, so that the small room went to the old people or the children. The room on the street side nearer to the entrance, the future "best room", was left half-completed in many cases, as was the bathroom.'[17] During the building or in subsequent years, mains water, electricity and drains would be installed, but the outside lavatory would be kept for a while. According the investigations of Katalin S. Nagy, more than a third of the houses in Telkibánya in 1975 had bathrooms, about half of which were in use. There was mains water in a sixth of the houses, but a water closet in only a tenth. Alongside the wood-burning stove in the kitchen, it was increasingly common to have a cooker fuelled by bottled propane-butane gas.

Work by Ágnes Losonczi in Békés County[18] was designed to learn about the ideal village home. Rather more than half the respondents thought the ideal would be a family house with a small garden and a quarter a family house with a large garden. One respondent

[17] Nagy 1979b, 83.
[18] Losonczi 1977, 426–9.

in ten preferred a flat in a building of several storeys, and the rest a flat in a large house. The housing-estate flats of the period were by no means ideal in the respondents' eyes. The desire to follow an urban pattern translated primarily into adopting the norm of a petty-bourgeois family house or improving the level of facilities in the home. At the same time, owning a family house and the small garden round it perpetuated a small-scale ownership mentality. Furthermore, the garden round the house made an important contribution to self-sufficiency and auxiliary earnings.

The outward appearance of the home depended strongly, in rural areas, on the expectations of the community and the scope open to its members, the internal structure and social position of the family. How the plot or the rooms were used depended not only on custom, but on the financial position and occupation structure of the family concerned. The home was also an item of property, of course, in fact the only piece of property that could be legally owned in the 1949–89 period.

An important architectural change was that the traditional peasant houses allowed other elements into the appearance of the village as well. Hitherto, the square houses had 'squeezed out the natural spatial elements. Now two-storey buildings are towering over them or being built in front of them, so that the street gains a narrower, more closed appearance. This wall-like closure of the street scene becomes especially oppressive and unresolved where new houses have been built up to the pavement without a front garden and with no garden or yard area between the houses, so that a street of densely built, two-storey houses emerges.'[19] Another factor behind the dominance of box-like houses, besides fashion and restricted scope, was that many of the early standard designs were for houses with pavilion roofs. These featured in the National Savings Bank brochure outlining the housing-loan terms as the cheapest type of building, so that the credit provider was also pressing for similar designs. Neighbours frequently passed designs to each other, for which the building authorities usually gave planning permission after only minor changes. The relative monotony was increased by the technological constraints of a limited range of building materials, doors and windows. The non-too-imaginative development of the appearance of the village was not primarily a question of consumer indifference, more of a combination of several influences acting upon each other.

According to research by Annamária Lammel, the 70 new houses were built in the village of Atkár between 1960 and 1980 could be divided into two types according to their

[19] Kenéz 1978b, 9.

plan. One type had an area of 80–130 sq. m, divided into two or three rooms, an entrance hall, a kitchen and a bathroom or space for one, with a pavilion roof and roller shutters. The other type was more urban in style, with two storeys and a floor area of 150 sq. m or more. Oil-fired heating was dominant in both types. 'The inhabitants of houses after both patterns consciously distinguish their family houses from the "tiny" flats in the towns. They are proud of the spaciousness of their homes, but they would like to imitate the level of facilities found in urban homes.'[20]

Local and national authorities tried to keep track of the changes and influence them by providing standard designs. In 1972, Bács-Kiskun County Council and the Ministry of Construction and Urban Development issued a national competition aimed at 'procuring design proposals for developing types of housing well suited primarily to the agricultural population.' The competition was expected to elicit ideas that would take into account the specific needs of people living by agriculture and the requirements for establishing modern living conditions. The initial assumptions emerged from the terms: the farming function of rural houses had been reduced since collectivization, but not ended. Household cultivation and auxiliary activities meant that apart from their dwelling function, rural houses still had a farming role, so that 'outbuildings should also be designed along with from the dwelling house—and in architectural keeping with it.'[21] The houses to be designed could be single or two-storey, with an area limited to 80 sq. m for a four-member or 100 sq. m for a six-member family. The larger buildings had to be suitable also for cohabitation by several generations. The design stipulations for each dwelling already included a kitchen-dining area, a bathroom with space for a washing machine and spin drier, and a separate WC. The outbuildings to be designed for each category included a 'summer kitchen', premises for livestock, a store, a fuel shed and a garage. An important structural criterion was to be that it 'should be possible for the execution to take place domestically' (i. e. the house would be built by its future occupants). Installation of electricity and drinking water supplies was a general expectation.

The demarcation and usage of plots altered with the character of the houses. The important changes after collectivization were basically to do with changes in lifestyle: 'There is a stratum of industrial employees appearing in the villages and the lifestyle of those working in agriculture is also changing—as a result of the industrialized and centralized production offered by the cooperatives… Certain functions vanish, so that some areas become superfluous, but other demands appear (for instance, for car storage), which are met by

[20] Lammel 1984, 334.
[21] *Mezőgazdasági*…1973.

demolishing the unused outbuildings and building new ones, or by retaining and altering these… The front garden remains—increasingly just for flowers, while the yard becomes a mix-used area for access, keeping animals or other uses, and the back garden remains as a vegetable garden or orchard.'[22] But many aspects of the closeness to nature remained characteristic of a village way of life.

Furniture, fittings and use of space

Use of space and furnishing of rural dwellings altered steadily with the conditions, of course. 'The home does not just set the scale of opportunities in life—what is suited to everything in the protective, biological, family and social functions. Its framework of masonry also sets the quality of cohabitation and the course, level, content and even mood of daily life. The more the home's functions become confined to one room, the tighter the living space; the planer the furnishing, the less the scope for daily life to be differentiated and the narrower the space and scope for more complex and richer activities becomes. And the narrower in content the interior environment for daily life becomes, the greater the frequency and scope for conflict among the cohabitants.'[23]

The role of the kitchen within the living space was reduced only slowly. Most events in a family's daily life continued to occur there in the new square houses. There they cooked, lived, received visitors and slept, and that was often where the children studied. It took time before use could be made of the larger space. But the size of the kitchen in altered and the newly built homes was generally reduced as a proportion of the floor area. Separate bathrooms were still not typical in the Sixties, so that people washed in the kitchen, which also affected the way it was furnished.

New and renewed village houses had broad double windows looking out on the street. The attics lost their function as stores for agricultural produce, but the objects of peasant life still dominated in the yards of modern houses, although great changes occurred there as well. The stables would give way to garages and the sheds to workshops. Nonetheless, village houses still had a real farmyard, for the remaining stables, stalls, sties and tools remained essential to the dual life of an employee and a small-scale producer, or an employee and a self-employed worker. 'The arrival of the new buildings with pavilion roofs meant that a bourgeois style of building became general and many rational aspects of peasant building

[22] Nagy 1979b, 64.
[23] Losonczi 1977, 415.

were abandoned. Apart from the traditional north-south alignment, village buildings so stood on the plot that the premises could be increased without any problems arising with their appearance. The new buildings with their square plan and pavilion roofs were a completed unit, so that any addition became an appendage. The person building a house with a pavilion roof was not even thinking of adding further accommodation for the next generation.'[24] Another important and frequent change was in the alignment of the house to which people were used.

Rural homes retained an important function of display. People would strive to present the rooms appropriate to their position in society and cultivate the usage habits appropriate to them. The display was intended for the immediate and the wider community. Most often it was designed to express a change in social position, even if it sometimes demanded inordinate sacrifices and expenses. The display area in rural homes usually remained the best ('clean') room during the Sixties. What brought change was the spread of television, for the set, as a rare treasure signifying status, would often be placed in the best room. This altered the uses to which the best room was put. It became the scene of family and social cohabitation while the broadcasts were on, and this cultural function eventually turned the best room into a living room after the urban pattern, although the display function remained. This function people tried to emphasize through the furniture, fittings and decorative objects.

While the outward appearance and plan of rural houses were altering rapidly, equipment was also being replaced and furnishing customs underwent important changes. The development of new customs often took a long while, for it involved abandoning old habits, changing the way of life, rising to a higher level of civilization, acquiring habits to match and introducing new daily activities. In many places 'the bathroom remained a spotless spectacle (for instance, because it could not be heated in winter). Next to the kitchenette being installed would be the new dining area, but life would go on in the old kitchen or on the veranda. There visitors would be directed, the children study, and the young women doing piecework at home keep their sewing machine. The articles given a place in the house would have functions at odds with their purpose, or be bought simply as prestige consumption. The new set of living room cupboards or the new suite of furniture would remain almost untouched.[25]

Kitchen equipment and furniture in the modern sense became general in rural households in the decades after the Second World War.[26] The decisive factors in this respect

[24] Nagy 1979a, 14.
[25] Lammel 1984, 335.
[26] Szarvas 1988.

were certainly the steady standardization, the reduction of local and regional differences, and imitation of urban patterns. The equipment in the home and household allows the desires to rationalize the way of life to be traced. The changes, replacement of equipment, partial or total changes of function for areas of the home, and development of new habits of spatial usage all too time, of course, and depended strongly, for instance, on each family's social position, income relations and ties between generations. Older people usually stuck to their accustomed ways and everyday possessions. Most old people living alone had in any case a very small income (ground rent or a pension from the cooperative) that precluded the changes. The finances of those on lower incomes were so stretched by modernizing their home or by building a new house that they could only replace items of equipment by stages.

Among the most important pieces of furniture in a well-to-do peasant home up to the turn of the Fifties and Sixties was a symmetrically or centrally arranged, usually hand-made suite consisting of two wardrobes, two night tables, a dressing-table mirror, two beds, and a set of chairs and a table. Arranged symmetrically, the beds would be along the outer walls with the wardrobes between and the chairs and table in the middle. In a centred arrangement, the beds were placed side by side, pointing into the middle of the room, with the table and chairs at the foot and the wardrobes along the walls. At the beginning of the period, a third layout known as the corner arrangement was still common. The table and a L-shaped bench would occupy one of the corners away from the street, with a fireplace or stove and the beds along the walls opposite.[27] According to Katalin S. Nagy, the feudal/peasant mode of furnishing was still typical of traditional, three-room houses in the Sixties. Function-dominated furnishing and use of space were set by an established order according to criteria of work and prestige: 'The tradition of this type of furnishing even survives strongly in places where peasant culture, customs, norms and objects appear to have been wholly rejected.'[28] When several generations living under one roof, the house still had only one room in most cases. Only in wealthier homes with four or more rooms or even a separate bedroom would the youngest couple sleep their own, usually unheated room. Even in well-to-do families, separate children's rooms were not customary until the Seventies. Children in multi-generation families slept with their parents or grandparents. Only a minority of the space in the early square houses—the kitchen and one room—would be used every day, the rest serving for display. But newer, often two-storey houses tended increasingly to have separate rooms for each generation. The parents slept in a separate bedroom and the fashion for a

[27] For detail, see Nagy 1984, Fél and Hofer 1997, Paládi Kovács 1997, and Szuhay 1996, for instance.
[28] Nagy 1987, 69.

children's room spread. The biggest room—housing the television as well—acted as a combined living room, reception room and best room. In a two-storey house, the lower storey was the area for daily activities with the bedrooms above. (Bathrooms on the upper floor came into fashion in the 1980s.) The basement gained importance as a place for a garage, store and larder, and in some cases a summer kitchen, one of the most frequented parts of the house from spring to autumn. The ground-floor kitchen often had two entrances: one from the hall on the street side of the house and one from the yard, for direct access to the garden.

During the private-farming period, acquiring furniture and equipment for the house was looked upon as an investment for the coming years of establishing a family. Great care was taken with the quality of the purchases, which were seldom replaced. 'The norm in village societies up to the Seventies was for couples to live their lives amidst the furniture they assembled when they married or over the first few years of marriage. With couples who had married in the Fifties, this norm began to alter in the Seventies. In other words, a couple might buy several suites of furniture during their lives and change the objects around them several times.'[29]

The first important change in the system inside rural homes came in the latter half of the Sixties. The new furniture that appeared first in the homes of couples getting married at that time came from factories, instead of being handmade. There would usually be a double sofa-bed, two wardrobes, a polished table and four upholstered chairs. In the next period, beginning in the mid-Seventies, the wall-unit suites that became general in villages too usually consisted of two armchairs, two upright chairs, a low coffee table, a double sofa-bed and four or five sets of shelves. A further wave of modernization in the Seventies brought in the double bed. It became acceptable to have a separate dining area and the room-usage habits changed as the number of separate rooms in homes increased.

For decoration, the pictures of saints and family photographs that had been general began to be overshadowed by needlework, tapestries and traditional sheepskin cloaks. The decline in religious observance also meant that the 'holy corner' or shrine lost some of its function. For a long time, wrought-iron articles such as lamps, flowers and candlesticks became popular as a way of breaking the monotony of the wall units. Another popular solution was to use bottles of drink as decorative articles. Extension of the concept of decorative articles applied to urban as well as rural homes in the Seventies. From time to time, the decorative or prestige sides of new pieces of furniture or equipment come to the fore.

[29] Ibid., 714.

‘Villagers are much more anxious and careful with their consumer durables than townsfolk. The television set occupied a central place in Atkár homes, surrounded by pictures and ornaments and covered with an embroidered cloth. The refrigerator was singled out in the same way, to show what type and size the family had been able to afford.’[30]

Electrification of the villages was completed in 1966, but this did not at all mean that the supply had reached every house. The lack of mains water and sewage was a much bigger problem, and in the latter case, appreciable advances only began to be made in the Seventies. Homes away from the central area of the village were much worse off. Electric power obviously speeded up the changes in living conditions and lifestyle. It made the household tasks easier, altering the pattern of daily activity, allowing modern means of communication to spread, speeding up the changes in cultural consumption, and allowing other utilities to be introduced, as electric pumps and pressure tanks became indispensable. These changes were still felt only to a small extent in the Sixties, spreading on a mass scale only the in the following decade.

By way of a conclusion

The transformation of rural living conditions in the second half of the Sixties clearly tied in closely with the development in earnings. Events were also influenced by changing fashions and the conditions in each district and settlement. Because of the transformation, the district and regional differences in village buildings decreased significantly; a kind of architectural standardization took place. However, there remained differences that were dependent on the economic characteristics of each region and the social and income differences among the inhabitants. The changing appearance of the village expressed not only the desire of local society for better living conditions, but steady reproduction of wealth differences. Important parts were also played by state housing policy, the elimination of the historical peasantry and the transformation of the peasant way of life.

[30] Lammel 1984, 338.

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Eszter Tóth

Flats, gardens, oranges, Kennedy rings

Symbolic possessions depicted in life-course interviews with workers decorated in the socialist period[1]

1. Introduction

Members of the Liberation Brigade from the Budapest Hosiery Factory lined up excitedly outside Parliament on April 1, 1970. They were entering the building for the first time in their lives, to receive the State Prize 'in recognition of the achievements of their socialist brigade'.[2] 'When we received the award, I'd got my divorce not long before and that was all inside me, and I cried all the way as we went down the stairs in Parliament,'[3] the brigade leader recalled. She had been called into the factory director's office and told of the award only a week earlier. Everyone had got ready with great care. Erzsébet[4] and Manci were at the hairdresser's on March 31, but they weren't laughing as much as usual: there was a huge storm that day. They were in despair about having to accept the award with washed out hairstyles, but the hairdresser calmed them down and put plastic bags over their hair.[5] After receiving the prize, they were invited to the April 4[6] reception in Parliament, where they could catch sight of people they would normally see only on television or hear about in the newspapers. The celebrities were not the biggest excitement at the reception, though. That was the sight of the

[1] This study is based on the author's dissertation *Egy Állami Díjas női segédmunkásbrigád mikrotörténete* (Micro-history of a State Prize-winning brigade of unskilled female workers) (Budapest: Loránd Eötvös University of Sciences, 2004). The interviews quoted were made by the author.

[2] The State Prize (*Állami Díj*), instituted in 1963 after a Soviet pattern, was the highest form of state recognition for which a socialist brigade was eligible. It could be won by 'persons doing scientific and technical research and development activity, persons attaining outstanding results in socialist construction, innovators, and persons introducing new production methods, excelling in direction of production, showing an outstanding personal performance in production work, and excelling in healing, health-care development, education or teaching.' A State Prize first went a socialist brigade in 1965. By 1985, 44 brigades had received the honour, accounting for 4.76 per cent of all such prizes awarded. MOL (Hungarian National Archives) XIX–A–92. 13. d. Állami Díj bizottság (State Prize Committee). Nomination papers 1970; Pálné Darvas, Dr Tamás Klement and Dr József Terjék, *Kossuth díjasok és Állami Díjasok almanachja. 1948–1985* (Almanac of Kossuth Prize and State Prize winners 1948–85), (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó), 449; Decree with the Force of Law No. TVRGY. 1963/36.

[3] Interview with Mrs Vilmos S., September 4, 2001, 17.

[4] In this text, I have used the given names of interviewees. At that time, the name of a married Hungarian woman invariably consisted of the name of husband with the suffix *né*, meaning Mrs.

[5] The weather forecast agreed there would be cloudy periods with scattered showers and thunderstorms on March 31, 1970, and April 1 would be cloudy and wet, with highs of 10–15º C. *Magyar Hírlap*, March 31, 1970, 9; April 1, 1970, 8; Interview with Mr and Mrs György K., July 29, 2000, 31.

[6] Public holiday to mark the traditional date of the Soviet liberation of Hungary in 1945.

tables laden with everything from subtropical fruits to caviar, and the waiter in white gloves serving the red wine. However, they were too shy to help themselves to much of the fare.

The celebrations did not end in Parliament. At the April 4 ceremony at the factory, the prizewinners sat in the front row and were greeted specifically in the address. They had journalists after them for weeks, enquiring how they lived their daily lives. But the resulting articles said more about what their socialist brigade was like, how far they met official expectations, or how they had come to form a brigade in the first place.[7] They were congratulated by fellow workers and even the local doctor, and complimentary telegrams flooded in.[8] This, perhaps, was the one moment in these working women's lives when they might have felt everyone was worth the same and had equal opportunities in a socialist state. They had been semi-skilled operatives in the boarding shop of the Budapest Hosiery Factory for many years. Their shop had the lowest prestige even within the factory, as there was constant unbearable heat winter and summer and air full of steam and moisture. They were all middle-aged women when they received the prize. They had moved to Budapest just after the Second World War as girls of 16 or 17, from the poorest parts of villages or small towns, prompted by considerations of livelihood and by a desire for adventure, freedom etc.[9]

Lacking qualifications, they took work immediately on arrival in the city. They could also expect help from kin and from fellow villagers. Most of them entered domestic service, but seized the first chance to work in a factory instead in the early 1950s.[10] Some got married before starting factory work, but others not till later. In most cases, they chose to marry skilled workers. Many said the biggest struggle in that period had been finding a good workplace, not

[7] E. g., 'Állami Díjasok' (State Prize-winners), *Nők magazinja* 1970/4, 5; Mária Zsigmondi, 'Kitüntetés és rang' (Decoration and rank), *Nők Lapja*. April 4, 1970, 2; István György, 'Miért éppen a kilenc asszony?' (Why precisely these nine women?), *Népszabadság*, April 9, 1970, 4.

[8] *A Felszabadulás brigád naplója. 1969–1970* (Diary of the Liberation Brigade, 1969–70, ms.) Collection of Mrs Károly T; interview with Mrs János T., November 3, 1999, 12.

[9] A country girl's decision to migrate instead of choosing a partner and settling in her native community would result from a long, multifactoral process of decision-making. The factors would include forces binding her to her childhood home and ones drawing her to the city: income security, chances to study, and attractive and repellent stereotypes of the city such as 'glittering' or 'crime-ridden'. George Gmelch, 'Migration and adaptation to city life', in George Gmelch and Walter P. Zenner, eds, *Urban Life Readings in Archaeology* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1990), 190.

[10] The proportion of women entering industry began to rise only in 1951, with the first five-year plan. Before the war, unskilled female hands from the country had usually done seasonal urban work to earn money for their marriage portion and returned home in the summer for the harvest. For a detailed history of female migrant employment, see Gábor Gyáni, *Család, háztartás és a városi cselédség* (Family, household and urban domestics) (Budapest: Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1983). It became possible for rural women to gain a foothold in the city with factory labour during and especially after the Second World War. The associated migration burgeoned in the 1950s, but 'a radical change ensued in 1963: Budapest's industrial workforce began to decline and growth to give way to contraction.' Gyula Benda, 'Budapest társadalma 1945–1970' (Budapest society 1945–70), in: Nikosz Fokasz and Antal Örkény, eds, *Magyarország társadalomtörténete. 1945–1989* (History of Hungarian society 1945–89), III (Budapest: Új Mandátum, 1999), 14.

finding a husband. The workplace where they had then spent decades, often with a skilled-worker husband working there as well, was the Budapest Hosiery Factory, founded in 1951.[11] Most of them had one or two children by the end of the 1950s. According to the communist propaganda of the period, they were doubly privileged—as workers and as women—yet many had not been allocated state housing and had to solve their own housing problems or live in sub-tenancies or dank, unheated accommodation. Several had simply occupied an empty flat after the 1956 Revolution, for instance.

They experienced state intervention in their daily lives mainly at work, where they had to take part in work competitions and form a socialist brigade. It was advisable to join the communist party and have the husband in the Workers' Militia if they wanted to be in a favourable position to assert their interests. Unhealthy working conditions meant they faced as middle-aged women more frequent illness and faster physical ageing than their immediate superiors, who were not doing manual work. By the time of the award, some were divorced or widowed. The oldest were sent into retirement not long after receiving the State Prize.

According to the official parlance of the time, the brigade was at once a homogenous social group (manual workers) and a community founded on political norms (a socialist brigade). Yet the members, in repeatedly telling of their lives and the events important to them and of interest to the author, often emphasized the ways in which they differed from their peers, rather than resembled them. Only by ignoring certain features of their stories can a single, common, overall history be assembled. They each attributed in their life stories special importance to different stages and factors in their lives and underlined different identity-forming factors.

2. The research methods

The study rests principally on life-course interviews made at several times between 1999 and 2003 with brigade members, husbands, colleagues and superiors (23 persons). In addition, interviews were made in some cases with family members who had not migrated to the capital; although some of the latter had taken occasional work in Budapest, they had spent most of their lives in their native district, where they still lived (9 persons in Túrkeve, Mezőtúr and Zalaszentgrót).

[11] Imre Czeglédi, *A Gyulai Harisnyagyár 75 éve. 1900–1975* (75 years of the Gyula Hosiery Factory), (Gyula: A Budapesti Harisnyagyár Gyulai Gyára, 1975), 121; Resolution of the People's Economic Council, June 22, 1951 (Népgazdasági Tanács 243/11/1951).

The interviewing techniques employed resembled partly those devised by Gabriel Rosenthal, which are also used in Hungary,[12] since respondents asked for a chance to tell their life story, stressing the part in it played by their old factory and the state award they received. The methodology departed from this insofar as the respondent, depending on her character, would not always expected to tell her life story from start to finish. Some occurrences would be discussed with her repeatedly, almost forcing out of her repetitions of the stories interesting to the author. This allowed differences between versions to be analysed as well. The life-course interviews were interpreted as narrative constructs referring to the past.

The respondents belonged to three age cohorts. The two oldest members of the brigade were born in the early 1920s into a Budapest and an Abony worker family respectively, each having one older sibling. Members of the middle cohort were born in the 1927–34 period, all into agricultural families with several children, and had migrated to Budapest after the Second World War. Members of the third and youngest cohort were born about 1940 into working-class Budapest families. In most cases, they were immediate superiors of the unskilled female workers in the factory and the interviews with them were analysed mainly in the context of identity experiences related about the workplace.

The author reached group members for interviewing by being passed almost hand to hand (the snowball method). That method is used mainly for stigmatized groups reluctant to admit 'strangers' (interviewers). The respondents seem indeed to have viewed their old work and their State Award as a stigma in Hungary after the change of system. The pretext for the research given to them was that the author wished to write a history of their factory and was interested mainly in factory-related memories.

At the start of the research, the author arranged a brigade reunion in a restaurant they had often frequented after work. As the conversation warmed up, some members became progressively freer in their stories and talk. Interviewing them as a group gave added chances to hear the same stories told by several people and conduct multi-viewpoint analysis. Group interviews were also made with married couples and sibling pairs, the main gain being the help conversation partners gave each other with recalling successive stories, sometimes snatching words out of each other's mouths. This form of interviewing did not end with the respondent bringing the narrative up to the present day. Stories from different periods would be returned to by interviewees repeatedly in narrative form. Interviews were made with and without a tape recorder. The second method was prompted originally because several

[12] On how this applies to Hungary, see, for instance, Éva Kovács and Júlia Vajda, 'Mutatkozás. Zsidó Identitás Történetek' (Appearance. Jewish identity stories), *Múlt és Jövő*, 2002.

respondents refused to give a recorded interview, but said they would gladly talk to me about their lives. On the other hand, it was often found that those allowing the use of a tape recorder were embarrassed by it and could not relate freely. As soon as the tape recorder was switched off, they were away, even relating happily their childhood experiences. The tape recorder symbolized in a sense the expectations of public history: they were happiest to say into the microphone what they thought was historically 'important', while feeling it was superfluous to record what was inessential.

The advantage of the snowball method is that common acquaintances make it easier for a respondent to open up. Winning respondents' confidence is a fundamental and inescapable issue in oral history. A respondent is not a file in an archive, available to any who open it. It was easier to gain access to further conversation partners if the author could relate by way of introduction how other group members were living and what had happened in their families since the decades spent together. Initial confusion on the first visit would be dispelled by retelling stories heard from others. These retold tales allowed a respondent to confirm that the author had visited former work mates, and if they had talked, they could as well. Respondents who were not old members of the brigade were chosen from articles in the factory newspaper. That was necessary because the author was curious to know about the brigade's system of connections within the shop and factory. Respondents themselves drew attention to other people by talking of a typical episode in their lives or role in the workplace that aroused the author's interest (an amateur photographer, a young unmarried mother).

Especially interesting is what subjects count as taboo in relation to one's own family, but not in relation to others. Several others told versions of the incident to be kept secret, but not the respondent to whom it happened. One narrator, when telling taboo stories about others, would preface her words, 'It's not nice to say this, but…' or 'This is going to be nasty story…', she would say. A teller more closely associated with such a story would blurt it out, and having once begun it, tell it continuously in an unstoppable way. The intention in the interviews was to minimize the extent to which the situation had an 'official' tone. An interview in the classic sense is a dialogue between interviewer and respondent, whereas the aim here was to turn the occasion into a real conversation. This was important as a way of extricating the interviewer from an 'omniscient' role and perhaps avoiding the trap of having the respondent eventually say what the interview wanted to hear.[13] This can easily happen if

[13] On this problem, see Erzsébet Barát, 'A nők érdekében folytatott kutatás és korlátai' (Research in the interests of women and constraints on it), *Replika* 1999/37, 163–8.

the interviewer puts the question as something to be assessed or the respondent feels some role is being imposed and seeks to narrate accordingly.

Identity, over the life course, is interpreted here as a social construct that changes over one's life.[14] A life-course interviewee will describe several groups to which he or she relates. Recalled identities can be depicted as social constructs in which groups to which the subject has related over the life course bear symbolic importance.[15] Like identity, group is also a dynamic category altering over time.[16] There is alteration over time in the significance attached to specific groups during an individual's life course. That is reflected in life-course narratives by the significance attached to belonging to different groups at different times of life. The processes of distancing from some groups and approaching others may coincide, although life-course narratives are little suited to displaying such dynamic processes.[17] The one constant stable category found in the life-course narratives of the author's respondents was male or female gender identity (an Erikson identity category).[18] Ties to the workplace and experiences to do with the State Prize can be discerned as identity-forming factors in the narrative structure of the life-course interviews, as can identities linked to household or consumer goods, which were less accented in the propaganda of that time. The various identities feature with different emphases in their depictions of different periods, just as they do in the narratives of different brigade members. They were tied not only to their fellow prize-winning brigade members, the workplace 'collective' or the factory (which had failed by then), but to their places of residence or the Trabant car bought with the premium associated with the State Prize. The narrative structure was interwoven with emphasis and analysis of a great many ties, which made it easier for the author to understand the values by which these working women lived in the post-war decades. What is primarily analysed here in the narratives, where respondents repeatedly reinterpreted their relations to objects, is how they obtained such a special consumer good or dwelling. The study also looks at relations between neighbours, as a special aspect of a respondent's local identity.

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[14] Good summaries of research into identity to date appear in Györgyi Bindorffer, *Kettős identitás. Etnikai és nemzeti azonosságtudat Dunabogdányban* (Dual identity. Ethnic and national sense of identity in Dunabogdány), (Budapest: Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó/MTA Kisebbségkutató Intézet, 2001), 18–34; Ferenc Pataki, *Élettörténet és identitás* (Life story and identity), (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2001).

[15] Willem Doise, 'Social representations in personal identity', in Stephen Worchel, et al., *Social Identity* (London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1998; hereafter *Social Identity*), 23.

[16] Stephen Worchel, 'A developmental view of the search for group identity', in *Social Identity*, 73.

[17] On contrasts between individualism and collectivism, see Darío Páez, et al, 'Constructing social identity: the role of status, collective values, collective self-esteem, perception and social behaviour', in *Social Identity*, 213.

[18] See Erik H. Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle. Selected Papers* (New York: International University Press, 1959).

3. Óbuda and Békásmegyer: housing and neighbourhood

3.1 Tactics and strategies in the socialist housing market

One important element of social integration into the big city after migration is to find housing. Most subjects moved to the Óbuda district of Budapest after the Second World War, which they explained by saying that relatives already lived there or they found work in the neighbourhood. Secure housing and employment are essential for a young migrant to integrate into urban society. Those unable to lodge with kin either rented accommodation as subtenants or lived in as servants. Respondents in their life-course narratives described the process of acquiring housing as a struggle. Some, who had a stronger local identity, attached greater importance in their narration to their dwellings than others did. There were common, collective elements in the stories they told about their housing, one such being how they had managed to outwit the system of central housing allocation.[19]

Although housing was a constitutional right in the socialist state, state-allocated housing could only be gained through the housing department of the local council after years of waiting, unless applicants had contacts and acquaintances. There are hardly any references in archives of housing allocation to the housing situation of specific social strata or documents on how people in the socialist state obtained housing in the quasi-market for it . Yet each brigade member had a 'housing story' as a central element in her life-course narrative.

Respondents were not in a strong position in the housing market and had to resort to various practices to shorten the waiting period or obtain housing in other ways. Some occupied housing in 1956, paid in for cooperative housing, or concluded a maintenance contract with an elderly person, in return for the tenancy or ownership of a flat. None of the families tried to build a house from scratch, only to extend a house inherited or previously rented.

Óbuda traditionally presents a picture very similar to the old Tabán district. Novelist Gyula Krúdy presents both in his writings, with their quaint little taverns, single-storey houses and winding streets.[20] After compulsory purchase of property in Tabán speeded up in the

[19] On the problems of central housing allocation in the socialist period, see Iván Szelényi and György Konrád, *Az új lakótelepek szociológiai problémái* (Sociological problems of new housing estates), (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1969), 22–7. The authors establish from a survey of new housing estates that occupational status is a prime determinant of housing acquisition among social groups.

[20] Gábor Gyáni, 'Tabán: falu a nagyvárosban' (Tabán: village in the big city), in *Bérkaszárnya és nyomortelep* (Tenements and Slums), (Budapest: Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1992) 139–46.

1930s, Óbuda remained until the 1960s the only part of the city with a rural appearance. The girls moving up from the villages may have found this congenial. In the collective narratives about the capital, the process by which Óbuda lost its rural character and followed other districts in becoming a concrete jungle of prefabricated apartment blocks was depicted as a barbarian attack that murdered the quiet romanticism and bitter-sweet atmosphere of the little taverns and tiny workshops.[21] Demolition of rural-type housing in Óbuda and construction of the Óbuda and Békásmegyer housing estates between the late 1960s and mid-1980s were said officially to mark success in the 'first 15-year housing plan' of 1960. Single-storey slums had given way to healthy housing estates for the workers to move into.[22] Architectural discussion since the change of system has altered that verdict: destroying the old Óbuda housing and building housing estates were 'mistaken moves, almost entirely wiping out architectural edifices and settlement patterns of historical value.'[23]

Several respondents were directly affected by the rebuilding of Óbuda, as they had to move from accommodation in old Óbuda houses to flats in new housing developments. Many called the demolition and move a very difficult period in their lives. The workers at the Budapest Hosiery Factory appear also in the archives as people scarcely able to assert their interests during the compulsory housing exchange; they were assigned new accommodation further afield in Kelenföld or Békásmegyer, not on the nearby Flórián tér or Szőlő utca estates.[24] The prefabricated blocks of the 1960s were still being built on sites quite near the city centre, but by the 1970s, they were in more remote locations.[25]

The life-course interviews show that Teréz and László were the only two interviewees to be allocated new flats directly by the housing department. Their accounts show signs that they had to use connections to ensure that they received flats acceptable to them. When

[21] This was denied in a defence of official policy by Lajos Mező, then chief architect of the Budapest town-planning department, in the women's weekly *Nők Lapja*, February 14, 1970, 5.

[22] The first housing estate in Óbuda was the so-called experimental estate in Bécsi út, built in the early 1960s. This differed in scale and architectural aims from the later estates. Each building was designed by a different architect using different technology, after a contest for designs in 1958. On the estate under construction, see 'Tágas horizont' (Broad horizon), *Nők Lapja*, March 5, 1959; Gábor Preisich, A lakásépítés és a lakásállomány változása (Change in housing construction and housing stock), in Gábor Preisich, ed., *Budapest városépítésének története. 1945–1990* (History of urban construction in Budapest 1945–90), (Budapest: Műszaki Könyvkiadó, 1998), 76.

[23] Gábor Preisich and Piroska Czétényi, A városépítési értékek megőrzése és érvényre juttatása (Preserving and applying urban building values), in *Budapest városépítésének*..., 59.

[24] Budapest Főváros Levéltára (Budapest Capital City Archives, hereafter BFL) Fond BB 8. XXXV (8) C Documents of the Budapest Hosiery Factory. July 14, 1967. Mood report to the 3rd District Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP). Of the 9494 dwellings on the Kelenföld estate, 6714 were built in the 1960s and 2780 after 1970; 50 per cent have two rooms and 33 per cent three. Preisich, op. cit., 80. The Óbuda housing estate has 15,999 dwellings, including the experimental estate. Ibid., 84. The Békásmegyer estate was built in two stages, the first having 7731 and the second 5663 dwellings. Ibid., 85.

[25] Ibid., 67–120.

László first related how he had acquired his first flat in 1963, aged 32, he omitted to say who had helped him. But on another occasion, with the tape recorder off, he said the person 'who brought me into the party told the council to give me a flat. Even then, I had to wait for three years.'[26] Those sentences allude to two important aspects that appear in other narratives when the acquisition of housing is described. One is membership of the communist party as an advantage on the housing market, and the other the long waiting times, which it was worth devising tactics to shorten. One motive for joining offered by György and Erzsébet was that party members seemed to find it easier to get a flat:

> György: 'When I… married her and we were living in a sub-tenancy, we didn't have a flat of our own, right? Then I phoned up and registered, I phoned up Rákosi's office.'
>
> Interviewer: 'About a flat?'
>
> György: 'About a flat.'
>
> Erzsébet: 'They said we'd get a flat if we joined the party.'
>
> Interviewer: 'They actually said that?'
>
> Erzsébet: 'Certainly did. Wasn't that what they said? Asked us if we were party members.'
>
> György: 'I told them we weren't party members.'
>
> Erzsébet: 'Neither of us. They said, join the party.'
>
> György: 'Then we'd get a flat.'
>
> Erzsébet: 'There's a chance.'[27]

[26] Interview with László Cs., October 25, 2001, 12. He was born in 1931 in Tápiósüly, to the wife of a postman who died in the Second World War. After the war, he, his widowed mother and younger sister moved to Budapest. He had six years of elementary and four years of middle school. His mother was a skilled worker in the hosiery industry, in which László also spent a lifetime. He started as a 17-year-old apprentice at the Borbás Brothers mill and moving to the Budapest Hosiery Factory in 1951, as it was being set up after nationalization. There he worked on three shifts in the 'Irmac' knitting shop until retirement in 1987, first as assistant foreman, then as foreman from 1957 and production supervisor from 1975. He also led the factory photography club and regularly had pictures published in the factory newspaper. He was an active racing cyclist as a young man. He married in 1960; a son was born in 1960 and a daughter in 1968. His office-clerk wife also worked briefly for the Budapest Hosiery Factory in 1977.

[27] Interview with Mr and Mrs György K., November 30, 2002, 63–4. György was born in Budapest in 1936 and brought up by his maternal grandparents in Óbuda and from 1946 in Tápiószele. His father managed the Fischer timber yard. He began to work as an apprentice to a self-employed tradesman in 1950 and then got a job at the Goldberger Factory as a turner. During the 1950s, he worked at the Small-Engine and Machine Factory, the Special Small-Engine Factory and the Washing-Machine Factory. He married in 1954 and they had a daughter in 1955. He worked as a mechanic at the Budapest Hosiery Factory from 1961 to 1995. He took an evening course at the Jenő Landler Machinery and Telecommunications Technical College in 1963–7. The parents of Erzsébet married in 1919. She was born in Tápiószele in 1932 as the eighth of 13 children. Her father was a carter and her mother took in sewing. She spent her childhood in Tapolca and then Kisgörbő in Zala County. In 1945, she went to work at the brickworks in Zalaszentgrót. She moved to Budapest in 1950 and worked initially as a domestic before becoming a semi-skilled worker in an arms factory in 1953. After marrying in 1954 and having a daughter in 1955, she was a semi-skilled operative in the boarding shop at the Budapest Hosiery Factory from 1957 to 1977. She was a member of the Liberation Socialist Brigade from its establishment in 1960. In 1977, she became a cleaner at the Budapest auxiliary workshop of the Zemplénagárd 'Fair Tisza' Agricultural Cooperative. At the time of the interview, she was still doing night

László made use of the party to promote his interests and resolve his housing problems before he was allocated a flat by the council. He mentioned his status as a young married man without a flat twice at branch meetings, in 1961 and 1962. Unfortunately on the second occasion, on November 29, 1962, the meeting was attended by Comrade S., a representative of the 3rd District Party Committee, who replied simply that 'housing is a big problem' and 'it's quite right for Youth Leaguers to contribute voluntary work to building their own houses.'[28] The party representative did not consider it a task for the state to help a manual worker find a flat. Instead, he encouraged László, who was living as a married man in his mother-in-law's flat at the time, to take part in housing construction himself.[29]

Manci remembered the party as a forum where it was fruitless for party members to plead for better housing, even with three children: 'I often complained to the party, but I couldn't claim anything, because I was a party member and that meant I couldn't speak out.'[30] Her recollections present the party as refusing to help her precisely because she was a member. This may have been a pretext for turning down housing applications from party-member factory workers at that time. It is also interesting because she was the only respondent to appear in the party records as a housing applicant—but eventually, she did not get a flat.[31] The idea that it was a drawback, not an advantage to be a party member when pursuing one's own interests was also voiced at a branch meeting in the factory on April 26, 1973.[32] That does not mean, of course, that party membership did not supply a greater fund of contacts when housing was being acquired, but it was not the same for everyone. The low

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work for its successor company.

[28] BFL (Budapest Capital City Archives) Fond BB 8. XXXV (8) C. Budapesti Harisnyagyár iratai (Documents of Budapest Hosiery Factory), November 29, 1962. Factory MSZMP branch meeting. ' Youth Leaguer' = member of the Communist Youth League.

[29] Excluding manual workers from the state housing market meant that building a house of their own was the only solution, often outside Budapest, in the ring of settlements surrounding the city. Iván Szelényi, *Városi társadalmi egyenlőtlenségek* (Urban Social Inequalities), (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1990), 69 and 178.

[30] Interview with Mrs János T., November 3, 1999, 17. Manci was born in Tiszaszentimre in 1929 and had 12 siblings. Her father worked as a dairy herdsman receiving payment in kind. After six years of elementary school, she went to work on the family farm and migrated to Budapest in 1947. She worked as a domestic until 1951, when she got married, giving birth to sons in 1952, 1954 and 1956. Her husband worked as a fire officer at the Klement Gottwald Electrical Factory until 1957, when he was dismissed for having been a Workers' Council member after the 1956 Revolution. He then worked at the Óbuda Textile Dyeing Factory, again as a fire officer. Manci worked in the boarding shop of the Budapest Hosiery Factory from 1953 until her retirement in 1976. She became a member of the Liberation Socialist Brigade in 1963. While a pensioner, she continued to work until 1994, as a caretaker, canteen server and cleaner.

[31] BFL Fond BB 8 XXXV (8) C Budapesti Harisnyagyár iratai, August 16, 1967. Meeting of Budapest Hosiery Factory MSZMP Executive Committee. Manci's application for a 'quality housing exchange' was supported.

[32] BFL BB Fond 8 XXXV (8) C Budapesti Harisnyagyár iratai, April 26, 1973. Meeting of MSZMP Branch I, Budapest Hosiery Factory. Dénes I. T.: 'Several manual workers have asked why I'm a party member if they don't help me solve my housing problems.'

occupational status of unskilled workers meant that party membership did not yield a housing allocation for them

Teréz underlined several times in her life-course narratives that her position as a quality controller gave her a fund of contacts in the party and trade union, so that she once managed to obtain a flat for a colleague.[33] When discussing how her family got housing, she presented things differently, portraying herself as someone who was willing even to go against an absent husband's wishes to obtain the family a flat:

> Interviewer: 'You lived in a sub-tenancy to start with. How did you get a flat?'
>
> Teréz: 'How can I tell you? My father… was a party secretary. And they came out once for a key or something and saw what sort of flat we lived in. Because my husband said that while people were still living in wooden huts—and there were still wooden huts in those days—he wasn't going to apply for a flat, because we had a roof over us and it didn't rain in. They saw the place and said, "We didn't think, T., you lived in such a state." So I say, "Look," and pulled the shoes out from under the bed and the wall was covered in green mould. And then we got a flat in F. utca. I got well told off by my husband.'[34]

Teréz told the story several times with pride mixed with embarrassment. It seems from her narrative that her strong position for asserting her interests came from two factors. First, her husband did not work in the factory and was a party secretary, and second, she was bold enough to parade her impossible housing situation before others who were in a position to obtain her a flat. The embarrassment may have been at having gone against her husband's wishes, as he seems from the narration not to have wanted to use his party contacts to obtain housing and argued to his wife that others were in huts, in much worse conditions than they were. But the respondent was proud nonetheless that she had acted as an independent, ingenious woman when she used her husband's connections to get a better flat. They moved into it in 1957. When this in turn seemed small with two teenage sons and they applied for a new three-room flat from the council housing department, Teréz had no luck with her contacts and they did not get one. They then looked to the cooperative housing sector, which was

[33] Interviews with Mrs Károly T, November 9, 1999, 7; November 13, 2000, 14; March 12, 2001, 37. Teréz was born in 1927 in Túrkeve and had seven siblings. Her father was a labourer and later a messenger at the council. She migrated to Budapest in 1945, working at first as a labourer on reconstruction and then returning to Túrkeve for a while to work in a sewing shop. She married in 1949 and had sons in 1949 and 1951. Her husband, who worked for Hungarian State Railways, died in 1968. She worked from 1953 to 1997 for the Budapest Hosiery Factory and its successor, in 1953–7 in the boarding shop and 1957–82 as a production controller. After her retirement in 1982, she worked as a pensioner on production control in the dyeing shop. She became a founder member of the Liberation Socialist Brigade in 1960.

[34] Interview with Mrs Károly T., November 9, 9. She used the formal second person pronoun in the first interview, but turned to the familiar form after the brigade reunion. The same story occurs in the interviews on April 13, 2000, 33, and September 2, 2002, 53.

expanding at the time. They had to make an initial payment of 20,000 forints to the housing cooperative and moved into the new flat in 1963. In her narratives, Teréz described the cooperative flats as elite housing: apart from them, only factory directors and managers could move there.[35] Her husband held a managerial position at Hungarian State Railways by that time and she was in production control at the Budapest Hosiery Factory. Teréz often described in her narratives how hard it was to repay the housing loan after her husband died in 1968. She felt she had to deny herself many things to become owner of that cooperative flat with one large and one small room. Her older son continued to live there after his marriage in 1971. When the children became independent, Teréz's partner moved in. By 1997, she was alone again in one of the first cooperative flats, having lived there for 40 years.

After the 1956 housing regulations came into force,[36] applicants were examined in terms not of their 'entitlement to apply' but of their 'degree of need', a concept that was not defined.[37] The principles of housing allocation gave the respondents hardly any realistic chance of receiving a council tenancy. That did not change with the 1971 housing regulations either, which tied housing allocation to a specified level of income and social situation, with number of dependent children as the dominant criterion.[38]

Cooperative housing was the form of construction that other respondents thought they had the greatest realistic chance of obtaining from the end of the 1960s onwards. This was open also to those unable to assert their interests in the council housing department, who would probably have had to wait years for an allocation otherwise, and had managed to gather the necessary deposit on the cost. It became possible for housing cooperatives to build such housing in 1959. Although the preamble to the regulation underlined that its purpose was 'for wage and salary-earners—above all, factory workers—to receive through the housing cooperatives concessionary opportunities to obtain privately owned housing,' the scheme did not immediately ease housing-market conditions for those with poor ability to assert their interests.[39]

Those joining a housing cooperative made a down-payment out of ' their own savings (15 per cent of the concessionary price of the flat in 1959) and could obtain a state loan on

[35] Interview with Mrs Károly T., April 20, 2000, 22.
[36] Council of Ministers Regulation No. 35/1956 (X. 30.) M. T., effectuated by No. 17/1957 (III. 7.). Korm.
[37] László Gábor and Péter Győri, 'Guberálás a lakáspiacon' (Raking through the housing market), in Péter Győri, ed., *A város, a város társadalma, életformacsoportok. Szöveggyűjtemény* (City, city society, lifestyle groups. Anthology of texts), (Budapest: Wesley János Lelkészképző Főiskola, n. d.), 122.
[38] Preisich, op. cit., 83. Council housing applications could be made in 1975 by those with a per capita family income up to 1500 forints. Dr Ferenc Rutics, *Lakáshelyzet, lakáselosztás* (Housing situation, housing allocation), (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1975), 39.
[39] Government Regulation No. 20/1959 (IV. 16) on housing cooperatives.

concessionary terms to cover the rest, repayable over 30 years. From 1959 onwards, only the specialist management organization of the council housing department could be the investor and the construction could be carried out only by a state-owned construction enterprise. The cooperative flat became the personal property of the member.[40] Cooperative housing constituted quasi-private property under the socialist state.[41] Although the flat could only be occupied by the cooperative member and his/her dependants and the cooperative had pre-emptive rights if the flat were sold, the flat could be inherited. Council housing could not be inherited, but there was a back door: the tenancy could be transferred after the tenant's decease to a dependant already registered there.

New government regulations on the operation of housing cooperatives were issued in 1971.[42] The preamble quoted above was dropped and cooperatives were free to build not only several-storey blocks of flats, but groups of family housing with at least 12 dwellings.[43] In 1977, a decree with statutory force on housing cooperatives allowed cooperatives to form to build holiday homes and garages as well. The owner of a cooperative flat had to report a sale to the cooperative, but the latter no longer had pre-emptive rights.[44] However, the decisive change was an attempt by policy-makers, reacting to the effects of the 1968 New Economic Mechanism, to address the inequalities produced by the housing allocation system. It was proposed from several directions as the legislation was drafted that the state should 'trade' in dwellings as if they were items on the housing market, so as to reduce the differences that resulted when high-status groups received benefits in the form of low housing rents. This, however, was dismissed on ideological grounds and the disadvantaged social groups continued to be excluded from the market for state-owned rented housing.[45]

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[40] According to Act IV/1959 of the Civil Code, 'personal property' could be: § 92 (1) 'Goods serving or promoting the satisfaction of the personal needs of citizens—family houses, equipment and consumer goods etc.—are in private ownership. (2) Also in private ownership are the items of property on the household farm serving the purposes of auxiliary agriculture. (3) What size of dwelling is permitted to be in private ownership may be established by legal regulation. § 93 The owner may enjoy freely his/her personal property rights for personal needs.' The first amendment to § 92 (1) came into force on January 1, 1968, when the text was altered to 'goods directly serving or promoting the personal needs of citizens' and the list became 'family house, plot of land, equipment and consumer goods etc.' The text of (3) became, 'separate legal regulations determine what size and number… can be held in private ownership.' The local Óbuda paper informed its readers that they might possess one piece of real estate of a residential character and one of a recreational character; the rest had to be disposed of. *Óbuda*, March 7, 1973, 7.

[41] Judit Bodnár and József Böröcz, 'Housing advantages for the better-connected? Institutional segmentation, settlement type and social network effects in Hungary's late state-socialist housing inequalities' *Social Forces* 76(4), 1998, 1275–304. http://hi.rutgers.edu/szelenyi60/bodnar-borocz.html.

[42] Government Regulation No. 6/1971. (II. 8.) Korm. on housing cooperatives.

[43] Applications for council-built cooperative housing could be made at that time by those whose income exceeded 1500 but did not reach 2500 forints a month. Dr Ferenc Rutics, op. cit., 39.

[44] Decree with Statutory Force No. 12/1977 on housing cooperatives.

[45] Iván Szelényi, op. cit., 92.

The Budapest Hosiery Factory had very few flats to distribute: workers could compete for two cooperative flats in 1962 and again in 1963, then for six in 1969.[46] The enterprise distributed 11 council flats in 1973 and 9 in 1974.[47] The flats went mainly to those with good interest-pursuing abilities in the factory. The six flats in a building at Római-fürdő in 1969 went to a skilled female worker, an unskilled female worker, a supervisor and two male skilled workers. However, the skilled female worker was a member of Parliament and one of the male skilled workers a Workers' Militiaman from one of the factory's dynasties. This meant they each had widespread contacts in the factory and counted as politically reliable. The enterprise advanced loans of 10,000 forints on each flat, repayable in instalments of 200 forints over 50 months.[48]

Just as the six workers were moving into their Római-fürdő flats in 1969, the factory made a survey of the housing situation among the 1952 employees classed as 'manual workers' at the Folyamőr utca and Vihar utca sites. A sample of 243 employees were questioned, of whom 152 turned out to have living conditions that 'were not satisfactory,' as the report put it. This meant that 99 were living in flats consisting of one room and a kitchen, 37 in one-room flats or sub-tenancies, and 16 in two-room flats. Those living in one-room flats included 15 households of five, 2 of six, 3 of seven and 2 of eight members. The same survey asked 327 employees whether their living conditions had altered in the last three years (i. e. since 1966). Thirty-one of the respondents said they had resolved their housing problems in that period, including 26 classed as manual workers. Of these, 6 had moved into cooperative flats, 8 into council flats, and 12 had managed to build themselves a dwelling.[49]

Those joining cooperative housing schemes faced many unexpected difficulties. One respondent, Zsuzsanna, should in principle, as supervisor of the boarding shop in 1969–76,

[46] BFL Fond BB 8 XXXV (8) C Budapesti Harisnyagyár iratai, March 13, 1962. Meeting of Budapest Hosiery Factory MSZMP Executive Committee. *Harisnyagyári Dolgozó* (factory newspaper, hereafter *HD*), March 24, 1969, 2.

[47] BFL Fond BB 8 XXXV (8) C Budapesti Harisnyagyár iratai. Mood reports to the 3rd District MSZMP committee, March 1973 and February 1974. The workforce at the Budapest Hosiery Factory numbered 1343 on its foundations in 1951 and 3610 in 1973, including the other sites in Folyamőr utca, Vihar utca and Pesterzsébet, the Gyula Hosiery Factory, and the site employees. The flats had to be distributed among the Budapest factories. Imre Czeglédi, op. cit. 157.

[48] Enterprises and institutions were free to participate in housing construction after the 1968 economic reform and able from 1969 to advance loans to workers. Dóra Kovács, ed., *A lakáspolitika, az elosztás, a gazdálkodás ellentmondásai* (Anomalies of housing policy, allocation and management), (Budapest: Szakszervezetek Elméleti Kutatóintézete, 1980), 67–8. BFL Fond BB 8 XXXV (8) C Budapesti Harisnyagyár iratai. '1969. február 25. MSZMP végrehajtóbizottsági ülés' (February 25, 1969, MSZMP Executive Committee meeting), *HD*, March 24, 1969, 2.

[49] BFL Fond BB 8 XXXV (8) C Budapesti Harisnyagyár iratai. April 1, 1969. MSZMP Political Committee. Report on the situation of manual workers at the Folyamőr utca and Vihar utca factories of the Budapest Hosiery Factory. Reports to the 3rd District MSZMP Committee, 1970.

have been better placed than shop-floor workers were. But she complained she had failed to get into the next housing scheme in K. út, despite several approaches to the director and promises from him: 'He said there might be a flat for us there. I then had to ring him up, but he said if any other chance came up for us, we'd do well to take it up.'[50] She spoke as if the director's omnipotence extended to the housing market. They eventually found a home of their own by paying in for a cooperative flat, but without a factory loan. She was still outraged as she talked about getting a flat and she gladly aired her old grievances. But she suggested that those paying into cooperative housing schemes were vulnerable: the state did not protect them from swindlers. Mind you, the opinions and decision-making strategies of the H. family would have been influenced by television and 'Blue Light', the famous (notorious) crime-report programme of the day, which presented cases of fraud in housing cooperatives in a sensational way. Zsuzsanna painted the lawyers' partnerships that executed the building schemes as local potentates, behaving as if there were a free market for socialist housing. She gave a similar account of the 'speculators' who joined housing cooperatives and sold on their flats at a profit before the house was built:

> 'We paid into [the cooperative housing scheme at] R. F. utca 155 because that's where the lawyers' partnerships were building at the time. Then we saw on "Blue Light" what swindles the … District housing cooperative was doing. The house was never built, although they promised. We then backed out of that quickly. On hearing that, an acquaintance of ours said he would transfer to us an option he'd paid for in a house going up on the corner of H. utca and T. utca. First he promised one figure, then he raised it by 10,000 forints when we said that would be all right. But we agreed. It was a Soviet-type prefabricated building. We went and had a look at it going up every day; they finished [the walls] in seven days, all seven stories. But we couldn't move in until October 17, 1971, because they'd forgotten to put in chimneys. The delays went on for two years and then we banged the table at the lawyer's, demanding to know when we could move in. He said we should sell our flat if it was that urgent. We were living with my parents in the meantime

[50] Interview with Mrs Antal H., February 16, 2001, 12. Zsuzsanna was born in Budapest in 1942 and had an older sister and younger brother. Her father was head of a commercial division. After the rationalization, she went as an unskilled operative to the Goldberger Factory. Her mother was a seamstress and then found a job as a linker at the Budapest Hosiery Factory. She joined her there as a linker in 1956 and was transferred in 1960 to clerical work. Meanwhile she completed the János Bólyai Textile Industry Technical College. In 1969, she married Antal H., a charge hand in the Textile Dyeing Factory. She was supervisor of the boarding shop in 1969–76, then head of the production department, and from 1982, head of the coordination department. She moved to the Vihar utca Traders Department Store in 1986. She took early retirement in 1993 but continued to work at the same place for another two years. Her daughters were born in 1970 and 1972.

and our elder daughter had already been born.'[51]

If a respondent did not have the down-payment required by a housing cooperative, there was still the chance to obtain a flat by concluding a maintenance contract. This kind of contract was a typical legal back door to the socialist housing market. It allowed a contracting occupant to transfer the tenancy of a council flat, for instance, to someone who was not a relative, whereas council housing could not normally be inherited in that way. The purpose of the contract as a legal device, according to Act IV/1959 of the Civil Code, was that the beneficiary should be 'adequately maintained, cured, nursed and buried' within his/her own household.[52] In return, the maintained party's real estate would be inherited by the maintaining party. The right of maintenance was recorded in the deeds, and after 1972, in the land registry.[53] Two respondents found a flat in this way at some point in their lives.[54] For Mrs Gyula B., one of the younger cohort and a single parent, it was the sole chance of getting a flat. Latterly, recalling these times without a tape recorder, she stressed the feelings involved in the maintenance contract. The one she concluded a contract with was a close relative of another respondent, Manci, beside whom she worked in the boarding shop. Manci related recently that she saw Mrs B. as a daughter.[55] In that frame of interpretation, the maintenance contract led to relations of adopted kinship. Mrs Gyula B. was reticent about how she got her first flat in the mid-1970s:

'The mother of Mrs T.'s sister-in-law suddenly became very ill. And the family didn't look after her. I agreed with them I'd nurse her. Then she left me the flat.'[56]

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[51] Ibid., 13–14.

[52] Act IV/1959, Civil Code §§ 586–90. The condition that this occur 'in his/her own household' applied from 1960 to 1978. Inheritance or transfer, according to Government Regulation No. 1/1971. (II. 8.) Korm., § 81. (1), depended on the maintaining party living permanently in the flat with the deceased occupant for at least one year, the maintenance contract being concluded in valid form at least a year before the maintained party's death, and the maintenance obligations to the occupant being fulfilled.

[53] Act 32/1972.

[54] Others in the factory also found a flat through a maintenance contract. Mrs István B., a seamstress, for instance, waited for 12 years for a flat with one room and kitchen. *HD*, January 17, 1974, 3.

[55] Interview with Mrs János T., November 10, 1999, 34.

[56] Interview with Mrs Gyula B. and Gábor K., February 7, 2001, 7. Mrs Gyula B. was born at Gulács in 1953. Her father (who died in 1993) was a stockbreeder on the cooperative farm and her mother a poultry breeder. Her older brother died in 1976; she has an older sister and a younger brother. After primary school, she moved to Budapest and found a job at the Budapest Hosiery Factory, where she worked from 1967 to the mid-1990s, up to 1980 as a semi-skilled operative in the boarding shop. She completed the János Bólyai Textile Industry Technical College as an evening student, and in 1980, became a thread examiner in the thread-testing laboratory. At the time of the interview, she was a trader, having begun to deal with trade in the factory at the time of the change of system. She married a foreman from the Cotton Printing Enterprise in 1975, but they divorced and she was then living with her partner, Gábor K. She had one daughter. Gábor K. was born in Nyíregyháza in 1936. He began working at the Ganz Waggon and Machinery Factory in 1953, initially as a lathe operator. He obtained a technical-college engineering qualification in 1970 and became a foreman. He joined the Budapest Hosiery Factory in 1980, first as section head in the TMK Department and later heading it. After the change of system, he took part in founding the Bella Patrícia Hosiery Factory, then

Mária left her cooperative flat to the young people when her son married and started a family. Although she did not mention it herself, other respondents emphasized what sacrifices she had made earlier to pay back the instalments on the cooperative flat. Erzsébet gave as an example of Mária's stamina that she would live on coffee all day and eat hardly anything, just to pay the instalments, and she worked on three shifts in the factory like that.[57] As Mária presented matters latterly, a maintenance contract was the one chance she had of getting somewhere to live after she moved out of the cooperative flat at the beginning of the 1980s. I asked her to relate in detail the circumstances in which she made the contract:

> 'And then, well, there was this woman, in the Hosiery Factory I mean, except she worked in the sewing shop. And she lived in the next-door house to ours, and she was after it with her son, because it was a newspaper ad, but she had a child as well, and three people in one room wouldn't be any good… And then she said wouldn't I have a look at it? And I went with her and there were loads of people… standing out there as far as the stairs, imagine. There was that many. Well anyway, and then with Zsuzsa, it was an old girl and we chatted, and she'd worked in the Goli and I said I work in the Goli and all and… well, she chose me… And I knew the doctor too, you know, that she'd worked with, she'd been the assistant at the Goli alongside the chief physician. And then, in a word she was decent, really, there was never any problem with her.'[58]

Mária put a different emphasis from Mrs Gyula B. on the role feelings play in a maintenance contract. There was again a personal contact, but only with a colleague of hers drawing attention to the advertisement in the paper. Mária depicted it as if the future person to be maintained had chosen her because they'd worked in the same place and had common acquaintances. She made a big thing of the personal sympathy that developed between them, as the last sentence showed, because the press at the time was full of stories of exceedingly bad relations between maintainers and maintained. The maintainers were often presented as being interested only in obtaining the flat, while the maintained were shown as abusing the

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worked at the Traders Department Store in Vihar utca. At the time of the interview, he was a trader.

[57] Interview with Mr and Mrs György K., March 16, 2000, 6.

[58] Interview with Mrs Vilmos S., January 14, 2003, 78. The flat was in a high-status district by Budapest standards. Mária was born in Dévaványa in 1931. Her father worked for a bridge-building company as a labourer. She had ten siblings. After six years of elementary school, she took a job as a domestic in Mezőtúr, and then moved up to Budapest in the Second World War. She worked initially as a signwriter and then as a domestic again. She married Vilmos S., a bricklayer, in 1950 and found a job in the same year at the Goldberger Factory as a semi-skilled machinist. Her son was born in 1954 and in 1957–9 she worked as a caretaker. She divorced in 1968. In 1971, she completed the eight years of primary education while working. From 1959 until she was awarded a disability pension in 1989, she worked as a boarder in the Budapest Hosiery Factory. She joined the Liberation socialist brigade in 1963 and became its leader in 1964. As a pensioner she continued to work in a theatre serving in the buffet and cloakroom.

fact that the flat was theirs and coming up with all sorts of demands. When the respondent emphasized how well she and the old lady had got on, she was defending herself against that stereotypical picture. It was also important to the respondent that there had been a queue of applicants because the maintained party had chosen her as the most suitable out of many people. The story also illustrates how housing distribution, officially conducted by the state, was taking place under market conditions, from the respondent's point of view. That near-market character was being created in housing distribution by the back doors in the state housing market.[59]

3.2. 'The key's under the mat.' Neighbourly relations in old Óbuda and on new housing estates

Intimate relations between neighbours in big cities are often represented as being lost when people move from older areas to new housing estates, where they find themselves in alienated fields in an alien environment. Urban anthropologists present people in poorer neighbourhoods especially as showing solidarity, lending each other support and security, and making friends close by. Negative sides of such neighbourly relations are interference in each other's lives, inquisitiveness, intrusive questioning and impatience.[60] György Konrád and Iván Szelényi established from research in new Hungarian housing estates at the end of the 1960s that most friends of an extremely high proportion of working-class families lived on the same estate.[61]

However, a contrasting stereotype became dominant as the status of housing estates changed. 'Fear flows around the concrete blocks of Békásmegyer. Night falls early in these parts and streets soon empty. By day, there is dirt and rubbish everywhere, and in the evening—especially at weekends—hubbub, disco din and the accompanying air of violence that smothers the town.' The Békásmegyer estate is presented as a hotbed of deviancy and alienation in a 1989 funding application submitted by a teacher at a local school, entitled 'School experiment in handling deviancy'.[62]

For young migrants to Budapest, the new immediate environment consisted of relatives and colleagues, and of neighbours to whom they felt they had to adjust. Neighbours

[59] Maintenance contracts were under direct state control in the 1960–78 period, since 'fulfilment of the maintenance contract was supervised by the executive committee of the local council as specialist administrative body.' 1978 Amendment to Act IV/1959 of the Civil Code.

[60] Elizabeth Roberts, *Women and Families. An Oral History, 1940–1970* (Oxford, UK, and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995), 232.

[61] Szelényi and Konrád, op. cit., 97. 'Families arriving on new housing estates preserve to no small extent their earlier social relations; in other words, they do not enter a "social vacuum".' Ibid.

[62] Zoltán Lakner, 'A deviancia kezelésének iskolai kísérlete' (ms. 1989), 29. Fővárosi Szabó Ervin Könyvtár (Capital City Ervin Szábo Library), Budapest Collection.

appear in many narratives, as helpful, supportive figures and as ill-natured, scheming people. After 1956, Malvin and Erzsébet and their families lived in the same house in flats they had seized and Manci lived nearby, all within ten minutes of the factory. Manci and family moved from there to Kelenföld in the mid-1970s. Erzsébet and family lived in Bogdáni út until the mid-1990s, when her mother died and they moved into her flat on the József Attila utca estate, leaving the flat in Bogdáni utca for their daughter.[63] At first sight, the neighbourly relations in the four-storey Bogdáni utca estate seem more similar to those in a traditional neighbourhood, where the fields are visible and everyone knows everyone else.

Members of these three families often told stories of their neighbours. In the interview situation, these emerged typically spontaneously; the author did not enquire as such what the neighbours were like. The neighbourly relations of immigrant women are given special attention by anthropologists, as neighbours are often the one social milieu for housewives and encountered day after day. According to that approach, neighbours have an exceptional social function for women and children as the one social field to which they are tied by friendships.[64]

Here, on the other hand, the respondents worked in a factory. This section considers how they portrayed their neighbours, what significance they attached to them, and what relations they had with them. Neighbour functions form a favourite topic in anthropological literature; research suggests mainly that neighbours take part in every important event in life, from childminding to looking after the sick and old and laying out the dead.[65] However, it is not intended in this section to compile a catalogue of these functions, simply to take the narratives as a basis for comparing neighbourly relations in the old neighbourhoods and on the new housing estates.

The narratives of György and Erzsébet gave a lively description of neighbourly ties in the Bogdáni utca house. All the residents knew each other, watched what happened to the others, and made no secret of their opinions of their behaviour. Erzsébet jokingly related how she was at home one day and looked out through the keyhole to see another resident deceiving his wife by kissing another woman.[66] Their narratives suggest they thought the opinion of female neighbours important in their lives. They said that ‘public opinion in the house’ was

[63] Altogether 8840 dwellings were built on the József Attila utca housing estate—285 in the 1950s, 6826 in the 1960s, and 1329 in the 1970s using prefabricated techniques. Preisich Gábor, op. cit., 79. The mother of György got a flat there in 1962, having lived previously in Óbuda. Interview with Mr and Mrs György K, November 25, 2000, 40.

[64] Elizabeth Roberts, op. cit., 202.

[65] Josef Ruland, *Nachbarschaft und Gemeinschaft in Dorf und Stadt* (Düsseldorf: Rheinland-Verlag GmbH, 1963). The book compares rural and urban contacts and functions, showing they depend on local social structure, not type of settlement.

[66] Interview with Mr and Mrs György K., March 16, 2000, 4.

satisfied if a wife dressed attractively, but only in moderation, not in a provocative way.[67] The women would make remarks to those they thought had gone beyond being a 'lovely wife' and was dressing like an 'easy woman'. So the neighbours had a control function in private family life as well. However, the neighbours would speak both for and against phenomena seen as valuable in the official parlance of the socialist state. According to Erzsébet, for instance, people did not look kindly, after a time, on residents who walked about in the uniform of a worker's militiaman.[68]

Among the 'bad neighbours' was one who felt, as a 'true socialist', that she had to intervene to defend the laws of the socialist state, although she would probably not have told the story in those terms. According to György, a resident reported him to the district council for undertaking private television repairs alongside his job as a 'charge-hand mechanic' at the Budapest Hosiery Factory. In official parlance, those who moonlighted in that way were materialistic and not truly socialist. The state did not support the idea of people taking second jobs. Second jobs could be held officially from 1971 onwards, but only with permission from the main employer and the second job was also recorded in a person's work record.[69]

> 'After I'd done the Landler Technical Secondary School course, I always took on television repairs after work. I took a big bag. There was one neighbour whose wife was a big red-haired woman. She'd ask where I was going, was I off to repair a telly? No, I'd say. What was the big bag for, then? She carried on until one day she reported me to the district council. She was envious that things were going well for us at the time. I was called in, but luckily, the man the complaint went to had been at the technical college with me. He's there in the picture.[70] So I go and say, "Remember me?" "Of course," he says. And we managed to smooth the matter over.'[71]

On other occasions, György interpreted his ability to repair televisions after completing the technical-college course, on top of his work in three shifts, as ensuring the family a higher standard of living. He underlined in the story that the neighbours had reported him out of envy of the extra income, but his acquaintance with the council official had

[67] Interview with Mr and Mrs György K., April 29, 2000, 17.
[68] The context of the story would place it in the early 1970s. Interview with Mr and Mrs György K., March 16, 2000, 9.
[69] Labour Ministry Regulation No. 17/1971. (VII. 22.) on second jobs, side work and work performed in other work-related legal frameworks.
[70] He pointed out the photograph on the wall of the evening class of 1967 at the Jenő Landler Technical College, with György and the council official.
[71] Interview with Mr and Mrs György K., November 30, 2002, 100.

thwarted the 'malicious neighbour' so that György was not punished for repairing televisions on the side.

Erzsébet often mentioned in her narratives that they had living close to them at the Bogdáni utca housing estate not only Malvin, but another brigade member, Manci and her family. They all worked in the same shop. Malvin and Erzsébet were on the same machine, but did not usually meet outside work. Manci mentioned both instances of neighbourhood: the inhabitants of the flat arbitrarily occupied on the Bogdáni utca estate and the neighbours on the Kelenföld estate. She explained that the flat had been occupied when the defecting wife had given the key to the occupier's husband, so they would not have to live in a place without a bathroom.[72] Manci had taken on the job of caretaker of the old Óbuda house, so that she knew the six resident families well. This is how she presented the close neighbourly relations:

> 'We'd go across to each other; the key was under mat. It was there when we went to work and there when we got back. If a brother or sister of mine came by they'd find the key. There was no reason to be fearful. We lent things to each other. My best friend lived there as well, who was godmother to my middle son. We were like sisters… When she died, poor thing, she was still worrying about me, look after Manci, she said, because I'd just had a heart attack. Now her younger brother's died. My daughter-in-law was very fond of him. We were on good terms with the whole street, not just the people in the house. There was the baker's, M's… If I go over to Óbuda, I meet them sometimes, they were very sweet. If I have to order a cake, I go over to the pastrycook there… Russian creams, he does, very tasty.'[73]

Manci talked of her old Óbuda neighbours as if they were relatives. She seems to have been seeking to establish kinship relations by choosing a godmother for her middle son in the house. Although the story took place in the city, it is as if it had occurred in the village where Manci spent her childhood. Her provincial brothers and sisters were frequent visitors there too, and felt at home, finding the key under the mat. Everyone knew everyone else, like neighbours in a village, and the neighbours were helpful, as well as playing a helping function in all the events of life and life as a whole. The narrator in this story is seen as a young woman, choosing a godparent for a baby. Then she appears as a middle-aged woman, just recovering from a heart attack and a source of anxiety to her dying neighbour. She also appears as an old person who has not lived in Óbuda for decades, but still goes back to order cakes from the pastrycook.

[72] Interview with Mrs János T., November 3, 1999, 17.
[73] Interview with Mrs János T., November 3, 1999, 18.

Another incident Manci recalled was how her neighbour had helped her bake and cook when she had the members of the brigade coming. Once, her neighbour helped her look for one of her sons was he was lost. Her husband waited in the flat, while the neighbour searched the courtyard and she went to look in the suburban railway station.[74] The old house was put down for demolition and the occupants had to move in 1976 onto the new housing estates that were being built. Neither Malvin nor Manci did so happily. Manci complained it was very difficult to integrate into the Kelenföld estate to start with. She did not talk about the shopping and transport difficulties on the estate, but complaints from new Kelenföld residents appear frequently in the factory mood reports. Initially, there was no state greengrocer, just a private shop, which was too dear, and they called for more shops. They would also have liked a more frequent service on the 86 bus that brought them from Kosztolányi Dezső tér to the factory without changing.[75] That counted as especially important for people used to strolling in from their old homes in five or ten minutes.

One by one, all the old neighbours moved to houses in Etele út on the same estate, and then Manci began to feel more at home. She was soon on similar terms with the new neighbours on the estate as she had been in the old house. One person who had been a neighbour in the old house as well as the new was Mrs B., was presented in the narratives as if she had almost superhuman powers:

> 'Mrs B. was envious. I always asked her and the two children if we were off for a coffee or a soft drink, but she never asked me. She was even envious in the end of my husband. I even wondered if she wasn't the one who did my husband in, as she died in February and my husband in July the same year. When she was very ill and just lying there—liver disease—I went up to visit her, she lived here on the fifth floor. And she always asked how my husband was. Fine, I'd say, but then he went soon after Mrs B., poor thing, him as well.'[76]

According to the narrative, the dying neighbour, whom Manci visited and helped just as she had her best friend in the old house, had irrational powers, for if she asked after anyone's health they died soon after. Perhaps these were stories like the ones she had heard as a child, in a village environment. Manci also tried to present the neighbours on the Kelenföld estate as people she would confide in. She related more than once how she had first confided before her husband's death to a neighbour, not to a member of the family, that she would like

[74] Interview with Mrs János T., June 11, 2001, 44.
[75] BFL BB Fond 8 XXXV (8) C, Budapesti Harisnyagyár iratai. Mood reports to the 3rd District MSZMP committee, May 9, 1969; August 8, 1971.
[76] Interview with Mrs János T., May 1, 2002, 46-47.

a ‘scattering funeral’—cremation and her ashes scattered at the cemetery.[77] When she spoke of the present, she would often complain, like Malvin, that the occupants had changed since the housing privatization and she could not establish such close relations with the new neighbours as with the old. She missed having real neighbours that she could always chat with.

Members of the Liberation Brigade and their work mates were able to assert their interests on the housing market only to a moderate extent. Some, who had extensive connections within the factory, found it much easier to get a flat than others, who were in a weaker position, even if they joined the communist party. The latter worked out tactics and strategies so that they would not have to wait for years for a council flat or an exchange for a better flat. They occupied a flat, joined a housing cooperative or concluded a maintenance contract. When the old dwellings were being demolished in Óbuda, they were reluctant to move to the new housing estates even if they were healthier and more comfortable than their old flats, as the propaganda stated. Initially, they often remained surrounded by their old work mates and neighbours in their new flats as well, but this ceased to be true with the change of system, under free market conditions, when the turnover of occupants became faster. The respondents now felt that their everyday living environment was degenerating into a slum.

The micro-environment and neighbourhood of some respondents seem to have acted as the kind of reference group their provincial neighbours had in childhood. They depicted neighbours in the old Óbuda houses and on the new estates as people they had to relate to and form a community with, and who would say or at least try to say how they should behave. Although the norms the neighbours wanted to impose on them might be rejected (over moonlighting, for example), they were never a matter of indifference. Interviewees would typically repeat the stereotype judgements of housing estates in their life-course narratives. But they seem to have adapted many elements of their way of life to the housing-estate environment (above all, a high level of sociability), so that it gave them, by and large, a feeling of being at home.

4. Consumer goods as identity factors. ‘Stream babbling at the bottom of the garden’—a piece of land

> ‘When I got the 20-year decoration at the Hosiery Factory and money with the brigade as well, we bought a plot of land on Hármashatár Hill. Someone from my village had land up

[77] Interview with Mrs János T., May 1, 2002, 50.

there already. My husband and I built a wooden hut and covered it with tarpaper. Just so we'd have somewhere to shelter if it rained. We had a few peas and a few strawberries, a little this, a little that. It was 200 square *öl* [700 sq. m] with some raspberries and some flowers. We often slept up there, with the stream babbling at the bottom of the garden. Till once we found the skin of a snake—a grass snake a metre long that had sloughed its skin. Then I said to my husband, "Let's not sleep here any more." And when we knew we were going to Békásmegyer, we sold it.'[78]

Malvin presented the garden on Hármashatár Hill in a similar way to the village of her childhood. It was bought at a juncture when the family fortunes took a sudden turn for the better. After that, they had to do everything for themselves—the money was enough only for the land. The plot was near Erdőalja út and that district was given symbolic importance in their life-course interviews. When her husband's family had been bombed out in the war, his carpenter father and cleaner mother had moved there with their many children and a grandmother. Later, Malvin had been a subtenant nearby after she had moved to Budapest, often taking the same bus as her future husband did. They began their married life living with her husband's family, so that she lived with a father-in-law, mother-in-law, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law and a grandmother until they occupied a flat in 1956. They reconstructed in their garden the childhood world that Malvin would so gladly recall, though they'd had endless work to do on the farm. Another factor behind the mode of depiction may have been that childhood and youth were presented as idyllic in the life-course interviews. However, the

[78] Interviews with Mrs József F. and Mrs József S., November 17, 1999, 13, November 23, 1999, 18–19, and March 1, 2001, 8. p. Ica was born in Csorvás in 1938, one of six children. She is Malvin's younger sister. Her father was a stockbreeder and then worked on the cooperative farm. After completing secondary school in Orosháza, she took clerical work at the Csorvás cooperative. She migrated to Budapest in 1958. There she worked first as a skilled operation at the Linen Spinning Factory and then as a conductor. She joined the Budapest Hosiery Factory in 1964, initially in the raw processing department, then in the boarding shop and then doing office work. During her years at the Budapest Hosiery Factory, she completed a sewing course. She then preceded her sister in moving to the engineering company Élépszer, where she again did clerical work, until 1992. After that, she was unemployed for a year and then retired. She married and had two daughters, her husband working at the Csillaghegy Brickworks and then at Élépszer. He died in 1979. She began in the early 1980s to live with a painter and decorator, until he also died in 1994. She was still working at the time of the interviews, in the kitchens of the Maltese Charity Service. Malvin was born in Mezőhegyes in 1931 and was the oldest of six children. Ica was one of her younger sisters. Her father was a stockbreeder and then worked on the cooperative farm. After the Second World War, she worked initially on the family farm and then went as an unskilled hand to the local sawmill. She moved to Budapest in 1953, working first in the carpentry shop at the Óbuda Shipyard and then in 1954–79as a boarder at the Budapest Hosiery Factory. From 1979 until her retirement in 1986, she worked as a cleaner and kitchen server at Élépszer, a subsidiary of the Óbuda Agricultural Cooperative. She was married in 1955 to József S., who worked as a carpenter at the Óbuda Shipyard, then at the Budapest Hosiery Factory and then at Élépszer. He died in 1999. They had a daughter in 1959 and she was still living with her, her son-in-law and her grandchildren in Békásmegyer and doing clerical work as a pensioner.

stories express the strong desire of the teller for land where the family could grow everything and be close both to the city and to nature.

> 'We were little children and the land was a long way off, 9 km from the village, and had to be tilled. At first we went in the morning and came back in the evening. We started out in the dark and came home in the dark, to achieve something… We dug the well and pulled up water on a pulley to have livestock. We went 2 km for drinking water, because we didn't dare drink that water—it was for the livestock and for irrigation. Then we made adobe bricks. There were singles and doubles. My little brother did the singles and I did the doubles… Then we built something… like a tool shed. We got it up in the spring and we children would sleep out there. That was good. Romantic… We took out a kitchen stove and cooked on it. We'd be out there with the stock from spring to autumn. There were poultry, geese and ducks, everything… Then we built on a room, and we bought the calf in that year… I say, OK, there was a war, but that was good.'[79]

Malvin took a series of photographs at her garden when she invited out colleagues from the factory, including the supervisor of the shop, Mrs Imre K. Notes on the back suggest that several of those who were there to toast bacon over a bonfire and drink beer ordered copies for themselves. Only Malvin and her colleagues were there on that occasion, without their children. The photos show them lost in enjoyment as they eat and drink. On another occasion, she took pictures of the family hoeing the plot in the autumn. She stands proudly in front of the flower garden with her daughter. Shots taken in early in the year show the house well and Malvin and her daughter happily using a swing made by her husband.

Narratives of other respondents also present the garden as symbolizing proximity to nature, but add various other strands of significance as well. For Teréz as for Malvin, its value initially was the ability to produce vegetables and fruit with her sons and be in natural surroundings at the weekend. But when she sold the plot, the land itself gained a big financial value, which allowed her to give an exceptional present at the wedding of one of her sons. Her description of the sale presents her and the buyer behaving as if they were at a village fair, not in a big city:

> 'We planted maize and turnips on Hajógyár Island, that's what I managed. My son and I tilled it at the weekends. We went out and they could fish and bathe in the Danube; they loved it. Then when Karcsi got married, I sold it to a man and that sum was my wedding present to them. We haggled for a long time. He had the money in his hand and spat in his

[79] Interview with Mrs József F. and Mrs József S., November 17, 1999, 6.

palm, he'd have handed it over, but I said no, it wasn't like that. It was a big sum for those days that I managed to give my son.'[80]

Mária did not have a plot of her own, but her partner did. The story of their affair was closely connected with what she had to say about the garden.

She shows some photographs: 'This was the little house; I'm sitting in front of it. My, how beautifully he'd done it. Karcsi did everything beautifully. We did this house together, we built it. It was gorgeous, really nice. This was his dog, a Great Dane. That dog was so sweet. Karcsi had trained him, you know. Imagine, when I went to their place, he'd hear my steps out in the street and run up like lightning, knowing that we were going to the plot.'[81]

The only respondent who still had a plot was László, but he bought it later, apparently in 1982. He was going out to it regularly, tilling the land and making wine from his own grapes during the period of the interviews.[82] The others bought a plot at a stage in their lives when they described things as going a bit better for them. Then they sold it again when major expenses came up, such as the marriage of Teréz's son or the birth of Malvin's grandchildren, obliging them to part with their little house and garden. Another reason why the garden represents in their life-course interviews an idyllic state close to nature is that it gave them a last chance to re-enact the rural surroundings of childhood. Having a garden near the city also gave them the feeling that they were trimming daily expenses with their own two hands.

To György and Erzsébet, what symbolized an exceptionally happy period in their lives was not a garden plot, but a set of kitchen furniture. They look back on it as a time when they could afford the costliest possessions. They also made a link in the account between their carefree youth and the purchase of a consumer durable that amounted to an investment, as they were still using parts of it.

György.: 'I was earning 5500 forints [a month] at the Washing-Machine Factory in 1955.[83] That was big money in those days. I managed to buy the most expensive set of kitchen furniture in Budapest out of two weeks' wages. It was 2200 forints and white and green. There were others for 400 forints, but this one had everything. We were a young married couple and we needed it. It had a laundry bin, a table with two stools—this table was part of it, even.[84]

[80] Interview with Mrs Károly T., September 4, 2000, 26.
[81] Interview with Mrs Vilmos S., January 14, 2003, 71–2.
[82] Interviews with László Cs., October 11, 2001, 7; October 25, 2001, 13.
[83] It is an enormous sum even for a well-paid factory worker.
[84] When I visited them, we always sat at that table to eat, drink and talk.

Erzsébet: 'And a pull-out pastry board. There was a little table with it where I used to prepare everything. This kitchen dresser is so good, so good-looking.'

György: 'It's still as good as new. The bits we don't use any more I've wrapped up and put in the cellar. We still have them too.'[85]

But on another occasion, Erzsébet described the time when they got married as the most difficult period for them financially. They presented the passage of time as a story of how they gradually came to thrive financially and how that affected their eating habits. Now they related how they'd been able to overcome their initial poverty to such an extent that their fellow factory workers envied them, as her husband was taking on television repairs after his work on three shifts at the factory:

'When we got married, we had so little money I'd just buy 10 forints' worth of fat and chop up carrots and onions and that was the soup. I always managed to pack Gyuri bread and dripping for his morning snack. When we had more money later, there'd be Fradi sausage as well. By the time my daughter worked at the factory, she was taking salami and tomato. They even made remarks about people who afford tomatoes and salami in their break wouldn't get their wage rate raised.'[86]

5. How people obtained the consumer goods they desired

5.1 Magnetic bracelets, 'fine pullovers and cardigans', Kennedy rings and swapping

The last chapter described the significance respondents attached in their recollections to consumer goods with symbolic value in the period. This concerns how they tried to outwit the shortage economy. How did they obtain articles considered important, yet not available in the shops?

It was officially forbidden in the socialist period for anyone to bypass the official sales channels of a centrally planned economy. Act V/1961, under the 'Profiteering' section of the Penal Code, prescribed a maximum sentence of three years' imprisonment for those 'engaging in commercial activity or maintaining a business without the requisite permit, or b) conducting economically unjustified intermediary trade in goods, or speculating in other ways conducive to profiteering.'[87] Respondents told of proceedings being taken against a colleague

[85] Interviews with Mr and Mrs György K., July 29, 2000, 23–4 and 26; November 30, 2002, 93–4.
[86] Interviews with Mr and Mrs György K., July 29, 2000, 26; September 9, 2002, 35.
[87] Act IV/1978 of the new Penal Code, which came into force on July 1, 1979, classified the basic case of 'speculation' as a misdemeanour punishable by up to two years' imprisonment. The phrase 'engaging in commercial activity… without the requisite permit' became 'pursuing unauthorized commercial activity.' This wording remained until January 1, 1988, after which an amendment to the Penal Code in force until

at the Budapest Hosiery Factory who sold clothing items (pullovers and cardigans) in the factory. The incident can be found in the archives as well, grouped with the cases of pilfering from the factory. The woman was reported on suspicion of 'profiteering'. 'The profiteering that occurred in the boarding shop of the Folyamőr utca [factory] in March this year [1968] was carried out by Mrs György H.[88] and the requisite official measures are in progress.'[89] The same report included cases on the scale of three cardigans worth 520 forints being stolen in 1967. The sale of goods within the factory was criminalized and those writing the report treated it as if it were a case of stealing 'public property' such as the tights produced at the factory or 'private property' such as clothes or valuables belonging to other workers. Nonetheless, there was big demand for cheap products not obtainable in the shops. Sellers were prepared to run the risk of police proceedings. It gave them extra income for work conducted at least partly outside working hours.

The case was recalled by several informants. This was not just because they had bought from the seller, for they had acted similarly at other times as well, but because they had been called upon to explain directly to representatives of a law-enforcement agency how they had come by products unobtainable in the shops.

György: 'Well, the wife was involved in a case where the police…'

Erzsébet (laughing): 'Hunch-Buffet.'

György: 'Hunch-Buffet was what we called the security officer.'

Erzsébet: 'He came over to us… He says nothing's going to happen to you, just tell me whether you sometimes buy stuff from Mrs —.'

György: 'Who brought in the raincoats.'

Erzsébet: 'Yes, she used to bring stuff to sell in the factory. She worked in the shop as I did, and a neighbour said to her, sell these clothes, as many as you can, and this money will

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May 15, 1993 read, '§ 299 (1) Anyone who continuously a) trades or maintains a business in an unauthorized way, or b) conducts economically unjustified intermediary trade in goods, or speculates in other ways conducive to profiteering, is to be punished by imprisonment for up to two years, severe corrective/educative labour, corrective/educative labour, or a fine… § 299 (4) If the behaviour constituting the crime defined under Point a) of Paragraph 1) consists of unauthorized conduct of activity requiring an official permit and the perpetrator receives such a permit from before a substantive ruling is made by the court of first instance, the sentence may be reduced without limit or wholly laid aside in cases deserving special consideration.' Speculation as a crime was abolished after May 15, 1993 and the law recognizes only 'influence peddling' as such today.

[88] I call her by this name as she is only subsidiary to the the story.

[89] BFL BB Fond 8 XXXV (8) C, Budapesti Harisnyagyár iratai. Report on situation with social [i. e. public] property in the two Óbuda hosiery factories, April 11, 1968. The case was also on the April 16 agenda of the factory's party executive committee: '16. In the boarding shop, police proceedings for profiteering are underway against Mrs H. She made sizeable transactions, selling in instalments to a value of 4000–5000 forints a month. It is necessary to mobilize several people for the social court proceedings; the trade union requests assistance.'

be yours. Well they were made out of material—we didn't know much about quality—and we put them on and they stretched like anything.' We laugh. 'It was all right when I tried it on. Then you had to dry it flat because you weren't allowed to put it in the spin drier. We were all in her notebook if we'd bought from her, because we'd pay for the goods in instalments when the wages came, we couldn't have bought them any other way. We had to put our hands on the cross in court to say we were telling the truth.'[90]

Such narration is a good example of one feature of the storytelling. First they recalled the situation when the security officer pulled them up for buying and then they explained the events leading up to it. The excitement and fear at the time was present in the story, although it was related in a jocular way. The one prosecuted for selling was an immediate colleague and not the only one to sell things. Others might equally have faced prosecution. The nickname of the security officer *(Pupkredenc)* symbolized that he was someone in authority, ridiculed as a hunchback, but no less threatening for that.

Malvin, telling the same story, picked out the fact that they began to talk to her differently at the police station due to a lucky chance.

'That's what Zs. hawked around. There were three sizes. I took one home and examined it and took it back next day because it was tight for me. Meanwhile she never crossed my name off her list. Well, later, not immediately, they caught her and found my name there. And where Parliament is, in that part of town, I don't know where, what street it was in, we had to go into the police station. There was a good many of us and they had us in singly, not all at once. And then they asked if I'd bought stuff too. I didn't buy anything, I said. And he says, well why's my name down? And I said it was because it was no good and I'd taken it back. And then they said something to me, that policeman did, about why I'd wanted to buy. I said, look, you couldn't buy them in the shops. And we knew that perfectly well. And he says, did we know? We didn't. They brought them in, however would we know? We said we didn't know. He asked where I was born and everything, and I said I was born in Mezőhegyes. Then he looks at me: "You were born in Mezőhegyes? Tell me where." And I say Homestead 43, etc. And then he started taking a different tone.'[91]

In this narrative, it is as if Malvin were still in the police station, emphasizing that she had not done anything illegal. Nor did she state outright that selling within the factory counted as a crime at that time, preferring to leave the sentence half-said ('And he says, did we know?

[90] Interview with Mr and Mrs György K., November 30, 2002, 69–70.
[91] Interview with Mrs József F. and Mrs József S., November 19, 2002, 53–4.

We didn't.') She preferred to underline that they knew nothing, they had just wanted to buy. That theme of self-justification recurs in other narratives: they had wanted to buy, but the size was not right, and their name had remained in the notebook after all.

Sometimes elements of fantasy appear in the narration. For instance, the woman who was prosecuted is said to have brought in by ship the goods she sold in the factory. (Of course, there is no excluding the possibility that she had a relation working on a seagoing vessel.)

> 'Apparently, they brought it in by ship and sold it free of customs… Those who were proved to have bought stuff from her had to pay twice, once when they bought it and once again at the police station. So the goods were very expensive for them in the end, although she sold things that you couldn't get at the time.'[92]

All that emerges from the narratives about the woman who sold the coats is that she was dismissed from the factory and her colleagues there lost touch with her.

The respondents were asked if they had sold anything in the factory and if so what. The responses were detailed in some cases and brief in others. László's laconic account was simply, 'I sold the women nice pullovers and cardigans that you couldn't get in the shops. A friend of mine and I went out to Poland on the train.'[93] Later I asked the others whether they remembered anything they had bought from him.

> 'Laci[94] used to peddle stuff. And when we saw Laci, we knew he had something. We'd always ask what he'd brought. I bought this bracelet from him, for instance. And the ring. It's magnetic and has a healing effect. You put it here for blood pressure.' She demonstrates. 'And here when you're asleep.' She demonstrates again. He always came into the shop and he never sold the things expensively.'[95]

László is presented in the narratives as a help to the working women, obtaining for them cheaply consumer goods unavailable in the shops. He was seen as a reliable trader you could count on.

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[92] Interview with Mrs Balázs S., January 10, 2003, 20. Ilona was born in 1920 in Abony, where her father worked as a reinforced concrete operative. The family moved to Budapest in 1937, as her father was already commuting. Her elder sister and her mother moved back to Abony after a short time, while Ilona and her father remained in the capital. She took on contract work for a carpet weaver. She met her husband in 1938 and they were married in 1944. He worked for the suburban railway and died in 1991. Ilona worked in the boarding shop of the Budapest Hosiery Factory, from its foundation in 1951 until her retirement in 1975. She was a founder member of the Liberation Socialist Brigade in 1961. They lived in the same house in Csillaghegy from 1946 to 1991. When her husband died, she sold the house and followed her sister and her family to Szolnok. As a pensioner, she worked as a hospital nurse.

[93] Interview with László Cs., October 25, 2001, 14.

[94] Laci is a familiar form of László.

[95] Interview with Mrs József F. and Mrs József S., November 19, 2002, 53–4.

Teréz spoke at length about what she sold.

'There was an old lady in the boarding shop and she had some American relative who sent her rings. And this old lady asked me to help her sell these rings. I said why not. A bit of money. And X. Y. bought from me as well and wore the ring for two months… It was Kennedy's signet ring, a gold ring, I think, selling for 200 forints. It wasn't expensive. And she wore the ring for two months and then she told them in the party committee that I was selling rings with Kennedy on them.'[96]

Teréz was explaining the fact that she had to resign from a responsible position in the factory trade union by relating that she sold rings bearing the portrait of the murdered American president. She was reported for this, because the authorities thought it was unbecoming in a party member to sell Kennedy rings, and not Khrushchev rings, for instance. (The Soviet leader had been ousted by then, and in any case, she would hardly have been able to sell such rings for 200 forints a piece.)[97] She explained at the beginning of the story how she had obtained the goods, which earned her a little extra income. The same storytelling approach occurs in other narratives, when the women explain why they took jobs as domestic servants when they were girls. 'Lending a hand', as the main motive for a women to take a job outside the home, is a recurring narrative element, as if the respondents were ashamed, in the interview situation, to give need as a motive.

Mária sold pullovers in the workshop and came into conflict for that reason with the party committee and with the factory security officer. She related that the security officer borrowed an argument from official parlance when trying to shame her out of selling. He said that selling was petty bourgeois and incompatible with public office or party-committee membership, and unworthy of 'socialist man'. This was related when the respondent was asked about the police matter mentioned earlier.

'I did selling as well, you know. And I was reported. Where we were living… next door, you know, there was a lady with relatives in Czechoslovakia, and she… brought knickers and bras and things over from there and asked me if I wanted to try and sell them. Well, of course, I took them into the factory and sold them, but the security officers noticed… I was reported… The security officer told me he knew I was selling something. I said prove it then. Then he said I was a district party-committee member, and this and that, and how

[96] Interview with Mrs Károly T., October 3, 2001, 41.

[97] The author of a manual for leaders of socialist brigades did not advise naming brigades after Kennedy either, although he had been murdered. Fábri, Tibor, A szocialista brigádvezetők feladatai és munkamódszerei (Tasks and working methods of socialist brigade leaders) (Budapest: Táncsics Kiadó, 1972). On the removal of Mrs Károly T., see BFL BB Fond 8 XXXV (8) C, Budapesti Harisnyagyár iratai. Meeting of Branch I, October 4, 1970.

come I did that?… But he couldn't prove it.' (She laughed.) 'Nothing ever happened over it.'[98]

Those travelling to work from villages around Budapest included a contingent from Csév (Piliscsév, Esztergom County), who would regularly bring home-grown, home-made produce not available in the city markets. They would put offerings in the fridge for supervisors and workshop managers in the hope of advancement—some accepted the gifts and some did not—but ordinary work mates had to pay for their sausage or black pudding.

'The Csév people brought in *disznótoros* [pig-slaughter products] to sell. They'd ask every year if I wanted some. I'd say yes. They made black pudding differently from us at home, with a lot of white breadcrumbs, but it was delicious.'[99]

According to the stories, the furnace workers would buy liquor in working hours from country *pálinka* sellers. The porters were involved in the selling and would tell the furnace workers when a new consignment arrived.[100]

5.2 Will Mrs Béla B. have an orange today?

With selling in the factory being equated with theft, those engaged in it had to adopt the same tactics towards the security guards as thieves did. Although peddling, unlike pilfering, was a crime only in the eyes of officialdom, the party committee in the factory would discuss both under the heading of 'protection of social property'. When factory pilfering was discussed by the respondents, even the concept of theft might be interpreted in various ways. Workers were subjected to a body search after work.[101] Their own stockings were stamped and there was a check every time to see whether they were leaving in their own stockings or tights or the factory's.[102]

The respondents often told stories of how they had managed to get round the strict regulations and steal some stockings. Often they would wind a pair into their hair bun. Others stuffed the lining of a fur coat with stockings. The narrators stressed that a lot of people were never found out and a lot were known to be stealing but the security officers did not report them, even though there were financial incentives to do so. The ones found out were exceptional cases, such as a woman who sold the stockings through a hairdresser's that many of the women went to, or people whom it served someone's purpose to report. It was reported

[98] Interview with Mrs Vilmos S., January 14, 2003, 65–6.
[99] Interview with Mrs József F. and Mrs József S., November 19, 2002, 52–3.
[100] Interview with Mrs Károly T., October 6, 2003, 55.
[101] BFL BB Fond 8 XXXV (8) C, Budapesti Harisnyagyár iratai. Report on security work, October 12, 1962.
[102] The stamp could not be washed out of the fabric. Interview with Mrs Károly T., November 16, 1999, 13.

in one of the theft cases in the archives that Mrs Béla B. had been discovered after an 'unrealistic rise in living standard'. That meant she had been able in 1963 to buy 20 bottles of wine and 30 bottles of beer at once, as well as oranges for her children, and this had been talked about among some mothers at the kindergarten. She was expelled from the party for the theft. The records presented the misguided woman as someone whose life was an open book to the authorities. They knew not only her wages (1000 forints a month in 1962) but 'how much her husband drinks.' According to the party representatives, Mrs Béla B. had not behaved as a party member and a future socialist person should do. All of a sudden, her life had not been so transparent as those of the others and she had adopted 'petty bourgeois habits' by buying the oranges. That meant she must have committed some crime, and it duly emerged that she had stolen communal property.[103] According to accounts from those working at the factory in the 1980s, managers who insisted very strictly on the body-search regulations themselves failed to respect communal property and stole from the factory on quite a large scale. Raw materials, machinery and equipment were taken out and often never returned (informal privatization). The respondents were of the opinion that those who took machinery from the factory prospered and started their own businesses, while the 'plain stocking thieves' did not.[104]

6. Holiday-making

Providing workers' holidays was seen as a state task under the socialist system, a free welfare benefit to workers in a workers' state. There were frequent newspaper reports, especially in the 1950s, of where and how male and female workers spent their summer holidays. These were supposed to encourage readers to engage in travel and bathing—hitherto pursuits mainly for other social strata, such as the bourgeoisie. As with other sides of life, there was official discourse and recommendations on how free time could be usefully spent and what was the correct course to take. For instance, 'regular summer' holidays were best spent by going away on holiday, returning to work refreshed and fortified, and immersing oneself in building socialism again as a useful member of society. Women working their holidays, on farm work

[103] BFL BB Fond 8 XXXV (8) C, Budapesti Harisnyagyár iratai. Theft case of Mrs Béla B., June 26, 1962. MSZMP factory branch meeting, July 19, 1962.

[104] Although they no longer remembered the occasion, two narrators, László and György, once thwarted thieves who crept into the factory during the night shift. *HD*, August 24, 1978, 2. On July 21, 1978, a shadow crossing the curtains in the electrical shop was noticed by Attila T. Two men had climbed over the fence, jumped down into the factory and hidden behind the compressor house. They were surrounded by László, György, János K., Rezső R. and police who were called. Those who caught the thieves received a reward.

for relatives, say, on their own land, or staying in Budapest and frequenting the baths rather than Balaton or the Mátra, were portrayed in a 1970 article in a women's weekly as having 'individual limitations' preventing them from enjoying 'the opportunities provided by society'.[105]

Trade-union vouchers for stays in holiday resorts were only a dream for some workers at the Budapest Hosiery Factory. The two Budapest factories received only 160 trade-union vouchers in 1965, of which four were family vouchers,[106] whereas in 1966, there were 1867 employees working in them.[107] So the majority of workers in the two factories did not use trade-union vouchers for their holidays. They stayed at sites their employer owned at Balatonszéplak or Surány, or in the 1980s at the Gönyűtető holiday centre at Balatonszárszó.[108]

The fate of the Balatonszéplak facility typifies the way factory workers failed to obtain trade-union vouchers for want of a fund of contacts, if they did not manage to create the conditions for holiday-making for themselves. The skilled and unskilled workers among the respondents did not report staying at the Surány holiday facility owned by the factory, but they frequently recalled stays at Balatonszéplak.[109] The site the factory owned at Balatonszéplak had nothing on it at the beginning of the 1960s. It was brought up at several party meetings in that period that developing the site would allow more people to be allocated holidays, despite the meagre assignment of trade-union vouchers. When presenting this to the 3rd District Party Committee, the management displayed themselves as fulfilling their obligations to provide worker holidays, as they themselves hardly ever had holidays there. There were plans in 1962 to build a guesthouse on the site, but nothing happened for several more years,[110] during which employees could camp there. A 1972 request from the workforce for wooden chalets to be erected was unsuccessful.[111] About 200 people each season could

[105] Katalin Osvát, 'A munkásnők és az üdülés' (Working women and holiday-making), *Nők Lapja*, July 18, 1970.
[106] BFL BB Fond 8 XXXV (8) C, Budapesti Harisnyagyár iratai. Works party meeting, October 12, 1966.
[107] BFL BB Fond 8 XXXV (8) C, Budapesti Harisnyagyár iratai. MSZMP factory executive committee meeting, May 10, 1966.
[108] The 'managing rights' (lease) to the children's holiday facility was taken over by the Budapest Hosiery Factory from Somogy County Council in 1983, where three and four-bed rooms were created for workers on a site full of big chestnut trees. Thereafter, the factory newspaper published regular reports and photographs of children on holiday there: *HD*, June 9, 1983, 2; August 4, 1983, 1–2; January 1, 1984, 3; July 19, 1984, 2; July 17, 1985, 1; August 27, 1985, 3; October 18, 1985, 3.
[109] The Surány facility was owned by the factory in 1970, but by 1983, there were plans to sell it. BFL BB Fond 8 XXXV (8) C, Budapesti Harisnyagyár iratai. Mood report, July 6, 1971; MSZMP party executive committee meeting, September 1, 1983.
[110] BFL BB Fond 8 XXXV (8) C, Budapesti Harisnyagyár iratai. MSZMP factory executive committee meeting, 1962.
[111] BFL BB Fond 8 XXXV (8) C, Budapesti Harisnyagyár iratai. Mood report, July 1972.

have a holiday at the campsite, in groups of 32. The factory provided nine tents in 1976, as well as a shower, a WC, a cooking area with electric plates and a fridge. According to reports in the factory newspaper, holidaymakers would grill bacon over an open fire, play chess or watch television in the evenings.[112] The report also shows that development of the site was long overdue. The management eventually decided to use income from the frequent 'communist' (unpaid) Saturday work to develop the site.[113] In 1981, the paper reported that the hosiery workers would still be camping on their site, although it lay amidst luxury resort facilities, although the tents were under plastic sheeting by then and a solar shower had been installed. Those quoted in the paper found life at Balaton very expensive. Many of them continued to cook while on holiday and few of them went to restaurants. One family commented, 'it's not a summer holiday if the wife spends it by the stove.' There could still only be 32 holidaymakers there at a time. There was still not water heater and the way to the tents was over 'ankle-twisting holes'.[114] No further improvements seem to have been made at Balatonszéplak after that. The factory newspaper preferred to dwell on the new facilities awaiting those who visited Gönyűtető. The members of the Universal Socialist Brigade made a water bicycle and a solar shower. They put up two handball goals, and a bottle of beer was broken over the side of the water bicycle before it was launched. Each night in 1986, the holidaymakers watched video films and played a parlour game called 'Do Business Wisely', at least according to the journalist.[115]

Despite seemingly bleak conditions, respondents called their holidays at Balatonszéplak unforgettable experiences of a kind they could no longer enjoy.

'It was wonderful at Széplak. We put up the tents and took our grandchildren. I made masses of pancakes, we bathed in Balaton, and we had a good laugh. We'd grill bacon over a bonfire every night.'[116]

Balatonszéplak was also presented as a place people felt they could call their own, as they had created it with their own hands:

'The workers themselves took down the wood from the dismantled crates by car, meaning by Trabant. Then they put up the tents. They could be rented.'[117]

[112] *HD*, July 28, 1976, 4.
[113] *HD*, May 19, 1977, 1; March 12, 1986, 2.
[114] *HD*, August 6, 1981, 3.
[115] *HD*, June 19, 1986, 3–4.
[116] Interview with Mr and Mrs György K., November 30, 2002, 100.
[117] Interview with Mr and Mrs József P., November 4, 2000, 5. József worked as a middle manager, not a skilled worker, and this could be sensed in the tone of his narration. Etelka was born in 1944 in Budapest. Her father worked in the Pesterzsébet Factory as a stocking knitter. She joined the Budapest Hosiery Factory in 1962 after taking her secondary-school certificate. Her husband was head of the Domestic Trade Warehouse at the

That helps to explain why the holiday facility remained a painful memory for the respondents, for it was privatized and sold separately after the change of system. They were also bitter because the work they had invested went for nothing; they did not share in the proceeds of the sale.

Balaton holidays were not the only ones that featured in the narratives, of course. Many stories were told of other excursions at home and abroad and of trade-union bonus holidays, and of holidays and tours run by private travel agencies in the period after the change of system. Most hardly differ from travel stories of other Hungarians, but a couple are worth quoting as they depart from the pattern in some respect.[118]

Male respondents attached great importance in their narration to official trips organized by the factory, gladly speaking of them at length. The account would be tailored to present the narrator in a 'manly' light, behaving in a 'manlier' way than in daily life, with frequent drinking and entertainment. Even social rules could be broken by laughing at superiors or giving them menial tasks to do.

'When we were out in **[**East**]** Germany, we travelled all over the country, even to the seaside. The mark was 1:4 at the time and everything was really cheap.[119] Jena ovenproof glass, for instance, the car was full of it, we bought so much. We also went to the Radeberger brewery. Beer was so cheap you always had to queue for it. I said to the others it would be simpler to buy 30 tankards at once for the four of us and that's what we did. They even had bars where girls danced on the tables. I got so drunk I danced on the table myself in the end… On the way over, I drove us at 140… On the way back, L.[120] suggested going a different way. We'd come the straight way, but we'd go back up hill and down dale so the views would be good. Meanwhile the petrol started to get low… Never mind, said L., we'll soon get to a petrol station, it's on the map. Well, it was closed, as we'd come on a Sunday. We'd quite run

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Traders Department Store in Vihar utca at the end of the 1980s. She worked from 1962 to 1976 as a wage clerk, a commercial clerk, an export clerk and finally as head of the export group. Etelka was supervisor of the boarding shop from 1976 to 1982. She then became head of the production department and in 1985, head of the preparatory division. Before retiring early, she worked in the Vihar utca Traders Department Store.

[118] For anthropological analysis of tourism, see, for instance, Burns, Peter M., *An introduction to tourism and anthropology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1999); for sociological studies, see Yiorgos Apostopoulos, Stella Leivadi and Andrew Yiannakis, eds., *The sociology of tourism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).

[119] I. e., one West German mark equalled four East German marks.

[120] János L. (1934-199?) was the immediate superior of György. He completed the textile industry technical course, then worked in 1953–7 in power-supply management and later as power-supply manager at the Knitting and Weaving Industry Directorate of the Ministry of Light Industry.

out by the time we reached the next one. The car stopped. I sent L. off to the petrol station, which was 500 metres away. Then we watched him stagger back with the heavy cans.'[121]

Two of the women put their travel narratives in a female identity framework. One told how she had decided as a young girl she would travel a lot until she got married, because that was when she would have a chance to do so. She followed the plan purposefully, carefully saving her money and paying for a trip abroad each year.

> 'I travelled a lot when I was single. To Moscow and Kiev—I almost missed the train, I had to run like anything. Then to Karlovy Vary. You could choose whether to go to Paris or to Florence and Rome. I chose Florence. I was on the Romanian coast at Mamaia, as well. I paid in at Expressz, by myself, you could always meet someone there. People were different in those days. I decided I'd travel while I was single, because there was no way of telling how things would turn out after I got married. We were in Zakopane, as well.'[122]

Mária emerges as someone who really likes travelling alone and discovering the sites by herself. This can also be interpreted as female self-fulfilment, so that travel becomes a symbol of liberation.[123]

'I went to Istanbul one summer with a female colleague. I'd been there several times, but the Turks weren't as pushy by then as they used to be. They used to come up saying buy this, buy that, but not any more. It had become a European city. When I was in Cyprus, you could pay for optional programmes as well, but I didn't want to. I bought myself a bus pass, looked up the timetable and went all round the island. I love travelling alone, you know, and then I can see what I want to see, and I can look around as long as I want. I love to gape at things.'[124]

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[121] Interviews with Mr and Mrs György K., November 25, 2000, 37; July 7, 2001, 41.
[122] Interview with Mrs Antal H., February 16, 2001, 15.
[123] For an account of women travelling alone and of single travelling in the life-course, see Mechthild Bereswill and Gudrun Ehlert, *Alleinreisende Frauen zwischen Selbst- und Welterfahrung* (Hanover: Helmer Verlag, 1994).
[124] Interviews with Mrs Vilmos S., September 2, 2002, 49; January 14, 2003, 54.

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Sándor Horváth

Hooligans, spivs and gangs. Youth subcultures in the 1960s

One year after the death of Stalin, in the spring of 1954, an American singer by the name of Bill Haley recorded a new song in the Decca studios in New York. Haley had only had moderate success before as a country singer and was trying to break into a broader market. 'Rock Around the Clock' served him well. Its appearance has been recorded in popular-music history as the birth of rock.[1]

In the same year, four young Hungarians fleeing across the border into Austria had this to relate: 'We grew up in the square *[klatyó]* together, went to the same school, spent all our spare time together. We didn't dig *[komál]* the people's democracy *[paradicsom = heaven]* in spite of our popular origins and worker lives. We didn't want to be party blokes *[párt-mikik]* or Stakhanovites *[élskerások]* either, so we didn't have much future ahead of us. We got bored with all that communist propaganda *[albérleti duma]*, the work competitions *[hullameló]* and the whole dingy *[tré]* life at home. We'd heard enough on the Western radio *[kacsázik]* and this relative was always writing *[skribol]* from Vienna *[B.]* about how much better *[frankó]* a worker's life was in the West. We decided we'd push off *[meghúzni a zamzigot]* and cross *[átgémblizni]* the border *[taccs = touchline]* as soon as we could. We were just waiting for the right moment. And this little do *[balhé]* went *[kocog]* very well.'[2]

The use of language and choice of words can be caught in action here, as an identity-forming factor determining the social orientation of young people.[3] Propaganda in the socialist period depicted young people as the most important recipients of the values of the 'socialist type of person', yet there developed among the young subcultures with alternative systems of values sharply different from the official norms. These came to be termed *jampec* (spivs) and *galeri* (gangs) in an official parlance adapted from the Soviet hooliganism discourse.

Analysing accounts of such youth subcultures can make it clearer how the social discourse becomes institutionalized, materializes and turns into an identity-forming factor.

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1 Timothy W. Ryback, *Rock around the bloc. A history of rock music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (New York/Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990) 19.

2 This valuable source material was published by Csaba Katona, 'Krina, frankó, mikulás—Egy határátlépés története budapesti szlengben' (Story of a border crossing in Budapest slang). *Archivnet* II:6. www.archivnet.hu. Open Society Archives, Box 300/40/4/7. Meanings appear in an appended slang glossary.

3 Sue Widdicombe and Robin Wooffitt, *The language of youth subcultures. Social identity in action* (New York etc.: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1995), 55–75.

For its role in disseminating the stereotypes and experiences was as important as that of the information channels about Western lifestyles that were widening in the 1960s, or of rock and roll. Continuity between the 1950s and 1960s appears in the adaptation of the Soviet hooliganism discourse. But differences in terms of the history of everyday life are more easily explained if the scale is narrowed—instead of considering the whole country, a local example is taken of the rebellious youth of a city or even of a single gang.

This study sets out to explore why the socialist authorities of the time needed to adapt the Soviet hooliganism discourse to Hungary and depict certain youth subcultures as deviant, and how the youth groups reacted to this. Official discourse at the time also resorted to the weapon of depicting groups at variance with the 'consensus' view of reality as a force expressive of 'decay' in society. It was essential for the socialist state to reinforce its power periodically by launching a campaign against certain groups in society. These campaigns gave official bodies a chance of presenting their views to society, views that they considered morally superior. To maintain their power status, they needed to demonstrate that power and to be able to point to groups that could be depicted as destroyers of ostensible moral values. Youth subcultures appear in this 'status politics' not as symbolic representatives of a possible way of life, but as the enemies of the state, the family, youth and socialism.

'Hooliganism' became known in Hungarian official discourse as *jampec* in the 1950s and *galeri* in the 1960s. One purpose of this study is to show how groups of young people bound mainly by consumption ideals were made to appear in the press as a danger to the idealized order of society. For the press campaigns of the time can also be interpreted as a case of moral panic, projecting a sensational picture of the youth subcultures that promoted the status politics of the authorities. With that approach, the *jampec* and the *galeri* were products of the moral panic that served the purposes of the youth policy of the socialist state, which was simultaneously a policy designed to shore up power status. Adapting the moral-panic model of Stanley Cohen,[4] 'moral' marks a phenomenon (youth subcultures) interpreted by the observer—the press, Communist Youth League or even police—as impinging on fundamental social values (e. g. consumption ideals and the *jampec*) or jeopardizing social order (e. g. acts of violence by *galeri*).

[4] Stanley Cohen, *Folk devils and moral panics: the creation of Mods and Rockers* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1972).

Drainpipes, striped shirts and boogie-woogie

Hungary's characteristic youth subculture in the 1950s was the *jampec* phenomenon, which attracted much propaganda attention. The *jampec* were presented as setting a bad example to their peers by following an ostensibly capitalist system of values. The *jampec* was a recurring figure in socialist realist films, as a young personification of the enemy. The best known was Swing Tóni in *Dalolva szép az élet* (Singing makes life beautiful), [a 1950 comedy film by Márton Keleti] where a cliché interpretation shows the world of the *jampec* attracting misguided, footloose, bewildered young people.[5]

Anti-establishment fashion linked closely to music appeared widely in the post-war world. The San Francisco trend that later became known as the beatniks were already followers of 'anti-fashion' in the spring of 1945, which was interpreted in public discourse as opposition to everything at all cost. The dominant society condensed the phenomenon into a stereotype: if white shirts were in fashion with the middle class, the beatniks wore coloured. Musical trends from the United States began to have decisive influence on the subcultures of young people.

The best-known subculture in the United Kingdom was that of the teddy boys or teds in the 1950ies, originally found in working-class districts. These British working-class youths, imitating in their clothing the elegant black wear of the Edwardian upper-class dandy and listening to rock and roll, caused a great stir in press in the 1950s, as similar trends did in other countries. Their appearance was taken to be violent, contrary to middle-class values and family life, and dangerous to young people.[6] As with the followers of the *Halbstarke* culture in Germany, they were marked for the dominant society by their dark or brightly coloured shirts and black trousers, hair combed right back for boys and ponytails for girls, patterned pullovers, wild dancing and acts of violence.[7] Even before the war, Germany had a similar youth subculture, known most frequently as *Edelweißpiraten*.[8] The French equivalent of the *jampec*, teddy boys and *Halbstarken* were the *blousons noirs*, who wore tight, closed black

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5 *Jampec* characters appear in the sequences set in the new town of Sztálinváros (Dunaújváros) and the workers' hostel. See Gábor Szilágyi, *Életjel. A magyar filmművészet megszületése. 1954-1956* (Sign of life. Birth of Hungarian cinema, 1954–6), (Budapest: Magyar Filmmintézet, 1994), 275.

6 T. R. Fyvel, *The insecure offenders: Rebellious youth in the welfare state* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963);

7 Thomas Grotum, *Die Halbstarken: zur Geschichte einer Jugendkultur der 50er Jahre*. (Frankfurt a. M./New York: Campus Verlag, 1994); Gabriele Dietz: 'Sozius—Miezen. Halbstarke Mädchen'. In: *Hart und Zart. Frauenleben 1920–1970* (Berlin: Elefanten Press, 1990). 232–6. Günter Cramer, *Die Subkultur der Rocker: Erscheinungsform und Selbstdarstellung* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus Verl., 1992), 49–54.

8 Alfons Kenkmann, 'The subculture of young urban workers in Germany 1930-1950. The example of the "Blasen", the "Meuten" and the "Edelweißpiraten"'. Paper read at 6th International Conference on Urban History: *Power, knowledge and the society in the city*. Section: European cities, public sphere and youth in the 20th century. Edinburgh, September 4–7, 2002.

jackets reaching to the waist (as rockers in France still do.)[9] The Western youth subculture best known in Hungary (due to its physical proximity) was that of the *Schlurf* in Vienna, who appeared in working-class districts of the Austrian capital during the war, with almost identical supposedly elegant American-style clothes and hair style that aroused fury in the public.[10] The pejorative terms for the *jampec* equivalents in the Soviet Union were *stilyagi* (fashion followers) and *pizhoni* (fashion monkeys). These scarcely translatable word are most often referred to internationally as 'hooligans', although the epithet does not convey the fashion or value directions of the subcultures concerned.

All these subcultures were similarly affected by international trends under mainly under Anglo-Saxon influence, determining the dress, hairstyles and musical preferences of young people. Each youth subculture had attributes connected with the country or political system in which it arose. The mass-consumption subcultures among youth arose simultaneously in many Western and Eastern European countries, which suggests that their structural role in youth society and the conflicts consequent on this can be analysed analogously, despite the differences of political system.[11] Rock and roll proved to be the most effective means of emotional self-expression, irrespective of 'capitalism' or 'socialism'.

Young people in all the countries affected developed a style of dress and pattern of behaviour with which to present a different social identity as an alternative to the official set of values. This identity is tied principally to consumer goods and consumer lifestyle. But its ability to present an alternative and express resistance began to lessen in the 1960s as the consumer society and official support for it spread. As the social changes speeded up, the consumption-related identity of youth came to signify intensification of the identity problems as well.[12] The appearance of these youth cultures was paralleled by the spread of the mass

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9 Cramer 1992, 55.

10 Alexander Mejstrik, *Totale Ertüchtigung und spezialisiertes Vergnügen. Die Tätigkeiten Wiener Arbeiterjugendlicher als Erziehungseinsätze.* PhD thesis (Vienna, 1993); *idem*, 'Schlechte Schlurfe—Guade Schluaf. Jugendfreizeit und Jugenderziehung, Wien 1941–1944.' In: Rudolf G. Ardelt and Christian Gerbel (eds), *Österreichischer Zeitgeschichtetag 1995. Österreich—50 Jahre Zweite Republik. 22. bis 24. Mai 1995 in Linz* (Innsbruck, 1996), 442–5; Christian Gerbel, Alexander Mejstrik and Reinhard Sieder, 'Die "Schlurfs". Verweigerung und Opposition von Wiener Arbeiterjugendlichen im Dritten Reich'. In: Emmerich Tálos, Ernst Hanisch and Wolfgang Neugebauer (eds), *NS-Herrschaft in Österreich 1938–1945* (Vienna, 1988), 243–68.

11 See Cramer 1992, 57.

12 On the emergence and intensification of identity problems, Ferenc Pataki writes in terms of identity theory, 'An identity problem—self-concept tension and difficulty in the individual—arises where and when mounting structuration of society and individualization of the social individual takes identity categories progressively further from their natural, received and stabilized bases… They proliferate and lose their rigid prescription for individuals. There is an increase in the conceptual richness of the articulation and treatment of reality, and within it, of other people and ourselves… The identity problems mount further if social reproduction accelerates and the pace of social change increases to a point where succeeding generations no longer inherit identity patterns in unchanged form.' Ferenc Pataki, *Élettörténet és identitás* (Life story and

media. In countries where rock and roll could not be heard on state radio, young people tuned to Western radio stations (Radio Free Europe or Voice of America) to know what was in fashion. This meant that the consumption habits of young people in countries behind the Iron Curtain (like Hungary) underwent comparable changes to those in the West, but of course at a different pace and within the frames imposed by a centralized state.

The phenomenon seems to be rendered more intelligible by the theories of youth subcultures that have arisen so far. Let me pick from the library of literature on the subject one work that marked a turning point of interpretation. Successive attempts were made from the 1940s onwards to define the concept of a subculture, especially by Anglo-Saxon sociologists. According to the broadest, it applies to a social group, one shared attribute of whose members distinguishes them specifically from other social groups. This definition, however, can be used equally for 'communities', 'societies' or even 'cultures'. A notable attempt to narrow and redefine the subculture concept was made by the Chicago school. The subculture definition of Albert K. Cohen and the analysis by William Foote of a street-corner gang helped persuade the public there lay behind the behaviour of youth hitherto labelled delinquent[13] and the everyday lives of gang members rules that might be stricter than those governing other social groups or even the dominant society. According to Cohen, subcultures arise when people facing similar social problems seek a group solution and point of reference. This also happened with young people who became delinquent in society's eyes for rejecting the middle-class values represented by the school system.[14] According to other approaches, similar young people are considered delinquent because the values of working-class culture (seen as something unified) have come to dominate their system of values.[15]

The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) established at Birmingham University in 1964 played a decisive part in research into subcultures for two decades. The

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identity), (Budapest: Osiris, 2001), 113.

13 A summary of Anglo-American literature on juvenile delinquency: Martin H. Neumeyer, *Juvenile delinquency in modern society* (Princeton NJ etc.: D. Van Nostrand, 1961 [1949). A conservative approach is also taken by most authors in the following (except Talcott Parsons, who questions the discourse on 'moral decline of society' that prompted the volume): Eli Ginzberg, ed., *Values and ideas of American youth*, (New York/London: Columbia UP, 1961). The Hungarian interpretation followed that conservative discourse, mainly for ideological reasons. Research focused on why young people were 'criminal' or 'deviant' in behaviour. Tibor Huszár, *Fiatalkorú bűnözők* (Juvenile delinquents), (Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1964); József Molnár, *Galeribűnözés. Antiszociális fiatalkori csoportok, a fiatalkori csoportos bűnözés* (Gang crime. Antisocial juvenile groups, group juvenile crime), (Budapest: KJK, 1971).

14 William Foote Whyte, *Utcasarki társadalom: egy olasz szegénynegyed társadalomszerkezete* (Budapest: Új Mandátum, 1999 = *Street corner society: the social structure of an Italian slum*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943); Albert K. Cohen, *Delinquent boys: the culture of the gang* (New York: The Free Press, 1955). Mutual influences of school system, worker culture and counter-culture are explored in Paul Willis, *A skacok. Iskolai ellenkultúra, munkáskultúra* (Budapest: Új Mandátum, 2000 = *Learning to labour: how working class kids get working class jobs*, Farnborough: Saxon House, 1977).

15 Widdicombe and Wooffitt 1995, 15.

research focused mainly on the conceptual sphere of 'youth'. Great influence on the research was exerted by Raymond Williams and E. P. Thompson, and by Richard Hoggart, the first CCCS director.[16] They analysed youth subcultures as the soil in which new mass-culture phenomena would take root first, which meant that youth research became a central problem, not a side issue. It was seen as an environment in which youth subcultures could be read as a text and a signal as well. Phil Cohen, who was on the CCCS staff, concluded from researches in East London that youth cultures appear as a substitute in an environment where an earlier social value system (such as the coherent culture of the working class) has lost its significance. Thus they could replace the community of the workers with a social space belonging to the subculture—for instance, by replacing the worker's community experience with the communal experience of entertainment. In that way, the individual subcultures would reproduce as well as replace the cultural environment giving rise to them.[17]

What does *jampec* mean and where does it come from? The first recorded mention dates from 1928, and according to the historical-etymological dictionary of the Hungarian language, it means an idle, good-for-nothing youth who dresses and behaves in a conspicuous fashion.[18] The figure of a *jampec* is associated primarily with fashion. Before the Second World War, it meant mainly the dandies from richer families, who stuck out for their extravagant lifestyle and enthusiasm for 'modern' things (*dance*, crime stories, motorcycles, and Kodak cameras), conspicuous dance styles and succession of lovers. There is a sarcastic song dating from 1933 that describes the *jampec* in these terms, who begins by singing, 'Oh world of old/Oh bygone failure *[kampec]*/I'm the fine, sturdy/Local *jampec*./I'm a modern youth/Malign me who dares/I make big demands/Battle me, blockhead.'[19] The figure of the *jampec* in common parlance also meant a worldly, independent, extravagant lifestyle, so that

[16] Their new approach to working-class history had great influence on analysts of mainly working-class youth subcultures. Thompson's anthropological approach to the autonomous entity of the working class centred on research into worker way of life. E. P. Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, (London: Gollancz, 1963). An influence on youth research in Germany was also exerted by writings on young workers. The most influential likewise dealt with way of life: Helmut Schelsky, ed., *Arbeiterjugend gestern und heute*, (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1955).

[17] Phil Cohen, *Subcultural conflict and working class community*, (Birmingham: University of Birmingham CCCS, 1972). Studies that adapt Cohen's model can be found in a volume on the subcultures of young workers: Geoff Mungham and Geoff Pearson, eds, *Working class youth culture*. (London: Routledge, 1976). For details on the changes in meaning of the concept of subculture, see Ken Gelder and Sarah Thornton, *The subcultures reader*, (London/New York: Routledge, 1997).

[18] The combination, Yiddish in origin, means 'great prick' in both senses. The analogous Hungarian combination is probably earlier and lexical development to 'very stupid' and then 'fashion-mad' would have occurred in Hungarian. Loránd Benkő, ed., *A magyar nyelv történeti-etimológiai szótára*, (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1970), Vol. 2, 258–9.

[19] 'The Debrecen *jampec* sings.' Text published in the newspaper *Debreceni Független Újság*, February 12, 1933, 7. I am grateful to Péter Szegedi for the reference.

it could be an attractive pattern for young skilled workers earning good wages after the Second World War.

It is clear from numerous accounts that clothing was the main distinguishing mark. A *jampec* would wear a black or brightly coloured shirt, a patterned tie or red spotted scarf, a baggy-shouldered jacket, drainpipe trousers, striped socks, coloured, rubber-soled shoes and a cowboy-style hat. A girl would wear a tight skirt and floppy jacket, with plaited or permed hair tied in a ponytail. The *jampec* later pioneered jeans, the article of clothing that ostensibly abolished the distinctions between classes and sexes. Even separately, these various articles of dress could give someone a *jampec* appearance; there was no need to invest in the full gear. The dress of the young men was even more striking because less restrained men's fashions (brighter clothes in more expensive fabrics) had been confined to subcultures ever since the mid-19th century. Work and career had become the main measure of value in the men's' world, while the appearance and dress of women came to symbolize family prosperity.[20] In the case of women, it was a mark of rebellion to dress in a more puritan way, to don garments associated with groups further down the social scale, or to wear men's clothes.

Jampec clothing as a status symbol lent an urban character to working-class youth obtaining it on the black market, along with the excitement of a group affiliation and an association with Western values. 'They looked suspiciously on us. When we walked in, and not as show-offs. But we had our *jampi* shoes, thick soles, rubber welts. They still didn't… I didn't wear them to work. They were for weekends. We went off in our *jampi* shoes to loaf around with friends. Big leather jackets, the lot… There were dealers in the South Town, three of them. I don't know their names, Frici somebody-or-other, they brought the stuff in. I think from Yugoslavia or the South Country… It was a big thing that you could buy it on the side, in instalments. You had to have connections to get hold of it, because they were bringing it in… People envied each other for where they'd bought stuff. They'd stare at a good pair of drainpipes…. And there were the young people at work, they didn't buy on instalments, they borrowed the gear from somewhere. Then I tried to buy a simple flannel shirt, right in fashion then. Drainpipes, thick-soled and real sponge-rubber shoes. Gojzer. [waterproofing suede, similar to suede Gibson-style shoes with thick crepe soles of the teddy boys]. The shoes were very hardwearing, unfortunately I can't show them to you,' explained a man who worked in a

[20] Jennifer Craik, *The face of fashion. Cultural studies in fashion*, (London/New York: Routledge, 1995). Quoted in Márta Csabai, 'A test felöltöztetése' (Clothing the body). In: Márta Csabai and Ferenc Erős, eds, *Test–Beszédek. Köznapi és tudományos diskurzusok a testről* (Body and speech. Everyday and scientific discourse on the body), (Budapest: Új Mandátum, 2002), 84–119.

skilled job in Sztálinváros in the 1950s. Incidentally, the stereotypes of the period prompted him to object that he had never been a *jampec* or anything of the kind.[21]

The loud *jampec* clothes combined with other habits thought to be conspicuous, such as 'wild dancing' and use of frequent 'Pest' expressions in speech. Another was a propensity to tell 'impudent' jokes. The uniformity of dress and hairstyle, dance patterns and spoken language all served to distinguish them from others in the city. Changes in hairstyle and clothes would tell passers-by in the street that this group were off to enjoy themselves and so defying the constraints of workplace, party or state.

Condemnation of the *jampec* included condemning Western consumer patterns. The *jampec* were not alone in that, of course. The British teddy boys, mods or rockers were targets for the press partly because of their habits as consumers. But the dress or music characteristic of a Western lifestyle was still more of a challenge to the socialist state. An important function of the *jampec* image officially projected was to present the norms that had to be condemned, and through them, the official expectations of young people. That did not mean that young people embodying in their appearance or way of life the characteristics ascribed to the *jampec* in the press at the time did not exist. Propagandists were fond of introducing the force of socialism into their depiction of the activities of young people. Then as now, it would be projected as a force supported by 'the young' and representative of 'the future'. Other stock images of the propagandists included those of 'heroic builders' and a 'classless society'. The image built up of the *jampec*, on the other hand, featured in propaganda and the press as a means of distinguishing in detail the patterns of behaviour that the young should follow or reject.

The *jampec* way of life was depicted as conflicting with officially expected norms as part of a blanket condemnation of all Western influence, since it was not derived from the planned economy and education in the socialist way of life. The campaign against the *jampec* was simultaneously a struggle against individualism, as an argument for collectivism and socialist justice, as opposed to the social system described officially discourse as capitalist. So the prime importance of the *jampec* phenomenon to official discourse in the 1950s was as a demonstration of the distinction between the desired 'socialist' behaviour pattern and the undesirable 'capitalist' one.

The *Halbstarke*, teddy boys and *jampec* groups disappeared from the media in the 1960s. Their place was taken by other groups, in Hungary's case the *galeri*, who were

[21] Recollection by János B., March 26, 2001.

accused mainly of crime. The role of the *jampec* in public parlance was assumed by debates on *galeri* or 'hooligans'. The function was similar, except that some elements of *jampec* consumption habits ceased to be so unacceptable.[22] Rock and roll and swept-back hair were decreasingly seen as a 'crime', though long-haired or inappropriately dressed youths were still treated harshly in official places such as school and workplace. Youths who had only heard rock and roll on Western radio stations could now frequent 'youth clubs' instead of street corners or cultural centres.[23] With the advent of consumer socialism, brighter clothes no longer attracted notice from passers-by. The spread of Western consumer habits led slowly to a situation where a former *jampec* could buy a refrigerator or watch the popular song festival on television, with albeit newer, censored versions of the songs rejected by the dominant society in the early 1950s. The *jampec* figure gradually lost its outrageous character, like its Western equivalents,[24] and blended into the value system dictated by 'refrigerator' or 'goulash socialism'. The new hooligan became a long-haired, layabout *galeri* member or hippy, denying that private property or consumption was sacred.

Duck, Indian, Fair Lord and others

'"If you work in a factory, you've got no time to sleep till midday." So Peregrin Orsós, the muscular, dusky-skinned lad, a manual worker, remembered his father's words from long ago, as he looked round at the yawning, sleepily indifferent people around him in the Lágymányos factory. "Still, that would be good, dozing till noon, stuffing in a good lunch, then beer with the boys. Towards evening and at night would be time for the gang."' The words are from the beginning of a 1975 documentary crime story, ostensibly a true tale of a 'notorious gang in the capital', with the names changed.[25]

The boys' gang on which the story is modelled was called the Indians. Indian was considered the strongest by the others, who did what he told them. The Indians began in 1968

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[22] Officially generated debates on the *galeri* led to the appearance of books such as Huszár 1964 and Molnár 1971. However, due to the 1968 student movements, recent writings on Western youth research became available in Hungarian: Tibor Huszár and Mihály Sükösd, eds, *Ifjúságszociológia* (Sociology of youth), (Budapest: KJK, 1969). Several works of social history comparing youth subcultures of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s appeared in Germany, e. g. Jürgen Zinnecker, *Jugendkultur 1940–1985*, (Opladen: Leske und Budrich, 1987); Ronald Galenza and Heinz Havemeister, eds, *Wir wollen immer artig sein…: Punk, New Wave, HipHop, Independent-Szene in der DDR 1980–1990*, (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 1999).

[23] *Halbstarke* culture also moved progressively into accepted dance clubs. This is apparent in a book analysing a street-corner gang of Elvis fans in the Ruhrgebiet, showing how their society consolidated, and through an Elvis club, merged into a system of values seen as bourgeois. Clemens Adam, *Rocker in einer Großstadt des Ruhrgebiets*, (Bochum: Diss, 1972).

[24] Cramer 1992, 58.

[25] Kálmán Tolnai, *A Mohikán-galeri*, (Budapest: Táncsics Kiadó, 1975), 9.

to frequent the Great Tree *(nagyfa)*, along with members of several other gangs. The tree was at the foot of the wall of Buda Castle above the Youth Park run by the Communist Youth League (KISZ). People would congregate there to hear the music if they were denied admittance to the Youth Park because of their dress, had no money for a ticket, or preferred to spend it on beer. The opening of the 'Youth Cultural Park' on August 20, 1961 had been the idea of the Budapest KISZ Committee. Entrance was five forints, and from the outset, there were dress expectations that helped to swell the numbers frequenting the Great Tree instead. To get into the park, you were supposed to have short hair, a jacket, a white shirt and a tie, while girls were required to wear a skirt.[26] László Rajnák, a former first-class wrestler and the manager of the park, used to walk up and down with his bouncers, dangling rubber truncheons, encouraging the youth to make civilized, 'culturally motivated' use of their spare time.[27] The Great Tree began to be seen as a place where scruffy, long-haired, badly dressed youths hung about all day cadging off passers-by, holding orgies with the birds who tagged on to the bands, and spending their time on useless things. But what makes a pastime useful? How does 'loafing', as the main occupation of the subculture groups, gain normative meaning?[28]

'The impression we give with our feverish idling is that we're busy working. Actually we have to take very good care it doesn't degenerate into work.' That note on a page of squared notebook was found by the police in 1968 on László P., a 19-year-old manual labourer, after 14 youths had been taken in for walking up Rákóczi út one May evening in wild clothing (e. g. fleece jackets turned inside out).[29] The youths were eventually released, partly because of the linear view of time taken by Police Lieutenant Colonel Ferenc Györök, who reported, 'The hippy phenomenon in the capital in the month of May could not essentially broaden any further.'[30]

A big contribution in the public condemnation of these young people was made by the hooliganism discourse imported from the Soviet Union. The term 'hooligan' was variously

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[26] Mária Hegedűs, 'Az Ifjúsági Parkban' (In the Youth Park), *Magyar Ifjúság* (= *MI*), September 6, 1968, 9; Magdolna Balázs, 'Az Ifipark' (Youth Park), *Budapesti Negyed* 1994/1.

[27] István Ivanics, 'Rajnák, a góré' (Rajnák, boss man). *MI*, June 20, 1969, 7.

[28] Rácz József: 'Semmitevés. Lakótelep és szegénynegyed-mentalitás' (Doing nothing. Housing estate and slum mentality'. In: idem, *Ifjúsági (szub)kultúrák, intézmények, devianciák. Válogatott tanulmányok* (Youth (sub)cultures, institutions, deviance. Selected studies), (Budapest: Scientia Humana, 1998), 117–29.

[29] Budapest Főváros Levéltára (Budapest Capital City Archives = BFL) XXV. 60. b. Capital City Prosecution Service. TÜK [Titkos ügyekezelésű iratok – Secret Documents] District Prosecution administrative papers. TÜK Ig. 00223/1968. Note on occurrences of the beat-hippy phenomenon in May, 8. For extracts, see István Kenyeres, 'A Superman hippik és a tanácstalan rendőrök. A Budapesti Rendőr-főkapitányság és a hippik 1968-ban' (Superman hippies and helpless police. Budapest police headquarters and hippies in 1968), www.archivnet.hu

[30] BFL XXV. 60. b. TÜK Ig. 00223/1968. Note on occurrences of the beat-hippy phenomenon in May, 9.

used, especially to contrast young people pursuing the 'socialist' way of life with those smitten by 'capitalist society', the former being presented as the future and the latter as the past or as decadence. Attempts were made within this normative assessment to extend the concept of a hooligan to all young people with ostensibly 'deviant' habits, from a free sexual life through unconventional dress to alcohol consumption. Criminalization of alcohol for the working class, noticeable since the beginning of industrialization, was adopted into the 'socialist guidelines', and the need to combat alcoholism would be emphasized from time to time. The publicity concept was much narrower than that, even rejecting such forms of recreation as frequenting bars. The authorities took this leisure-time habit of the working classes and other social groups as a challenge to the interests of family, city, factory, country, and even socialism, and therefore as something to persecute.

In a 1961 report on alcoholism and 'the consequent family, youth and social problems', the Capital City Prosecution Service posited a strong association between alcohol consumption and crime. It was asserted that although 'it is far from possible to simplify hooliganism down to alcoholism, there is an undoubted relation between alcoholism and this ramified, intricate, complex question is related to alcoholism—one of the most important for youth—the problem of hooliganism.' The report goes on to list examples of alcohol-related hooliganism among youth. I. S. and L. B., 16 and 14-year-old youths, climbed into a beer garden, tapped a small barrel of beer, and drank as much as they could. E. W. and three others, celebrating a birthday, drank 30 bottles of beer and five of wine, and then knocked down a woman for no reason. The report deduced from these occurrences that 'exploitative morality will continue to infect [society] in hundreds of thousands habits and practices until our adolescent, inexperienced young people, insufficiently versed in the school of life, have been adequately prepared against them.'[31]

The first big campaign against the *galeri* was launched by Budapest Police Headquarters in 1960–61, when several dozen gangs said to be organized on a territorial basis were broken up. The campaign provided an opportunity for associating the *galeri* in the public mind with the concept of hooliganism. The detailed reports on the elimination of particular gangs came to resemble each other, with a template account of how each had come into being. The police headquarters in every Budapest district was ordered in 1960 to eliminate a few gangs. The most assiduous seem to have been Józsefváros and Angyalföld (11 and 13 gangs mopped up), although it would be premature to conclude that no fabrication of gangs for

[31] Ibid., 60. f. Tük. 0045/1945. Report on alcoholism and consequent family, youth and social problems in Budapest, 7.

elimination was going on, because the 9th District, for instance, only set itself a target of eliminating two. (These districts were depicted mostly as 'working-class' ones at that time.)[32]

The police would deploy in the busy squares and places of entertainment, where young people were likely to congregate in their spare time. The eventual reports tended to state that the gang came into being in 1959 (a year before the elimination began), and that its members were immoral and unsupervised by parents, schools or KISZ.[33] The mass emergence of the *galeri* was ascribed throughout to the unsettled conditions that followed the 1956 Revolution. József Molnár, for instance, wrote in 1971 on *galeri* crime, 'The mass emergence of the *galeri* can be dated to the counter-revolution and immediately ensuing years… The gang-type activity manifest in many mass acts around the time of the counter-revolution has been ceasing recently,' so that hardly any *galeri* were formed in 1965–6, for instance.[34] The main reason, of course, is that the police, after the campaign of 1961, next placed emphasis on the importance of eliminating gangs in 1969. The *galeri* emerged out of the police actions and the stories they invented or instigated about them. As the political and ideological debates ended in the early 1970s, the label *galeri* vanished, to be replaced in official discourse by the term *csöves* (drainpipe). There is no data on ostensible *galeri* crime after 1976.[35]

The main crime ascribed to the *galeri* was generally to have 'entertained themselves utterly freely, without restraint, according to their own tastes and ideas.'[36] This argument was also advanced to back up the importance of the influence the police exerted on youth. The police themselves brought the *galeri* into public discourse, intent on presenting these occasional groups as stable gangs and criminalizing their members for activity not connected with an officially supported institution. Apart from their alcohol consumption and crimes of roudyism, they were accused of immorality, of which the examples given tended to depict the ostensible *galeri* members enjoying a 'perverted' sexual life. One of the main crimes of this type found in the police minutes was 'fornication' by the female gang members with 'various men'. This followed the common procedure of making uncleanness and unnatural sexual behaviour a prime characteristic of whatever persons or groups were being stigmatized.[37] The

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[32] Ibid., Tük. 0017/61. 409–10.

[33] Ibid., 414–621. Summary reports of accounts of the origin of the *galeri*.

[34] Molnár 1971, 335–6.

[35] József Kó, Iván Münnich and Zsolt Németh, 'A magyarországi galeribűnözés néhány jellemzője' (Attributes of gang crime in Hungary). In: *Kriminológiai és Kriminalisztikai évkönyv. Kriminológiai és Kriminalisztikai Tanulmányok* (Criminological and criminal studies yearbook. Criminological and criminal studies), Vol. 32, (Budapest: IKVA, 1995), 156–72.

[36] BFL. XXV. 60. f. Tük. 0017/61, 415.

[37] Howard M. Solomon, 'Stigma and Western Culture: A Historical Approach' In: *The Dilemma of Difference. A Multidisciplinary View of Stigma*. Eds. by S.C. Ainlay, G. Becker, L.M. Coleman (New York: Plenum Press, 1985). 59–76. Stereotyping as 'dirty' and 'holding orgies' appeared even with the early 'heretic sects',

central events in most of the police and press narratives on specific gangs were private parties that degenerated into orgies, rape-related events, frequent changes of partners, and provocative dress by the girls attached to them. One prosecution-service report stated that it was 'typical of the recklessness of the *galeri* members, for instance, that he lay on one of the juvenile girls and [continued to lie] across her for a stretch of ten hours… not because… there is no other way of assuaging natural desires.'[38]

Although the police paid less heed to the young women seen as *galeri* members than the male gang members did, they used similar narrative structures to depict the sex roles in the gang. Female gang members form a relatively neglected field of research into juvenile peer groups. They tend to be mentioned only in relation to some activity by male members. In Frederic Thrasher's seminal work on juvenile gangs, only half a dozen of the 1313 gangs surveyed were expressly female gangs, and women gang members are scarcely mentioned except in passing. According to the book, which appeared in 1927, the girls do not play an important part in the youth gangs mainly because they are subject to much stronger family and social constraints than the boys.[39]

As in several other fields, women appear rarely in analyses of gangs. However, a turning point came in 1984 with *The girls in the gang* by Anne Campbell. This points to the strong influence of stereotypes on gang role of women, so that depictions of them underline their wildness (masculinity, unruliness) or promiscuity (pride in being a sex object): female band members either assume male characteristics or develop a sexist self-image. The identification and choice of roles is tied to stereotypes, according to this approach. It also emerged from Campbell's research that the men play a strong part in deciding whether girls become gang members, as they are normally introduced by boyfriends or brothers. The male gang then opens to them illegitimate opportunities that would otherwise remain closed. Another important observation of Campbell's was that a girl accepted into a gang finds the fellow feeling shown to her, especially by 'sister' members, a decisive experience. Noting the occasional press descriptions of female gang members as 'street feminists', Campbell asserts that the gang can offer liberation, for some female members find there extra-familial solidarity and self-fulfilment.[40] Most literature on the subject concludes that male gang

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and with several 20th-century ethnic groups.

38 BFL. XXV. 60. f. Tük. 205. 006/61, 228.

39 Frederic M. Thrasher, *The gang. A study of 1313 gangs in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927 [1960]).

40 Anne Campbell, *The girls in the gang* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1984).

members are at least as (if not more) sexist in their talk and outlook as people in the dominant society. The girls are often considered and treated as sexual property.[41]

This relatively schematic interpretation is apparent in an extract from a television interview with a member of the Indians or Great Tree Gang. The interviewer of the police TV show, László Szabó, one of the great popular 'educators' of the period, narrows down the interviewee's views of women to the girls in the gang: 'Well as far as I'm concerned, I strongly disapprove of the girls I've met with generally. I tell you that honestly and I meant to talk about it. It's one reason why I asked for the interview. Their morals are so low they're not worth talking about. I have to say it's really so, you might change your coat or your jacket as easily as it goes when you pick up a woman in company like that, really you just have to say come here or sit down and she'll sleep with you.'[42] The main distinction over the sexuality of gang girls was drawn between the moral and the immoral. Such girls had more confrontations with the vice squad than with ordinary police on the streets, who were more inclined to stop and identify the youths (male) with a penchant for acts of violence.

Reports of police investigating juvenile Hungarian peer groups also tell of far less confrontation with female gang members than with male. During the whole campaign against the *galeri* (1960–75), the proportion of girls did not exceed 20 per cent in any police investigation, and there were some *galeri* with no female members at all. Just a single all-female *galeri* is mentioned, and simply because the police thought they discerned the criteria of *galeri*-type organization among a group in a girls' reformatory. The explanation in the literature is that '*galeri* formation was primarily a boys' occupation. This remains so even if it is taken into consideration that girls attaching to the *galeri* or even taking part in them as full members played in many cases an important socialization role and had great significance for the group.'[43]

Nonetheless, girl members may well have played a decisive part in the acts of some juvenile gangs,[44] even if the gangs' main activity was loafing. This, of course, did not mean that any gang member aspired to the kind of role played by a KISZ secretary. Certainly not Mariann K., who began to frequent the Emke coffee bar, at first with a female friend and then

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41 See Willis 1977; Joan Moore, *Going down to the barrios. Homeboys and homegirls in change* (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1991).

42 László Szabó, *Kék fény. A hippikirály* (Blue light. The hippy king), (Budapest: Táncsics Kiadó, 1981), 156.

43 Kó etc. 1995, 156–72, 162.

44 A similar claim about female members of youth gangs appears in Otto Wilfert, *Jugend-"Gangs". Entstehung, Struktur und Behandlungsmöglichkeit der Komplizengemeinschaft Jugendlicher* (Vienna: Springer, 1959), 19.

because of a boy, but became disillusioned with him after he threatened her with his flick knife when he was drunk.

'Doktor appealed to me. I'm not nobody, but I was the only girl in the gang and took care of myself. Doktor was different from the others… Meanwhile Doktor got mean… Then Tigris ['Tiger'] had the authority. At first I was just his bird *[csaj]*, then junior *[öcsi]*, then pal *[havér]*. He never touched me, because he doesn't touch his pals. He liked reformatory girls from Villám utca… The ones that kept escaping.'[45] So the top of the ladder for a girl member was to become a pal instead of a sex object or bird, or feel that she had the role of an equal in the gang.

Ancsa was another girl who felt after two years that she was an equal in the *galeri*, though she probably was not. She said they spun the bottle with the boys at a week-long party in someone's home because there were equal rights among hippies.[46] Ancsa started going round with the Béla tér and Vidámpark *galeri* in 1967, aged 14.[47] She lived with her mother, a chief bookkeeper, her father, a draughtsman, and her six-year-old brother, in a three-room flat in Róbert Károly körút. She was introduced to the Emke *galeri* in 1968 by Lord of Óbuda, as his girlfriend. She soon became a junior rather than a bird, known as Black Ancsa or Hippy Ancsa to the others. After Lord's, she became Oszkár's girlfriend, and in December 1969, she met Doxa, a muscular loader with a criminal record, who stood high in the gang hierarchy, and like Tigris, was fond of girls from Villám utca. According to a report by an agent of the III/III department of the secret police, Ancsa had been wandering and 'drainpiping' since the age of 14. 'Sometimes the Children's Protection took her home, sometimes another police organization. Sometimes she went home of her own accord.' In August 1969, Ancsa was placed by her parents in the Villám utca reformatory,[48] where she made friends with another girl, Erzsi, with whom she would often escape.

Ancsa told Doxa on March 4, 1970 that she and Erzsi were due to be transferred to the Rákospalota reformatory, which was much stricter and harder to escape from. So Ancsa didn't return to the reformatory. According to Doxa, they went together and according to Kék Fény ('Blue Light' – police TV show, one of the most popular television programmes of the period) they were led by Ancsa to the girls' reformatory next day, to spring Erzsi. Ancsa rang the bell, and when the door opened, Doxa, Jimi, Georg and others burst into the reformatory. Anna later described what each had done. She had watched out for the police. Georg ripped out the

[45] Ferenc Komornik, 'Csavargók voltunk' (We were tramps). *MI*, February 23, 1968, 9.
[46] Történelmi Hivatal (Historical Office = TH) O–13708. 71. Report. By 'Mrs Tamási'. March 16, 1970.
[47] TH O–13708. Papers on Hippy Ancsa. 79–80, 93, 136–7 and 144.
[48] László Szabó: Huligánok, szélhámosok, körözöttek (Hooligans, swindlers, the wanted). In: Szabó 1981, 142.

telephone wires and threw vases at the heads of the wardens. Jimi dashed about the reformatory looking for Erzsi. Doxa used his fist with a mermaid signet ring to knock down the doctor, who rushed to the reformatory's aid. Once the staff found out who the intruders were after, Erzsi was locked into a changing room in the cellar of the building. Jimi failed to break in the door by charging it with his shoulder as the girl kicked from inside, shouting, 'Let me out, or I'll die if you don't take me with you.' Meanwhile the reformatory girls started fighting, as some of them were for the abduction and some against. When they heard the police-car siren, they all ran off except Doxa, who still tried to prise open the bars on the window, but without success.

They returned to the Emke and then went to the Kisluxor, one of their haunts, where they said they had done well, and some others were indignant at being left out of the fray. Nine of them set out for the reformatory again, to free Erzsi at all costs. They went on foot, looking in at several bars on the way, so that it was about 11 p.m. before they reached the reformatory. Nobody opened up when they rang, and so Georg attacked the door, which broke in immediately. But Erzsi could not be found as she had been taken to another institution. They then tried to break into the office for the money Ancsa had deposited in the safe, but the police arrived. Doxa and Ancsa managed to flee, but they were picked up later as well.

According to Ancsa's account, she had played a leading part throughout. She and others described her not just as an assistant, but as a liberator of equal rank, as if it was believed in the gang world that she could act like a boy, being given a knife, a weapon, and thereby a feeling of power for a while.

When the hippy movement appeared at the end of the 1960s, *galeri* members often identified themselves with the hippies. According to the official discourse, the hippy-gang members were against society, work and war. The last was thought to be positive while the word war still meant Vietnam, but after the invasion of Czechoslovakia, opposition to war was decreasingly congenial in police circles, even later, when agents planted among the hippies reported the gossip under the Great Tree that János Kádár had been taken prisoner, and that was why the Hungarians had entered Czechoslovakia as well. László Szabó, the television front man of the period, reported that members of the hippy *galeri* 'usually did not work, or hardly at all, but drank a lot nonetheless.'[49] Asked how they spent their time, they replied, 'We loaf about." or 'We stand about, tongues wag, we take off and stand a bit further over.' A hippy girl added, 'Yeah, and of course our dress is so hip the other guys just whirl

[49] Szabó 1981, 146.

around us like demented apes.'[50] They viewed time in a way that differed from official expectations, even if time did not stand still for them.

E. P. Thomson, in his study 'Time, work-discipline, and industrial capitalism', writes, 'if the purposive notation of time-use becomes less compulsive, then men might have to re-learn some of the arts of living lost in the industrial revolution: how to fill the interstices of their days with enriched, more leisurely, personal and social relations; how to break down once more the barriers between work and life.' So according to Thompson, long-industrialized nations have discovered ways of experiencing time that were forgotten before the beginning of written history, such as the time experience of the prehistoric Nuer, who 'have no expression equivalent to "time" in our language, and they cannot, therefore, as we can, speak of time as though it were something actual, which passes, can be wasted, can be saved, and so forth.'[51]

The time experience of Budapest hippies was tied not to work, but to seasons, events, and actions organized by their groups. The informers and police describing them in their reports from the position of a participant or an observer were as astonished by their time perception and ways of spending it as the anthropologists were by that of the Nuers, which has since become a commonplace in anthropology.

As in other years, several issues of the youth weekly *Magyar Ifjúság* in the summer of 1969 had a picture of slim girls in bikinis on the cover, under the slogan, 'Workers of all lands, unite!', inviting young people to attend KISZ work camps.[52] But many from working-class districts went to the Great Tree to loaf, not to a work camp. On July 7, 1969, during a heat wave, ambulances were called 120 times in Budapest to people collapsing in the heat.[53] The Great Tree crowd were looking forward to a concert in the Youth Park next evening by a later legendary guitarist, Béla Radics, and his first band, Sakk-Matt, playing progressive and blues music, including numbers from Jimi Hendrix and Cream. Although Sakk-Matt were still persecuted in that period, they'd drawn a crowd of 5000–6000 in June and had their photo in *Magyar Ifjúság* in July.[54]

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[50] Éva Bedecs, 'Hippik' (Hippies). *MI*, December 12, 1969, 4–5.

[51] E. P. Thompson: 'Time, work-discipline, and industrial capitalism', *Past and Present* 38:56–97 (December 1967). 95-96.

[52] E. g., *MI*, July 11, July 25 and August 1, 1969.

[53] *Népszabadság*, July 8, 1969, 9.

[54] *MI*, July 18, 1969, 10. On Béla Radics, see János Sebők, *Magya-rock* Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1983, Part 1, 190–95; Miklós Ómolnár, R. B. kapitány avagy pengék és halak (Captain BR, or blades and fish), (Budapest: Ifjúsági Rendező Iroda, 1986). Tamás Béla Tóth, Csodálatos utazás: könyv Radics Béláról, (Budapest: Zoltán és Zoltán Bt., 2002) Memorial website by BR Society: www.radicsrb.hu/index.php?p=eletrajz&l=en.

The *galeri* members had probably not read their *Népszabadság (Communist Party Newspaper)* regularly, or they would have learnt of János Kádár's fascinating visit to Bulgaria and seen that a cold front was forecast. The concert on July 8 had to be postponed because of bad weather. Kacsa, a seminal figure at the Great Tree, persuaded the others to take a trip into the city. An argument broke out about whether to go to Hűvösvölgy or to Margaret Island. To give them time to decide, they set out in twos on a hippy walk across Elizabeth Bridge, a symbol of '60s modernization. They had first heard of hippy walks, they stated later, from a 15-year-old Swedish girl who 'seemed much more developed than her years.' Some 80–100 strangely dressed, long-haired young people in jeans sang the songs *'Lánc, lánc eszterlánc'* (Chain, chain, [nonsense word]) and *'Sétálunk, sétálunk'* (Walking and walking – both are childsongs). The police, not too familiar with the words, later recounted in their reports how the hippies had repeatedly 'squatted on reaching the part in the song that goes *"egy kis dombra lecsücsülni, csüccs"* [sit down on a little hill, sit].' [55]

They went on up Váci utca, where one of them bought half a kilo of bread. The others surrounded him, shouting, 'Work, bread!'. According to Lekvár (Jam), who later described himself as a robber, it was fashionable among the Great Tree people to choose a job that had relatively few duties and plenty of time out in the open.[56] Many of them were street-sweepers, gravediggers or rod-holders for land surveyors, making occasional use of their rods, or people sent out by the gasworks to detect leaks. The last meant going round the city sniffing the air and detecting gas. They were paid for this and the employment was registered in their work-record book, although a leader of the gang, Nagy ('Great') Kennedy, later introduced himself as director of the Buda Public Danger Workshy Works (KMK).[57] They had appointed as employment manager Szőke (Fair-haired) Lord,[58] who had the letters ÉSZ (brains) tattooed on his forehead. Others related that Szőke Lord would often eat what girls in love with him

[55] TH V–158094/1, 6. Report by the Youth and Child Protection Examination Subdepartment of Budapest Police Headquarters, August 1, 1969. Where not otherwise specified, the sources on the march are TH V–158094/1–3; TH O–13575; TH O–13708.

[56] Recollection by Lekvár in the film *Passengers in a water-driven Moskvich* (2000, director: Gábor Kresalek). Lekvár's occupation was divulged personally by the director.

[57] TH. V–158094/1, 277. Publicly dangerous avoidance of work (KMK) was covered by Act XXI/1913, which was designed mainly for prosecuting beggars and placing them in workhouses. Under socialist penal law (which only amended the 1913 legislation), a person classifiable as workshy to the point of being a public danger was 'an individual capable of work, who wanders to avoid work or pursues a work-avoiding lifestyle in another way.' This qualified from 1956 to 1960 as a crime (punishable with two months' imprisonment). It became a misdemeanour in 1960 and was used by the police mainly against social groups deemed 'deviant' (beggars, prostitutes, alcoholics). Zoltán Kárpáti, Imre Savanya and József Olasz, ''Gondolatok a közveszélyes munkakerülésről' (Thoughts on publicly dangerous avoidance of work), *Belügyi Szemle* 1978/2. 55-62. The main purpose of the work-record book was to register employers' previous places of work and positions and the circumstances in which they left.

[58] Éva Bedecs, 'A "Nagyfák" sem nőnek az égig' ('Great Trees' don't reach the sky either). *MI*, February 20, 1970, 4–5.

brought him at the Great Tree, although it was said of him that if faced with the choice of making love to a girl or robbing her, he would rather do the latter. Unsurprisingly, it was not long before the group in Váci utca began chanting 'Work without bread!', which the police later interpreted as a demand for dole payments.

Kacsa led the people out of Váci utca towards St Stephen's Basilica, to hold a beat mass in memory of Brian Jones, the blond Rolling Stones guitarist, who had been discovered drowned in his swimming pool a few days earlier, with high levels of alcohol and drugs in his blood. His fans had immediately begun to suspect murder and requiem masses were organized all over the world. The ancient church of St Mary in Cheltenham, England, was overrun by girls in miniskirts at his funeral on July 10.[59] News of beat masses spread around Budapest about 1968, as the church, like KISZ, discovered that a light version of rock music was a good way of winning over young people. In May 1968, the communist daily *Népszabadság* reported indignantly how 'girls wearing Coca-Cola badges swayed to the blues tunes' in the Matthias Church.[60] In this case, though the Basilica doors were shut. The Great Tree people sat down on the steps for a time and engaged some passing older women in conversation.

They then set off towards Szabadság tér—encouraged by the fact that nothing had happened to them so far, they intended to go to the American Embassy, as a tribute to Brian Jones, who represented American hippies in their eyes, although he was British. On the way, some of them sang the SS march 'Erika', which they had learnt from an American war film. Szöszi ('Blondie'), Goebbels Röfi ('Goebbels Pup') and their group excelled in this. They were in the habit of greeting each other at the Great Tree with 'Heil Hitler', and according to one hippy agent, expected Germany to defeat the Soviet Union quite soon, after which Hungary would become like America.

That evening, Péter B. and his girlfriend, a shorthand typist with the publisher Corvina, were off to a concert. They came down from his girlfriend's flat near the Basilica about half past seven and noticed the German march being sung. B. told the police, 'When I heard the march, I thought they might be German tourists,' but soon realized they were not. He then telephoned the duty officers at Budapest police headquarters and followed the group, which turned into Arany János utca. B. then went into the Workers' Militia headquarters there to ask for help.[61]

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[59] http://www.beatzenith.com/the_rolling_stones/bjones.htm.
[60] F. Sz, 'Beatmise' (Beat mass). *Népszabadság*, May 28, 1968.
[61] TH V–158094/1, 33–4 and 37–8.

The police car arrived as Kacsa and his group entered Szabadság tér. The young people scattered and the police only managed to arrest four of them, and although the Workers' Militia hurried to the scene, there was nothing for them to do by the time they arrived.[62] Proceedings were taken by Budapest Police Headquarters against those detained. The case was then passed to Group III/b of the Political Department, which set itself the task of breaking up the 'Great Tree *galeri*'. During the mopping-up operation, almost a hundred ostensible members were recorded and over a dozen informers recruited. Then on February 16, 1970, ten members were convicted of agitation against the state by Pest Central District Court and given jail sentences of eight months to two years.[63] Several of the condemned were kept under observation after their release, through the agents who infiltrated or were recruited from the gang.[64] Articles appeared in the press about them and how 'loafing' had turned into 'agitating against the state'. Apart from László L. Lőrinc, Kálmán Tolnai also wrote a book about the Great Tree people that met the official expectations.[65]

In the summer of 1970, when several of the Great Tree people were already in jail, Indián appeared on the *Kék fény* television programme, saying he would like to speak plainly and reveal the 'bare truth' about the hippy movement. He admitted to being the leader, to the delight of the others and of the police. The police were pleased because of Indián's criminal record of multiple rape, so that the gang could be criminalized by association. The Great Tree people themselves were pleased because it meant he had taken some of the odium onto himself. Indián said on the programme that although the poor conditions meant that hippies showed their age, he had no age and never would have. He said they had made an amateur film for showing on *Kék fény* one day, and then it would emerge what a hippy party and free love really were.[66]

The 'moral outrage' or 'moral panic' in the press showed the Great Tree people as young people with a perception of time quite opposed to that of the dominant culture. The time concept of gang members and of the police clashed several times in the police documents. The police tried to show the activity of the peer groups as linear, pointing in time and sequence towards some goal. This they needed to do if they were to present these occasional groupings as consolidated groups. It also explains why official discourse devised the concept of *galeri*, drawing on the public utterances about Soviet hooliganism. Members of

[62] TH V–158094/1. 35. Gyula B., workers' militiaman.
[63] TH V–158094/3. 237–8. Pest Central District Court. 9.B.23598/1969, No. 14.
[64] E. g. TH O–14729.
[65] Tolnai 1975; László L. Lőrinc, A nagy fa árnyékában (In the shade of the Great Tree), Budapest: Kozmosz Könyvkiadó, 1979.
[66] Szabó 1981, 142–65.

the generally occasional peer groups, however, were prompted merely by the various police procedures against them to identify themselves as '*galeri* members' and 'loafers' and portray their doings, in edited responses to constructed questions, as a purposeful, time-employing sequence of events. The institution with which the ostensibly deviant gang members dealt with most intensively was not KISZ but the police. Their constant games of cat and mouse with the police were what gave shape to their narrative about their groups. The police, in a story that can also be interpreted as a cultural conflict, appear as the basic agency of social control, their prime purpose being to eradicate the groups, which also meant criminalizing the group's use of time.

The expression otherness also denoted the development of a self-identity and personal autonomy opposed to the officially supported processes of socialization, in a society that generally tried on an everyday level to deny this to young people. The process included denying that spare time was a resource that could be used for society's good if it was spent well. But the mass media and the police did not simply react to the time perception put forward by the subculture, for by criminalizing it and advancing it as a deterrent example, they became one of the forces creating it.

Description of the concepts of the youth subcultures may symbolize cultural conflict, as people try to hold onto their freedom and autonomy under a system of rule that invokes a normative system. Since official discourse in the socialist period prescribed officially supported, institutionalized forms of leisure activity for young people, this placed in a prescriptive frame the subcultures of those who used their spare time freely. So the subcultures of the autonomy-seeking young emerged as decisive identity-forming factors in juvenile socialization.

To put it more concisely, the cadres and/or police of the 1960s decided almost everything, even who might be classed as a hooligan and why. Of course, irrespective of that, those considered hooligans, as a function of the cadres' decisions, could choose identities that symbolized for them freedom and autonomy instead of slavery.

Depiction of the *jampec* and *galeri* in the press and the appearance of 'moral panic' in relation to them was not just a consequence of the operation of the press. After a time, it became one of the press's objectives. *Magyar Ifjúság*, the official paper of KISZ, regularly published articles about hooliganism, not simply to meet and reflect official expectations, but to prove the necessity for the press to exist. Police preparing strictly confidential reports in the Interior Ministry strove for the same reason to identify extreme right-wing actions among the Great Tree people. To that extent, KISZ and the media (from *Magyar Ifjúság* to *Kék Fény*) were

writing a novel about the Great Tree people. Or the police can be seen as 'moral entrepreneurs', representing 'hooligans' as a force menacing the interests and values of society and thereby acquiring a justification for acting in that role, as society's redeemers. Even in Indián's television interview, he too seems to be appearing in his story as a moral entrepreneur, a social redeemer, a warrior 'hippy' tilting against 'productive work' and 'consumption'.[67]

An important role is usually ascribed to the middle level of power in an outbreak of moral panic.[68] With the Great Tree people, KISZ and the district police headquarters can be seen as a kind of starting point, for in this case too, the first condemnations did not come from above, but from the middle, the level of everyday ID checks. The press found a suitable subject in the Great Tree affair because one reason to arouse moral panic was to distract the public from everyday problems. Let them devise instead a kind of 'chaos narrative': young people are being infected by rock music and negative elements of 'Western' lifestyle, so that they gather into gangs and display violence towards other members of society. It was not by chance that the *galeri* were traced back to the 1956 groups, which had likewise appeared, primarily as constructs of post-1956 counterrevolutionary propaganda, as well-organized, continuous organizations, rather than ad hoc groupings.

One important aim of the state was to control the socialization of the young. Full control over society could not be exercised, of course, and it was much less costly and more spectacular to single out a few youth groups and punish them. It was more conspicuous for the authorities to punish young people in jeans than to reconcile the 1960s' fever of refrigerator acquisition with socialist principles. It seemed more practical to restore a semblance of social unity by exploring the subject of decadence—juvenile crime, violence, sexual permissiveness, mass cultural products, decline of the family, which gradually became subjects of press campaigns.

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[67] Szabó 1981, 155.
[68] Angela McRobbie, *Postmodernism and popular culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

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