

Hungarologische Beiträge

KÁDÁR'S HUNGARY – KEKKONEN'S FINLAND

Edited by
Anssi Halmesvirta

14

University of Jyväskylä 2002

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University of Jyväskylä, Faculty of Humanities, Hungarian Studies
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Preface

This volume of the *Hungarologische Beiträge* is the product of two years' co-operation of Hungarian and Finnish historians. It has become customary to publish their work in this series, the preceding one being the HB vol. 7 from the year 1996. Since the position of Hungarian Studies has now stabilized in Jyväskylä University, it is to be expected that we will be publishing more regularly in the future. This can be said also because the 'Kádár-Kekkonen' topic is still very timely and has not by any means been exhausted yet. We set ourselves to work with the conviction that these two statesmen and the conditions in their countries deserve to be studied concomitantly and that their situations under the shadow – dark in Finland, darker in Hungary – of the USSR and in the context of politics of the Cold War and détente resemble each other considerably. Of course, as sociologists use to say, the search for similarities presupposes search for differences.

This volume could not have been brought to daylight without many persons' participation in its preparation. Thanks go to Professor Attila Pók from Budapest who arranged the Hungarian co-operation. In Finland, the work of Phil.Lic. Mari Vares was essential in keeping the contacts to Hungary alive during the initial stages of the editing. David Wilson, MA, has done a great job in polishing our English. Petteri Laihonen, MA, the serial editor for *Hungarologische Beiträge* not only took care of the technical side but also gave valuable advice.

A. H.

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Editor's Introduction

Anssi HALMESVIRTA

The original purpose of this volume was to publish the papers read at the 'Kádár-Kekkonen Symposium' of the 5th International Congress of Hungarian Studies held in August 2001 in Jyväskylä, Finland. Thus it could be read as a companion volume to Professor Pritz Pál's symposium papers on Hungarian foreign policy in the twentieth century.¹ However, the present collection grew thicker than planned because it was decided to also include the contributions to the meeting of the Hungarian and Finnish historians in Budapest, August 2000, and the papers of the Tampere seminar of September 2002 dealing with roughly the same subject matter.

The above-mentioned joint events carried on the tradition of co-operation well-established by Professor Olli Vehviläinen a couple of decades ago, and the aim here has been to promote dialogue and update our research: it was anticipated that different, problematic interpretations of the Cold War era in Hungarian and Finnish history would arise. Now that the late President Kekkonen's diaries are published and the re-evaluation of Secretary-General János Kádár's life is under way, an opportunity to evaluate their careers and achievements in similar historical contexts has presented itself. It could, however, be assumed that in reconsidering the political history of the Cold War era, and how Hungary and Finland managed to get out of it, Hungarian and Finnish historians carry with them quite different tool-kits. Let us call to witness those Hungarian

historians and political scientists who compare the *Sonderweg* of the two countries since 1956, and who use the term 'finlandization' (*finlandizálás*) in a quite positive, Hungarian manner, a manner which may be found disturbing to their Finnish colleagues.² Finnish historians, for their part, have found the Finnish political élite of the times deeply 'finlandized' (*suomettunut*, as for example, in the extreme case when CPSU financed Kekkonen's election campaign via KGB) and accustomed to deplorable self-censorship in Soviet matters.³ Bearing this contradiction in mind, and seen from the perspective of Soviet security interests, it may not have been amiss to study Kádár's and Kekkonen's regimes side by side, and assess how their *Realpolitik* was realized. Others have already tried to answer such tricky questions as how 'indispensable' their leadership in troubled times was (but how can we definitively ascertain that someone else could not have achieved anything as great as they did?). It has remained for the contributors of this volume to concentrate on less sapient issues.

The book falls into three rather distinct parts: the first four articles (Borhi's, Rentola's and Vares') deal with foreign politics and the question of statesmen's 'images', the next two, Oikari's and Nyysönen's, analyze the politics of power in culture and the politics of history, and the rest (Horváth's, Varga's and Pihkala's) turn attention to social and economic aspects. The foreign policy section is the most coherent one and its articles can be read as complementary texts to each other. One basic difference, however, remains: the Hungarian contributors studied mainly Hungarian affairs, whereas the Finns attempted comparative studies with the aim of disentangling the Hungarian and Finnish power-political constellation and explaining their situations in a wider international context.

In the part devoted to internal 'politics of power' the reader may feel uncertain: what does György Aczél's 'politics of culture' under Kádárism have to do with the 'politics of history' after the change of the political system in Hungary? The connecting link lies in the nature of the policy itself. The holders of power in Hungary could by an 'unholy compromise' with the writers

and intellectuals in general define what could be said or written during the Kádár regime. After its collapse, what could be counted as a new and acceptable, official interpretation of the past – in Hungary it was encapsulated in the resurgence and reappraisal of the 1956 Revolution – was now to be written down by the opponents of the 'old power'. They moulded the image of history to suit their own imperatives of the 'politics of power'. Kádár's heritage haunted them more than Kekkonen's has haunted the Finns, since Kekkonen's march was not tainted with blood and outright repression ('consolidation'). For Finland, these kinds of analyses will be completed by the 'Kekkonen-Kádár' project of the Academy of Finland (2001-2003) in the near future, and its results will be published in a separate volume.

Social-economic realities and planning in Hungary and Finland are studied in the last section of the book. It is a pity that Dr Horváth's article could not yet be matched by one from a Finnish counterpart at this stage of the co-operation. Possible comparatively compatible 'urban development' plans based on idealized visions of community life can also be found in industrialized Finland of the 1950s and the 1960s. As the two articles on economic planning show, there was fertile common ground in overall economic planning in spite of the fundamental ideological cleavage between the two countries in question. And if we look more closely at the ideological background of, for instance, the social policies of Hungary and Finland in the late 1960s and through the 1970s, we may be surprised to discover how Marxist Finnish sociology and social policy had become – a trend noted with pleasure by the Hungarian observers in Finland.⁴

What becomes clear from Dr Borhi's article is that Kádár could, by means of pragmatic foreign policy, wring advantages and concessions from both superpowers, the USA and the USSR. The process was cumbersome but accomplished successfully. At the same time when Kádár remained faithful to Moscow, he could by piecemeal methods gain international room for manoeuvre from the Americans in the 1960s by making

'consolidation' (1956-1963) look like 'liberation' in the end. Kekkonen's policy was, in principle the same, although in a more peripheral context: in exchange for the trust (*luottamus*) he managed to retain in Moscow, he was able to co-operate with the Nordic countries, and approach the EFTA and the EEC and, from that basis, start soundings for détente and the Helsinki process with Kádár who backed him. Both benefited from this rapprochement strategy, which meant a gradual opening of the international arenas for them. Both established relations with the Third World and criticized heavily the USA during the Vietnam war, and honestly – not only liturgically as sometimes incorrectly stated – pursued the policy of 'peaceful co-existence' of the socialist and capitalist systems. In the end of the 1960s Kádár and his foreign ministers were ready to acknowledge that although the ideological battle – Finland was regarded as a highly valuable forum for scientific and cultural propaganda⁵ – had to be accelerated, Finland was in the category of those capitalist countries with which extensive bilateral agreements could be made. As Kádár himself, already in the midst of deepest isolation in 1957, made the distinction, there were imperialist and capitalist countries. If Sweden was not an imperialist country⁶, Finland was even less so. From the end of the 1960s onwards, it was highly important for Hungary to send experts to learn Western scientific and technological innovation from such capitalist countries as Finland which promoted a 'good neighbourly policy' and already established intensive relations with the USSR. In these connections, finlandization became something very positive for Hungarian policy, since it was – paradoxically – Finland, not Hungary, which could gain favours (Porkkala, the lease of the Saimaa Canal) and favourable trade agreements with the USSR.

Borhi's conclusions concerning Kádár's and Kekkonen's tight-rope walking are corroborated by Dr Rentola's findings from Kekkonen's papers, which also demonstrate that the two were closer to each other than formerly believed. Kádár certainly had less space for manoeuvre than Kekkonen: no wonder that he welcomed Kekkonen's directness and gestures of

'friendship' while hosting him in 1963. In 1969, when they met again, the atmosphere was somewhat spoiled by the repercussions of the Czechoslovakian crisis, but in spite of that they could take credit for their long-lasting 'mutual understanding' and sense of political realities. The rhetoric of kinship provided 'bridge-building' its conceptual framework, as Phil. Lic. Mari Vares attempts to show in her paper. In the sixties it was not only a handy camouflage behind which political considerations could be hidden, but it also meant genuine caution in avoiding any provocations that might tease the Eastern bear. Rentola illustrates this with an example of the Hungarians avoiding paying their respects to Mannerheim's grave during state visits. This attitude was reflected also in the Hungarian text-book on Finnish history in which the Finnish war-hero was made the greatest villain.⁷ Thus the negative side of finlandization was not quite uncommon in Hungary either. Both in Hungary and in Finland it was rather Lenin than domestic heroes that were celebrated, but surely it was Finland where this should have, at least for an outsider, seemed quite strange.

Professor Vesa Vares argues that although the circumstances of the Cold War made it very difficult for both Kádár and Kekkonen to find true recognition, they were finally recognised (especially in Helsinki in 1975 they sat side by side) and appreciated for their peacemaking efforts. The Americans and the British had changed their original low-key tune and the image of the two 'foes' was transformed into the image of 'manageable parties' in international diplomacy. This was one of their lasting successes. Kekkonen's successor, President Koivisto, used this common 'political capital' to his own advantage, but in Hungary, it seems, it did not, at least for a while, pay any tangible results.

Dr Nyysönen's article, even though it does not directly discuss Kádárism, throws light on the ways in which some delicate moment in history, in this case the very essence of Kádárism, the revolution of the year 1956, was politicized in the new system. Typically for Hungarian political debate, political parties wanted to 'own' 1956 and pose themselves as the real heroes in

it. The darker side of this historical-political method has been that politicization boiled over and produced historical (megalo)-mania. However, it was only a natural reaction to the Kádárist policy of the erasing of history from Hungarian minds. Had it not been Kádár himself who boasted to Kekkonen during his visit to Finland in 1973 that in Hungary 1956 was no longer “hardly remembered”.⁸ These were the times of deepest finlandization when also Kekkonen occasionally intervened in historical debates by trying to teach the nation that it should realize how significant a role the Soviet Russia had played in the formation of Finnish independence.

In the political culture of the 1970s and the 1980s it was quite customary that Power regulated the content of the messages from the past as well as from the present. In this spirit it controlled the intellectual life in general, and as Dr Oikari puts it in a Foucaultian language, Hungarian socialism had its own ‘policy of truth’, the lessons of which the people had to learn. According to György Aczél’s system of three Ts (*tiltott* = prohibited, *türt* = tolerated, and *támogatott* = supported), it was, but only in principle, possible to convince the authorities that “socks with holes and a typewriter” should be exhibited at public expense as a work of art.⁹ In times of serious economic problems, cultural policy became alarmist, ringing the bell of looming disaster in the ears of artists and writers who had not quite fulfilled the requirements and ideals of socialist realism.¹⁰ Oikari’s doctoral thesis dealt with the same problematic in the context of Hungarian-Finnish literary and cultural relations, and she found that the ‘policy of translation’ was tied up with the same power structures.¹¹ It may well be that here lies also the reason why the work of the Nobel laureate, Imre Kertész, was relatively unknown to the Hungarian reading public. His work was tolerated, though awarded, not supported, even discouraged. It was obviously too ‘subjectivist’ for the ‘collective consciousness’ which was yet to be built in Hungary.

Dr Horváth’s contribution to this volume proves that the building of a socialist model town on socialist ideals of man did not quite result in its planned objectives. Not everybody was

ready to live up to the ideals, and some started to form their own sub-cultures, so irritating to the authorities. The people forced to move into monstrous environment also tended to escape back to the countryside. But, as both Dr Varga's and Professor Pihkala's papers illuminate, the conditions in the countryside were changing for the worse. Periods of reform (1963–, 1968–), during which the leash of the state was slackened and the agricultural co-operatives fared relatively well, were followed by 'conservative' reaction (1972–1973), which halted the individual incentive in agriculture and caused serious damage in the national economy. In Finland, the founding of large state-owned enterprises lasted until the 1970s. The ideology of planning was borrowed from socialism and favoured by the political Left (1966–). While the flight from the countryside in Finland was in full swing, the planning officers were busy in industrial site and town planning, outlined a new, more democratic social policy and culture of science. For both Hungary and Finland the 1970s and 1980s were the great age of professionalization. For Finland, in particular, it was an era of increased state intervention in the economy and culture by extensive bureaucracy, which was already a burden in Hungary. In hindsight, this growth brought forth the generation of scholars and scientists which opened Hungarian-Finnish contacts in ever expanding fields, now rather through various projects in the natural and applied sciences than through the traditional humanities. Hungarians were eager to import various technical innovations from Finland to Hungary, ranging from traffic safety systems to monitoring heart diseases and alcoholism. It remains for future studies to reveal the extent and significance of these relations brought about under the umbrella of the agreement of the two national Academies. It is only to be hoped that the present volume will encourage future research to take up themes left unexplored here.

NOTES

- ¹ Magyarország helye a 20. századi Európában. Szerkesztette – Sipos Balázs és Zeidler Miklós közreműködésével – Pritz Pál. Magyar Történelmi Társulat. Budapest 2002.
- ² For controversial popular expressions of the same see e.g. in Kopátsy, Sándor, Kádár és kora. C.E.T. Belvárosi Kiadó, Budapest 2002; Büky, Barna, Visszapillantás a hidegháborúra. Balassi Kiadó, Budapest 2001, esp. 43, 53.
- ³ Entäs kun tulee se yhdestoista? Suomettumisen uusi historia. Ed. Johan Bäckman. WSOY, Juva 2001; Vihavainen, Timo, Kansakunta räähmälään: suomettumisen lyhyt historia. Otava, Helsinki 1991.
- ⁴ Halmesvirta, Anssi, 'Scientific Co-operation between Hungary and Finland, 1965-1980'. A paper read at the Tampere seminar, 3rd September, 2002 (unpublished ms. University of Jyväskylä, Dept. of History).
- ⁵ Cf. Előterjesztés a kulturális és tudományos propagandáról (KKI). MOL, M-KS-288-22.cs-1971-34.ö.e; Feljegyzés (Dr. Szatmári I.) Helsinki, 1971 július 23. MOL, KÜM-XIX-J-1-j-Finn-142-002422/1-1971. 43.d.
- ⁶ Földes, György, "Kádár János külpolitikai nézetei (1956–1967)". In Pritz 2002, 139.
- ⁷ Dolmányos, István, Finnország története. Gondolat, Budapest 1972, 6.
- ⁸ Kádár on the 3rd of October. MOL, M-KS-288.f.5./621.ö.e.
- ⁹ Aczél, György, "Aspects of Cultural Policy". *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, vol. xxvi, no. 97 (Spring, 1985), 28.
- ¹⁰ For the socialist ideals, see Szabó, Márton, Diszkurzív térben. Tanulmányok a politika nyelvéről és a politikai tudásról. Scientia Humana, Budapest 1998, esp. 51-58.
- ¹¹ Oikari, Raija, Vallankäytöstä Suomen ja Unkarin kirjallisissa ja kulttuurisuhteissa (Unpublished thesis, University of Jyväskylä, Dept. of Literature 2001).

**Foes Who Grew Better With Time:
The Image of János Kádár and Urho Kekkonen in the
West from 1956 to the End of the 1960s**

Vesa VARES

1 Two Statesmen as Symbols and Images

First of all, it must be noted, that this is not a study of János Kádár and Urho Kekkonen as such; no attempt will be made to clarify what kind of politicians they were and what kind of policy they actually pursued. That issue is still very controversial in their respective countries and the sources available for this study do not offer a possibility to answer those questions. Rather, the purpose is to clarify the *image* they had in the West – the “West” meaning in this case the United States and Britain.

This also implies that the conclusions of this research are not judgements on Kekkonen or Kádár as such, but on the Western superpowers. Western opinions and views on these persons are the object. Kekkonen and Kádár are rather spectres and mirrors through which Western policy is illuminated as the actual object of this study. The often very critical assessments on Kekkonen and Kádár are not taken as any value as such – the truth or falseness of those assessments are not as interesting as the attitudes which can be seen lurking behind them. The similarity between reality and the image is of minor importance, because it was the image, not the actual reality, which determined the Western political line towards Finland and Hungary. In this sense the image *was* reality to the West, even if it was –

as it often was – actually erroneous or at least one-sided. This image was based on the information available to the West – not on archives nor on the benefit of hindsight.

Kekkonen and Kádár are in fact quite good ‘tools’ for just this kind of research. Neither Finland nor Hungary was an issue which would have been crucial to Western interests, and both were geographically and also in many cases mentally distant. Prejudices and expectations often prevailed, so the statements reveal the mental climate. It could also be asked whether Kádár and Kekkonen also became kind of scapegoats in the Western psychology – especially Kádár for the tragedy and failure of the 1956 uprising, but also Kekkonen in ‘wasting’ the Paasikivi heritage and letting the Soviets interfere also in Finnish internal affairs.

However, one cannot talk about a real ‘enemy image’ or a method with which the bloc of one’s own is made more solid by ‘creating enemies’. Both Kekkonen and Kádár were, after all, too insignificant for this from the American or British viewpoint. One can say that there were expectations for both Kádár and Kekkonen, and their images differed in various periods, depending on how these expectations were fulfilled. Did the two statesmen live up to the expectation that they would at least try to keep the Soviet influence as minimal as possible with all the means at their disposal? Or did they let the bear in?

The period in question extends from 1956 to the end of the 1960s. Both Kádár and Kekkonen rose to power in 1956 – the former after the Hungarian uprising was crushed, the latter less dramatically in a presidential election. Both had also previously been members of the prominent political élite in their respective countries. The late 1960s is a suitable period to conclude the study because it marks an end of the consolidation era: both Kádár and Kekkonen were still in power, seemed very likely to remain in power for a long time and in fact did, and the Cold War had reached a new stage in which there was a real possibility that these former foes might perhaps be seen in a new role, as moderate stabilisers. This was even more so because the invasion of Czechoslovakia marked a much more dangerous fu-

ture. Also the West was not planning its strategy as aggressively and was not as confident of changes to its benefit in the near future as it had been ten years before.

This study can be described as a history of diplomacy and international relations. As such it might represent the very thing which the so-called 'post-modern' philosophy abhors as 'old-fashioned' and 'elitist.' Even though there might be some truth in this, Finland and Hungary in Western policy actually do represent this old-school history of old-school diplomacy – especially during the Cold War years. A 'post-modern' effort to stress contacts of 'civic societies' in these cases and periods would be too trendy in respect of the realities of the situation. However, from the late 1960s there were undoubtedly new possibilities in this area, but these will have to be considered from other standpoints in possible future studies*. The fact is that the nature for the present study is 'traditional' because it would be quite artificial to pretend that any 'post-modern' or other state of affairs would have existed in this kind of case in the 1956-1968 era.

It must also be added that the domestic events in the United States and Britain do not play a big role in the analysis of the motives of these countries. This is due to the fact that the circles which had opinions on Finnish and Hungarian issues were very small; domestic changes influenced only bigger issues, like the Cold War, fear of Russia and Communism, the situation in Germany, the Third World and Imperialism, etc. In fact, it does not seem that the Western policy line was particularly dependent of the fact which party – Democratic or Republican, Conservative or Labour – was in power in the United States or in England. Because Finland and Hungary were not vital to the West, the policy concerning them was usually decided by the desk officers in the State Department and the Foreign Office; these issues seldom required a ministerial decision or comment.

As previously noted, this study ends in the 1960s. It must, of course, be confessed that the available sources as well set the fi-

* Cf. Oikari's article. [Ed. note]

nishing point in the 1960s. The British archives are available only until the turn of the 1960s-70s and the American archives until the early 1970s. Because it has not been possible to check the National Archives at College Park for material on American-Hungarian relations for this study, most American material is in Hungary's case taken from the FRUS-Online series (Foreign Relations of the United States) from their web-sites. The material concerning Finland was gone through at College Park in 1997. As far as the British material is concerned, the actual papers on Hungary in Public Record Office, Kew Gardens, have also been used, although not as extensively as in the Finnish case.

Because of all this there might be more quotations from the British sources than their actual influence (compared to the Americans) would have warranted, but at least the material available to this study does not suggest that there would have been any serious divergence between the American and British lines. Not at least in the cases of countries like Hungary and Finland. The general trend seems to have been that the only real difference was that the British were a bit more moderate and cautious – which is of course not very surprising since their resources and influence in world policy were much smaller than the ones of the Americans.

2 Hungary

2.1 Aspect of the Cold War: Traitors to be Ostracized

The factual events of the 1956 uprising and the biographical, personal history of Kádár will not be described here, since it can be assumed these are already known* and since this study has

* In today's Hungary Kádár and his legacy are highly controversial issues. See e.g. Rácz, Árpád (Ed.), *Ki volt Kádár?* Budapest, Rubicon-Aquila, 2001. A balanced view is presented by Földes György in his "Kádár János (1912-1989)". In *Nagy képes Millennium Arcképcsarnok. 100 portré a Magyar Történelemtől. Szerk. Rácz Árpád.* Budapest, Rubicon-Aquila, 1999, 355-361. Cf. Huszár, Tibór, *Kádár János politikai életrajza 1. köt. 1912-1956.* Budapest, Szabad tér – Kossuth, 2001. [Ed note.]

to do with image, not with the actual events. More important is to remember the starting points for the West: Hungary was a country which had been under a very strict Stalinist control and which was in the enemy camp. Even the simultaneous disagreements of crisis such as that over the Suez Canal were not relevant in the case of Hungary, where the West thought it could see the Cold War re-emerge violently from the Soviet side.

After the national uprising was crushed it was thus crystal clear to the West who were the heroes and who were the foes. The Hungarian Communists were considered Moscow's puppets and henchmen, the real aggressor being the Soviet Union. The uprising was seen, as the British Envoy Leslie Fry defined it, as a "revolt of a nation", and it had been directed against Soviet exploitation and Communist oppression.¹

In practice, the new Hungarian leaders, Kádár included, were boycotted after the crushing of the uprising. The United States in particular aimed to deny credentials to the Hungarian UN Delegation because of the atrocities in crushing the uprising. The American view can be seen also from the motivations for a UN solution, which the US Legation made to its British counterpart in Budapest:

- a) It should comprise a series of steps, and not be a 'package' proposal.
- b) The measures proposed should be such that no formal acceptance of them either by the Russians or by the Hungarians was necessary.
- c) It should appeal to the 'uncommitted' nations.
- d) It should consist of measures which could be carried out within the existing Hungarian constitution.
- e) It should, if possible, be able to show some advantage to the Soviet Government.

As such, there was also an aspect of *Realpolitik*; it was perceived that not much could be done and that the Russians would need some face-saving measures. But on the whole the American line was uncompromising. The American Legation suggested that it would also be demanded that Hungary should withdraw such legislation (it is illuminating that the word "legislation" was in parenthesis), which made arbitrary arrests, in-

carcerations, summary trials, etc. possible. The UN should also demand new negotiations about the stationing of Soviet troops in Hungary, more cultural freedom, reducing the pressure of the party in schools, increasing the number of workers' councils and the widening of the government. It was, of course, taken for granted that these conditions would not be met, but as the Soviets would reject them, it would be a propaganda victory for the West.²

The American National Security Council – which drafted the policy lines to be approved by the President – also claimed that the uprising was a moral victory against Communism in the long run. This, of course, was partly an ideologically 'compulsory' interpretation and revealed, in fact, that the West had no means to influence events behind the Iron Curtain. The NSC considered, however, that there were possibilities for evolutionary development of the satellites, and thus they could distance them more and more from old-time Stalinism and the influence of Moscow. The future looked most promising in Yugoslavia and in Gomulka's Poland.

Compared to them, Hungary was totally black.

The present Communist regime in Hungary, in consolidating its physical control of the nation, has followed a policy of terror and intimidation clearly intended to wipe out all resistance. Although the Hungarian people continue to despise this regime, a surface calm prevails and the normal pattern of life under Soviet Communism has resumed...

Because Hungary has become an important psychological factor in the world-wide struggle of the free nations against expansionist Soviet Communism, U.S. policy must maintain a delicate balance; it must seek to encourage the same evolutionary developments as in the other nations of Eastern Europe, without compromising the symbol which Hungary has become. More restraint will be required in dealing directly with regime officials than in certain other nations of the area, and the timing of U.S. moves will be of great importance.³

In 1958-59 the NSC defined Western goals in Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe. The general line was not totally

militant nor black and white in its perceptions. Of course, there would be a continuous refusal to accept the *status quo* of Soviet domination over the nations of Eastern Europe as permanent, and there would be a continuous affirmation of the right of the dominated peoples to national independence and to governments of their own free choosing. However, simultaneously it was assumed that the West had to deal with the present Communist governments, not to expect them to be overthrown in the foreseeable future. Even so, also in this document Hungary was presented in the most negative light⁴:

There has been no progress toward the achievement of U.S. policy objectives in Hungary. In the absence of any favorable change in the Hungarian regime's defiant and uncooperative attitude toward the UN and its efforts to deal with the problems arising from the 1956 revolution, U.S. relations with Hungary remain strained, and the United States has continued successfully its efforts to keep the Hungarian situation before World opinion and under active consideration at the UN.

The British may not have disagreed with the general line, but having far less superpower resources, they could usually recommend no alternative action. Mere propaganda would not help much if nothing concrete would be achieved. As the British Ambassador in Moscow, Sir Patrick Reilly, pointed out to the Foreign Office, the Soviet Union took no heed of international pressure, and if the UN tried to deny the Hungarian credentials in the UN, it would only reveal the impotence of the UN. The only possible way to get any results would be high level talks with the Soviets – for example between the Secretary General of the UN and the Soviet Ambassador in the UN.⁵

It is hardly surprising that Reilly's colleague in Budapest, Leslie Fry, emphasized more the moralistic view, in conjunction with a certain pragmatism:

While I agree that the Russians should logically be our main target, it seems to me to be going too far to say that 'to take action against the Hungarians would be hitting the wrong target'.

There was nothing illogical about hitting the secondary target, "the Hungarian puppets", if you could not hit the main one, "their Russian masters". Neither did Fry take very seriously the threat that Hungary would in return expel the Western Legations from Budapest.⁶ The atrocities which he had witnessed in Budapest clearly made him the most militant representative of the British diplomatic corps.

When Fry wrote to his superiors a critical evaluation of the UN plan of the Americans, he seems to have seen even that as too moderate. According to him, the UN representative or group should not be a negotiator in any normal sense of the word, but "an 'educator' seeking to convince the Russians that concessions should be made to the Hungarian people". Of course, the Russians would not accept proposals put to them; but they might initiate something else, if they would be convinced that world opinion demanded it and that they would not lose thereby.⁷

On the whole, however, the British were more moderate, or at least less convinced of the usefulness of propagandist gestures. This became evident on a small scale when the Inter-Parliamentary Union was summoned in London in 1957 and Hungary planned to send the hard-line communist Sándor Rónai as the Hungarian representative. Fry recommended that Rónai should be denied access, and his further advice on how the Hungarians should be approached was not particularly diplomatic. He recommended that it be expressed:

that, as the Kadar Government was imposed on the Hungarian people by force of Russian arms, a delegation from a 'Parliament' consisting solely of Kadar's stooges can hardly expect to be recognised in this country as representing the people of Hungary and to complain to the Delegation.

This was too much for the desk officers: they admitted that the British could mention oppression and that the British people regarded with horror "the executions, arbitrary arrests, po-

litical prisons and concentration and forced labour camps which are now such prominent features on the Hungarian scene". But it was doubtful whether Fry's suggestion would pay off in any way. In the first place, there would be several other delegations at the Conference of whom much the same thing could be said; and in the second, it was hardly logical simultaneously to tell people that they were mere stooges and then go on to protest to them about what their Government was doing.⁸ The realities of *Realpolitik* were getting more important as time went by.

The British felt also that the Hungarians saw or wanted to see British policy as more moderate than that of the other Western countries. Especially during Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's visit to the Soviet Union in 1959 the Hungarian attitude towards the British approached, according to the British, "even cordiality and I was forced to listen to clumsy exercises in wedge-driving through contrast between British flexibility and American-German intransigence".⁹ Naturally, the British did not want to see their moderation in this light or take the role of a deserter.¹⁰ Even so, their comments on American policy on Hungary were less and less enthusiastic: the standard British line was that, repulsive as the Kádár Government was, the American approach had been proved "sterile" and it was in the interests of the West to do whatever they could to promote contacts with the Hungarian nation and to prevent the traditional links from being broken.¹¹ Whereas the American line emphasized the isolation of Hungary, the British thought the same goals could perhaps be achieved better from within.

The Americans held to their own line. When State Secretary Christian Herter approved in November 1960 that the Legations in Bucharest and Sofia should be raised to the status of Embassies, he specifically stated that this would not apply to Budapest, since "our current relations with Hungary are anomalous and wholly negative".¹²

2.2 Kádár: the Quisling of 1956 – or a Lesser Evil?

Seen from the starting points and policy strategies mentioned previously, it is hardly surprising that the Western view on Kádár's person was extremely suspicious and negative. At best, Kádár was seen as a mediocrity and a victim of circumstances who had had no choice if he wanted to save his own skin. At worst, he was seen as a traitor and a quisling, who had joined the Russians because of personal ambition. What was worst and most ominous – according to this interpretation – was that he had not done this because he had to, but because he had wanted to gain power in Hungary. Even his personal honesty was in doubt, because he had first joined the Nagy regime but then deserted it and seemed to have willingly adopted the role of a Soviet puppet. In this interpretation it was also taken for granted that Kádár had no popular support at all; he was universally considered a traitor. In fact, some of the Western spectators thought the Hungarian people were so disgusted with him that even the Soviets would have liked to replace him by another, less hated figure.¹³

In January 1957, envoy Fry distinguished Kádár from Imre Nagy in these terms:

M. Nagy, his loyalty confronted during the brief days of freedom with a choice between Moscow and Hungary, stood steadfast by his own country. But his partner in power, M. Kádár, had already betrayed her; and the Russians, as reward, set him up as head of a puppet government in the provincial town of Szolnok.¹⁴

A "Personality"-report on Kádár was hardly more merciful:

Never of first-rate ability or great strength of character, Kádár on his emergence from prison [1954] was unable to decide which brand of communism to support. On August 12, 1956, he publicly dissociated himself from the Rákosi-Gerő line, but when in the autumn he entered the short-lived second Nagy Government, although himself a non-Muscovite, he made common cause with the Russians. It is worth noting, however, that after Nagy's Government fell Kádár was called on to form a Cabinet while he was on a visit to the U.S.S.R. and he was thus without any freedom of choice

whatsoever... the workers' councils (banned except in the factories) which, though disembodied, are still influential, treat Kádár with complete contempt. Kádár, in short, is a leader without a following. His past record suggests that he would prefer Communism shorn of its worst excesses, but that, although he owes his life to the Nagy reforms, he would not go further along the path towards 'liberal' Communism.¹⁵

However, the most sinister interpretation of Kádár's motives gave way gradually to a view which at least admitted that Kádár was not the most Stalinist alternative: there were still even worse options among the old Rákosists.¹⁶ But even this might not be a cause to change the opinion, because even in this case Kádár would hardly have space to manoeuvre. As one of the Foreign Office officials put it colourfully:

Thus, while it may still be true that there are moderate and extremist factions within the party, their interests at the moment largely coincide: they must hang together if they are not to hang separately.¹⁷

At any rate there was no hope on the horizon.

But it seems that now, paradoxically and gradually, Kádár had become to represent some sort of "lesser evil", compared to the old Rákosi guard. And if there were to be hope of any improvement or even the end of deterioration and oppression, it would probably be connected in association with his name. A short time later the defeat of the Molotovians in Kremlin was seen as an advancement for Kádár.¹⁸ However, in the Western eyes Kádár's position was still very unstable and there was certainly no respect connected to his name. And the bottom line at the end of 1957 was still that the resistance of the Hungarian people against Communist oppression was strong.¹⁹

2.3 A Gradual Change to the Better

Gradually, however, also the West had to adapt itself to the situation. Besides, even though the Kádár regime was still considered emotionally repulsive, no onlooker could deny that the

situation in Hungary seemed to be normalising – and the economy even prospering. Even the NSC admitted this in 1958:

A certain degree of moderation has been evident in the economic policy of the Hungarian regime. Collectivization of agriculture remains the ultimate goal, but Kadar has asserted that this will be achieved by 'Leninist' persuasion rather than 'Stalinist' coercion. A degree of private enterprise among artisans and small tradesmen has been tolerated though not encouraged, and there has been an effort to keep the market reasonably well supplied with consumer goods. With the aid of extensive grants and loans from the Soviet Union and the other Communist nations, the Hungarian economy has recovered from the effects of the revolution more rapidly than had been anticipated, though grave economic problems remain.²⁰

Although the aspect of economic development was often partially moderated with the expression "according to Eastern European standards", it was still a fact. On one hand, this was a positive development. On the other, it could be also politically worrying: would the Kádár regime thus be able to 'buy' the popular support which the people of Hungary had thus far denied him? At the same time, the belief that the Hungarian people would continuously resist oppressive regime diminished.

Also, Kádár's personal position and standing seemed to change. Even this was a dilemma with at least two aspects. On the one hand, if one took the moralistic view of 1956, it was not mentally comfortable to see how the quisling and demon of 1956 was becoming tolerable. On the other hand, if Kádár gained more personal authority, it was not inconceivable that he would some day be able to stand up against the Soviets, at least on some issues.

The execution of Imre Nagy produced a shocked moral outcry, but even that did not have any permanent effect. The Americans did not, in fact, blame Kádár for the execution in their own secret negotiations. The execution was considered a factor which, if anything, would tend to damage his position. The Head of the CIA, Allen Dulles, expressed his conviction that the signal for the executions had almost certainly come

from Moscow and that they had been intended as warnings first to Tito and thereafter to Gomulka. "He (Dulles) thought it likely that in the sequel Kadar would drop out of the political picture quite soon."²¹

But despite Dulles' comment above, at least the British did not expect Kádár to fall soon, and when Kádár visited the Soviet Union in April 1958, the West considered his position in Hungary safe: the extremists had not gained the upper hand.²²

In late 1959 the British also concluded a new "Personalities"-list in which they analyzed the leading circles of Hungary and even some of the potential opposition forces. It should be added that according to the information of the archive catalogue an even more extensive list also exists, but this is still secret.

The analysis of the list available is, however, very illuminating. Kádár is, of course, the obvious target of interest, but also some other personalities are worth mentioning.

Kádár, János: Immediately after the revolution, Kádár offered many concessions to the workers and the revolutionary councils, including the principle of multi-party free elections and the withdrawal of Soviet troops. At this time he did his best to represent himself as a moderate. But his term of power has been marked by steadily increasing repression in all fields and the elimination of most of the political concessions won by the Revolution. It has been rumoured that, particularly in the summer of 1957, he favoured the introduction of a more moderate line but was overruled. His speeches have been harsh, he accepted without protest the execution of Nagy and his associates in June, 1958, and, whatever his personal views, he appears to be a reliable tool in the hands of his Soviet masters, ready to carry out any excesses which are demanded of him. It is believed that his nerve and will-power have never recovered from his sufferings in prison; but his public appearances present a facade of confidence and determination. The great majority of Hungarians detest him as devoid of every vestige of political and moral integrity.²³

But it is illuminating that this critical tone seemed to be more and more the compulsory mental adherence to the old moralistic values, which, however, would no more be permitted to

stand in the way of a pragmatic policy. It would have been too much to admit to an erroneous analysis, but the very fact that Kádár had remained in power and was likely to be the strong man in the future also made it essential to find also good sides of him. And at the very least his success had to be admitted.

Besides, the other characteristics showed that there was no better option. To take a couple of examples:

Kiss, Károly: Kiss is one of the key figures in the party today and is thought to be in favour of repressive policies. He is the main party organiser and disciplinarian and has been largely responsible for carrying through the reconstruction of the party since the revolution.

Marosán, György: He did not play a prominent role in the revolution of October, but has since repeatedly declared that he voted in favour of calling in Soviet troops at the outset on October 23... Marosán has been one of the Kádár régime's principal spokesmen since its inception, although less has been heard of him in recent months. He has made numerous speeches at party meetings and Workers' Conferences, the majority marked by their harsh uncompromising attitude. His style is extremely coarse and the published versions of his speeches are carefully edited. He has frequently stated that there can be no question of the revival of a separate Social Democrat Party... He is uneducated and regarded as something of a buffoon; but he is dangerous.

Münnich, Ferenc: He is a tough and determined Communist who would have been happy to share responsibility for the excesses of Rákosi but for his personal friendship with Rákosi's victim, Rajk. He is still said to distinguish himself from those members of the leadership who are out and out Rákosists, but he is probably as reactionary and inflexible as they are. His allegiance to the Soviet Union is probably absolute.

It is interesting that the personality of Ernő Gerő is not commented on at all – his career is only cited as an extended curriculum vitae.²⁴

The difference between the British and the American attitude about tactics became clearer and the British were very con-

scious of it. The Head of the Northern Department, R. H. Mason, answered to the Budapest Legation: "I entirely agree with your view that we must try to encourage a more forward policy towards Hungary by the NATO powers as a whole. The American attitude has been an obstacle to this, but we must hope that the new Administration [that of Kennedy] will be prepared to take a more positive view."²⁵

Thus necessity became a virtue, and it is of minor practical consequence whether this was due to a conversion or tactical considerations. A year later it was essentially Kádár's authority and personal respect which was emphasized in the British analysis, and this trend became more and more obvious in the following years.²⁶ A phrase which was frequently repeated was that it was accepted that although Kádár would never be able to get the real confidence of the Hungarian people, the Hungarians thought Kádár to be the best Prime Minister they were likely to get. He was essentially a mediocrity who had risen to the top because of events – but Hungarian history was full of men who in similar circumstances had adopted the realistic policy of doing what was possible. One Hungarian writer had even called him the Hungarian Christ because "some one had to save the Hungarian people".²⁷ And even after Khrushchev fell in October 1964 the British did not think that this would harm Kádár's position.²⁸

Also, the American image of Kádár was gradually changing, although the Americans were slower in this mental rehabilitation process and did not concentrate so much on Kádár's person. They saw the situation of Hungary in a wider scale – as a part of the Communist bloc and as one in which only the Soviet Union really mattered. When Kádár visited the United Nations, the Americans did not meet him and restricted his travels. Even so, after Kádár had visited the UN the American attitude began to show more signs of interest in him.

A report which was issued from "a reliable source" in December 1960 described Kádár's informal comments during this visit. They were also thought to be interesting because it was assumed that Kádár had actually wished that they would reach

the Americans. This is most probably plausible, since the comments show Kádár's desire to convince the Americans of two starting-points: he was in power to stay, but he was also a pragmatic man. He would bear no grudge for the suspicions and the boycott, and he was a man with whom one could have dealings with – only a few circumstances had to be understood at first. And thirdly: it paid off to take him seriously, since he was no puppet.

Since the events of 1956, there have been a lot of childish (*gyerekes*) things going on between our two countries. I want to be frank with you. Both the U.S. Government and we Hungarians have been acting like a couple of kids. Periodically, we expel one another's diplomatic representatives: one American for one Hungarian. I don't think this is an intelligent (*okos*) thing to do. Let us explore the possibility of an understanding.

I don't like the Germans (I mean Adenauer's Germany) but to illustrate my feeling on this subject, I would use the German word 'Realpolitik' to describe the way this matter should be treated. We do not hate the Americans. After all, let us be realistic: Who are we? We are only a 'little louse' (*kis tota* [sic!]) in this big world. However, the prerequisite for normal relations is a willingness on the part of the U.S. Government to recognize the hard facts. The People's Republic of Hungary is an accomplished fact. It is here today. It will stay here tomorrow. All you have to do is to recognize this fact. The rest is simple. We could then resume normal diplomatic representations instead of this ridiculous (*navetaeges* [sic!]) Charge d'Affaires business.

The U.S. Government talks about Hungary being a Soviet satellite. Now on this subject let me tell you the following. It has cost the U.S.S.R. a lot of money to help normalize our conditions after 1956. Today we are happily engaged in constructive work. Our people enjoy freedom. No more of the Rakosi terror. Believe me, we don't take people to prison in the middle of the night any more. If you don't believe me, then talk to our writers, our intellectuals who were released from prison. Talk to Tibor Dary [Déry], the writer. And all this nonsense about Khrushchev dictating everything in Hungary – it is simply not true...

Let me assure you, once the U.S. recognizes that there was such a thing as the People's Republic with Kadar as its leader, we would

not have a single problem. I cannot emphasize that strongly enough.

I must tell you in earnest: We have no illusions concerning the possibility that the U.S. will become a socialist or a communist state. We Hungarian Communists are realists. We know that your country is capitalist, and it will not adopt our system. (Source: Mr. Kadar, this does not seem to be in line with Mr. Khrushchev's remark to the effect that our grandchildren in the U.S. will live under Communism.)

What makes you think that we have to go along with everything our Comrades say? We Communists like to argue with each other. That is the democratic thing to do. The principal thing is that the East and West must co-exist in peace and that we must negotiate. Take this present UN debate. It is much better to shout (*kisbalai* [sic!]) at each other than to shoot (*loni* [sic!]) at each other.²⁹

The message is clear: Kádár wanted to show that he was not a man who would hang himself for any dogma. He even took the trouble to emphasize his peasant (!) origin and love for nature and animals, even to joke about how he would not like to live in New York: "Not enough trees and (laugh) too many policemen." And then he appealed to American nationalism by confessing his and his people's admiration for Ulysses Grant. The document does not, however, reveal the American reaction to Kádár's words.

Even as the image of Kádár became better, one thing still annoyed even the British: they thought that Hungary was buying internal independence by being extra loyal and rigid in foreign policy.³⁰ The Americans had even more to complain about, since according to their view Hungary was one of the most eager supporters of North Vietnam and so vehement in its condemnation of 'American imperialism'. In 1965 there even occurred a demonstration of Asian and African students in Budapest against the American Legation, and the sanctity of the Legation premises was violated – according to the Americans, with no effort on the part of the Hungarian authorities to prevent this.

2.4 The end of the 1960s: Stability and Expectations

At the end of the 1960s the image of Hungary and Kádár had become relatively stable and even positive – if one bore in mind the starting points and the obvious differences.

Also, the American policy line had softened remarkably. The standard line, which can clearly be seen in the document *Changing Patterns in Eastern Europe* in 1964, was now that the Communist regimes were there to stay in Eastern Europe. But now they were seen as representatives of national communism, and they would consciously and methodically attempt to free themselves as much from the dominance of Moscow as possible. In this way the Communist bloc would lose its monolithic nature.

It was assumed that this political evolution was not likely to proceed at a speed which would threaten the Communist regimes as such, but the logic of this development would make the difference – against Moscow anyhow. The national Communist regimes were now the main force which could oppose Moscow in Eastern Europe, so it was not practical any more to treat them as oppressive and undemocratic quisling governments, but to try to develop relations with them. It was also assumed that the Soviets would consider direct military intervention in Eastern Europe only in extreme circumstances, when they believed vital Soviet interests to be threatened. Even the fall of Khrushchev did not change this analysis.³¹ In any case the principle was that the United States should improve its relations with Eastern European countries – even to strengthen their Communist regimes.³²

All this was a far cry from the old moralistic view which drew a sharp distinction between the cause of the free, democratic world and that of the evil communist bloc. No immediate victory was in sight; probably there was even some thought of a possible convergence of the two systems in the long run.

As the British Ambassador in Budapest, Alexander Morley, stated in his Annual Report in January 1967:

the Hungarian leadership abjured old-fashioned dogmatist Communism and became committed to the search for a new brand of Communism, aimed at giving the people of this country material benefits similar to those enjoyed by their neighbours to the West... I have the impression that if it is possible to combine a workable economic liberalism with full public ownership of production and strict central political control, which to us are the essence of communism, it is as likely to be seen in Hungary as anywhere.... Contrary to the usual stereotype of how Hungarians behave (which is not always wrong) the Hungarian party and governmental apparatus has been moving slowly and methodically.³³

The Hungarians had noticed the change and seemed to sense that they did not need to be begging to be released from the boycott. They knew it was in the interests in the United States to dispell the old animosity. So thus Hungary could wait and make its peace with the Americans on its own terms. The chargé d'affaires in Washington, János Radványi, could afford even a slightly sarcastic tone in his negotiations with the Americans:

As to RFE [Radio Free Europe], Radványi said that Premier Kadar had decided to cease jamming of this station to bring some humor into the life of Hungarians, since RFE broadcasts were so ridiculous they could not be taken seriously... Radványi next adverted to Cardinal Mindszenty. The US, he said, should put pressure on the Vatican to find a solution of the case. It was unfortunate that there was no provision in the Catholic Church for the pensioning of Cardinals, he continued, since this might permit a solution of the issue.³⁴

True, the Vietnam issue was still stressed by the Hungarians, but even here the Americans now seemed apt to interpret it in a new light. It was now considered to be mostly lip-service and necessary political currency which enabled a greater degree of internal independence to be bought from the Soviets. The issue was not in reality important to Hungary, so the West could afford this price. Hungary was considered to be much more moderate than the Soviet Union or the German Democratic Re-

public, and it was also understood to take a charitable view on the reforms in Czechoslovakia in 1967-68. It was thought that Kádár would not allow himself to be forced either to follow the Czech model or to actively attack it.³⁵

In May 1968 the British Ambassador Millard had a long talk with Kádár and naturally sent a long report to London. Kádár's remarks resembled those he had made in 1960 (the ones which were probably addressed to the Americans): he thought the quarrels were mostly due to misconceptions, and as he had assured to the Americans that he foresaw no socialist revolution in America, he now assured that he did not want to destroy the British Empire. But there was even more confidence in his tone now: he was firmly in the saddle and would remain so. And he pointed out that even though political relations with the West Germans were bad, the Germans had made an effort to develop economic relations. The British should do the same:

Reverting to this theme of the need for our two countries to understand each other, Kádár said that we would be aware of what had happened in Hungary during and since the war. They had suffered much, and for the events of 1956 they had paid a very high price. They were not now going to sell cheaply what had been won. If I knew the Hungarians, I would know that this was how most of them felt.

Concerning the Czechs, Kádár took an almost patronising tone: the Czech reforms were not a threat to socialism, and in many ways the Czechs were now catching up with the Hungarian reforms: "They were dealing with their problems in their own way, and he was confident of their ability to succeed."

The Ambassador's analysis to London ended in a manner which combined respect with a somewhat calculating tone:

To some extent the strength of Kádár's position is the lack of credible alternatives. Hungarians are cynical about their leadership and of course they have no means of changing it, but he is the best First Secretary they have. More positively his prestige is due to his strong personality and the relatively humane quality of his rule.

Although there is little communication between Government and people, the Hungarians sense that under the pressures of office he has revealed statesmanlike qualities. Many are disposed to give him credit for this, although there is much else about the regime which they would condemn. The policy of reconciliation has produced results and to a limited extent Kádár has capitalised national feeling. From this brief contact he appears confidently in control.³⁶

The desk officers in London agreed – and were especially interested in Kádár’s views on the Czech reforms and their future.³⁷

Kádár had a roughly equivalent meeting with the American representative. This was all the more important because this marked the final normalisation of US-Hungarian relations. And also in this meeting he played the part of the good-humoured father of the nation – and of a statesman who was big enough to forgive his counterpart’s blunders. In a sense, he had a valid opportunity to pose as the winner in the US-Hungarian controversy, since this was the first time an American Ambassador had met him after the long boycott. “There was no false modesty, and he spoke with the assurance of someone who is not only party boss but the real power in this country.”

According to the Ambassador, Kádár had emphasized the need for peaceful coexistence as the only rational approach between countries whose systems were based on differing theories of society. It might not have been possible to say this twenty years earlier, when the pressure of ideological differences had been much more intense, but the basic problem now was to avoid the outbreak of nuclear war between the two superpowers. And once again, referring to the previous bad relations between the USA and Hungary, Kádár made a practical analogy:

He had compared the situation at that time as similar to two boxers who had been slugging at each other for seven rounds (from 1956 to 1963). Neither could hope to knock the other out, neither was prepared to capitulate, and neither could ultimately hope to gain very much from the contest. Hungary was not prepared to

come on its knees to the US, and he knew the US was not prepared to assume this posture before Hungary. As I knew, he went on, the UN problem had now been solved in an acceptable way. If we approached current problems in the same spirit which had finally led to a solution of the Hungarian question in the UN, based upon realistic acceptance of the facts of life, then there was good possibility of advancing towards agreement in other areas... Both sides would, of course, indulge in propaganda against each other, but firm and realistic acceptance of this truth would not let the possibilities of improving our relations be submerged by such propaganda.

...Kadar was in an obviously relaxed, good humoured, sometimes semi-ironic mood. He was well-briefed and had apparently carefully thought out the line of argument he wished to use. He seemed to enjoy playing the role of a confident leader big enough to forget the past, and hopeful for betterment of Hungarian-American relations though very mindful of present difficulties.³⁸

Even after the invasion of Czechoslovakia no real fears were expressed about Hungary's own reforms in the field of economic freedom and the extended self-government of the people – at least as long as the Hungarians were allowed to decide these things themselves.

Hungary was one of the occupying powers in the Czechoslovakian crisis, but this did not destroy Kádár's record and image in the Western eyes – rather the reverse. Of course, it was noted that Hungary had participated in the invasion, but simultaneously it was taken for granted that this had been something which Kádár would have wanted to avoid; he had finally had to accept it in order not to endanger Hungary's position towards the Soviets. No enthusiasm was detected on the Hungarian side, rather extremely half-hearted efforts to find excuses for the invasion, excuses which they did not in fact take seriously themselves, but had to perform as some obligatory lip-service. It was evident that the Hungarians had no wish to see the Cold War positions return.

As far as Kádár himself was concerned, there were different interpretations whether his position had weakened or not, and

a British letter reported also a joke: "A current joke here is that among the telephones on Kádár's desk, it is easy to tell which is the hot line to Moscow, because it has only a receiver." Also the American report included a joke: "Why are the five armies still in Czechoslovakia? They are trying to find the guy who called them to help."³⁹

In 1968, the standard tone seems to have been that Kádár had tried to ride on two horses at the same time and had been forced to participate in the invasion – and, had the Czech reform policy succeeded, would have "tried to manoeuvre himself into a Dubcek-like posture and tried to ride the whirlwind". In any case it was thought to be essential that the West would do nothing to blame Hungary or harm its position. It was in the Western interests that contacts with Hungary would increase and the Hungarian economic reform survive, because in the long run this would strengthen Hungary's freedom towards the Soviet Union.⁴⁰ The American conclusions were no different.

It is also interesting to see that whereas in Leslie Fry's time the Legations had been more critical towards Kádár than the desk officers in London, now the tables were turned in this respect. Yet again the occupational hazard of diplomats – identification with the local conditions – was at work, but this time it meant a sort of identification with *Kádár's* policies, not with his opposition or his victims, as after 1956. Moralizing was now absent.

At any event, in the late 1960s the image of Kádár had thus stabilised. It was more positive than negative, and it was expected to improve, not deteriorate. Hungary belonged, of course, to the opposing bloc, but bearing in mind this starting point and Hungary's conditions and possibilities, the results were as good as could be expected. The Hungary of Kádár did not seem to be very rigid, orthodox or sincerely convinced about its own Socialism as such. It was anything but ideologically expansive and it seemed to want to absorb as much market economy and political breathing space as it possibly could without provoking the Soviets. This did not mean implementation of capitalism or democracy as such, but it was pragmatic

policy which caused very little trouble to the West. Hungary represented the *status quo* in a liberal shade and this was the best that was expected of it – especially after the invasion of Czechoslovakia and the declaration of the Brezhnev Doctrine.

And the riddle of János Kádár remained in many sense unsolved. As the Superintending Under-Secretary of the Northern Department in the Foreign Office, P. Hayman, stated: "The enigma about Kadar remains: how has he been able to combine a record of close association with the Soviet Union (in 1956 and at other times) with an appearance of national leadership?"⁴¹ The answer remained uncertain, but more important was that Kádár had indeed succeeded.

3 Finland

3.1 Moderate goals: Maintaining the Paasikivi Line

Finland was in many sense a very different case compared with Hungary. It was a neutral country, or at least striving to be neutral; there were no Russian troops in Finland; the country was a democracy and had a multi-party system, free elections and a press which on the whole was free. However, there are astonishingly many similarities: the Soviet shadow, the tightening Soviet grip, a strong leader who remained in power for a long period, suspicions in the West, increased political freedom and independence and hence a new view towards the formerly disliked national leader.

In the case of Urho Kekkonen, there are many interpretations on how successful he in fact was in maintaining Finnish independence and neutrality. According to his supporters, he was a genuine success: he managed to obtain recognition of Finnish neutrality in the West and thus to win over Western confidence. This was something which the cautious Paasikivi had not dared even to attempt. In particular the American and British recognitions of Finnish neutrality in 1961 are taken as evidence of Kekkonen's success, the Summit of European Security in 1975 in Helsinki being the final jewel in his crown. This was conclusive confirmation of the fact that he had become a true European statesman of the first order.

According to Kekkonen's opponents and critics, these achievements were not necessarily due to the merits of Kekkonen, but something which would have been achieved anyhow – possibly achieved even earlier, had Kekkonen not been so pro-Soviet in his speeches. The critics emphasize that Paasikivi had operated in much more difficult circumstances, held his own against the Russians in domestic policy and also enjoyed much more personal respect and confidence in the West than Kekkonen. According to them, Kekkonen allowed the Soviets to interfere with internal Finnish issues and domestic policy – the so-called Finlandisation* – which Paasikivi had managed to avoid. The main point of the criticism is that the basic line had been set by Paasikivi and that Kekkonen had played the Soviet card to his own benefit to gain a political hegemony in Finland. Kekkonen had also created a stifled mental climate in Finland and weakened the Finnish backbone by demanding that the friendship with the Soviet Union should be treated as a virtue, not as an uncomfortable necessity.

But what was then the Western view on Finland? How much did the internal conditions of Finland matter to it, and what was expected from the Finnish leaders and thus also from Kekkonen?

Finland was a sort of a reluctant test-case for the Russians, but also for the West. As such it was not vitally important to the West. It was useful mainly for the fact that its independence denied the Soviets many military and political advantages which membership of the Warsaw Pact or becoming a Soviet province like the Baltic countries would have given them. It was useful also in the sense that the collapse of Finland would weaken other small nations threatened by Communism, as the American National Security Council (NSC) concluded in the

* Cf. the Hungarian positive meaning of "finlandising" (*finlandizálás*). Romsics, Ignác, *Hungary in the Twentieth Century*. Trans. Tim Wilkinson. Budapest, Osiris 1999, 309; Kende, Péter, "Afterword". In *The Hungarian Revolution of 1956*. Ed. Litván, György. London, New York, Longman 1996, 168-169. [Ed. note]

1950s.⁴² But, not being vital, Finland might also be expendable if the price – for example Sweden’s possible membership of NATO – would be tempting enough. In any case, Finland would never be defended by NATO troops: it was recognized that the country lay in the Soviet-dominated sphere of interest.

The NSC stated in 1954 its moderate goals concerning Finland:

To review NSC policy with respect to Finland with a view to continuance of an independent, economically healthy, and democratic Finland, basically oriented to the West, (but with no attempt to incorporate Finland in a Western coalition) neither subject to undue reliance on Soviet Bloc trade nor vulnerable to Soviet economic pressure.⁴³

In 1959 the NSC also stated:

Furthermore, if Finland is able to preserve its present neutral status – that of a nation able to maintain its independence despite heavy Soviet pressure – it could serve as an example of what the United States might like to see achieved by the Soviet-dominated nations of Eastern Europe.⁴⁴

Finland was a warning of what a neutralist Scandinavia might become, yet it was not Eastern Europe by any real standards, and it could be seen also as a positive prospect when the Eastern European Bloc was concerned; perhaps it could be a model for the “Finlandization” of Eastern Europe?

It was clear that more was expected and hoped for on the part of Finland than from that of Hungary, because Finland had some space to manoeuvre – which a Warsaw Pact country like Hungary could not have, especially after 1956. So it was important that Finland would not make too many compromises and put this room for latitude in manoeuvre in jeopardy. The Finnish statesmen were expected to defend the degree of ‘Westernness’ they had. It was expected that they would preserve the *status quo*, make the necessary concessions to the Soviets to keep them content, but simultaneously defend their right to take care

of their own domestic affairs without any interference from Moscow. Domestic drifting towards Communism would be a blow to Western interests in the Cold War and would disturb the whole balance in Northern Europe.

A sort of a test case was the ability to keep the Communists out of the government. The standard American and British line in the 1950s and 1960s was to support co-operation and coalition governments between the Social Democrats and the Agrarian Union, no matter how much they or their leaders might be distrusted as individuals. This was called "the red soil" government in Finland. The most important aspect in grading the importance of the Finnish parties was ultimately not a question of which party was 'right' in internal disputes or even the most pro-Western one. The most important thing was to guarantee Finnish domestic stability and to avoid an internal chaos, in which the trade unions and the farmers' union struggled for material and social benefits. This struggle would undermine the democratic parties, strengthen the Communists and thus make Finland more vulnerable to Soviet pressure. Stability was also the highest goal considered possible to achieve.

It was accepted that the SDP and the Agrarian Union (later the Centre Party) were the only forces imaginable which occupied a position to control the economic interest groups and make them stabilise the economy. The red soil government was also considered the only coalition strong enough to make a stand against Communist and Soviet demands and threats. In theory, the National Coalition Party (the Conservatives) was clearly the most pro-Western and anti-Communist party as such, but it was left in the political wilderness for pragmatic reasons. Co-operation with this party would provoke the Russians and antagonize Leftist parties, the Agrarian Union and President Kekkonen – and whereas these could do much harm to Finnish stability, if left in Opposition, the Coalition Party could not. Thus, it was expendable. The desirability of the red soil government was due to tactical considerations and was a means, not an end. This standard line did not even depend on what party was in government in the USA or in Britain, nor on

the personality of the Ambassadors or the desk officers in Washington and London.

This sort of government had been the norm in the 1950s; however, between 1959 and 1966 this coalition became impossible because of the bad relations between the SDP and the Agrarians, or, between the SDP and Kekkonen.

So no pro-Western heroism was required, because it was taken for granted that any exaggerated move towards the West, let alone help on the part of the Western Powers, would only provoke the Russians to demand even more than they had originally intended. In short, it was expected that the Finnish President and Government would maintain the *status quo* of the mid-1950s.

Paasikivi seemed to have managed all the essentials of this; of Prime Minister Kekkonen's abilities and intentions or even of his bottom-line sympathies one was not always equally sure. As a British memorandum, which could be compared with the American NSC outlines, stated in 1955:

...the attitude of the Finnish government towards Russia has of late been unnecessarily subservient. This is principally the fault of Dr. Kekkonen, the Prime Minister, an able and an extremely ambitious man who, though no Communist or fellow traveller, is prepared to follow almost any policy which will suit his personal book and further increase his popularity with the weak and ageing President Paasikivi, whom he hopes to succeed at the next Presidential elections... there is a risk that he may allow his ambition to outrun his country's interests.⁴⁵

The West also seemed to appreciate a cartoon by Kari Suomalainen, the leading Finnish cartoonist, which appeared in *Helsingin Sanomat*, in 1954, when Kekkonen ousted Ralf Törnngren from the Premiership and became Prime Minister himself again. The cartoon depicted a mass of Soviet-type soldiers carrying Törnngren away and Kekkonen saluting the soldiers from a balcony. The text was: "Long Live the People's Republic of Kekkoslovakia!" It is significant that both the American and the British ministers sent the cartoon to their foreign ministries.

Since the West could not do much to defend Finland politically, not at least in the area of foreign policy, the Finnish domestic forum was the only one in which the Communist and Soviet influence could be fought effectively – without a risk of an American-Soviet conflict over Finland. The best weapon would be to aid the non-Communist parties and to further non-Communist co-operation.⁴⁶ And this should be done with as little noise as possible.

Despite the criticism of Kekkonen it was mostly taken for granted in the Western diplomatic circles during Paasikivi's Presidency that Kekkonen would become the next President. Kekkonen's political talent was considered to be a class of its own in Finland; moreover, he was clearly the favourite of the Soviets, and the forces opposing him could not join their forces.⁴⁷ But after he indeed was elected, the fears seemed to become true, and the first real evidence of subservience seemed to come during the Hungarian uprising. The Finnish attitude was considered very evasive. When the British Ambassador in Helsinki asked the Finnish Ambassador in London whether Finland would contribute to the work of the *UN Special Committee on the Hungarian Uprising* the Finnish colleague expressed reluctance. The London officials were not surprised: as one of them noted in the minutes with a short but illuminating sentence: "This is what we expected."⁴⁸ And after the Nagy execution it was yet again Kekkonen who was seen as the culprit in Finland or at least as the censor whose line prevented some of the moral outcry which the executions would have deserved from every democratic and free man.⁴⁹

3.2 Rock Bottom – Permitting Soviet Interference 1958-62

The convictions of Kekkonen's sins were accentuated even more after the so-called Night Frost Crisis in 1958-59 and Note Crisis in 1961. It is not possible to describe these crises in detail here, but in both cases the Americans and the British thought they could see their worst fears being confirmed: they thought that Kekkonen was yet again making undue concessions to the Soviets – concessions which Paasikivi would not have made.

The Night Frost crisis came after the 1958 elections. The Communists became the biggest party (50 out of 200 MPs), but the negotiations to form the new Government brought a pleasant surprise for the West. Instead of the dreaded popular front government just the opposite emerged: a coalition government of all parties except the Communists. Even Kekkonen's party, the Agrarians, participated. The most influential position was held by the anti-Kekkonen Social Democrats, and also the ostracism of the Conservatives was ended. In Western eyes, this was even better than the red soil government: a government with such a substantial parliamentary majority would effectively isolate the Communists. Western diplomats sensed Kekkonen's coolness towards the new Government, but as the American Ambassador reported to Washington, "all Emb contacts assume, and we agree, Communists will not repeat not be admitted to government unless President Kekkonen in effect goes nuts".⁵⁰ It was recognised that Kekkonen could not prevent the government from being created, and it was expected that the government would control his undue subservience to the East.

However, when the West was satisfied, it was evident that the same reasons would make the government anathema for the Soviets. The discontent was soon apparent: the trade negotiations were cancelled, and Ambassador Lebedev left the country without even the usual courtesy visit to President Kekkonen. The relations between the two countries froze to a zero-point.

Kekkonen's own attitude towards the Government had been negative from the very beginning, since he regarded the Government as dangerous in foreign policy and consisting of his most ardent opponents in domestic policy. The question of his actual role in the making and breaking of the government is still debated among Finnish historians, but it can be said with certainty that he and the Soviets had at least some co-operation against the government – and both were trying to bring about its downfall. For example, Kekkonen inquired through his political confidant Ahti Karjalainen whether the Soviets would continue resisting the Government without compromise to the

end – because only then could he use his authority in the game against the government.⁵¹

Whereas Paasikivi, ten years earlier, had defended a government in a somewhat similar situation against Soviet discontent (the first Fagerholm Government in 1948-50), Kekkonen seemed to work against his government right from the start and then to give in to the Russians almost immediately – if not even to collaborate against the Government. Finally, the Government resigned.

In the Western Embassies, Kekkonen was seen as the culprit. It was thought that the Soviet pressure would not have warranted such submission on his part, especially since the Americans had promised to give economic aid, and now he had set a dangerous precedent and the Soviet influence in Finnish domestic matters had increased. As the British Ambassador Douglas Busk put it:

President Kekkonen is apparently genuinely persuaded that the degree of submissiveness to Russian wishes indicated in his speech is necessary to the safety and prosperity of his country... the President is still playing party politics... apparently granting the Russians the right to object to any government and from that it is but a short step to a Russian right to choose a government... The President may think he is adopting '*divide et impera*' as his motto, but it may work out as '*divide et Russia imperabit*'. At the very least the Russian appetite must surely have been whetted.⁵²

The Western image of Kekkonen was of course partly a stereotype. But Kekkonen did not improve this image – of which he could hardly be ignorant – in his meetings with the Western diplomats, especially in the years 1959-60. He repeatedly stressed to them that the real danger to world peace was not the Soviet Union at all, but the unwise, revanchist policy of Western Germany. He also maintained that the Soviet Union was in ascendancy in the Cold War, whereas the West had suffered many setbacks.⁵³

It has often been said that the Western diplomats had too one-sided contacts and listened too much to Kekkonen's oppo-

nents. According to their reports, however, Kekkonen and his supporters were listened to as well; it was especially those opinions of Kekkonen mentioned above (and thus given by himself) which made them most worried, not the horror stories of his opponents, which were taken with a pinch of salt.

Kekkonen's opinions, of course, led to negative reactions in the West. It was difficult to decide whether Kekkonen had capitulated mentally or let the fear or even some sort of pro-Soviet conversion guide him. However, the Western conclusion was not that disenchantment should lead to distancing oneself from Kekkonen. It was taken practically for granted that he would be re-elected President in 1962, so the West had to find ways to influence him, not to discredit itself by backing his adversaries, who had little chance of defeating him. The West should rather try to improve Kekkonen's knowledge of the world situation and particularly make him aware of American might, compared to that of the Russians. At the same time the West should maintain a low profile in Finnish affairs in order not provoke Kekkonen and the Russians.⁵⁴ "Finland must walk a tightrope; the local Blondin is the only one available, so we must try to guide him", was a sentence used by more than one diplomat.

Even the question of inviting Kekkonen for a state visit to the United States and to Britain was seen in this light. So, paradoxically, when Kekkonen made these visits to both England and the United States in 1961, this seemed to be a recognition of neutrality, and the Finns made the most of them. But, in fact, the invitations were not proof of Western recognition of Kekkonen's policies or his success or authority, but quite the reverse.

How can this paradox be explained? One must bear in mind that Kekkonen was not accused of being a traitor or an agent of the Kremlin. He was almost always, also in the most critical Western analysis, considered to be a Finnish patriot. His greatest error was not a lack of patriotism, but one of judgement: he had made a wrong assessment of world politics and the outcome of the Cold War, since he had overestimated Russian

might and underestimated American. State visits were considered the only means to try and influence him and to make him see that Finland had a chance to hold its own against the Soviets. It was also considered useful to talk about Finnish neutrality most when it was considered to be at its weakest and in a danger – because this was the only way to make it as difficult as possible for the Soviet Union to crush it. So the invitations for state visits and recognitions of Finnish neutrality during these visits were paradoxically not the fruit of Kekkonen succeeding in convincing the West, but of his failure to do this.⁵⁵ It was an effort to “convert” him, and this would be done with a carrot, not a stick.⁵⁶

The success, seen from the Western point of view, was meagre. Kekkonen maintained his official line and gave no signs of ‘hidden’ Western sympathies. A disillusioned British memorandum stated after Kekkonen’s visit that Kekkonen had behaved in London as if he recognised that the Soviet Government had a right to involve themselves with Finnish internal politics, and he had betrayed a leaning towards the Soviet point of view in world politics.⁵⁷ Another one stated: “It must be hard to be a good Finn. What disappointed me most about the whole visit was the President’s pointed omission of any indication that he was basically on our side.”⁵⁸

In October 1961, when President Kekkonen was still on his state visit to the United States, a crisis erupted which damaged Kekkonen’s reputation even further in Western eyes. The Soviet Union sent a diplomatic note to Finland and suggested that consultations based on agreements in the 1948 Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance should be commenced due to the rising militarism and revanchism in West Germany. The ‘true’ motives of the Note are a constantly debated issue in Finland, and the main question has been whether Kekkonen had some collaboration with the Soviets in order to ensure his re-election.

While it is not possible to describe the aspects of the Note Crisis with any degree of confidence here, the result was that Kekkonen’s name became more suspect than ever in Western

eyes. First the West had considered that Finland was in real danger and that the Note was a threat also to Kekkonen, who should now defend Finland; the Americans were ready to give extensive economic and even diplomatic support – they had agreed on this with the British already in April 1961.

But when Kekkonen yet again gave in, agreed with most of the Soviet arguments and attacked his domestic political opponents in his speech, suspicions rose. These suspicions gained more substance from the stories of a Soviet defector that Kekkonen and Krushchev had arranged the note together. Kekkonen travelled to Novosibirsk to meet Krushchev, and when the Soviets dropped their suggestion for consultations at almost the same time that Kekkonen's rival stepped down from the presidential elections, the Western analysis began to see some sort of conspiracy. This time the West was disappointed not only in Kekkonen, but also in the whole nation, which seemed to have no fight left in itself against the Soviets – where had the spirit of the stubborn nation of the Winter War gone?

3.3 The Pessimistic View Stabilises – Slippery Slope to the East?

The American and British views on Kekkonen's personality during these crucial years can also be traced from various reports in different forms. They are presented in a most illuminating way in two documents: a British "Personalities" list of influential Finns, consisting of 217 names, written in 1959, and an over 60-page 'mini-biography' of Kekkonen, *A Study of the Career and Policies of Urho Kekkonen, President of Finland*, which was written in the American Embassy in 1963. The latter even included notes.

Neither of these documents favour the interpretation that Kekkonen was in any way a sinister demon, a traitorous power-hungry satellite or an agent of the KGB. Neither was, in fact, based on information taken exclusively from anti-Kekkonen circles – as has repeatedly been suggested by Kekkonen's supporters when the question of Kekkonen's strained Western relations are debated. Both documents were reasonably neutral and attempted to give an unbiased view.

The key sections of the American 'biography' were in the introduction and in the conclusion. Since these confirm the analysis already alluded to in this study, they are cited here quite extensively⁵⁹:

Urho Kaleva Kekkonen is the unchallenged ruler of Finland and he is likely to remain so for many years to come. At 62 he has just begun his second six-year term as President of Finland. A third term seems probable and a fourth term is within the realm of possibility... He likes the Presidency which he actively sought and for which he evidently considers himself well qualified. No individual even remotely threatens his political pre-eminence. There is no current prospect of a coalition of domestic opponents capable of reducing Kekkonen's authority and eventually turning him out of office. In the unlikely event that Kekkonen at some point proves unable to protect his own position, the Soviet Union can be expected to take steps to preserve his authority.

Kekkonen had effectively monopolised Finnish foreign policy and had also made use of it as no predecessor had done before. And no one had made domestic developments serve foreign policy or used foreign policy for domestic political purposes like him before. His domination of Finland was primarily the product of the application of political skill and calculated exploitation of fear of Russia, and he had also remained active in partisan politics. Contrary to the idealized view of the Finnish President as a unifying force, he had continued to be the real leader of his Agrarian Party and had controlled the actions of the Cabinet during most of his presidential term. And no one had dared to challenge him – it was known that it would be useless to try to convert him, and he would retaliate by discrediting his opponents in Russian eyes. To make the President's task even easier, he often had the support of the large Communist Party and factions of the other parties; his opponents were disorganised and lacking in skilful leadership.

The 'biography' described a very autocratic leader and personality:

Kekkonen is not a popular President. Confident, tough, often resentful of advice, and markedly sensitive to criticism, he seems to have few close friends or confidants. He neither seeks nor received the adulation or affection of his people. His relationship to them is cold, distant. The public seldom sees the congeniality of which Kekkonen is capable. He is offensively pedagogical in his attitude toward the Finnish people. Kekkonen asks for their confidence while often demonstrating that he has little confidence in them. He does not appeal for understanding and cooperation; he demands it. Despite his unassailable political position Kekkonen is seldom if ever magnanimous or conciliatory, even in moments of national crisis. He tolerates corruption in high places and deals harshly with opponents. Even among some of those who would not consider denying him their support, Kekkonen has incurred an intense dislike.

But even so, Kekkonen's views had a popular following: it was taken for a fact that Finland could not rely on the support of western nations despite their sympathies. And Kekkonen had concluded that the greater confidence the Soviets had in Finland, the freer Finland would be to develop its western associations. Within the limits he had set for himself, Kekkonen indeed desired considerable contact with the West, which was demonstrated by his visits to the West in the previous two years.

Outwardly Kekkonen appears confident that he has been successful, even remarkably successful, in protecting Finland's independence. This is an attitude he must adopt, however, and it is at least questionable that he really believes Finland's position is as secure as he pretends. Nevertheless, despite the doubt he may have, the trying moments in relations with the Soviets, and the irritation and possible serious concern caused him by those who suggest he may have undermined Finnish independence, Kekkonen has a taste for the burden he has assumed and seeks to retain. He seems to be stimulated by his encounters with the Russians and he has had the satisfaction of seeing his domestic political position reinforced as a consequence of these encounters. In 1961 he told an American audience that he found it fascinating to conduct Finland's foreign affairs. Even shortly after what must have been a harrowing journey to Novosibirsk later that same year Kekkonen said privately that it was thrilling and stimulating to be President of Finland.

It can easily be seen that the tone was critical and not very respectful, but it was not hopeless; and Kekkonen was certainly not considered to be a mere stooge or a mediocrity. The main worry was still that he would overreach himself in his zealotness to appease the Soviets at almost any price. It is rather a picture of a ruthless nationalist who was too convinced that only he could save Finland and nothing could change his grand plan to do this.

The British personalities-list made the same kind of remarks:

One of the ablest men in Finland. His sardonic humour and cynicism are unusual in a Finn; his colleagues do not entirely like him, perhaps partly because they do not understand him, and he is easily criticised. Although a die-hard Finnish patriot during the early part of the war, he is now prepared to follow the 'Paasikivi line' of ostensible friendliness towards the Soviet Union. The apparent change of Soviet foreign policy in a more moderate direction has probably increased the support for such a policy and most Finns feel that it is the only realistic line for their country to pursue. But this policy has, in the past, been deeply distrusted in Finland, where it has been held to be a dangerous substitute for a tougher reaction to Soviet pressure. The prolonged Government crisis of the autumn of 1958 and early 1959 showed the President in a poor light. In the first place he was clearly not playing an impartial role, but favouring his old party, the Agrarians; in the second he allowed himself to be alarmed by Russian coldness and showed a subservience to the Russians which much decreased his popularity.⁶⁰

This is not the place to argue whether these analyses were actually valid. However, they represent the attitude which lay behind Western suspicions of Kekkonen's person.

During the 1960s these suspicions gradually diminished, but at intervals it always seemed that there was a new cause for suspicion of Kekkonen's uncritically pro-Soviet views and dictatorial leanings. For example, in 1965 Kekkonen stated in Moscow that Finland could only be neutral during peace; in the West this was seen as a deviation from official neutrality and as yet another concession to the Soviets, and the American State

Department Assistant Secretary expressed American surprise at this to the Finnish Ambassador and inquired whether there had been a change in the Finnish foreign policy.⁶¹ The Finns assured him that this was not the case.

In domestic policy, Kekkonen's role in defeating the Agrarians' chairman V. J. Sukselainen because the Soviets had criticised him was regarded in an American analysis as "another successful foray into Finnish domestic affairs" by the Soviets. It was not even the Soviet interference that was the worst, it was the fact that Kekkonen had made extensive use of it.⁶² The British called the spectacle "unedifying".⁶³

What was then to be done? Kekkonen was there to stay, but he seemed unapproachable. If you compare the Western view of him it might even seem to be a worse case scenario than that of Kádár – at least Kádár was gaining more freedom from the Soviets and increasing domestic freedom.

The only option to control Kekkonen seemed to be to strengthen Finnish civic society and to let the eulogy of Finnish-Soviet friendship go past unnoticed. As a British Foreign Office official put it in 1965: "while leaving President Kekkonen free to flirt with the Russians as much as he likes", connections between Finnish and Western individuals and organisations should be reinforced. "What we need, I think, is a strong pro-Western public opinion in Finland capable of preventing President Kekkonen from going too far with the Russians."⁶⁴

3.4 The Late 1960s: the Old Foe as the Guarantor of Stability

In the late 1960s, however, the Western image of Kekkonen improved significantly. This was due to many reasons. The Cold War entered a new phase or gave way to détente, the old diplomats with the old personal stereotypes of Kekkonen moved on away, and, most important of all, the worst fears had not materialised. Finland had not become a satellite or lost its democracy. Quite the contrary, it seemed to gain more breathing space as it carefully, step by step, joined the economic integration of the West. So Kekkonen's cautious policy now seemed to

have gained dividends and not to have led Finland finally down the 'slippery slope'.

Kekkonen, even with all the traditional misgivings attached to him, was no longer looked upon as a spineless dictator. He was still not 'liked' in any true sense of the word, and he was still difficult to influence and too pro-Soviet. But the emotional repugnance against him had disappeared, and, like Kádár, he seemed to guarantee stability. He now seemed to be the elder statesman, who guaranteed that Finland would maintain the *status quo* and even move slowly to the Western model of society – and all this was still the best that could be expected.

There was also a new reason to have a better opinion of Kekkonen. In the 1950s and early 1960s it had seemed that Kekkonen's policy meant more compliance and even possible 'fellow-travelling' radicalism than that of other Finns (the Communists were, of course, a case of their own). The Social Democrats and the Conservatives in particular, and even the grass-roots Agrarians and the civic society in general had previously been considered much more reliable.

In the late 1960s, however, a new danger seemed to be looming in Finnish foreign policy. This was the emergence of the young New Left radicals, the new intellectual élite of Finland, which was the counterpart of the radical generation in Western Europe. They were not usually Communists, but nevertheless they characterized the West as "Imperialist" and "reactionary", and, even if they did not advocate outright Warsaw Pact policy, they overwhelmingly favoured the Soviet interpretation of *détente* to the Western interpretation. Especially the Social Democratic Party – previously so reliable – was influenced by these young New Left intellectuals. Seen especially from the American point of view, these radicals, some of whom were recruited in the Foreign Ministry of Finland, were very outspoken about Vietnam, Latin America, etc. – issues which were inconvenient for the Americans.

Compared to them, Kekkonen might be difficult, obstinate and a bit too close to the Soviets, but he was traditional and stable. He had voiced no opinions about Vietnam and had ad-

vocated strict *Realpolitik* which meant that no idealist surprises were to be expected from him. Since there was now a warning example also in the Western world, and this only next door to Finland – Sweden and especially Prime Minister Olof Palme, who took a very moralistic stand on the Vietnam issue and was very anti-American also in other matters – Kekkonen seemed a much better option than before. The confidence was also strengthened by the fact that the Finnish society – if you did not count the new intellectuals – seemed to be far from breaking apart, rather it was on the move in the right direction, towards Scandinavia and Western Europe.⁶⁵

And now Kekkonen was admitted to be the best interpreter of Finnish interests and Finnish space to manoeuvre. As the British Ambassador in Helsinki, David Scott Fox, had analysed already in 1967: "President Kekkonen can, I think, probably be trusted to understand better than anybody how far Finland can safely go. He seems to be moving Finnish neutrality very cautiously into a position where it is less slanted towards the Soviet Union, although we should not be surprised if he feels obliged to throw an occasional sop to Cerberus in the process." And, what mattered most to the West, was the fact that the development in Finland seemed to be tending to move gradually towards the Western way.⁶⁶

After the crisis in Czechoslovakia a British official reported on the moods of Kekkonen and the Finnish people:

... virtually nobody denies that in the things that matter, he is Finland, and that when he speaks to the outside world he is both honest and accurate in his interpretation of the way that Finland thinks and feels. If he pretended to us that he was entirely free to go his own way in foreign affairs, he would misrepresent both the facts and the beliefs of his own people... And behind him, and identifying with him to an astonishing degree, are a people who desperately want to be part of the West, who are afraid of the present and the future, and who badly need a boost.⁶⁷

In these estimations Kekkonen was by no means a spineless man of compliance, nor even primarily anymore an over-

ambitious and power-hungry partisan politician. It seems that now he was thought to have a cunning plan to not only defend Finland's neutrality but also to gain even more space for manoeuvring. And while he was seeming to be able to achieve this, the official lip-service to Soviet friendship was not of equivalent importance. It also seems that the West was now counting on the fact that Kekkonen did not take this lip-service seriously either.

Even the fact that the Communists had entered the Government in 1966 – although as a very junior partner compared to the Social Democrats and the Centre Party – was not held against Kekkonen now. This had been the test-case before, and when the Communists joined the government in 1966, there were initial worries. But now it seemed rather that in integrating the Communists within the government Kekkonen had actually managed to tame them. In the beginning of the 1960s the participation of Communists in the Government would have been regarded as the final taming of Kekkonen.

One would not have been so optimistic in this, had not also the image of the Communists and Left-wing socialists changed. The new generation was not considered to be the same as the old, Stalinist monolith, which had only echoed their Russian master's voice. According to the West, even the extreme Left had now made its choice: it was more important and paid better dividends – in fact it was the only way to gain any dividends – to integrate within Finnish society, not to be a crony of the Russians without a will of their own. The Stalinist fervour of the young intellectuals in the early 1970s caused some concern, as did the Exceptional Law in 1973 (Kekkonen's re-election was ensured without a regular election). But by and large the stabilisation of Finland's international status and domestic policy had given the West what it mainly wanted; the 1970s seemed safe, and at the very least the Conference of European Security and Co-operation in 1975 – Finland acting as the host – secured Finland's position. Also the Soviet policy seemed more predictable than before.

On the other hand, the Finnish debate about finlandization has stressed that the 1970s were actually more dangerous than the 1960s. This was so because the previous unpleasant inevitability – the close relations with the Soviets – had now been made a virtue. Self-censorship, discrimination on foreign policy grounds and Kekkonen's dominant position had meant a mental capitulation, a limited democracy and a limited freedom of opinion. In the 1960s everyone, except the Communists, had still thought in terms of necessary compliance, not in terms of collaboration or true friendship with the Soviets. In Finnish eyes, this transformation was the actual 'slippery slope'.

However, this was not equally important to the West. And thus the circle was completed in the early 1970s. The West, even though it might have some complaints on individual issues and think that Finnish neutrality had some odd pro-Eastern flavour, now believed genuinely in Finnish neutrality, the recognition of which had been more a tactical concern to it in the 1960s. And it now had this belief in Finnish neutrality for the very same reason for which it had not had this belief previously: namely, President Kekkonen.

4 Closure

So the formula in both Kádár's and Kekkonen's image is astonishingly similar: moral dislike – disapproval of erroneous policy – a recognition of other, worse alternatives – the improved image of the old foe whom you at least knew – a feeling which was not admiration but some sort of appreciation of the achievements anyhow – satisfaction with the stability and even respect. This suggests that basically the phases of the Cold War and the grand strategies in it decided the image, not their domestic policy or democratic freedom. This was even more so since one could never do much else than hope for the best and do nothing concrete. But also the persistence and traditionalism of Kádár and Kekkonen was an important factor: when one could not expect revolutionary improvements, no news was the best news.

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Kádár and the United States in the 1960s**László BORHI**

Except for the process of Sovietization and the anti-Soviet uprisings, which were discussed from the viewpoint of Soviet-American conflict, Eastern Europe has not been the focal point of Cold War historiography. That ethnically and politically diverse entity appeared as a passive object of power politics, not an active participant in it.¹ This one-sided approach must have been due to a variety of factors. Firstly, it was hard to conceive Cold War Eastern Europe, or even parts of it, as more than instruments of Moscow's will. Nations of limited sovereignty could hardly be expected to pursue independent foreign policies. The possible exception was Ceausescu's Romania, which was widely regarded as a maverick state that occasionally frustrated Soviet imperial aspirations. Nonetheless few if any scholars, were inspired by Romania's alleged *Sonderweg*. In the public image the Soviet zone, in spite of all its impressive and colourful cultural heritage was seen as a grey bufferzone led by dull, if not spineless, party bosses who were little more than lackeys of the Kremlin. Second, most of the satellites were not even potentially powerful enough to exert any influence on power politics whatsoever. Their importance in the Cold War – and in scholarly writings that deal with it – was derived from the fact that they were caught in the middle of Soviet-American hostility. Finally, there are technical difficulties: until the archives of at least some of the former communist states were

opened, researchers had little reliable evidence on Eastern Europe's external relations.

A view of the Cold War "from the other side" may reveal important information that could contribute to our understanding of this still highly controversial conflict. In broad terms it may shed light on the relationship between ideology and pragmatism in the foreign policy of a communist, that is ideologically constructed, state. Understanding the foreign policy of a Soviet client could add to our knowledge of communist images of the Western world, its notion of peaceful coexistence and other significant aspects of international relations in the years leading to *détente*.

This paper will address the following issues. How did János Kádár, one of the important and most innovative figures of the contemporary communist movement, whose economic experimentations gave a ray of hope to theorists of convergence, think about basic issues of war and peace? Was a communist leadership necessarily in agreement about all issues of international relations or were there differences concerning the relationship between socialism and capitalism? How and to what extent did the Soviet Union influence the external politics of its client? How was US policy towards the Soviet bloc as envisioned in a multitude of policy papers actually put into practice? A crucial issue was the impact of psychological warfare, or, as President Truman aptly called it, the struggle for the hearts and minds of men. Was the United States as ineffective in shaping attitudes behind the Iron Curtain as it is generally and with some justification believed?

Foreign relations have a lot to do with discrepancy between foreign and self-images. America's self-image was, and still is, problematic. Critical domestic observers, with Americans among them, have depicted the US to be self-centred and imperialistic. Others, on the opposing side of the spectrum, like to see it as enlightened, democratic and even messianic to the point of being self-sacrificing.² But what was America's image on the other side of the Iron Curtain? These are some of the is-

sues that the archives of a former Soviet satellite allow us to address.

The concrete context within which these broader issues will be addressed is in itself a significant chapter in the Cold War: the normalization of US-Hungarian relations in the framework of important change in Washington's approach to the eventual rollback of communist influence in East-Central Europe. This bilateral relationship was no less significant from the perspective of the Kádár regime. These were the years of domestic consolidation, which were to some extent hampered by the regime's lack of proper international legitimacy. A legitimacy that could not be achieved without the active acquiescence of the United States, which in turn would be granted in return for a relaxation of domestic repression. The other thread the paper will follow is the fate of Cardinal Mindszenty, who found refuge at the US Legation in Budapest. The struggle over the Catholic primate evolved into a game of nerves between a nuclear superpower and a small Soviet client state.

1 The Context of Hungarian-US Relations

János Kádár's career was marked by a paradox. Kádár, like his predecessors, came to power after a failed revolution, instituted massive reprisals, resulting in many deaths.³ Yet, by the end of his life he emerged as a paternalistic figure with genuine popular support, perhaps even affection.⁴ Moreover he was a turncoat and was widely thought to have betrayed the revolution. If ever there was one, Kádár's was a puppet regime. He was carried to Budapest literally in a tank; his cabinet was put together behind closed doors in the Kremlin. Even though the Soviet leadership selected Kádár to administer their rebellious province, he had little reason to feel secure. Failure would definitely lead to his removal.⁵ Hungary's fallen dictator Mátyás Rákosi was not idle in his Moscow political asylum, but was bombarding the Kremlin with petitions urging his return. Rákosi felt that the cause of communism was betrayed regretted nothing and was poised to reintroduce an unrelenting Stalinist regime. Although the Soviet leadership announced that Moscow's rela-

tionship with the fraternal states would need to be placed on a new, more equal footing⁶, Khrushchev may have toyed with the idea of reintroducing him should Kádár fail. In 1957 Khrushchev paid a visit to Hungary, which was being held under Soviet military administration. Although he received a welcome befitting emperors, including triumphal arches at the locations of his visit, he did not dispel fears of Rákosi's return. Moreover, Kádár's position was imperilled within the Hungarian party by both diehard Stalinists and party liberals.

It was not until the first years of the sixties that he was able to consolidate his position. Eventually Kádár and Khrushchev developed cordial relations to the extent that when Khrushchev was removed in 1964, Kádár expressed his disapproval to Brezhnev. Of course, having owed his position to Khrushchev, he had personal reasons to be resentful. But his loyalty was not tied to a single leader. Kádár, like Rákosi or even Imre Nagy, owed almost unconditional allegiance to the international communist movement. And, just like his predecessors, Kádár did not doubt that the Soviet Union alone was the legitimate leader of that movement, which status gave the Soviets a licence not to be mindful of the country's sovereignty. Even Nagy thought that it was all right to work out political problems with Soviet assistance. Hence interests of the (imagined) community of fraternal (communist) peoples superseded the interests of their nation: in fact the two coincided. This does not mean that Kádár was unable to think in national terms, or even in national characteristics. On one occasion he professed to understand the Hungarian soul, which, according to him liked "fairs, pocket knives, goulash, but not the narrowing of norms".⁷

Kádár and others accepted the primacy of the Soviet Union in international affairs. As Prime Minister Münnich once put it, "by virtue of its position Hungary cannot take the initiative in international politics, which was the prerogative of the Soviet Union".⁸ Kádár explained that Hungarian-Soviet friendship was founded on the ideological community of the two countries. He added that Hungary's national interests coincided with those of the Soviet Union.⁹ He supported Moscow's lead-

ership in ideological matters and took Moscow's side in the Sino-Soviet dispute: "Hungarian communists have always believed that the touchstone of internationalism was always and still is today the comradely-principled relationship with the Soviet Union. There is no anti-Soviet communism and never will be".¹⁰ Kádár's loyalty was obviously dictated by geopolitical considerations as well – the proximity of the Soviet Union as opposed to China. The brutal efficiency with which the Soviets put down the revolution must have left a deep imprint on his consciousness, regardless of what he may have said about "friendly assistance" afterwards.

Nonetheless, there is little doubt that Kádár was honest about his ideological affinity with the Soviets. Moreover, he had little taste for Mao's belligerent anti-capitalist rhetoric. He enthusiastically espoused peaceful coexistence and championed the cause of world peace. This was clearly revealed in a letter to Brezhnev occasioned by Khrushchev's dismissal. The former leader was reproached for having taken members of his family to international gatherings. But, according to Kádár, "one is more credible" about his desire for world peace when he can show that he has grandchildren to worry about.¹¹ When the Soviet inspired Hungarian efforts to mediate in the Vietnam crisis broke down, Kádár was genuinely disappointed. Although he distributed blame for the failure equally between the Americans and the Chinese, he harshly condemned the latter: "Next time our Chinese friends should take their own grandfathers for fools and not us", he fumed.¹² Like his counterparts in Moscow, Kádár thought that peaceful coexistence did not rule out ideological struggle with the capitalists, even though he lacked the Soviet optimism about communism's prospects in the Western world. Ideological belligerence left a deep imprint on Hungary's relationship with the United States, which for a while was the country's second most important foreign relationship after the Soviet Union.

In the early 1950s US-Hungarian contact consisted of little more than the exchange of abuse. Party leader Rákosi was dogmatic even by Stalinist standards, which made his regime

highly unpalatable. Relations remained frigid even though in 1953 Beria and Molotov accused Rákosi of making overtures to Eisenhower. Washington saw the 1956 revolution as a low cost opportunity for rolling back Soviet power through self-liberation, even though the US leadership viewed Imre Nagy with a large measure of mistrust. Immediately before the revolution relations seemed to improve slightly, primarily because facing grave economic hardship the Hungarians were ready for minor political concessions in return for increased trade.

The Soviet crackdown put an end to these overtures at a time when America was placing its policy toward Eastern Europe on a new footing. Instead of undifferentiated economic, political and cultural embargo the building of closer ties was envisioned in the hope of mellowing the communist regimes, fostering conflict between them and the Soviets and countering communist indoctrination of east European societies. This policy would not be implemented unconditionally. Rather, it was predicated on the communist leaderships' willingness to liberalize their regimes, toning down anti-American measures and propaganda. As we shall see, the Kádár government was unwilling to take the steps required to normalize relations and thereby qualify for better treatment. Until 1967 Hungary remained one of the last three countries in the world which had only Legation level diplomatic contact with the US.

In the aftermath of the revolution the objective was to induce the Hungarian regime to relax and ultimately to halt political reprisals and repression and eventually to raise relations to a "bloc normal" level. Hungary, on the other hand, wanted the US to put an end to the regime's international non-recognition. Considering that the two political systems were worlds apart, these were no small aims to be achieved even in an international environment which was, albeit slowly and indecisively, changing towards a relaxation of tension and away from rigid bipolarism.

2 From Non-Recognition to Political Amnesty, 1957–1963

Kádár's foreign policy was dictated by two main motives: the iron logic of bipolar conflict and the conviction that international relations were about the historic struggle between progressive and reactionary forces. The confines of Hungarian external relations were set by Soviet imperial interests. Washington, ever since 1948, encouraged Titoist deviation within the Soviet bloc, namely the triumph of 'national' communism, which would take national interests sufficiently into account to oppose the Soviet Union. Hungary took a different path. Paradoxically Kádár wanted to placate mass resistance by relaxing central control of the economy, cultural affairs and the free movement of people and ideas. On the other hand, by declaring that he could not conceive of anti-Soviet communism he shattered any hope of Titoist dissent. Welcoming the first US Ambassador to Budapest, Martin J. Hillenbrand, Kádár insisted that the US "should not even dream about something like the aggression in Vietnam in this region."¹³

It was clear that the US would not be able to support its objectives in Eastern Europe with armed forces "and therefore could not be interested in provoking counter-revolutionary situations". Hence, according to a Hungarian appraisal, the United States was out "to improve its position in the people's democracies, to widen its mass appeal, to drive a wedge between the country in question and the Soviet Union, and as in the Polish case to extend economic assistance with the open intention of promoting the establishment and development of a more independent political line".¹⁴ If this was the case, one asks what drove the Kádár regime towards a state that questioned even its legitimacy? Firstly, it nilly-willy followed the example of bloc nations like Poland, which was building better relations with the US, chiefly economically. Soviet-American economic and cultural ties were expanding. In addition, the country was still struggling economically, making it imperative to expand commercial relations with the Western world, including the United States. Like the Soviet Union, the Hungarians were eager to receive the most favoured nation treatment. Most impor-

tantly, however, the US held the key to the regime's international legitimacy. In order to consolidate itself, the leadership needed to relax the ideological straitjacket on its foreign relations.

In a recent article Nigel Gould-Davis argued that the policy of ideological states sometimes reflects traditional motives like security concerns and pragmatic thinking. Under certain conditions pragmatism may even temporarily gain the upper hand, or at least complement the ideological elements in order for the triumph of ideology.¹⁵ Kádár, who took great interest in foreign policy, thought that concessions were needed for the victory of communism. Like Khrushchev or Malenkov he believed that the survival of human civilization was more important than the world-wide triumph of Marxism-Leninism. Reflecting on the diminishing role of ideology, he explained that "the Hungarian government sincerely accepted peaceful coexistence", which "perhaps may not have been possible twenty years ago, when the force of ideologies was stronger, but at present the greatest problem is to avoid a nuclear war among the great powers".¹⁶ He saw no contradiction between peaceful coexistence and ideological struggle: "peaceful coexistence and the struggle against imperialism exists simultaneously... [there will be a] third world war, or we have to tolerate each other, exist together".¹⁷ Anti-imperialist struggle though, meant more than just ideological competition: it was also an imperative to support "fraternal" states, like North Vietnam.

As far as the United States was concerned Kádár consciously used the German term *Realpolitik* (even though he claimed to dislike Germans). He sought to appear as a dedicated *communist* politician, who accepted the existing distribution of *power*. Unlike some of his comrades, Kádár was aware of his country's insignificance in world politics, using the expression "tiny flea" to describe its position. He once had to dine in the company of Khrushchev and Kennedy's ambassador-at-large, Averell Harriman. He felt distinctly uncomfortable in their company. "I would be satisfied if the great powers just left us to live", he confessed after the event.¹⁸ Kádár had fewer illusions about the

future of communism than the Soviets. While Khrushchev and Mikoyan confided to Eisenhower and Kennedy respectively that the communist revolution would at some stage triumph in the United States, Kádár, in a conversation meant for the ears of the US leadership, expressed his doubt. "I must honestly admit that we have no illusions about the triumph of socialism or communism in the United States. We, Hungarian communists, are realists".¹⁹ Perhaps we shall never know what this devoted communist thought about these matters at the bottom of his soul. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that he was dwelling on the same ideas whether he was talking in the UN, to American diplomats or the Hungarian Politburo.

Hungarian-US relations were ultimately the function of the Moscow-Washington relationship. In 1958 the Hungarian Foreign Office opined that "the improvement of our relationship with the United States is subordinated to the development of the international situation and to the extent that the success of Soviet policy, to which as a matter of course we also have to contribute, will be able to make the Americans change their openly anti-socialist politics".²⁰ In 1959 the Political Committee made the normalization of bilateral relations contingent upon the outcome of the Eisenhower-Khrushchev summit²¹; later the Vietnam War impeded more amicable relations. In the words of the Foreign Ministry, "it is understandable that the United States' aggression in Vietnam and its international consequence influences Hungarian-US talks".²² Deputy Foreign Minister Béla Szilágyi admitted to Assistant Secretary of State John M. Leddy that bilateral relations ran into trouble primarily because of America's policy in Vietnam, Cuba and the Middle East and only on "a second level" because of bilateral issues.²³

Ultimately, US-Hungarian relations were dictated in Washington. Right after the revolution President Eisenhower explained to Tito that the US was concerned by the fact that the Soviet Union was extending its power into the heart of Europe, which posed a threat to world security. There could be no relaxation of tension in Europe until the Soviet Union returned to its own borders and released Eastern Europe.²⁴ Several factors

suggested a reevaluation of America's tactics for the 1960s. First of all, the Eisenhower administration had to deal with domestic, as well as foreign recriminations: to wit that US propaganda encouraged armed struggle against the Soviets in Hungary without any prospect of Western intervention. Moreover, it started to look as though the communist regimes were consolidating themselves and were there to stay. What even a few years before seemed inconceivable became a possibility: as time passed by, people would get used to communism. Economic conditions would improve, Soviet occupation would become less conspicuous, communist indoctrination would stick, particularly among the youth, which had no experience of its own in any other way of life. The rapprochement between the governments and their people made efforts to isolate the bloc satellites pointless.²⁵

The US leadership was not unanimous about the path to take. The Joint Chiefs of Staff wanted to stick to the old policy on the grounds that there was no chance for independence without fighting. Therefore passive resistance and guerrilla activity was to be supported, but only when the US was ready to stand up against the Russians. Dulles prevailed in the debate and the new NSC paper discarded force as a means to end Soviet occupation. Since the isolation of Iron Curtain states did not bring the desired results, the expansion of contacts would be the order of the day. The long term objective was still the restoration of independence and political pluralism, but only through slow change. East Europeans would be encouraged to achieve their goals only gradually. The US was ready to restore its traditional (otherwise never too close) links with Eastern Europe. This would be done on a country by country basis. Hungary would be a special case because its evolutionary process was to be encouraged without compromising the symbol it became in the combat against communism.

Economic relations were an important part of the debate about the new approach. Eisenhower had favoured the expansion of trade practically since he had entered office. He believed that trade would serve political aims and not financial profit.

Dulles disagreed with any general statement on economic relations and opposed the Commerce Department's proposal to encourage the US business community for trading with the satellites. Finally, consensus was reached in the formula that Washington would strive for "normal" economic contact with the satellites on an individual basis in order to increase American influence and to reduce dependence on the Soviets. The doctrine of liberation was officially discarded.²⁶

US-Hungarian relations reached a new low point after the revolution. The appointed minister, Edward Wailes did not present his letter of credentials and left. Under the pretext that US diplomats were spying, the Hungarian authorities demanded that the Legation reduce its personnel, which in itself might have provoked the cessation of diplomatic relations.²⁷ On the Hungarian side, Prime Minister Münnich broached the idea, but no one else was willing to go that far.²⁸ Nonetheless the government spokesman accused the Americans of espionage and subversive activities, and the Foreign Ministry protested against such alleged activities in a diplomatic note.²⁹ The frigid atmosphere resulted from the Soviet intervention and the events that transpired in its aftermath. The United States wanted to put an end to the trial, execution or incarceration of the participants, while for Hungary the main issues were the Hungarian question and the suspension of the Hungarian credentials in the UN, as well as Mindszenty's asylum at the US Legation.

Although the UN was powerless against the Soviet intervention and the initial mass reprisals, it was able to exert diplomatic pressure on the Kádár regime for the sake of political liberalization. In January 1957 the UN set up a committee of five to investigate the Hungarian question in the hope that the committee could force the Hungarian authorities to accept UN observers. Simultaneously the US broached the rejection of the Hungarian mandate in the world organization, which would have amounted to exclusion from the UN. In spite of accusations that he was using a double standard in making a distinction between Hungary and the Middle East, Eisenhower re-

jected the proposal and settled for the suspension of the mandate. Clearly, Hungary's ejection from the UN would have created a dangerous precedent. Nevertheless, the committee of five and the suspension of its mandate brought the Kádár regime – and indirectly the Soviet Union – into a precarious situation. It is hardly surprising that Hungary concentrated all its efforts to bring this situation to an end. But the price to pay was way too high, at least initially. For the sake of normalization Budapest was required to fulfil all UN resolutions, receive the world organization's observers, grant safe conduct for Mindszenty and appease the Hungarian people.³⁰

As the new government consolidated its hold, these conditions would change. In 1957 Kádár eliminated the Central Workers Council, the "right wing party opposition", that is Imre Nagy and his associates, were facing trial, Rákosi and Gerő were exiled in the Soviet Union, and, most importantly, Kádár enjoyed Khrushchev's backing.³¹ A leading State Department official advocated more flexible policies on the grounds that the internal situation in Hungary was consolidating, internationally the revolution was on its way to oblivion, and it was doubtful whether world public opinion could extract the regime's liberalization.³² But the President's speech on the first anniversary of 1956 signalled that a reappraisal of Washington's stance was not yet timely. In response the Hungarian Foreign Ministry even recommended the suspension of diplomatic relations, but Kádár rejected the proposal. Instead, a harshly worded *démarche* was drafted, but at Soviet advice it was not delivered.³³ In the meanwhile change for the better took place in the way diplomacy was practiced. Hungary's chargé in Washington, Tibor Zádor, took the initiative to recommend certain measures to placate the Americans, which would include the "revision" of the case of arrested US employees and the decision to downsize the US diplomatic mission in Budapest. Zádor offered his Legation's services for diplomatic overtures.³⁴ At his own initiative he negotiated with Senator Karl Malone on developing commercial contacts. Such individual moves would have been inconceivable prior to 1956. In January 1958 the For-

eign Ministry made a recommendation to the party leadership for normalizing US-Hungarian relations.

Soviet policies were conducive for such initiatives. Khrushchev launched a peace offensive, and although he would not discuss the status of Eastern Europe, he pulled out all Soviet troops from Romania and one division from Hungary as well. The Political Committee discussed a general plan for normalizing relations with the Western world and in April Foreign Minister Endre Sík talked about the prospect of an "initiative" concerning the US. As it turned out this would have been an offer for exchanging ministers – since 1956 both Legations were headed by *chargés* – but in May he told the US *chargé*, James Ackerson, that the initiative was taken off the agenda.³⁵ Ackerson speculated that Khrushchev stood behind the affair, but this is unlikely in view of the fact that the Hungarians had consulted with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko about the proposal, who had expressed his consent.³⁶ The affair was of slight significance: the US had no intention of exchanging ministers whatsoever. But it does reveal that Americans may have misunderstood the power relations in Eastern Europe. In all likelihood Minister of the Interior Béla Biszku halted Sík's initiative, which was inimical to relaxing the restriction on movement that applied to US diplomats. Disagreement with the Soviets, it seems, did not necessarily mean more liberal policies, but occasionally less liberal ones. It was a mistake to think that Moscow alone stood behind the satellites' anti-Western stance.

Imre Nagy's execution suddenly revitalized waning international interest in Hungary. Soviet intervention in Hungary was once again in the limelight, meaning that the Hungarian question could be kept on the UN agenda. The State Department considered severing diplomatic relations.³⁷ This did not transpire, but the renewed campaign in the UN caused serious difficulties for the Hungarian regime. The Political Committee prepared a "counter offensive" for the XIIth session of the General Assembly. This consisted of publicly "revealing" that the US diplomatic mission in Budapest was a "spy centre", plus an announcement that with the latest executions legal proceedings

against the participants of 1956 had come to an end. During the debate Münnich suggested that the Americans "go home", but the éminence grise of Hungarian foreign policy, the otherwise conservative Dezső Nemes disapproved.³⁸ While the Hungarians were launching their diplomatic offensive, the US was busy arranging the rejection of the Hungarian credentials even though China's position in the UN³⁹ required a two third majority in the General Assembly.⁴⁰ In this critical situation Sík announced that legal proceedings had been terminated. In an immediate rebuttal the US representative, Cabot Lodge, announced that four more revolutionaries had been imprisoned a few days before. Lodge's unexpected statement foiled the incoherently constructed diplomatic offensive. The State Department pushed for the rejection of the Hungarian credentials to put psychological pressure on the Soviets⁴¹, but the President backed down.

Political repression was not the only obstacle in the way of normalization. Mindszenty's status eventually turned out to be a more complicated issue and would remain unresolved until 1971. The Cardinal was granted asylum at the US Legation on 4th November, while Soviet tanks were drawing a cordon around the Budapest Parliament. The same was denied to a member of the Nagy cabinet, the smallholder Béla Kovács, who had spent long years in Soviet captivity. The surprising thing is not that asylum was denied Kovács, but that it was extended to Mindszenty. Using a diplomatic building as a place of asylum was contrary to international law and US custom. Secretary of State Dean Rusk once admitted that the Cardinal's position was rather sensitive and was exceptional in the US practice of not granting asylum in its diplomatic missions.⁴² But this state of affairs was not altogether undesirable from the Hungarian perspective. Mindszenty was considered a criminal, yet trying him would have been politically suicidal in view of the public outrage a trial would have entailed. Therefore, for a while both parties remained bashfully silent about the affair.

The death of Pope Pius XII put an end to the policy of head in the sand. Without the State Department's consent, the US

embassy in Rome approached the Sacred College of Cardinals suggesting that Mindszenty be summoned for the conclave. Since the Vatican thought that there was a chance that the plan would work, the State Department instructed the Legation in Budapest to negotiate with officials on the College's behalf. In the meanwhile Washington decided that if the Hungarians released the Cardinal, the US would guarantee that he would not be allowed to assume a public or political role. Unfortunately, however, the guarantee of silence was not included in the note delivered to the Foreign Ministry in Budapest.⁴³ As it turned out, Mindszenty had no desire to leave his refuge and gave in only after lengthy persuasion. All in vain, since the reply was unequivocally negative. The Foreign Ministry asserted that Mindszenty's status was against international law and US regulations; his fate constituted a Hungarian domestic affair and "could not form a part of Hungarian-US talks." US diplomats drew the correct conclusion that the Hungarians were, for the time being satisfied with the *status quo*.⁴⁴

Soon Hungary's image in the US started to turn for the better. A CIA estimate dating from 1959 found a strong measure of consolidation and deemed that mass uprising could not be expected.⁴⁵ The Legation advocated economic and political concessions, including readiness to drop the Hungarian question in the UN.⁴⁶ Although the Hungarian chargé in Washington received no instructions for even exploratory talks with US officials, at his own initiative he spelled out the conditions for direct talks. The essence of these was that Hungary would not even consider any recommendation or demand that was directed at implementing change in its social order, or was "designed to offer unilateral advantages to the country's opponents".⁴⁷ His negotiating partner, Assistant Secretary of State Livingston Merchant hinted that Washington was less interested in domestic issues than in the satellites' relationship with Moscow. He used Yugoslavia as an example, which was almost an ally: not because of its political structure, but because of its independent foreign policy.

But, in the case of Hungary, there was no sign of even a minor rift with Moscow. Official analyses presented the international arena though as a struggle between progressive and reactionary forces, where the task was to defy "American imperialism". The Foreign Relations Department of the party's Central Committee nevertheless proposed bold measures for improvement: in order to "liquidate" the Hungarian question it recommended the solution of the Mindszenty question, but without granting any concessions "of principle", or surrendering "the prestige and sovereignty of the Hungarian People's Republic". Hungary's initiative would be contingent upon the outcome of the Eisenhower-Khrushchev meeting scheduled for May 1960. Betraying considerable misperception as to their possibilities in the international arena, the Hungarian leadership hoped that in return for Mindszenty the Americans would consent to the removal of the Hungarian question. But even their Mindszenty formula was rigid: as a "compromise" solution they offered that the Archbishop should be held under house arrest somewhere in Hungary; whether he would be allowed to leave the country was up to the "international situation". In the latter case silence would have to be imposed on him.

If the Hungarian question could be done away with in return for Mindszenty, as the Kádár regime hoped, it would have been a low price to be paid indeed. In spite of all the rhetoric, Mindszenty's position could hardly have been more favourable. It provided opportunities for verbal attacks on the US; a new ecclesiastical structure was established and, most of all, it spared the authorities from having to arrest him. Any kind of change in his status would be undesirable, since if he were "seized by the authorities, it would occasion renewed propaganda about his 'martyrdom'." This meant that if released, Mindszenty could become just as uncomfortable for Hungary as he was for the Americans while he was sitting in the Legation. Hence the conclusion that if his silence could be guaranteed, thus ruling out any "cold war attack" on Hungary from the part of the Cardinal, it would be worthwhile showing flexibility and allowing him to leave the country. The trick was not

to show what a relief it would be to get rid of him; instead this option was to be presented “in an offensive manner” to make it seem like a great concession. To make the deal work the cooperation of the Vatican and of Mindszenty himself would be needed. Budapest insisted on depriving Mindszenty of his ecclesiastical function as the Archbishop of Esztergom (which meant that he was the Primate of Hungary).⁴⁸ The Hungarians waited for the American side to make the first move so as not to give the impression that they were eager for a deal: an own initiative was envisioned only in case the great power summit was a success. Since the summit broke down because of the U 2 affair, the whole matter was abandoned.⁴⁹ But the episode revealed that the Kádár regime was capable of showing a measure of imagination in its diplomatic manoeuvring.

In April 1961 Foreign Minister Sík thought the time had come for a significant initiative. In return for jump-starting US-Hungarian relations, he was ready to relax the travelling restrictions concerning US diplomats.⁵⁰ Since this would have been a bold step – similar restrictions existed for US diplomats in the Soviet Union – Sík had to consult with Soviet Ambassador Ustinov. Ustinov informed the Foreign Minister, János Péter, that the USSR agreed with the proposed measure. This was not enough: Sík needed the consent of the staunchly conservative Minister of the Interior, since the movement of foreigners fell under his jurisdiction. Foreign policy was sometimes constrained by domestic power relations.

Finally, in January 1962 the State Department spelled out the conditions for normalization of bilateral relations. The US was in a position to stop UN actions against the Kádár regime and thereby open the door for bilateral talks in case domestic changes of such magnitude occurred in Hungary that would convince the American public and legislation that the concession was justified. Aside from the fact that Hungary did not envision more far-reaching concessions than letting Mindszenty out of the country, the other problem was that the US conditions could be conceived as interference in domestic affairs. Even though many aspects of the Soviet Union’s presence con-

stituted a violation of Hungarian sovereignty, vis-à-vis the West Hungary wanted to appear as a sovereign state, which guarded itself from imperialist encroachments.⁵¹

The conciliatory measure the State Department expected was a statement to the effect that no one was sitting in prison in connection with 1956 anymore. This would be the only moral foundation that could protect the US government in the face of domestic criticism.⁵² Considering that the government had already granted partial amnesty to political prisoners this was not an impossible condition. But the regime clearly thought that it owed the cause of progress to resist American imperialism. In the UN Deputy Foreign Minister Péter Mód accused the Americans of tying the normalization of bilateral relations to a political amnesty. The US claimed that the Hungarian chargé had misunderstood what was said to him: amnesty was not a precondition, since that would constitute interference in Hungary's internal affairs.

The counsellor of the Legation in Budapest came up with a face-saving formula, claiming "he needed some kind of a theatrical measure, but he does not dare pronounce the word amnesty", because it "could be conceived as interference in Hungary's domestic affairs". Zádor's successor in Washington, János Radványi who had Kádár's personal instruction to normalize bilateral relations⁵³, found the statement acceptable and informed the State Department that "the Hungarian Government would study every serious, well-founded proposal".⁵⁴ However, the Foreign Ministry rejected the formula.⁵⁵ Radványi lost his self-confidence, and thought it better to adopt a hard-line stance vis-à-vis the Americans, while asking his Foreign Minister to provide "professional guidance" to interpret his communications with the Americans. Under Secretary of State George McGhee reaffirmed that Hungary had to make an unambiguous gesture to show that the 1956 events were permanently closed. He added that this was not a condition, but a "suggestion" only. When he reported the conversation to Budapest, Radványi, in order to make sure that there would be no misunderstanding, added the English original to the translation

of the key word, 'suggestion'. Perhaps to avoid getting rebuked once more, the chargé changed his previous stance and told McGhee that the American proposal was not new either in form or content and "still constitutes interference in our domestic affairs". In his report to the Foreign Ministry he accused the Americans of being "captives of their own propaganda": they "immerse their own public opinion with the poison of hatred" and therefore not even out of self-interest "are they able to break their own circle". Nevertheless he informed Péter that the government would not challenge Congress or public opinion because of the Hungarian question. He thought that "within the subversive framework of the Kennedy administration" the Americans strove for normalization.⁵⁶ Who can tell whether Radványi offered his sincere appraisal of American attitudes or was he only satisfying the expectations of his superiors?

Be that as it may, Radványi recognized that Hungary had few options. His superiors did not reject the renewed US offer off-hand, but decided to wait.⁵⁷ Taking the initiative, the Americans approached the representative of the Hungarian news agency in Washington, Dénes Polgár, obviously because they thought that Polgár could communicate directly with the party leadership. The message they wanted to get through was for the Hungarians to understand that the amnesty was needed to pacify domestic opinion. If the Government in Budapest declared amnesty for the people sentenced for their role in 1956 on their "own initiative", the Hungarian question would be dropped, negotiations could be started to "mutual satisfaction" on expanding commercial and cultural relations and the Mindszenty issue. As if reading the minds of the Politburo, a word of warning was added: normalization could begin only if the Americans had the question removed; but not if it was allowed to "sleep" otherwise. The ball was clearly in Hungary's court.⁵⁸

But Budapest still hoped that Mindszenty would suffice for the deal, although the Cardinal himself refused to hear about leaving his refuge even in the (unlikely) case that he were offered the possibility of resuming his ecclesiastical function. The papal nuncio in Washington agreed and was assured that

Mindszenty could stay.⁵⁹ The Pope himself thought that, as the spiritual leader of the Hungarian people, it was undesirable for Mindszenty to leave, which would have a dismal effect on the people.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the Vatican was not inimical to summoning him and in 1962 jointly with the Americans raised the possibility of his attendance of the Synod, after which he would be shunted to one side.⁶¹ Budapest drew the conclusion that it was winning the long-standing diplomatic game. The Politburo asserted that the Americans wanted to get rid of their guest, and therefore their demands were placed lower and lower. Therefore a diplomatic 'package' was assembled, which contained a new element, the return of the crown jewels⁶² in return for Mindszenty's departure to the Vatican, where his silence would have to be guaranteed. They thought they were doing a favour, since "the US could rid itself of both the Hungarian question and Mindszenty". At the same time the removal of the Hungarian question had "domestic political significance", could have a "democratizing effect on the hostile émigré elements" and was also significant from "the perspective of the Soviet government". In return for the Hungarian question the Government was ready to close 1956 within "a reasonable time".⁶³ Of course there was an element of truth in the argument. It was getting harder and harder to keep Hungary on the UN agenda and Mindszenty's presence was problematic.

Radványi was instructed to make the necessary diplomatic moves, which came about after consultation with the Soviet Ambassador in Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin. Dobrynin agreed with the "principle and execution" as well.⁶⁴ Head of State Department Office of European Affairs Harold Vedeler told Radványi that if the Hungarian government carried out the amnesty publicly, as a first step the US would see to it that the Hungarian question was removed. All other matters – cultural exchanges, economic relations and the exchange of ministers would be discussed subsequently. The crown jewels were not even mentioned.⁶⁵ At this point Assistant Secretary of State Richard Davis delivered a written document – but emphatically not a note – on the US condition. This document opened a new

chapter in Hungarian-US relations. In order to avoid the semblance of interference in domestic affairs, the wording was carefully chosen. The United States expressed its hope that at its own initiative Hungary would release the persons still in prison because of their participation in the events of 1956 and would make this fact public. In this case Washington would see to it that Sir Leslie Munro's mission would be terminated, no anti-Hungarian resolutions would be passed and the mandate would be accepted. In addition the US would make a declaration calling attention to changing conditions in Hungary and would reaffirm that further discussion of the Hungarian question would be counterproductive. Then talks could start on lifting restrictions on the travel of official personnel, US assets in Hungary, sending of ministers, cultural exchanges, family unification, and the fate of József Mindszenty. Davis presented the document to Radványi for his "personal use" as the "text of his unofficial declaration".⁶⁶ In spite of its high confidentiality, at his Government's instruction, the chargé showed the document to Dobrynin, who as his "personal opinion" declared that if Hungary had "decided to make certain domestic political steps anyway, we [the Soviet Union] can only agree".⁶⁷ In spite of the ambassador's statement Radványi still considered that the amnesty was tantamount to "surrendering our principles".⁶⁸

The Cuban missile crisis interrupted the talks, but in November Khrushchev assured Kádár that the conditions were not unacceptable.⁶⁹ At the VIIIth Congress of the HSWP Kádár announced that 95% of those sentenced for "counter-revolutionary crimes" had been released, Deputy Foreign Minister Mód publicly hinted that his Government was considering a general amnesty, which was finally announced in April 1963. In May the credentials were accepted and at the end of the year the Hungarian question was taken off the UN agenda.

American diplomacy thus played a significant role in the general amnesty, which was an important landmark in the liberalization of the Kádár regime. As a memorandum worded in the Foreign Ministry later put it: "the Hungarian Government, *in order to eliminate the 'Hungarian question' from the UN agenda,*

granted amnesty to those still in prison... the Hungarian question... was a serious burden to Hungary and the rest of the socialist world"⁷⁰ (emphasis added). This was a considerable success for US diplomacy in a part of the world where success had evaded it ever since the end of the war. It is another matter that the general amnesty was not fully implemented. The Hungarian question was difficult to keep in the focus of world attention such a long time after the events, and therefore the US got a lot in return for relatively little. The episode showed that diplomatic pressure behind the Iron Curtain could work, since by now countries like Hungary actually had a stake in expanding contacts with the West and enjoyed Soviet support in this quest.

It was not until the end of 1963 that Deputy Foreign Minister Mód approached his counterpart, Averell Harriman, in order to start the talks envisioned in the Davis memorandum. Harriman informed Mód that the crucial issue was Mindszenty. He explained that the key to the good Polish-American relationship was Warsaw's political independence and quoted Khrushchev to the effect that "the children have grown up, they are harder to control".⁷¹ The notion that the satellite regimes were beginning to assume a nationalistic creed in their foreign, but mainly in their domestic politics was gaining currency in Washington. Such developments pointed towards the realization of the long standing hope for anti-Soviet dissent in Eastern Europe. A new and less inflexible relationship was taking shape between Moscow and the satellites. This was partly due to changes in Soviet politics, but more importantly to the fact that the communist leaderships recognized that they had more room to consider their own national interests.⁷²

Such appraisals failed to take into account the individual traits of local administrations. As far as the Hungarian one was concerned, it was not 'looking for an opportunity' to distance itself from Moscow. Kádár's pro-Soviet stance stemmed from a variety of factors, including personal conviction. In return he exploited cordial relations with Moscow for domestic liberalization. On the other hand, the US wanted to see spectacular acts of defiance. It was enough to demonstrate a certain distance

from Moscow to curry favour, even if the domestic system was dictatorial. A case in point was Ceausescu's Romania. In spite of the oppressive traits of his rule Ceausescu was hosted by two presidents. Moreover, Romania received MFN status, which the domestically far more liberal but, in terms of foreign policy, more pro-Soviet Hungary was never able to get. Kádár's reforms were nevertheless appreciated and within the region the US accorded special attention to Hungary.

Therefore, when in early 1964 Hungary recommended bilateral talks on "a mutually acceptable basis" to resolve outstanding issues,⁷³ the response was positive. The National Security Advisor believed that long-term, fundamental advantage could be derived from increasing American presence in Budapest, since Hungary had gone further than any other satellite in destalinization and the process was continuing.⁷⁴ Talks on political, economic and cultural affairs got under way in Budapest in May 1964, but there was no breakthrough. In order to end the impasse Secretary of State Dean Rusk invited his Hungarian colleague for a private conversation. The meeting was in itself of great significance as the highest level US-Hungarian personal contact since 1946. Rusk discussed a whole range of international issues and treated Péter as an equal partner throughout the conversation. Péter wanted to speed up the negotiations with an exchange of ministers. He was authorized to tell Rusk that Mindszenty could leave the country in return for guarantees for his silence. Péter tied the settlement of US financial claims – for example indemnification for nationalized American property – to the relaxation of the trade embargo, but the US wanted to go about it in a reverse order. Rusk held out the prospect of granting MFN status to Hungary. The Secretary recommended a gradual approach: the solution of easy issues first, leaving the complex ones for later.⁷⁵ Mutual goodwill was clearly not enough: when it came to the technical details the difficulties were hard to overcome.

One of these was the Mindszenty affair. In an unofficial parley with Kádár, Harriman revealed that this problem was the greatest obstacle to the normalization of bilateral relations. Har-

riman turned theatrically to Khrushchev, who was also present, asking him to "use his influence so that US-Hungarian relations should be normalized".⁷⁶ Even though these conditions were acceptable to the US, the stumbling blocks were the Vatican and the Cardinal himself. The Vatican wanted to retain Mindszenty's position as head of the Catholic Church even after his departure and admitted that it would be hard to keep him for making political statements.⁷⁷ Mindszenty refused to leave, claiming that this would be negligence as far as his ecclesiastical duties and his loyal priests were concerned.⁷⁸ For propaganda reasons the Kádár regime insisted that Mindszenty should appeal to the Presidential Council for clemency, which would be published in the press. Moreover they wanted him divested of his function as Archbishop of Esztergom together with guarantees of silence.⁷⁹

Even though political relations were by and large frozen, on another level US infiltration was more successful. For the first time ever, in 1965, the United States participated at the Budapest International Fair, making it possible to introduce the Hungarian public to the feats of American technology and consumerism, a task that formed an important part of the design to transform the communist regimes with peaceful, evolutionary means. The dangers of this policy were not lost to the party leadership. The Political Committee devoted several sessions to the theme of "imperialist loosening propaganda". Deputy Prime Minister Jenő Fock complained that the claim, according to which "imperialist propaganda in Hungary is unable to rock the masses' confidence in the Socialist system and to reduce the attraction of Socialist ideas", "is not true", "it is capable of reducing it and is reducing it".⁸⁰ Attributing socialism's lack of mass appeal to external subversion, the party's leading organ found that the US (and the FRG) were "striving to set the socialist states against the Soviet Union and each other to disorganize the socialist system from inside, to stir mistrust, dissatisfaction towards the society's leading party, the government, and ultimately against the social order, and hence to prepare the restoration of capitalism in the socialist states". Attempts to "loosen

up" the socialist states "manifested themselves most of all in their differentiated treatment". Cultural and scientific contacts were used so that "under the pretext of peaceful coexistence they opened the door to bourgeois ideology and its products". Hence the Politburo's conclusion was in stark contrast with the State Department's gloomy prediction that the youth, in particular, would get accustomed to and accept communism. Washington officials would have read the following lines with satisfaction: "the loosening propaganda plays a role in that within society as a whole, but particularly among the intelligentsia and the youth, love of the West, nationalism increased, which is coupled with the underestimation of the results of socialism".⁸¹

Since these attitudes were antithetical to basic communist doctrines – socialism as the highest form of social organization, and internationalism – the foundations of the system were at stake. Little could be done. There was no way back to the isolationism of the Rákosi years. The relative openness of the consolidated Kádár regime left the door ajar to Western influence. Doubtlessly, the door would open wider and wider. The only option was to compete with Western propaganda in providing access to *Western* culture from domestic sources. From the American perspective it obviously did not matter whether the source was RFE [Radio Free Europe] or Hungarian State Radio. State propaganda would have to be tailored to satisfy demand. In the words of Deputy Premier Kállai "the youth does not ask or need a full explanation of Marxism but the satisfaction of their needs and in the meanwhile adequate propaganda" would be provided under its guise. One had to point out the "swinishness" of imperialism, but that was not enough. National feelings and "national self-esteem would have to be taken into consideration, popular American musical programs such as *Teenager Party* would have to be counterbalanced by domestic programming". Perhaps it was already too late to turn the tide. Kállai complained: if *Ifjúsági Magazin* (Youth Magazine) "was a communist journal in spirit, I do not know what communism means. It is but a propaganda forum for Western life style

without critique... There is not a single socialist hero in it, but the Beatles".⁸²

Official relations were hindered by the Vietnam War, as a result of which Hungary suspended the ongoing bilateral talks.⁸³ The US Legation reported that the Hungarians considered Vietnam as the most important element of bilateral relations and their harsh propaganda campaign was hardly reconcilable with their suggestions for normalization. Just like the Soviets, Hungary was suffering from its own Vietnam syndrome. Throughout 1965 and 1966 Hungarian diplomacy was busy arranging for a political solution. Kádár was very unhappy with China's influence, which the Hungarians believed was forcing the Vietnamese to wage a hopeless war, as well as with Vietnam's unhelpful attitude: holding back information while demanding unconditional support. As a culmination of these efforts, on October 6 1966 Péter informed Rusk that the Vietnamese were "in a position to negotiate", were "not interested in occupying South Vietnam" and expressed his "conviction that Hanoi is ready to respect the 17th parallel". Rusk deemed this "new and very important information", but North Vietnam distanced itself from Péter's statements, after the Foreign Minister made them public at a press conference.⁸⁴

Moderate members of the leadership realized that US economic support was needed, but this would not be forthcoming unless Hungary satisfied outstanding American claims. Nonetheless, considerations of socialist solidarity and the cause of (communism) overrode this consideration. Kádár could not afford to surrender his regime's ideological legitimacy for pragmatic reasons. As opposed to some, he did not want a complete breakdown either. He argued for the continuation of talks with simultaneous "political attacks". When the Foreign Ministry proposed that government officials should not visit the American stand at the Budapest Fair and that the US be condemned for its aggression in the opening speech, he resisted. He thought it unwise to discriminate against the American exhibitors or to use such a non-political forum for anti-American propaganda. Unlike some of his colleagues, he be-

lieved that such measures would be counterproductive. This realization sprang from his purported understanding of his people. "For years", he argued, "I have struggled to eliminate this strongly political matter, because this is not good from our perspective. The Hungarian soul likes fairs, pocket-knives and goulash, it does not like smaller norms".

Kádár rejected the proposal that the recipients of Ford Foundation grants cancel their invitations, and the use of the composer Zoltán Kodály's US visit for political protests. He affirmed that the normalization of US-Hungarian relations was possible in spite of Vietnam – after, of course, consultation with Moscow.⁸⁵ Kádár was pragmatic to the point where his ideological convictions were not compromised. In this spirit, in April 1966, the Hungarians accepted an American offer to renew talks. Emphasis would now be on financial and economic affairs. Cultural relations would be kept "on level", because they were claimed to serve the American interest.⁸⁶ In October 1966 Péter discussed normalization with Rusk and urged the exchange of ministers irrespective of the Mindszenty question. As a turning point in the Hungarian attitude he asked for US mediation between Hungary and the Vatican. Rusk made it clear that Mindszenty was an obstacle, but agreed that "we should get rid of this old bone stuck in our throats".⁸⁷

Mindszenty's presence was getting increasingly burdensome. Not only because the stubborn old man insisted on sharing his political views with his hosts, but also because in 1965 his tuberculosis broke out again. Small wonder that the chargé, Elim O'Shaughnessy, exclaimed that the solution was hopeless, or should they "poison him?"⁸⁸ Since Mindszenty refused to leave, and the Vatican refused to guarantee his silence in any case, the Americans expected Hungary to come up with a proposal since they could not just "throw him out".⁸⁹ The Vatican found that the Cardinal was obstinate and could not "see a chance for solution". This at the same time meant that there was no point in maintaining the US-Hungarian diplomatic impasse. On 11 November 1966 Assistant Secretary of State John Leddy informed the Hungarian chargé that the US was ready to raise

its representation to embassy level on a mutual basis. Mindszenty almost foiled it by threatening to walk out of the Legation if the US Ambassador set foot in Hungary. It took the Vatican's envoy, Cardinal Casaroli's diplomatic skills, to talk him out of it.

Péter told the first American ambassador in Budapest, Martin J. Hillenbrand, that bilateral talks could be pursued concerning the "international situation" only.⁹⁰ He ruled out the possibility of rapid development even though the experienced ambassador, who according to Hungarian information was considered to be friendly towards the Soviets in Washington circles, expressed his desire to make progress in bilateral relations. Kádár's welcoming thoughts expressed, that there was no turning back either. In what can be conceived as his political credo he told the ambassador that the majority of people supported improved relations with the Americans and the leadership had to take this sentiment into account. Hungary fully supported peaceful coexistence, the prerequisite of which was the *mutual* recognition of each other's political system.⁹¹ If all world leaders had been this explicit about the conditions of peaceful coexistence, the world would have been a safer place to live in.

3 Conclusion

This decade of US-Hungarian relations was as turbulent as world politics in general. At first glance little was achieved. Mindszenty was still sitting in his self-chosen exile. Mutual financial claims were unsettled, bilateral trade was negligible, cultural relations lagged behind the rest of Eastern Europe. But these raw facts do not tell the whole story. In 1957 there was no government in Europe with a worse image in the US than Kádár's. By the mid-60s, it was gaining a measure of appreciation as a result of liberalization. What was misunderstood in Washington was that liberalization did not necessarily mean a rejection of Soviet policies. In Hungary it was the other way round. Kádár's allegiance to Moscow permitted far-reaching economic reform and more tolerance for cultural diversity than

elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Paraphrasing Marx, reform helped dig the regime's own grave.

Washington's new approach to psychological warfare, *Teenager Party* versus Marx's *Das Kapital*, was causing serious concern by winning the hearts of the younger generation. This was made possible, in part, by the fact that Hungary in late 1963 stopped jamming foreign broadcasts. Washington scored one of its few diplomatic successes behind the Iron Curtain by extracting a general amnesty for the participants of the revolution. Initially they offered Mindszenty in return for the settlement of Hungary's status in the UN. But the US persevered in demanding amnesty noticing that their opponents had a serious stake in normalization.

Kádár's Hungary rejected military confrontation with the West for any conceivable purpose and, in tune with Soviet policy helped to find a political solution to the crisis in Vietnam, but at the same time provided economic assistance to Hanoi, reflecting Kádár's ambiguous stance towards the Western world. Communist functionaries regarded the US as an imperialist power, which opposed and oppressed the progressive forces of the world. On this point, to quote Vojtech Mastny, there was no double book-keeping. The same harsh terms were used behind the padded doors of Politburo meetings as in public rallies or the press. Few comrades doubted its economic and technological power. But only some realized its immense cultural potential. In a Politburo debate on cultural contacts a member reminded his comrades that the Ford Foundation had more money than the annual Hungarian GDP.

Soviet guidance was sought in important matters, but their advice was not always heeded. In certain cases the Soviets were more flexible than the Hungarians.⁹² There were differences of opinion within the party leadership, as well as between the dogmatic Interior and the Foreign Ministries. The latter took an active part in the formulation and execution of foreign policy. On at least one occasion Kádár overruled it in favour of less rigid policies. The diplomatic mission in Washington occasionally took the initiative. By the mid-60s Kádár sided with the

reformers. Unlike some colleagues he recognized that, even with Soviet backing, his country was not a player in world affairs and realized America's importance in gaining international legitimacy. Kádár could be pragmatic to the point where pragmatism did not compromise his ideological conviction. He did not allow the conflict in Vietnam to completely halt the process of normalization, yet there was no question as to where he stood. He was a self-confessed *Realpolitiker*, which served the preservation of *socialism* at home. Kádár never noticed that even a small measure of it would eventually undermine the regime he did so much to build.

NOTES

- ¹ One of the rare exceptions is Radványi, Janos, *Hungary and the Superpowers – The 1956 Revolution and Realpolitik*. Stanford, Hoover University Press, 1972. The volume is an insider's appraisal of Hungarian foreign policy in the first Kádár years. The only treatment of the US and Eastern Europe *throughout* the Cold War is Kovrig, Bennett, *The Myth of Liberation – The United States and Eastern Europe*. New York University Press 1991.
- ² For the former, obvious examples are the writings of Cold War revisionists. For the latter, see Gaddis, John L., *We Now Know – Rethinking Cold War History*. Oxford, Clarendon Press 1997.
- ³ We now know that Kádár took an active role in the trial and consequent execution of Imre Nagy.
- ⁴ In this sense Kádár's political career bore striking resemblance to Francis Joseph's and Miklós Horthy's, both of whom were branded as reactionary oppressors of progressive forces and the people. This may explain his success in the deeper context of Hungarian political culture.
- ⁵ In 1953 for example the Soviet leadership dismissed Rákosi, whose policies were not satisfactory.
- ⁶ As expressed in the CPSU declaration of 30 October 1956.
- ⁷ Az MSZMP KB Politikai Bizottsága ülésének jegyzőkönyve, 11 May 1965. Magyar Országos Levéltár (Hungarian National Archives, hereafter cited as MOL) M-KS 288. f. 5. cs. 365. ő. e.
- ⁸ Cited by Vida, István, "Az MSZMP Politikai Bizottságának 1958. január 15-i határozata a Külügyminisztérium munkájáról". In Fischer, Ferenc et. al. eds., *Magyarország a (nagy)hatalmak erőterében*. Pécs, University Press 2000, 631.
- ⁹ Cited by Felkay, Andrew, *Hungary and the USSR, 1956-1968. Kadar's Political Leadership*. New York, Greenwood Press 1989, 184.
- ¹⁰ Cited by Földes, György, "Kötélhúzás felsőfokon. Kádár és Brezsnyev". In Rácz, Árpád ed., *Ki volt Kádár? Harag és elfogultság nélkül a Kádár életútról*. Budapest, Rubin-Aquila könyvek 2001, 106. On the Sino-Soviet conflict Kádár wrote to Brezhnev in 1964: "We think that in all significant aspects of the debate – together with the CPSU and the other fraternal parties – we are right". Published in Békés, Csaba, "Magyar-szovjet csúcstalálkozók, 1957-1964". In Hegedűs, B. András et. al. eds. *Évkönyv 1998*. Budapest, 1956-os Intézet 1998, 165.
- ¹¹ At a Soviet-Hungarian meeting in Moscow in 1964 Kádár told Brezhnev: "Simple folk living in capitalist countries show more sympathy to politicians who show their human side. A politician talking about peace is

- more credible if people know he has children, grandchildren". The document is published in Békés, Csaba, *Magyar-szovjet csúcstalálkozók*, 171.
- ¹² In a message to Budapest Hanoi threatened with "serious consequences" should the Hungarian effort to mediate in the Vietnam conflict continue. Kádár was offended. This sentence, he declared, "contains a certain threat". "I myself would call this point the Peking point... I would like to exert on the Vietnamese as well something to take their matters more seriously". Hungary thought that China stood behind Hanoi's rejection of a political settlement. *Az MSZMP KB Politikai Bizottsága ülésének jegyzőkönyve*, 16 January 1966. MOL M-KS, 288. f. 5. cs. 385/1966. ő. e.
- ¹³ Telegram from the Embassy in Hungary to the State Department, 3 October 1967. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter cited as FRUS), 1964-1968, Vol. XXVII, 313-314.
- ¹⁴ A washingtoni magyar követség elemzése a magyar-amerikai viszonyról, 1959, MOL Külügyminisztérium [Ministry of Foreign Affairs hereafter cited as KüM], XIX-J-1-j, USA 5/a, 0020461, 9. d.
- ¹⁵ Davis, Nigel-Gould, "Rethinking the Role of Ideology in International Politics during the Cold War". *Journal of Cold War Studies* 1/1 Winter 1999, 90-109.
- ¹⁶ Telegram from the Embassy in Hungary to the Department of State, Conversation with Kádár, Introductory Call (Hillenbrand), 30 November 1967, FRUS 1964-1968, Vol. XVII, 318-320; Emlékeztető Kádár János, az MSZMP KB első tikára és Martin J. Hillenbrand amerikai nagykövet megbeszéléséről, MOL, KüM, XIX-J-1-ny-114/PJ-1967, 003309/1967.
- ¹⁷ *Az MSZMP KB Politikai Bizottsága ülésének jegyzőkönyve*, 11 May 1965, MOL, M-KS, 288. f., 5. cs., 365. ő. e.
- ¹⁸ Kádár János előadói beszéde az MSZMP KB ülésén, 2 August 1962, MOL, M-KS, 288. f. 4., cs. 63. ő. e.
- ¹⁹ Instruction from the Department of State to the Legation in Hungary, 21 October 1960, *FRUS* 1958-1960, Vol. X. p 126-130. Mikoyan's remark is cited in Dobrynin, Anatoly, *In Confidence – Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents* (1962-1986). New York, Times Books 1995, 92.
- ²⁰ *Az USA-val való kapcsolatok normalizálása*, 30 October 1958, MOL, KüM, XIX-J-1-j, USA, 4/b, i. k. n., 11. d.
- ²¹ *Az MSZMP KB Politikai Bizottsága ülésének jegyzőkönyve*, 1 March 1960. MOL, M-KS, 288. f., 5. cs., 172. ő. e.
- ²² A Külügyminisztérium V. Osztályának összefoglaló feljegyzése a magyar-amerikai viszonyról, MOL, KüM, XIX-J-1-j, USA IV-526, 001304/1965, 13. d.

- ²³ Telegram from the Embassy in Hungary to the Department of State, 3 October 1967, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XVII, 313-314.
- ²⁴ Eisenhower to Tito, National Security Archives, Washington D.C., Record No. 66140.
- ²⁵ Draft Paper by N. Spencer Barnes of the Policy Planning Staff – Long Term Trends in the Soviet European Satellites, 28 June 1958, FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol. X. 40-44. Barnes had served in Budapest, and therefore had first hand experience in conditions behind the Iron Curtain. Then he contrived hairbrained schemes to subvert the regime. The PPS was not unanimous in its appraisal of the situation, not all members thought that the communist systems would be able to consolidate their hold permanently.
- ²⁶ See Memorandum of Discussion, 366th Meeting of the National Security Council (hereafter cited as NSC), 22 May 1958, FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol. X; NSC Report, Statement of United States Policy Toward the Soviet Dominated Nations in Eastern Europe, *ibid.*, 18-31; Memorandum of Discussion at the 369th Meeting of the NSC, 19 June 1958. *Ibid.* p 34-40. In 1959 the Operations Coordinating Board opined that the military balance between the two blocs ruled out the use of force, US objectives would be realized through slow change, not revolution. Operations Coordinating Board Report, Report on Soviet Dominated Nations in Eastern Europe (NSC 5811/1), 15 July 1959. *Ibid.* 95-98.
- ²⁷ The US Legation was charged with maintaining contact with 'subversive elements' and gathering intelligence. A Külügyminisztérium jegyzéke a budapesti amerikai követséghez, 25 May 1957. MOL, KüM, XIX-J-1-j, USA, 4/a, 002418/1, 4.d.; A budapesti amerikai követség jegyzéke a Külügyminisztériumhoz, 10 June 1957. *Ibid.*; A Külügyminisztérium III. Osztályának feljegyzése, 10 June 1957 *ibid.*; A Külügyminisztérium feljegyzése a budapesti amerikai követség létszámcsökkentéséről, 11 June 1957. MOL, KüM, XIX-J-1-j, USA, 4/bd, i. k. n., 6. d.; A Külügyminisztérium feljegyzése a budapesti amerikai követség ügyvivőjének látogatásáról, 27 July 1957. MOL, KüM, XIX-J-1-j, USA 4/a, 002418/4, 4. d.; A budapesti amerikai követség jegyzéke a Külügyminisztériumhoz, 12 September 1957, *ibid.* See also Radvanyi, 32-33.
- ²⁸ Az MSZMP KB Politikai Bizottságának jegyzőkönyve, 2 September 1958. MOL, M-KS, 288. f., 5. cs., 93. ő. e.
- ²⁹ A magyar kormány szóvivőjének tájékoztatója a magyarországi amerikai hírszerző tevékenységről, 13 september 1958, MOL KüM, XIX-J-1-j USA 4b/d i.k. n./1958, 11. d.; A Külügyminisztérium tiltakozó jegyzéke

- a budapesti amerikai követséghez, 20 September 1958, MOL, KüM, XIX-J-1-j, 4/b, i. k. n., 11. d.
- ³⁰ The Chargé in Hungary (Ackerson) to the Department of State, 14 November 1957, National Archives, Washington D.C. (hereafter cited as NAWDC), Record Group (hereafter cited as RG) 59, 611.64/11-1457.
- ³¹ See Kalmár, Melinda, *Ennivaló és Hozomány. A korai Kádár-korszak ideológiája*. Budapest, Magvető 1998.
- ³² FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol. XXV, 685-690.
- ³³ Radványi, 32-33.
- ³⁴ Zádor Tibor ideiglenes ügyvivő jelentése Horváth Imre külügyminiszternek, 31 December 1957. MOL, KüM, XIX-J-1-j, USA, 4/bd 005851, 1.d.
- ³⁵ The Chargé in Hungary (Ackerson) to the Department of State, 9 May 1958, NAWDC, RG 59, 611.64/5-958. US officials approached Deputy Foreign Minister Mód about the status of political prisoners. Mód said he would look into the affair, but on 13 March he refused to answer on the pretext of "interference" in domestic affairs. See: Magyarics, Tamás, "Az Egyesült Államok és Magyarország 1957-1967". *Századok* 3/1996, 573.
- ³⁶ Baráth, Magdolna – Feitl, István, "Két összefoglaló a magyar-szovjet tárgyalásokról". *Múltunk* 4/1993, 182-185.
- ³⁷ Memorandum by the Department of State Policy Planning Staff, 11 July 1958, NAWDC, RG 59, PPS Lot 60 D 216, Box 2, Wilcox.
- ³⁸ At a Political Committee session Münnich said: "If anybody is interested in maintaining an American representation and for it to work with large personnel, it is only the international enemy, the government of American imperialism. There is no need for great tact. Their representation is a very important spy center for them, they will not liquidate it... We are an independent, sovereign state, no one should poke their nose here... concerning their representation it is not our interest for them to be here. Let us not court them, if they want they can go home". See note 27.
- ³⁹ Taiwan's place in the UN was being challenged by mainland China.
- ⁴⁰ Memorandum by Wilcox to Dulles, 13 September 1958, NAWDC, RG 59, Lot 60 D, Box 1, Wilcox.
- ⁴¹ Memorandum by Wilcox and Elbrick to Murphy, 7 October 1958, Ibid.
- ⁴² Memorandum from Secretary of State Rusk to President Kennedy, 3 November 1961. FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XVI, 1-2.
- ⁴³ A budapesti amerikai követség jegyzéke a Külügyminisztériumhoz Mindszenty József távozásának ügyében, 18 October 1958. MOL KüM, XIX-J-1-j, USA, 4/c, 005726, 6. d.

- ⁴⁴ Despatch from the Legation in Hungary to the Department of State on the future of Mindszenty, 20 November 1958. FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol. X., 54-59.
- ⁴⁵ CIA NIE, Political Stability in European Satellites, NIE 12-59, 11 August 1959, FRUS 1958-1960. Vol. X, 100-102.
- ⁴⁶ Despatch from the Legation in Hungary to the Department of State, Recommendations Regarding US Policy Toward Present Day Hungarian Regime, 23 January 1959. *Ibid.*, 62-71.
- ⁴⁷ Zádor Tibor ideiglenes ügyvivő jelentése Sík Endre külügyminiszternek Livingston Merchantnél tett látogatásáról, 17 February 1959. MOL, KüM, XIX-J-1-j, USA, 5/e, 001867, 15. d.
- ⁴⁸ On the deliberations see: Az MSZMP KB Külügyi Osztálya és a Külügyminisztérium előterjesztése az MSZMP KB Külügyi Bizottságához Mindszenty helyzetének rendezése tárgyában, 25 March 1960, MOL, M-KS 288. f., 5. cs., 176. ő. e.
- ⁴⁹ The Foreign Ministry warned that US-Soviet relations had deteriorated. A Külügyminisztérium III. Osztályának előterjesztése a magyar-amerikai viszonyról, 11 August 1960. MOL, KüM, XIX-J-1-j, USA, 4/bd, i. k. n.
- ⁵⁰ Sík Endre feljegyzése Biszku Béla belügyminiszternek, 14 April 1961. MOL, KüM, XIX-J-1-j, USA, 4/a, 001745/61, 4. d.
- ⁵¹ According to the official position "the question of amnesty is a Hungarian domestic affair, Western pressure could only make things worse". The author of the report, Dezső Nemes thought that it was harder and harder to keep the Hungarian question on the agenda, at the same time its removal would mean loss of prestige. Therefore Hungary was in a bargaining position. A Külügyminisztérium és az MSZMP KB Külügyi Osztályának jelentése, 9 May 1962. MOL M-KS 288. f. 32. cs. 1. ő. e.
- ⁵² Zádor Tibor feljegyzése Péter János külügyminiszternek a magyarországi általános amnesztiára vonatkozó amerikai feltételekről, 23 January 1962, MOL, KüM, XIX-J-1-j, USA, 5/e, 001234 (15. doboz).
- ⁵³ Radványi, 92-93.
- ⁵⁴ Radványi János ügyvivő jelentése Péter János külügyminiszternek az amnesztia kérdéséről, 24 March 1962, MOL, KüM, XIX-J-1-j, USA, 5/e, 001224/B, 15. d.
- ⁵⁵ Rác Pál külügyminisztériumi főosztályvezető leirata Radványi János ügyvivőnek, 16 April 1962. *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁶ Radványi János ügyvivő jelentése Péter Jánosnak a McGhee államtitkárral folytatott megbeszéléséről, 29 April 1962. *Ibid.*, 005115/1962.
- ⁵⁷ Rác Pál külügyminisztériumi főosztályvezető leirata Radványi János ügyvivőnek, 24 May 1962. *Ibid.*

- ⁵⁸ Radványi János ügyvivő jelentése Péter Jánosnak Polgár Dénes megbeszéléséről, 25 May 1962. *Ibid.*, 005413.
- ⁵⁹ Memorandum of Conversation, 13 February 1962. Participants: Edigio Vagnozzi, Harold C. Vedeler, August Velletri. FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XVI, 14-16.
- ⁶⁰ Memorandum of Conversation, Situation of Mindszenty, 2 May 1962. Participants: Edigio Vagnozzi, Harold C. Vedeler, August Velletri. *Ibid.*, 22-23.
- ⁶¹ Az MSZMP KB titkárának előterjesztése a Mindszenty-ügy rendezésére vonatkozóan, 7 August 1962, MOL, M-KS, 288. f., 5. cs., 275 ő. e.
- ⁶² They had been seized by the US army in Austria's American occupation zone and were being held in Fort Knox.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*; See also Nemes Dezsőnek, az MSZMP KB titkárának előterjesztése a Mindszenty-ügyre vonatkozóan, August 11 1962, *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁴ Radványi János ügyvivő összefoglaló jelentése Péter Jánosnak a Magyarkérdésről és az általános amnesztiáról, 11 September 1962. MOL, KüM, XIX-J-1-j, USA, 4/b 001224/6, 6. d.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁶ Az amerikai Külügyminisztérium Emlékeztetője a magyarkérdés és az amnesztia tárgyában, 20 October 1962, MOL, KüM, XIX-J-1-j, USA, 4/bd, i. k. n., 6. d.
- ⁶⁷ Radványi János ügyvivő jelentése az amerikai Külügyminisztérium Emlékeztetője tárgyában, 7 November 1962, MOL, KüM, XIX-J-1-j, USA, 4/b 001224/8/1962, 6. d.
- ⁶⁸ A washingtoni magyar követség jelentése a Külügyminisztériumnak, 22 November 1962. *Ibid.*, 00598.
- ⁶⁹ Radványi, 140-141.
- ⁷⁰ Memorandum by the Foreign Ministry on Efforts to Improve Hungarian-American Relations, May 1964. MOL XIX-J-1-j USA 4/bd KüM, i. k. n. In János Radványi's account, Kádár told him that he could not afford to announce the amnesty while under foreign pressure to do so. In this light US pressure was counterproductive. See Radványi, 92-93. The Foreign Office memorandum suggests otherwise. Moreover, on a later page Radványi writes that Kádár "could not bring himself to admit either to himself or to Khrushchev that his government would be acting under pressure of the American condition to trade 'amnesty for normalization'." *Ibid.* 141. The US face saving formula that was eventually acceptable for the Government was already on the table in April, yet it was another six months of diplomatic wrangling until Kádár accepted it.

- ⁷¹ Memorandum of Conversation, U.S.-Hungarian relations, 14 December 1963. Participants: Governor Harriman, Frederick Chapin, Christopher A. Squire, Mód Péter, Radványi János. FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XVI, 58-62; Feljegyzés Mód Péter megbeszéléséről Averell Harrimannal, 15 December 1963. MOL, KüM, XIX-J-1-j, USA, 4 /bd, 320/Szi/1963. Harriman cited Khrushchev in the context of US-Yugoslav relations.
- ⁷² See for example Special Report by the CIA, 27 March 1964, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XVII, 2-8.
- ⁷³ The Political Committee discussed bilateral relations on February 18 1964. Az MSZMP KB Politikai Bizottságának jegyzőkönyve, MOL, M-KS, 288. f., 5. cs., 327. ó. e. The Government passed a resolution on starting bilateral talks the following day. A Magyar Forradalmi Munkás-Paraszt Kormány 3062/1964 számú határozata a magyar-amerikai tárgyalások megkezdéséről. MOL, KüM XIX-J-1-j, USA, 4/b, 002812/1964, 6. d. The main aim was to expand commercial relations and eventually to receive MFN status. The growth of Hungarian exports to the US was seen as the precondition for the settlement of American financial claims. On the other hand, Washington wanted to proceed in the reverse order.
- ⁷⁴ Memorandum from the President's Special Assistant for National Security (Bundy) to President Johnson, 14 April 1964. FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XVII, 301.
- ⁷⁵ Az MSZMP KB Politikai Bizottságának jegyzőkönyve, Péter János és Dean Rusk találkozásának előkészítése, 26 November 1964. MOL, M-KS, 288. f., 5. cs., 352. ó. e; A Péter-Rusk találkozó, 4 December 1964. MOL, KüM, XIX-J-1-j, USA, 4/b, 116612/1964, 6. d.; Memorandum of Conversation, New York, Secretary's Delegation to the 19th Session of the UNGA. Participants: Secretary, Mr. Givan, Péter, Radványi. FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XVII, 305-306.
- ⁷⁶ Kádár met Harriman during his official visit in Moscow in July 1963. Several informal conversations took place, one of these in a sport stadium. Kádár wanted a guarantee that Mindszenty's mouth would be "shut" after his release. Kádár előadói beszéde az MSZMP KB ülésén, 2 August 1964, MOL, M-KS, 288. f., 4. cs., 63. ó. e.
- ⁷⁷ Az MSZMP KB Politikai Bizottsága ülésének jegyzőkönyve, 29 October 1963. MOL, M-KS, 288. f., 5. cs., 318. ó. e.
- ⁷⁸ Telegram from the Legation in Hungary to the State Department, 11 March 1964. FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XVII, 299-300.
- ⁷⁹ Az MSZMP KB Politikai Bizottsága ülésének jegyzőkönyve, 14 September 1965, MOL, M-KS, 288. f., 5. cs., 37. ó. e; Az MSZMP KB Politikai Bizottsága ülésének jegyzőkönyve, 29 October 1963, *op. cit.*

- ⁸⁰ Az MSZMP KB Politikai Bizottsága ülésének jegyzőkönyve, 23 November 1965. MOL, M-KS, 288. f., 5. cs., 380. ó. e.
- ⁸¹ Az MSZMP KB Politikai Bizottsága ülésének jegyzőkönyve, 26 April 1966. MOL, M-KS, 288. f., 5. cs., 393. ó. e.
- ⁸² Az MSZMP KB Politikai Bizottsága ülésének jegyzőkönyve, 23 November 1965, *op. cit.*
- ⁸³ Az MSZMP KB Politikai Bizottsága ülésének jegyzőkönyve, 26 April 1966, *op. cit.*
- ⁸⁴ Radványi János feljegyzése a Péter János magyar és Dean Rusk amerikai külügyminiszterek között lezajlott megbeszélésről, 10 October 1966. MOL, KüM, XIX-J-1-j, USA, IV-135 005244/1966, 15. d. Radvanyi, who participated in the talks claims that the mediation served Péter's personal ambition, and were completely groundless. On the basis of material I saw there were more of these efforts than Radvanyi believed.
- ⁸⁵ Az MSZMP KB Politikai Bizottsága ülésének jegyzőkönyve, 11 May 1965. MOL, M-KS, 288 f., 5. cs., 365. ó. e.
- ⁸⁶ Az MSZMP KB Politikai Bizottsága ülésének jegyzőkönyve, 26 April 1966, *op. cit.*
- ⁸⁷ Radványi János ügyvivő feljegyzése a Péter János magyar és Dean Rusk amerikai külügyminiszter között lezajlott megbeszélésről, 10 October 1966. MOL, KüM, XIX-J-1-j USA, IV-135, 005244/1966, 15. d.
- ⁸⁸ Házi Vencel feljegyzése Elim O'Shaughnessy amerikai ügyvivővel folytatott beszélgetésről, 11 August 1965. MOL, XIX-J-1-j, USA, IV-14, 004704/1965, 13. d.
- ⁸⁹ Feljegyzés Szilágyi Béla külügyminiszter-helyettes megbeszéléséről az amerikai ügyvivővel, 6 September 1965. MOL, KüM, XIX-J-1-j, 5/b, i. k. n., 12. d.
- ⁹⁰ Martin J. Hillenbrand amerikai nagykövet bemutatkozó látogatása Péter Jánosnál, 21 November 1967. MOL, KüM, XIX-J-1-ny-114/PJ-1967, 14. d.
- ⁹¹ Emlékeztető Kádár János és Martin J. Hillenbrand megbeszéléséről, 30 November 1967. Ibid; Telegram from the Embassy in Hungary to the Department of State, 3 October 1967, *op. cit.*
- ⁹² In 1964 the US requested a military aircraft to pick up members of the Legation and fly them to West Germany. It was turned down, although the Politburo noted that such requests were regularly honoured by the Soviet Union and even Bulgaria and Romania. Az MSZMP KB Politikai Bizottsága ülésének jegyzőkönyve, 17 March 1967. MOL, M-KS 288. f., 5. cs., 329. ó. e.

**Kekkonen and Kádár
in the Soviet Sphere of Influence**

Kimmo RENTOLA

In the political conditions prevailing after the Second World War, both Hungarians and Finns deemed it prudent not to recall the special relationship between the two brother nations, based on their common linguistic ancestry. Both countries now belonged to the Soviet sphere of influence, and everybody knew how suspiciously the Russians eyed any kind of 'nationalism' but their own. Of course, during the racial heyday there had also been some overstatements, which nobody cared to remember, like Admiral Horthy's proposal to import some tens of thousands of able-bodied young Finnish males to Hungary to add a northern component to national characteristics.¹

After 1944, the Finnish mainstream thinking emphasized the Nordic cultural, social and political heritage more than ever, because that was seen as the only legitimate channel left to avoid Russian influence. The linguistic and ethnic aspects were bypassed, which led to a break in Finnish relationships with Hungary and Estonia, abandoned to the mercy of their fates. The Finns could only afford the barest survivalism on their own.

Paradoxically, however, the *Soviets* tended to include Finland and Hungary in the same category.² Since the social conditions were very much different in the two countries, this was not due to any Marxist thinking, but rather to national and

ethnic considerations. Both were non-Slav nations, and hence not to be linked in Stalin's 'Pan-Slavist' designs³; both were former German allies, and thus in a comparable position as far as international law and relations between the victorious powers were concerned. Even in the domestic life of the two nations some features looked similar to a Russian eye, like the position of Mannerheim and Horthy before and during the war, and the importance of the agrarian parties. In 1944 and in the years immediately after that, the Russians tended to ignore the crucial difference between the two nations, which was the fact that Finland succeeded in avoiding occupation by the Red Army. Things seemed to proceed rather smoothly even without that.

This convergence theory of the Soviets was most visible on three occasions.

In October 1944, when Andrei Zhdanov arrived in Helsinki as the head of the Allied (Soviet) Control Commission, he had Stalin's orders to proceed carefully, so that the interim peace agreement would not be spoiled by a pro-German coup and occupation as in Hungary. Perhaps the Arrow Cross movement, which has a contradictory reputation in the history of Hungary, did the Finns a favour, because the Soviet policy in Finland could have been harsher without the deterrent of Hungarian developments. Now the Finns were able to gain time, and, as the saying goes, nothing is so constant as the temporary state of affairs. Many of the structures, institutions and channels built between Finland and the Soviets during the nine months' respite before the end of the general war in Europe in May 1945 remained in force until the very end of the Soviet Union.⁴

Secondly, and self-evidently, Finland and Hungary belonged to the same group during the final peace negotiations.⁵ This point need not be elaborated on here.

Even after that, the Soviets saw a surprisingly close similarity between the two countries. When Europe was definitively divided into two camps during the summer of 1947, the Soviets harshly criticized the Finnish Communist Party for their underachievement and moderation (which originally had been strictly ordered by the Soviets themselves in 1944), and praised

Hungary as an example of what was to be done, e.g. by using the security police. Not even the Finnish comrades would be able to manage without some bloodletting, Zhdanov predicted.⁶ In January 1948, Zhdanov ordered the Finnish communist leaders to follow the Hungarian way and get their opponents arrested for a conspiracy with the western powers. That would open the way to further victories.⁷ The communists, who controlled the secret police, fabricated a conspiracy case and invited a Hungarian party representative to advice about the correct line. For various reasons, however, these preparations were abandoned and Stalin finally settled for a security treaty with the bourgeois Finnish president, J. K. Paasikivi. This course of action was deemed reasonable in Moscow because of the bitter experience of difficulties involved with the total submission of the Finns, acquired in the Winter War in 1939 to 1940. We were clever "not to do it" in Finland after the war, Molotov later recalled, because those stubborn people would have inflicted "a festering wound" in the Soviet body.⁸

In 1947-48, Finland and Hungary definitively took different paths. But for some time even after that, the connection between Hungary and Finland was made by Finnish and Russian communists in situations that seemed to involve an Eastern European perspective even for Finland. This was clear during the volatile strike movement of August 1949, when 'Uncle' Rákosi was consulted and used as a channel between Stalin and the Finnish communist leadership.⁹ Inkeri Lehtinen, who was a former Comintern official well versed in Soviet attitudes, at that time once again praised the Hungarian example.¹⁰

In the early 1950s, when the divergence of paths became evident and definite, this kind of Zhdanovist connection between Hungary and Finland was gradually forgotten. But perhaps some traces remained, so easy was it for Khrushchev to make the connection again.

1 1956: The Crucial Year

The dominant statesmen of the post-war period in the history of Finland and Hungary, Urho Kekkonen and János Kádár, both

came to power in the turbulent year of 1956. As far as political background was concerned, they came from opposite camps. Kekkonen served as a soldier in the White army of 1918, was then an officer of the secret police, and as an agrarian politician always a staunch nationalist and anti-communist. Kádár was a communist from his youthful days, from clandestine activities to building a people's democracy, and he had experienced both right-wing and Stalinist persecution.

In power, the two leaders had to deal with and force their reluctant nations to adapt to the Soviet Union after crushing confrontations with the Russians. For both of them, the Soviet Union was and remained the main issue, not only in foreign policy, but also as far as the national existence as a whole was concerned. In different conditions, they both adopted a similar kind of tactics, thinking that loyalty to the Soviets would finally pay off and the two nations would gradually gain new latitude and independence. They did, but the process was slow and painful, and a new backlash could lurk right behind the next corner. This fed the idea of their personal indispensability and made both statesmen cling to power to the very end, until they were involuntarily forced to loosen the grip by their advanced age and frail physical condition, that is, until 1981 and 1988 respectively. Undoubtedly, both Kekkonen and Kádár considered themselves to be the one and only person able to conduct the complicated eastern relations and to deal with "those people", as Kádár described the Kremlin gang shortly before the Czechoslovak occupation in 1968.¹¹ Both Kekkonen and Kádár seem to have developed a rather disillusioned view of the Kremlin, based on their intimate contacts with the Soviet leaders and probably also on their earlier experience of state security affairs. Of course, Kádár was much more of an insider than Kekkonen ever became.

The Soviet intervention to suppress the Hungarian revolution in 1956 brought Kádár to power and was a seminal experience for him. For Kekkonen, it was his first difficult test as head of state. He had to balance on a tightrope between the upsurge of Finnish popular solidarity towards the brother nation on the

one hand, a feeling he tended to share himself, a pan-Ugric nationalist as he was since his youth, and on the other hand, the necessities of the coolest *Realpolitik*, maintaining the vital relations to the Soviet Union. The Soviets keenly observed Finnish reactions, not only for general reasons, but also for the particular fear that the popular support for the Hungarian cause might later on develop into a Finnish movement to support Estonians.¹²

Conferring with his predecessor Paasikivi, Kekkonen took the traditional Finnish nationalist stand, adopted already by Snellman in 1863, during the Polish uprising. Although the unhappy fate of the damned ones was lamented, expressions of solidarity would not help them. Condemning the Russian action would hurt Finnish relations to the huge eastern neighbour, who would always stay there right beyond the border, if not closer. "There is no choice: we must keep a cool head, even with the heart full of pain, when the death is spreading out on unhappy, hopeless people", Kekkonen advised the foreign minister.¹³ In the United Nations, Finland could only afford to refer to centennial Hungarian traditions of freedom; in the vote itself, Finland abstained.

The neutrality of Finland his life's work, Kekkonen must have been startled by the role played by the idea of neutrality in the decisive phases in Hungary. In a last ditch effort to avoid imminent intervention the Hungarian government announced withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact treaty and proclaimed *neutrality*.¹⁴ Although the word was not yet invented at the time, it can be said that Imre Nagy's government aimed at the 'Finlandisation' of Hungary.¹⁵ While the deliberations were going on in the Soviet politburo, Khrushchev himself, at a Turkish Embassy reception a couple of days earlier, seems to have gone so far as to envisage a neutral status for Hungary similar to that of Finland.¹⁶

'Neutrality' and 'Finland' were thus mentioned on the immediate eve before a full-scale military intervention.¹⁷ Kekkonen had every reason to be nervous. Probably for that reason he at first even made an exception to his own golden rule of distance and offered himself as a mediator in Budapest. The Soviets did

not respond.¹⁸ Then, to alleviate possible suspicions, he assured the Soviets that *Finland* would never unilaterally abrogate the 1948 Treaty. Here, as in other cases when he was certain that Soviet records would remain closed, he even deemed it appropriate to pay some lip service, criticizing the Nagy government and accusing the western powers for provoking the situation in Hungary.¹⁹ (On the other hand, of course, the fate of Hungary once again showed to Kekkonen how willing and able to help the West would be in case of real need.)

Although Kekkonen swore by the 1948 Treaty, in fact he was planning to reduce its force, no doubt alarmed by Hungarian events. Through his confidential KGB channels, he proposed to the Soviet leadership an international treaty, by which both NATO members and the Soviet Union would promise not to attack each other through the territory of Finland. Then the 1948 Treaty would be needed only *secondarily*, as he said. Kekkonen tried to sell the plan by hinting at the propaganda advantages offered by a possible refusal, but Khrushchev did not take the risk of their approval and discreetly turned down the proposal.²⁰

Perhaps Kekkonen's initiative was a factor in the Soviet assessment that a restoration of discipline was needed in Finland. A rather pungent ingredient was added to the 1956 experience, when CPSU leaders, attempting to push the slow Finnish communists into an offensive, cited the Hungarian intervention as a valiant example of the fact that the Soviet Union would never desert friends in need. If Finnish comrades would be able to acquire stronger positions, they could count on Soviet support, even by military means. When this information reached Kekkonen via the security police, he must have been shocked, even though the Soviets probably spoke at a more general level than was reported.²¹ Later on, this information was partially and incorrectly leaked to the press, in the form that the Soviets had been looking for a Finnish Kádár.²²

Paradoxically, the painful 1956 experience was to form the basis for later relations and mutual understanding between Kádár and Kekkonen.

First, as Kádár later acknowledged to Finnish communist leader Hertta Kuusinen, Kekkonen's stand in 1956 did not create further difficulties for his regime, and he was thankful for the consideration. "When the situation was bad and other neutral countries acted badly towards Hungary, we noted that the government of Finland was correct."²³ Thinking about Kádár's experiences from the UN visit and his isolation, this was far from negligible.

Second, both Kádár and Kekkonen had to push through their line despite domestic popular disapproval, in order to avoid further calamities. This condition drew them closer to each other.

And third, the significance of the 1956 Revolution for Hungary became comparable to that of the Winter War for Finland. Since the Soviets knew that the unconditional submission of these two nations would demand a considerable price, in terms of military force and international prestige, the Kremlin was prone to allow more latitude to these clients than it would have been willing to give in other circumstances. The Winter War and the 1956 Revolution were the basis for Kekkonen's and Kádár's Soviet policies also in the sense that they created a kind of backbone for the national identity, so that concessions to the Soviets could not immediately shake the foundations of national psychology. Having showed they were also able to fight, both nations could afford concessions without breaking their self-esteem.

Of course, dealing with the Soviets neither Kádár nor Kekkonen could ever, ever even hint at this kind of significance of the 1939 and 1956 experiences, if they came to think of them at all. On the contrary, they both had to condemn their predecessors' incorrect actions and stupid policies.

These convergent trends became visible only after some time. Immediately after the 1956 shock Hungary seemed to float ever further away, as Kekkonen later confessed to have thought.²⁴ For some time after 1956, even some national-minded Finnish communists feared that the new Hungarian communist leadership would stress the Soviet factor in their national history (in 1919, in

1944, in 1956) too much, which would then “easily lead into the thought that Hungarians’ own efforts are of lesser value.”²⁵ In 1959, one moderate communist seemed to have been rather surprised that his visit to Hungary was “as a whole positive.”²⁶

2 The 1960s bridge-building

The conditions for a Finnish-Hungarian rapprochement matured after 1962, in the conditions of an international thaw after the Cuban missile crisis. The period of crises was followed by a calmer phase between Finland and the Soviet Union. In Hungary, after the anti-Stalinist 22nd CPSU Congress, Kádár was finally able to initiate his project of reconciliation and reconstruction.²⁷ International conditions became favourable, when the ‘Hungarian question’ was dropped from the UN General Assembly list of problems to discuss.

Kekkonen began to plan visits and other action to revitalize Finnish relations with Hungary and Estonia.

In connection with his official visit to Yugoslavia in May 1963, Kekkonen visited also Hungary, “in private”, to avoid criticism. His first impressions of Kádár were very favourable; the Hungarian leader “seemed to be a really agreeable and sensible man. Quiet, plain, modest. Quiet humour, tinged with irony at his own expense. Spoke openly about the 1956 events.”²⁸

Leaning on his personal confidence with Khrushchev, Kekkonen finally succeeded in arranging a trip even to Estonia, where he surprised everybody and especially the KGB watchers by delivering his main speech in an Estonian purer than most leaders of the Soviet republic could manage. Even today, Kekkonen’s trip is remembered by Estonians as a major step in their long struggle to regain their independence.²⁹

In both Hungarian and Estonian cases, Kekkonen had a prize to offer to the Soviets: in case official relations would be allowed to flourish, Finnish contacts to emigrants would naturally cool off. In foreign countries, the emigrants would be swallowed up in two or three generations, while those who stayed would forever be the nation, he assessed. To the Swedish ambassador Kekkonen explained that to himself, as to his genera-

tion, both Estonia and Hungary had been deeply felt emotional causes, although in 1944 contacts had to be cut off, and in 1956 Hungary seemed to float even further away. Now the situation seemed to allow a revitalization of contacts, which could mean a lot also in the very long run. "History does not end up today. We often talked with [President] J. K. P[aa]sikivi: if the S[oviet] U[nion] would change." So, the relations to Hungary and to Estonia had to be built thinking not only about the present, but also preparing for the distant day when the Soviet Union and the camp controlled by it would change.³⁰

Ideological considerations did not prevent Kádár from developing closer relations with Finland. When the Finnish Communist Party chairman complained about various difficulties created by Kekkonen's policy which thwarted all efforts, Kádár commented with a smile: "So help you God" and then began to praise Kekkonen. According to Kádár, Khrushchev had compared the Finnish President to "a swordsman, who crosses immediately, straight and honest."³¹

So, the Soviet leader apparently had given a green light. Both Kádár and Kekkonen were very much Khrushchevites, they both owed a big part of their power to Nikita Sergeevich's intervention, and they both got on well with the *muzhik* style of government. In the Summer of 1964, Kádár predicted to his Finnish comrade that the successor in the Kremlin, most probably Brezhnev, would no doubt continue the line.³² Even after Khrushchev became a non-person, Kekkonen tried to contact him, and Kádár sent a telegram of condolences to his widow.

Khrushchev's dismissal in October 1964 was a profound shock both for Kádár and Kekkonen. It soon became clear that the 'party line' would not continue unaltered in the Kremlin. The Soviet unpredictability was once again suddenly demonstrated, and in a very disquieting way. On the one hand, an experience like this tended to press Kádár and Kekkonen closer to each other, but on the other, they had to proceed more cautiously, and initially the latter trend was stronger. The process of rapprochement between the state leaders was halted for some years.

To Finnish communist leader Hertta Kuusinen, Kádár rather openly criticized the way Khrushchev was ousted, which had brought about "a wave of concern" in Hungary. Kádár criticized Soviet political culture, where everybody was united and unanimous under the same slogans, and the next day of an opposite opinion, also unanimously. "Unity should not be proclaimed in an exaggerating way; it can help at a given moment, but later on it may backlash against yourself." One of the Hungarian leader's associates put it even straighter: "If we want to retain confidence, we should speak the truth."³³

Kádár admitted that the 'biological aspect' was also valid, that is, Khrushchev's advanced age (he was 70). "Growing old, a person becomes crazier. How to solve the issue? I'd have a prescription, but it cannot be used because of its inhumanity. That is, our leaders should be checked every day and when they reach the top they should be shot before they have time to grow old. Of course, this was a joke, but we should find appropriate ways to remove people into retirement."³⁴ (In 1982, when Kádár himself turned 70 and had quite some experience of Soviet gerontocracy, he probably did not recall this modest proposal.)

During the first years of the Brezhnev regime, Kádár's influence in Finland was mainly felt through the Communist Party, where Hungarian attitudes provided tactful support for the liberal-minded moderate wing.³⁵ Inside world communism, MSzMP assumed a mediating role between the Moscow camp and emerging Eurocommunism, and this became so well-known even in the West that Hungarians were soon seen "as usual to have played the role of intermediary."³⁶ For the majority wing in the Finnish CP, this mediation was entirely welcome, providing them with new latitude in their silent effort to achieve some distance from Moscow. In 1968, their confidence in Kádár's moderate statements misled Finnish communist leaders into believing in a settlement between the Soviets and the Czechs. Two weeks later, the occupation shock was then so much the worse.³⁷

Kekkonen learned about Hungarian influence and was satisfied with it. From his point of view, it was far from negligible, since strengthening moderate, national-minded Communist

thinking was a main element in his long-term strategy and even in short-term power play, communists being a party in government after 1966. Also in the field of state relations, important new steps were taken, particularly in cultural affairs, where a cooperation treaty was signed in 1967 on a Finnish initiative.

3 From the Prague Shock to European Security

The occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968 created common interests between Finland and Hungary, and this time they were real, strong and specific, of a *raison d'état* type. Between the states, that kind of common interest should be counted as the solidest one.

During the action itself, Kekkonen and Kádár were in extremely different positions. Despite his close contacts with the Soviets, Kekkonen was basically an outsider, to whom nothing was told about the preparations. He was especially hurt, realizing that the Soviets had outright lied to him, "to a person like myself." Usually, when something important happened in the Soviet Union, Kekkonen was given information, in many cases similar to that received by eastern European allies, but this time he was kept in the dark.

Kádár for his part was an insider and an important accomplice in the Soviet plans. He had to demonstrate diplomatic skills similar to those adopted by Kekkonen in relation to Hungary in 1956, but he was much closer to the events and had to take a direct part in the Soviet action. Feelings and judgements about the appropriateness and consequences of the Kremlin policies had to be suppressed and a 'realist' attitude adopted.³⁸

Although the position of the two statesmen was rather different, they both seem to have experienced a depressing shock. Kádár was "sulking in his tent,"³⁹ and Kekkonen went so far as to reveal his feelings to the British ambassador, who was surprised by the open bitterness of the man who usually held his cards very close to the chest as far as his dealings with the Soviets were concerned.⁴⁰

After the occupation, the basic foreign political interest of both Kekkonen and Kádár was to avoid Czech-type develop-

ments in their own countries and in their relations to the unpredictable Soviets and to find new, stabilizing elements on which to build their positions. But this had to be done cautiously, so that the Soviets would not be provoked into some kind of preventive action. The only way open for these two statesmen was to further some pro-Soviet efforts and to mould them in such a way as to strengthen the position of their nations as a kind of diminutive and hardly discernible by-product of the overwhelming process, where the Soviets would have something considerable to gain.

The initiative for a European security conference, presented by Finland and eagerly developed by Hungary, must be interpreted in this light.

Of course, also the general situation had to be favourable, and in 1969 it was, the Soviets wary of the Chinese threat and the Americans in trouble with their Vietnamese mess. Both sides had something to gain in a European compromise.

Basically to promote the CSCE initiative and to find new ways to further it, Kekkonen in September-October 1969 made a carefully balanced visit to Romania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Prague was selected to please the Soviets, who wanted international recognition for the Husák regime, and Bucharest to show ability to defy the Soviets and go where Nixon had gone; Kekkonen had no sympathy for Ceausescu, "a charmless, monotonous, humourless chap [...] with boundless egotism and greed for power."⁴¹ And then Budapest, which was where the Finnish President really wanted to go to. To show that the Hungarians should not be blamed for the Czech occupation and to take a new symbolically very important step, the Finns agreed to approve visa-free travel between the two nations. Hungary was the only socialist camp nation whose citizens were allowed to Finland without a visa.

The Finnish record of the three hour one-on-one discussion between Kekkonen and Kádár is short and unsatisfactory⁴²; in part perhaps reflecting the fact that not every card was shown right away, many things were left unsaid and the partner had

to sense or guess deeper meanings.* Perhaps this need to watch the mouth was the main reason for the fact that Kekkonen became so disproportionately furious, when the correspondent of the leading newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* suggested in his news report that Hungarians were playing the visit down in response to Soviet pressure. Hungarians probably did not try anything of the kind,⁴³ but Kekkonen was very nervous not to provoke or raise any Soviet suspicions towards his dealings in Eastern Europe. After the trip, however, only a Finnish left wing socialist newspaper (financed by the Soviets) wrote that some of Kekkonen's remarks might fuel anti-Soviet elements in the West.⁴⁴

According to Finnish notes, Kekkonen and Kádár seem to have mainly discussed the past, most of the time the Prague Spring. Kádár explained the course of events as he saw them, admitting, "as a lawyer" (to another lawyer) that sovereignty was violated by the occupation.

Perhaps even the future was talked about, or at least understood, because Kekkonen used his discussions with Kádár to sell the European security conference idea to reluctant and suspicious Americans. In the White House in June 1970, he explained to President Richard Nixon that smaller Eastern European nations ("satellites", as the American memo read) strongly desired such a conference, seeing it as an occasion to express and to strengthen the national identity.

History has shown that armed rebellion does not work, as evidenced in Hungary. It has also shown that quick economic change does not work, as evidenced in Czechoslovakia. The last resort for the East Bloc satellites is to get more individual freedom through the conference table.⁴⁵

The only solution left was to find a way somehow acceptable also to the Soviet Union. The proposed conference could possi-

* The Hungarian report is now available: Feljegyzés Kádár elvtárs és Kekkonen között 1969. szeptember 29-én történt tárgyalásról. MOL, KÜM, XIX-J-1-j-Finn-TÜK-1-002242. 37.d. [Ed. note]

bly open up a peaceful development, where Eastern European national aspirations would become better represented. In this sense, it was a kind of risk also to the Soviet Union.

This was the kind of talk Nixon understood. He invited his advisor Dr. Henry Kissinger from the adjoining office to join the discussion and repeated to him what the Finnish President had said. The Americans now gradually adopted a more positive attitude, sensing after all that there was something in it for the West also.⁴⁶

This was only a first step, but it was an important one. During the complicated and lengthy preparations a special working relationship developed between the Finns and the Hungarians, although the latter had – especially in public – to be very careful. Not to raise any Soviet doubts, the Hungarians stressed that their special relations in the cultural field derived from common linguistic ancestry (that is, not from e.g. political considerations).⁴⁷ On state visits, Hungarians avoided paying respects at the graves of the unknown soldier or Marshal Mannerheim, knowing how the Rumanians succeeded in provoking the Russians by acts like this.⁴⁸ But privately or even semi-officially Hungarian leaders spoke so straight that the Finns were astonished, even a bit shocked. Introducing to his colleague Kekkonen the famous painting on King Árpád's arrival in the Budapest parliament house, Pál Losonczi pointed out the vanquished Slavs, saying that Slavs (and even Germans) had always tried to suppress Finns and Hungarians, but in vain.⁴⁹ In Helsinki in January 1971, Prime Minister Jenő Fock boasted how he told about a power cable to Austria to Prime Minister Kosygin only afterwards. The Soviet colleague looked shocked, "because I had not asked his permission first." Fock entertained his Finnish hosts by telling a Hungarian joke, according to which many socialist countries were like men who wanted to relieve themselves in a swimming pool and did so quietly in the water. But the Czechs had insisted on doing so from the diving board.⁵⁰ This kind of talk was certainly understood in Finland.

At the state dinner after the solemn signing of the Helsinki Final Act on 1 August 1975, Kekkonen had Kádár placed next to

himself. The placement was no accident (to use Stalin's vocabulary), since the CSCE was a triumph for these two statesmen, who now had every reason to hope for a more secure future for their countries.⁵¹

4 Closure

The troubles of the mountains are followed by the troubles of the plains. Developments after the security conference were far from smooth. But Kekkonen and Kádár could use their mutual understanding to help each other to better understand what was going on in Moscow, also in very sensitive matters, as was demonstrated during Kekkonen's visit to Budapest in November 1976. The Hungarian Ambassador to Helsinki, Rudolf Rónai, seems to have been an important actor in cultivating these contacts.⁵² This structure was inherited by Kekkonen's successor, President Mauno Koivisto, for whom discussions with Kádár were of great importance especially in the beginning of his tenure, because of the Hungarian leader's close relations with new Soviet leader Yuri Andropov.⁵³

Of course, this is only the roughest outline. More detailed research into the development of these relations should be conducted, before any conclusions about their significance can be made, even on the basis of Russian materials. The wish expressed by Kekkonen in 1964 about a change in the Soviet system and sphere of influence was realized in a far deeper way than he or Kádár could ever have predicted. It remains to be seen, if their inheritance can at all be developed in new Europe by new generations.

NOTES

- ¹ Edwin Linkomies, *Vaikea aika. Suomen pääministerinä sotavuosina 1943-44.* Helsinki, Otava 1970, 121-22. Linkomies visited Hungary in May 1942, on the eve of his tenure as Prime Minister.
- ² In a 1969 discussion with Kekkonen, Kádár himself saw the position of Finland and Hungary in 1944 rather similar, as compared e.g. to Bulgaria. Notes of the conversation between Kekkonen and Kádár, 29 Sept 1969, Kekkonen archives 21/97.
- ³ George Schöpflin makes the non-Slav point – without mentioning Finland – in *The Hungarian Revolution of 1956.* Ed. by G. Litván, London, Longman 1996, 16.
- ⁴ Details in my *Kenen joukossa seisot? Suomalainen kommunismi ja sota 1937-1945,* Juva WSOY 1994.
- ⁵ See Tuomo Polvinen, *Between East and West: Finland in International Politics, 1944-1947,* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1986.
- ⁶ Memo of conversation between Zhdanov and Finnish communist leaders Ville Pessi and Hertta Kuusinen, 30 Jun 1947, by L. Baranov, RGASPI, fond 17, opis 128 (The International Department of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party), delo 1107,118-24. A slightly different memo by V. Terjoshkin in RGASPI, f. 77 /Zhdanov's papers), op. 3, d. 88, 1-12.
- ⁷ Memo of conversation between Zhdanov and Finnish communist leaders Hertta Kuusinen and Yrjö Leino, 2 Jan 1948, RGASPI, f. 77, op. 3, d. 88, pp. 21-31. A slightly different memo in RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 1171, 1-7.
- ⁸ *Molotov Remembers. Inside Kremlin Politics. Conversations with Felix Chuev.* Ed. by Albert Resis. Ivan R. Dee, Chicago 1993, 10. For details, see my article on the Spring of 1948 in *Jahrbuch für Historische Kommunismusforschung 1998* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag 1998).
- ⁹ Hertta Kuusinen to her father, O. V. Kuusinen, 19 Aug 1949. Kansan arkisto [Peoples Archives], Helsinki.
- ¹⁰ Report on Lehtinen's talk to party members in Kotka on 18 Sept 1949, Report no. 287, 22 Sept 1949, Report files, The Finnish Security Police archives.
- ¹¹ Kádár's speech at the HSWP CC plenum, 7 Aug 1968, *The Prague Spring 1968, A National Security Archive Documents Reader.* Compiled and ed. by Jaromír Navrátil et. al. Budapest, CEU Press 1998, 331. Saying farewell to Dubček at Komárno railway station on 17 August 1968, Kádár is reported to have said: "Do you really not understand the sort of people you are dealing with?" Zdenek Mlynár, *Nachtfrost.* Er-

- fahrungen auf dem Weg vom realen zum menschlichen Sozialismus. Köln, Europäische Verlagsgesellschaft 1978, 157.
- ¹² Kekkonen's notes on a discussion with Ambassador V. Z. Lebedev, 12 Nov 1956, Kekkonen archives 21/35.
- ¹³ Kekkonen to Ralf Törnngren, 12 Nov 1956, a draft, Kekkonen archives 21/42.
- ¹⁴ Litván 1996, 78-80, 85-88.
- ¹⁵ The description was used by Ferenc Fehér and Agnes Heller in their *Hungary 1956 Revisited*. London, George Allen & Unwin 1983, 10.
- ¹⁶ Miklós Molnár, *Budapest, 1956: A History of the Hungarian Revolution*. London, Allen & Unwin 1971, 159. As source are given western observers quoted in Vincent Brugère-Trelat, *Budapest*. Paris, La Table Ronde 1966, 207-08.
- ¹⁷ Of course, the decision to intervene was not due to these factors, but a rather complicated and confused process, as can now be seen from the documents published in *Sovetskii Soyuz i vengerskii krizis 1956 goda. Dokumenty*. Moscow, Rosspen 1998. Cf. Rainer M. János, "Hossú menetelés a csúcsra 1954–1958". *Rubicon* 2000/7–8, 38-39.
- ¹⁸ Juhani Suomi, *Kriisien aika. Urho Kekkonen 1956-62*. Keuruu, Otava 1992, 64-65.
- ¹⁹ Ambassador V. Z. Lebedev's memo on his discussion with Kekkonen on 12 Nov 1956, AVP RF, f. 0135, op. 40 (papka 213), d. 3, ll. 145-46. The memo is quoted also by Jukka Nevakivi, *Miten Kekkonen pääsi valtaan ja Suomi suomettui*, Keuruu: Otava 1996, 119-21. The criticism to Nagy and the West was not mentioned in Kekkonen's own notes of the meeting (cited above).
- ²⁰ Kekkonen's notes 27 Dec 1956, 5 Jan, 30 Jan and 16 Feb 1957, Kekkonen archives 21/35. Suomi, 83-84.
- ²¹ Report no. 1060, 4 Apr 1957, case file I K 1b; Information report (to the President) no. 5, 2 Jun 1958, Information reports. Both in Finnish Security Police (Supo) archives. In 1955/56 Supo succeeded in recruiting a high level source in the Finnish CP headquarters. The allusions to Hungary were made in a Moscow conference in February 1957 by politbureau member Frol Kozlov and – in more vague terms – by Foreign Minister Dmitri Shepilov.
- ²² Arvo Tuominen, "Suomalaiset kommunistit odottavat 'Kadar-kulmaa'". *Helsingin Sanomat* 29 Jun 1958.
- ²³ Notes of a discussion with Com. Kádár, by P. Salonen, n.d. [November 1964], Finnish Communist Party International Dept papers, file no. 4, Kansan arkisto, Helsinki.

- ²⁴ Kekkonen's notes, 14 May 1964, see below.
- ²⁵ Aino Lehtinen's report on a party delegation trip to Hungary, 21 Apr 1958, Finnish CP International Dept papers, file no. 4.
- ²⁶ Jorma Hentilä's report on a visit to Hungary at a pro-communist student society meeting, 1959, Organization file II G 6c, Supo.
- ²⁷ William Shawcross, *Crime and Compromise: Janos Kadar and the Politics of Hungary Since Revolution*. London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson 1974, 105-06.
- ²⁸ Kekkonen's diary entry on 11 May 1963. In *Urho Kekkonen päiväkirjat*, vol. 2, 1963-68, ed. by Juhani Suomi. Keuruu, Otava 2002.
- ²⁹ Former Estonian President Lennart Meri has stressed this also in his recent interviews.
- ³⁰ Kekkonen's manuscript notes, 'Reflections on Estonia and Hungary', 14 May 1964, The President's yearbook for 1964, Kekkonen Archives. In his yearbooks Kekkonen collected his most important papers. Swedish ambassador Ingemar Hägglöf is mentioned as making a question.
- ³¹ Intelligence report on a discussion between Kádár and Aimo Aaltonen in Budapest in June 1964, dated by Kekkonen on 10 Aug 1964, Yearbook 1964, Kekkonen archives. This report was written or at least brought by Professor Kustaa Vilkuna, Kekkonen's personal intelligence chief, who received information from Aaltonen's interpreter. See Kekkonen's diary entry, 11 Aug 1964.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Notes of the discussions with Com. Nemes and Com. Kádár, by P. Salonen, n.d. [November 1964], Finnish Communist Party International Dept. papers, file no. 4.
- ³⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁵ See e.g. Anna-Liisa Hyvönen's report from Hungary, 30 Mar 1967, and Olavi J. Laine's and Toivo Pohjonen's report from a party delegation trip, [Jan 1967], The Finnish Communist Party International Dept papers, file no. 81. Thinking about a Finnish way to socialism, party chairman Aarne Saarinen read carefully the HSWP CC theses of 16 July 1970, translated for him, and underlined sentences that could be interpreted as alternatives for or criticism of the Soviet model. See a copy of the theses in Saarinen's papers, file no. 15. See also Saarinen's positive assessment on Kádár, in his memoirs *Kivimies*. Keuruu, Otava 1995, 319-20.

- ³⁶ Ambassador G. E. Millard's report on an international communist meeting in Budapest, 28 Nov 1968, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) 28/580, Public Record Office (PRO).
- ³⁷ See V-P. Leppänen, *Kivääri vai äänestyslippu? Suomen kommunistisen puolueen hajaannus 1964-1970*. Helsinki, Edita 1999, 235-38.
- ³⁸ This conclusion is based only on the documents published in *The Prague Spring 1968*.
- ³⁹ Shawcross, 234.
- ⁴⁰ Report by ambassador R. D. J. Scott Fox to Foreign Minister Michael Stewart, 18 Oct 1968, FCO 33/719, PRO.
- ⁴¹ See Juhani Suomi, *Taistelu puolueettomuudesta. Urho Kekkonen 1968-1972*. Keuruu, Otava 1998, 232-35. The quote on Ceausescu is from Kekkonen's diary.
- ⁴² Notes of the discussion between Kekkonen and Kádár, 29 Sept 1969, compiled later on by the interpreter Ulla Hauhia-Nagy, Kekkonen archives 21/97.
- ⁴³ This was assured by former Ambassador to Helsinki, Kurtán, to British Ambassador to Budapest, G. E. Millard, whose report on 9 Oct 1969, FCO 33/721, PRO.
- ⁴⁴ *Päivän Sanomat*, Oct 1969.
- ⁴⁵ Quoted from the American memo on the discussion between Nixon and Kekkonen on 23 July 1970, by the interpreter, Navy Captain Erkki Minkkinen, Nixon Presidential Materials, Project, National Security Council files, Vip visits, Box 915, National Archives II.
- ⁴⁶ Ambassador Max Jakobson's memo on the discussion between Kekkonen and Nixon, 23 July 1970, Kc 11 (Top Secret Files), Finnish Foreign Ministry archives. This discussion is dealt with by Suomi 442-48.
- ⁴⁷ A memo by Kárász Péter (chargé d'affaires in Helsinki) on Finland's relations to the socialist countries, 19 Nov 1970, top secret documents, Hungarian Foreign Ministry Archives, MOL, KÜM, XIX-J-1-j, 1970, 36. d.
- ⁴⁸ Telegrams by former ambassador to Helsinki, Kurtán, from Wien, and ambassador Rónai from Helsinki, 31 Dec 1970, *ibid*.
- ⁴⁹ Risto Hyvärinen, *Virkamiehiä, viekkautta ja vakoilua*. Keuruu, Otava 2000, 259-60.
- ⁵⁰ A.C. Stuart from Helsinki to C.L.G. Mallaby in Eastern European and Soviet Department, 21 Jan. 1971, FCO 33/1578. The source was the Finnish Foreign Ministry deputy chief of the political section, Paavo Laitinen.
- ⁵¹ A photograph is published in Kekkonen's biography (Juhani Suomi, *Liennytyksen akanvirrassa, Urho Kekkonen 1972-1976*. Keuruu, Otava

1998, 668.) On the opposite side of the table, Gerald Ford and Henry Kissinger are seen in lively discussion with Cypriot president Makarios. In his memoirs (*Years of Renewal*, New York. Simon & Schuster 1999, 200), Kissinger tells that the Americans had denied the Cypriot president a one-on-one meeting with President Ford. "We shall see", the Archbishop said, and at the state dinner Ford and Kissinger were found to be sitting with Makarios for more than an hour. So, who was sitting with who was not an accident.

⁵² Juhani Suomi, *Umpeutuva latu. Urho Kekkonen 1976-1981*. Keuruu, Otava 2000, 125-27, 131, 137, 145-46, 170-71.

⁵³ Mauno Koivisto, *Historian tekijät. Kaksi kautta II*. Juva, Kirjayhtymä 1995, 104, 151, 155.

**President Kekkonen's Visits to Hungary in the 1960s:
Satellite Policy in the Context of Kinship**

Mari VARES

A high-ranking Finnish foreign policy official Keijo Korhonen wrote in his memoirs about the role-position of Hungary in Finnish foreign policy during the era of Kekkonen. To quote Korhonen:

The Russians were first in importance, after them there was no-one in importance, even after no-one there was no-one, then there were the Hungarians and at the tail of the queue there were East Germans, Poles, Czechs, Bulgarians and Rumanians.¹

My aim is to discuss Finnish foreign policy – conducted by President Kekkonen - towards Hungary during the Kádár era, in the 1960s. At that time, the relations between Finland and Hungary were improved at both the intergovernmental and non-governmental (civic society) level. In this article, I will concentrate on the image and the structure of these relations: how were these relations established and what kind of relations were pursued? It can be anticipated that there were two contradictory elements in these relations: first, the heritage of the old cultural relations, which were based on the feeling of kinship*,

* Cf. Riikonen, H.K., "Sustaining Kinship in Wartime: Finnish-Hungarian Contacts in the Light of the Yearbook *Heimotyö* (1937-1944)". *Hungarologische Beiträge* 7, Hrsg. Anssi Halmesvirta. Universität Jyväskylä 1996, 61-73. [Ed. note]

and second, the political reality of Cold War Europe in the 1960s.

Expressions of the Finnish policy towards Hungary can be found in the context of the meetings between the countries' leadership. Therefore, I will focus on the two visits which President Kekkonen paid to Hungary: the private visit in May 1963 and the state visit in autumn 1969. The first visit was made at a time when the Hungarian relations to the West were problematic after the 1956 uprising. Kekkonen's visit, although it was officially only a detour during the visit to Yugoslavia, was the first visit of a Western Head of State since the uprising of 1956. The state visit of 1969, which was an official state visit and a part of a visit to Rumania and Czechoslovakia as well, was, on the other hand, made while the European Security Conference was being discussed and while the shadow of the occupation of Czechoslovakia was creating intense international pressure.

Especially during the era of Kekkonen the President had an unusually strong position in formulating Finnish foreign policy. Kekkonen's Hungarian relations are of special interest because as a student politician he was *aitosuomalainen*, an Ardent Finn, respected Finnish-Estonian-Hungarian kinship, and knew Hungary and Hungarians personally. Presumably, this mental heritage might have influenced his opinions and his policy towards Hungary.² The presence of power politics was, however, a reality. Relations with the Soviet Union were a primary consideration, but, at the same time, the Finnish reputation as a western and neutral state was cherished. It is worth discussing how or if these two frameworks – the idea of kinship and the prevailing political conditions – were linked to each other in Kekkonen's policy. As a working hypothesis it is presumed that these two dimensions were united in his policy to make the mutual relations between Finland and Hungary a quite unique case in the field of Cold War policy. Further, it is important to compare the attitudes of the diplomatic corps to the policy of the state leadership as well as the expressions of the press and publicity to the official rhetoric³.

These two contexts – the tradition of kinship relations and the Cold War political conditions – hypothetically affected the visits too. In the case of Finnish-Hungarian relations, the visits which President Kekkonen paid in the 1960s seemed to be symbolically valuable as acts of relations between two states. Therefore, the visits – including programmes, symbols and forms of state visits⁴ – are of special value and worth studying in order to illuminate the conduct of the Finnish – Hungarian relations.

1 Kádár's Hungary and the Recognition of Finnish Neutrality

In the aftermath of 1956, the issue of Hungary was controversial in Finland. Official Finnish policy towards Hungary can be defined as cool satellite policy and the attitude of public opinion was that of a warming cultural co-operation. As the Finnish legation in Budapest defined it, there were two different dimensions in Finnish-Hungarian relations. First, the correct state level relations – as a result of the Finnish official moderate policy on Kádárism. Secondly, there were the correct relations between Finns and Hungarians, which were based on the Finnish sympathetic attitude towards Hungarians and on the voluntary help to the Hungarians who had suffered in the revolution. To quote the Finnish legation, there were the concepts of “official gratitude” and “official aid”. There was thus a difference between public opinion and the Finnish official policy. Kekkonen was aware of this difference.⁵

In the context of the issue of kinship, Finnish-Hungarian relations seemed to be normalised soon after the revolution. As the Finnish Legation in Budapest stated, thanks to the Finnish sympathy for Hungarians, the relations between Hungary and Finland returned back to “cherishing the idea of kinship” as early as 1957. For example, *Finn-Magyar Társaság* (Finnish-Hungarian Society) visited Hungary. The chargé d'affaires, T.H. Heikkilä, warned, however, that there was no reason for too much optimism yet. According to Heikkilä, it was still important to consider the conditions in Hungary carefully, even if they seemed to be normalised.⁶ It can be argued that the state-

ment reflected, surprisingly, both the attitude of Finnish public opinion and the official moderate policy towards Kádárism.

In spite of the quick return to the normal kinship relations, the state-level relations between Hungary and Finland remained cool. The relations were correct, but cool or reserved. Therefore, the fact that the Finnish Government opposed all open protest against the Soviet occupation in 1956 and against the Kádár regime, did not imply that the official relations between Hungary and Finland were good. It was assumed that the relations were kept cool in order to preserve Finland's position as an independent country.⁷

Obviously, at the time of the first visit, the policy of a cool attitude towards satellite countries did not seem to be essential any more. The cool relations between Finland and the satellite countries were gradually warming up as a result of developments in international politics. In the case of Hungary, there were some new aspects to consider from the Finnish point of view. Kekkonen's visit to Hungary in 1963 was part of a development during which Hungary normalised or reconstructed its diplomatic links after the events of 1956. The Finnish political and diplomatic circles saw signs of liberalisation and destalinisation in Hungary as well as signs of a new orientation in the relations between Hungary and the United Nations.⁸

The question of Finland's reputation as a neutral state was also an important indicator in Finnish foreign policy. When there were perceptible signs of western acceptance of Finnish neutrality, the Finnish political leadership was ready to improve the relations with the Eastern Bloc. After the visit to Great Britain in 1961 and France in 1962, the tone of the West gave official indications that Finland was a neutral state.⁹ In addition to this, the cultural and scientific contacts between Finland and Hungary had increased little by little in the late 1950's and early 1960's.¹⁰

The visit of 1963 can easily be seen as a turning point in the relations between Finland and Hungary. The policy in the aftermath of the 1956 revolution seemed to change. One can ask if the Finnish contradictory attitudes towards Hungary were still

apparent and one can also ask if 'Finnish sympathetic attitudes towards Hungarians' were transformed to 'the policy of kinship' and if the 'moderate attitude of the Finnish political leadership towards Kádár' was transformed into the 'Finnish satellite policy towards Hungary'.

Kekkonen himself considered that his visit had an important effect on Finnish-Hungarian relations. He stated a year after the first visit that it was the kinship movement that should form the basis for Finnish relations towards both kinship nations, Estonia and Hungary. He pointed out in his private speech to the representatives of the so-called national sciences in Finland that these relations should be based on unofficial civic society circles rather than conducted at the state level. As he said:

To the generation to which I belong and whose marvellous and good representatives are gathered here, the issue concerning Estonia and Hungary is an emotional subject... Already for a couple of years, I have had an idea that better relations to Hungary and Estonia should be established, not necessarily on a formal or official basis, because I understood that there would be difficulties with that, but merely on informal, cultural and social levels, but progress in this way should be handled very carefully.¹¹

Accordingly, Kekkonen invited the scholars to create an informal network between Finland and the kinship nations. This was a way to establish and reinforce the contacts between Finland and Hungary. One can ask if this was a way to strengthen kinship relations as such or whether it was a way to get Finns involved with Hungarians in spite of the political differences. Were these informal contacts aimed to further the official political relations?

The visit which Kekkonen paid to Hungary in May 1963 was an unofficial visit - and the aim of the Finnish political leadership was to emphasise this unofficial nature of the visit. The tentative attitude of the Finnish political élite towards Hungary can be interpreted in Finnish official reports to the press. The Finnish News Agency, *STT*, pointed out that President

Kekkonen would only call at or stop at Hungary during his way home from Yugoslavia.¹²

President Kekkonen then stopped at Hungary on May 12th-15th 1963, immediately after his visit to Yugoslavia. President Dobi and Mrs Dobi acted as hosts for him and Mrs Sylvi Kekkonen. The programme consisted of cultural events, sight-seeing in Budapest and a visit to the countryside and Debrecen. Kekkonen also met Finns who lived in Hungary. There was no mention of a meeting between Kekkonen and Kádár in the official program – a fact that can also be interpreted as a symbol of informality.¹³

2 Reflections on the Visit

Kekkonen's visit attracted some attention in the Finnish media: in the press there was a slightly critical tone. Before the visit, Kekkonen was annoyed about the tone of the newspaper *Uusi Suomi*. According to him they were questioning the judgement of the Finnish political leadership – in other words, his judgement. In *Uusi-Suomi* the question was asked if it was reasonable to visit a country in which the prevailing conditions were suspect. Kekkonen brought this matter up with the chief editor, Eero Petäjaniemi, who denied that he had criticized Kekkonen in this way.¹⁴

After the visit, it was claimed in a Finnish magazine *Kuva-Posti* that the state visit to Yugoslavia was successful, but the informal extended visit to Hungary aroused more criticism. "Was the visit at all necessary at this time?" asked the journalist Väinö Länsiluoto.¹⁵ The reason for these comments can be found in the post-1956 context: the press might well be fearing that Finland was being identified with the Eastern bloc.

Also in Hungarian media comment the visit of the Finnish presidential couple aroused some attention. The press seemed to have concentrated on the informal nature of the visit. For example, the Hungarian magazine *Nők Lapja* concentrated on Mrs Sylvi Kekkonen. The women's magazine also wrote about *Kalevala* and presented the city of Helsinki in a richly illustrated article. In the pictures published in newspapers and magazines,

President Kekkonen was photographed in informal situations: in Pusta and visiting suburban housing developments.¹⁶ In other words, in the traditional Hungarian context and in the modern one – one can ask if these pictures reflected symbolically new Finnish-Hungarian relations in which the traditional context and the modern one were present concomitantly?

Afterwards, in the political rhetoric certain value was given to the visit. The discourse reflected the idea that the visit was to be interpreted and expressed as an opening of relations between Kekkonen's Finland and Kádár's Hungary. One year later, the Hungarian Foreign Minister János Péter stated in the Hungarian parliament that the relations between Hungary and Finland did not reflect only "a romantic ethnographic kinship", but that the relations were at a level of modern progress. Péter argued that there were "many useful economic and cultural achievements" between Hungary and Finland. Later, in the Finnish Foreign Ministry, Péter's statement was given as an example of the prevailing image of Finnish-Hungarian relations.¹⁷

Kádár himself stated to Finnish Ambassador Palas after Kekkonen's visit that Hungary carefully observed Finnish foreign policy. Kádár emphasized the good relations between Finland and the Soviet Union. He – like many others – used the concept of kinship in a modern sense. Kinship was designed as being not only a cliché, but a scientific truth. At the same time there was in Kádár's rhetoric another concept, peaceful cooperation: the idea of small peaceful nations in the field of international politics.¹⁸ The Finnish diplomats might have regarded this as a sign of peaceful co-existence. Therefore, in the 1960s, two different aspects were found in Finnish-Hungarian relations by the Finns: the two kinship countries wanted peaceful co-existence.¹⁹ A traditional concept and a modern one were thus used in the policy of the relations.

An interesting detail in terms of the relations between the two different political systems was a discussion between Kádár and the Finnish Communist Party Chairman Aimo Aaltonen a year after Kekkonen's visit. The discussion was reported to Kekkonen by the Finnish State Policy Service. Aaltonen com-

plained about various difficulties created by Kekkonen's policy. He explained to Kádár that one of the reasons why there could not be a communist revolution in Finland was that the Finnish Communists were not successful because Kekkonen was taking the wind out of the sails of the revolution. Kádár commented with a smile: "So God help you!"²⁰

At the informal level – as Kekkonen wished – there began to appear concrete signs as symbols of good relations. A sign of the understanding between the two countries was that in 1964 package tours to Hungary were for the first time organised in Finland. This implied – as the Finnish Embassy in Budapest stated – the "popularisation of Finnish-Hungarian relations".²¹ Tourism and travel as well as an increasing number of Finnish scholarship students in Hungary were undoubtedly ways to strengthen and re-establish the contacts between Hungary and Finland. Later, as a result of Kekkonen's state visit to Hungary in 1969, the travelling conditions were further simplified, as the result of an agreement that compulsory visas between the two countries should be discontinued.

3 In a Spirit of 'Peaceful Co-existence' – The 1969 State Visit

If the visit in 1963 was remarkable because it was understood to be the opening of a new era of relations between Finland and Hungary, the visit of 1969 had also a similar importance. In the late 1960s, respect for Soviet interests was still the primary consideration in the relations across the iron curtain. But one new element in the foreign policy of Hungary was an increasing openness to the West. A key motivation behind such moves was the opportunity which the West offered to gain access to the latest technologies and to participate in economic opportunities. The first contacts in this respect were Finland and Austria. The visit paid by the Austrian Chancellor Josef Klaus in 1967, as well as Kekkonen's visit, were given huge publicity.²² For Kekkonen, the tourney in Eastern Europe offered an opportunity to formulate the Finnish position on post-Prague international politics. In 1969 there were signs of normalisation in international relations after the events in

Prague. This might have encouraged Kekkonen to visit Eastern Europe. As Kekkonen's biographer, Juhani Suomi further explains, the Finnish state leadership wanted to get acquainted with the situation in Eastern Europe.²³ Therefore, the situation in 1969 resembled the situation in 1963: stabilisation after tension.

Before the visit, the Finnish Embassy in Budapest assumed that the policy of peaceful co-existence had given Finland a certain position in Hungary's policy. In the report concerning the political events in Hungary it was again estimated that relations with the Soviet Union formed the basis of Hungarian policy. This basis was, however, not contradictory to the idea of peaceful co-existence. It was stated that "this pleasant side of the socialist bloc is more evident in the case of Hungary than in other socialist countries".²⁴

In addition to the political conditions, attention was also drawn to cultural relations. Culture and science were seen as central aspects of these mutual relations. A report which was drawn up by the Finnish Embassy in Budapest stated that the reason for the good co-operation was that Finland accepted Hungarian cultural policy: the policy which was conducted at the higher political level.²⁵

4 Expressions of Relations

The speeches provide an interesting insight into the image and to the system of the relations between the two countries. Kekkonen's speeches in Budapest in 1969 reflected both the concept of kinship and the concepts of progress: old concepts were interlinked to new ones. As Kekkonen expressed it, the relations between Hungary and Finland were founded not only on historical grounds but also on modern co-operation. For example, Kekkonen praised the progress Hungary had made during the 1960s: the development in Hungary between the years 1963-1969 had shown "the high level of Hungarian civilisation and culture". He emphasized both political and cultural understanding between the two countries.

Further, it was stressed that kinship was a scientific truth, not a romantic speculation or a myth. This was undoubtedly a way to reinforce the value of the kinship. In this rhetoric, the kinship was not, however, the only aspect of brotherhood. Kekkonen defined the brotherhood between Finland and Hungary as not only a tradition of the awareness of the kinship but also as the willingness to establish mutual cultural and commercial agreements. The concept of a small nation implied this brotherhood. The idea of small nations in the field of modern politics was thus one of the uniting links between the two countries. Therefore, the concepts of kinship and brotherhood, progress and small nation formed the basis of the rhetoric.²⁶

The kinship aspect – in a more traditional sense – was visible also in the informal part of the state visit. Such details were the *Kalevala*-show, which was held in Budapest and a new *Hungarian-Finnish Dictionary*. According to Kustaa Vilkuna, the *Dictionary* was a “neat or, in other words, smart and solid expression of the special status of Finnish-Hungarian relations”. Vilkuna had recommended that the dictionary should be presented to some of the Hungarian high-ups.²⁷

The discussions between the heads of state can be linked to the idea of small nations in the field of international politics. Discussions of world politics and mutual interests dealt with the typical, actual political issues. Notes of the discussions show that an exchange of views concerning NORDEK, European security and commercial and economic co-operation were on the agenda.²⁸ The official memorandum which the President and the Finnish Foreign Ministry gave on the state visit emphasized the correct nature of the relations between Finland and Hungary. It is worth noticing that there was an expression of “the similarity of opinions on world politics and of the direction of the mutual relations between the two states”.²⁹

5 “Muckraking Journalism” – A Dissonance to the Official Liturgy

The Finnish press, however, did not adopt a similarly high tone: their discussions were not necessarily in accordance with the

official rhetoric. One of the interesting incidents of the latter visit was the case of "muckraking journalism" of which Kekkonen accused one reporter of the Finnish newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat*, Lauri Karén: the codes of the official 'liturgy' were disturbed by Karén's critical articles on the president's visit to Hungary.

The President made his attitude to Karén's articles clear. Kekkonen would not accept critical reporting and accused Lauri Karén "of taking a waste bin instead of a pen" with him to Hungary. Kekkonen further complained that "it was clear that a journalist who had equipped himself with these kind of tools cannot write a truthful description".

Karén had written that Hungary had shown only little interest in Kekkonen during his visit. Karén gave an explanation of this: the Soviet Union disliked the potentially increasing contacts between Hungary and neutral countries. Karén noticed that the typical symbols of a state visit had been lacking in Budapest: there was no red carpet at the airport and Kádár was not there to personally welcome the president. In addition to this "lack of symbols at the airport", there were only a few Finnish or Hungarian flags in the streets of Budapest. He considered that the atmosphere in Czechoslovakia and Rumania had been much warmer towards Kekkonen. Karén had discussed this with some British and French representatives, who had considered that the reception was rather cool and who had also noticed these things.³⁰ Thus maybe his tone of reporting was not typically Finnish, but more French or British? Karén personally stated later in his memoirs that the Hungarians had not paid much attention to his writing.³¹ Nevertheless, the recent Hungarian appraisals of Kekkonen's visit in 1969 have pointed out the huge publicity which was given to it in Hungary.³²

6 Two Ideas of Brotherhood

For Hungary, the correct state level relations with Finland were important in order to create and develop techno-scientific contacts with the West.³³ For Finland, relations with Hungary were – in terms of state level politics – an integral part of Finnish pol-

icy towards the satellite countries. In the case of Hungary, the satellite policy was, however, conducted by connecting the idea of tradition to the modern Cold War policy. Therefore, the tradition of cultural co-operation and the tradition of cherishing the idea of kinship were linked to the Finnish (Satellite) policy towards Hungary – at least at the rhetorical level.

The concept of kinship was undoubtedly a way to establish Finnish-Hungarian relations. This myth offered a common discourse and it was a way to assure the structure of good relations. As Kekkonen put it, these relations were meant to be primarily unofficial: academic contacts, cultural co-operation and increasing tourism. It will be worth extending the analysis concerning the role of the unofficial kinship activities in Kekkonen's policy in further studies: what was the role of these contacts in the field of international politics?

Nevertheless, the kinship activities offered a basis not only for popular, unofficial contacts between the Finns and Hungarians but for the political rhetoric as well. The only limitation on the use of the old tradition was, according to Korhonen, that the players of the game knew the rules of it. In other words, the rhetoric of tradition was to be used in the context of the limitations of the international policy.³⁴

Accordingly, the efforts of unofficial contacts, which was founded on the idea of kinship, could be used as arguments in political relations. The visits reflected this policy. There was, however, a trend to modernise the concept of kinship in order to strengthen its value. First, the kinship was claimed to be a scientific truth, and secondly it was stated that it was not the only tie between Finland and Hungary.

In addition, the concepts of a small nation and progress were used in the political rhetoric. Similarly, just as with the concept of kinship, these arguments referred to the ties between the two countries. The role of science, both in terms of the kinship aspect and techno-scientific co-operation was essential. In conclusion, there were two ideas of brotherhood to launch: the traditional one and the modern one.

NOTES

- ¹ Korhonen, Keijo, Sattumakorpraali. Korhonen Kekkosen komennossa Keuruu 1999, 122.
- ² See Suomi, Juhani, Kriisien aika. Urho Kekkonen 1956-1962. Keuruu 1992, 64.
- ³ In this context: to study arguments, contents and forms. See Palonen, Kari, Summa, Hilka, Retorinen käänne? Pelkää retoriikkaa. Tampere 1996, 10-13; Perelman, Chaïm, Retoriikan valtakunta. Tampere 1996.
- ⁴ The programmes consisted of speeches, reception ceremonies, presents, dinners, discussions about world politics and mutual interests, visits to culturally and historically valuable places and to countryside and factories. Kekkonen saved some materials from the visit: leaflets, invitation cards, menus etc. An interesting item and memory of the visit of 1969 was a wooden menu with signatures of Ahti Karjalainen and other participants.
- ⁵ Suomen ja Unkarin suhteet, T.H. Heikkilä (Budapest) to the Finnish Foreign Ministry 11.1.1958. UM/12/L/Unkari 1958-1959, Foreign Ministry Archives (=UMA); See Suomi 1992, 63-68; Nevakivi, Jukka, "Kekkonen, a magyar '56 és a finlandizáció kezdete". *Hitel* 13 10/2000.
- ⁶ Suomen ja Unkarin suhteet. T.H. Heikkilä (Budapest) to the Finnish Foreign Ministry 11.1.1958. UM 12/L/Unkari 1958-1959, UMA.
- ⁷ Suhtautuminen Unkariin. T.H. Heikkilä (Budapest) to the Finnish Foreign Ministry 3.10.1959. UM/12/L/Unkari 1958-1959, UMA.
- ⁸ Romsics, Ignác, Hungary in the Twentieth Century. Budapest 1999, 332-333; For Finnish interpretations see Memorandum by Finnish Foreign Ministry. Presidentin epävirallinen vierailu Unkariin 12.-15.5.1963. UM 101/3/H/ Kekkonen, UMA; R.R. Seppälä (Washington) to Max Jacobson (Foreign Ministry) 18.4.1963 and Otso Wartiovaara (Wien) to the Finnish Foreign Minister Veli Merikoski 22.4.1963. UM/3/H/Kekkonen, UMA.
- ⁹ See Suomi 1992, 383; see also Suomi, Juhani, Presidentti. Urho Kekkonen 1962-1968. Keuruu 1994, 88-97.
- ¹⁰ See Katsaus Suomen ja Unkarin välisiin kulttuurisuhteisiin. Presidentin vierailu Unkariin 26.9.-1.10.1969. UM/3/H/Kekkonen, UMA.
- ¹¹ Vuosikirjat 1964. Kekkonen papers, President Urho Kekkonen's archives (hereafter PUKA).
- ¹² See Memorandum by Veikko Hietanen 25.3.1963. UM 101/3/H/Kekkonen, UMA. The visit was paid on Hungary's initiative. President Dobí's invitation was presented when Hungarian Ambassador, Sándor Kurtan left his letter of credentials in Helsinki.
- ¹³ See the programme of the visit. UM/3/H/Kekkonen, UMA; Vierailut 1963-1966. Kekkonen Papers 22/8, PUKA.

- ¹⁴ For the debate with *Uusi-Suomi* -newspaper see Vuosikirjat 1963. Kekkonen papers, PUKA.
- ¹⁵ *Kuva-Posti* 21/1963. Vierailu Unkariin, Lehtileikkeet 1963-66. Kekkonen papers 41/61, PUKA.
- ¹⁶ *Nök Lapja* 18.5.1963 and Lehtileikkeet. Vierailut 1963-33. Kekkonen papers 22/8, PUKA.
- ¹⁷ Katsaus 1968. UM/3/H/Kekkonen, UMA.
- ¹⁸ Palas (Budapest) to Finnish Foreign Ministry 20.5.1963. UM/5/C27, UMA.
- ¹⁹ Martti Ingman (Budapest) to the Finnish Foreign Ministry 9.9.1969. UM/3/ H/Kekkonen, UMA.
- ²⁰ Vuosikirjat 1964. Kekkonen papers, PUKA.
- ²¹ Memorandum by Finnish Embassy, Budapest 30.9.1968. UM/5/C27, UMA.
- ²² Romsics, 408-409.
- ²³ Suomi, Juhani, Taistelu puolueettomuudesta. Urho Kekkonen 1968-1972. Keuruu 1996, 232-233.
- ²⁴ Martti Ingman (Budapest) to the Finnish Foreign Ministry 9.9.1969. UM/3/ H/Kekkonen, UMA.
- ²⁵ Katsaus Suomen ja Unkarin välisiin kulttuurisuhteisiin. Vierailu Unkariin 29.9.-1.10.1969. UM/3/H/Kekkonen, UMA.
- ²⁶ See the speeches. Kekkonen vierailu Unkariin 1969. UM/3/H/Kekkonen, UMA.
- ²⁷ Kustaa Vilkuna to President Kekkonen 14.8.1969. Vilkuna Papers 1/54, PUKA; for the program see Kekkonen vierailu Unkariin 1969. UM/3/H/Kekkonen, UMA.
- ²⁸ Tasavallan presidentin keskustelut Unkarin pääministeri Fockin kanssa 26.9.1969 klo 16.30; Tasavallan presidentti Kekkonen ja Unkarin Presidentti Losonczin keskustelut 27.9.1969. Kekkonen vierailu Unkariin 1969. UM/3/ H/Kekkonen, UMA.
- ²⁹ Tasavallan Presidentin Unkarin vierailun tiedonanto. 1.10.1969; Yhteinen tiedonanto Suomen tasavallan presidentin tohtori Urho Kekkonen valtiovierailusta Unkarissa. Kekkonen vierailu Unkariin 1969. UM3/H/Kekkonen, UMA.
- ³⁰ *Helsingin Sanomat* 27.9.1969, 28.9.1969, 29.9.1969, 30.9.1969, 1.10.1969. Lehtileikkeet. Valtiovierailu Romaniaan, Unkariin ja Tshekkoslovakiaan 1969. Kekkonen Papers 41/88, 41/89, PUKA.
- ³¹ Karén, Lauri, Herrasmiehiä valepuvussa. Juva 1994, 174.
- ³² See for example Romsics, 409.
- ³³ Ibid, 408.
- ³⁴ Korhonen, 123.

**Discursive Use of Power in Hungarian
Cultural Policy during the Kádár Era**

Raija OIKARI

In this article political culture in cultural relations will be examined through the concept of discursive exercise of power. More precisely, the subject of the study is the discursive use of power in the cultural policy of Kádár's Hungary. The cultural policy of Kádár's time was by no means uniform during the era, as there were changes that were connected to the general changes of society and its politics. What remained the same, however, was that the cultural policy was subjected to the general objectives of politics, and that its essential task was to legitimize the power of the state and the party. As culture, and especially literature, was seen to have a significant effect on the ideological atmosphere in society, it was given an almost exaggerated significance during the entire era. As a result, it was kept on a short political leash. The ideology defined the room for cultural and literary policy.¹

The goal is to examine the conditions of the existence of discourse and connect it to the practical field it is produced and controlled in: the practice of politics. How, to what extent, and on which levels can discourses, in this case especially cultural and art-related discourses, be the objects of political actions, and what type of correlation can they have in relation to the actions?

Michel Foucault has studied the relation of politics to discourse. He is not interested in codes but incidents: why exactly these

events (discursive or others), and what their correlation is to the previous and simultaneous events. Thus, he is trying to find the set of norms defined by certain eras and certain societies.²

Discursive use of power is a key concept when one examines how cultural and intellectual policies, which in socialist Hungary were personified in the leading cultural politician György Aczél, were a part of political culture in general. In that case it can be asked how political the culture was, and in what way. Culture was openly part of foreign policy, as in all socialist countries, and, in practice, it was a matter of what was possible and allowed to be said, so that one was able to get for example one's texts published. I will examine the literary life of Kádár's Hungary mainly from this point of view, as it is the most important field of culture and, at the same time, the object of the strongest exercise of power.

All over Eastern Europe, as well as in Hungary, writers have always been assumed to represent the conscience of a nation. Writers, poets and other intellectuals have been expected to cultivate and maintain the national values even at the risk of losing their lives when tyrants have created an unsurmountable gap between rulers and subjects. National revolutions have often been regarded as direct results of the sacrifices made by the intellectuals. In brief, literature in particular has often served as a substitute for politics in this field, and writers and poets have often replaced politicians, who have sometimes been considered tyrannical and corrupted by foreign states. It can be argued that one of the Great Narratives of Hungarian literature has been the writers' mission to lead the people with their prophecies. Especially the so called folk writers (*népi írók*) have been placed into this *vátesz*-role. *Vátesz* means a prophet or an inspired writer, who has even clairvoyant powers. It has been one of the key concepts of the literary discussion in Hungary and an important part of the tradition. The writers themselves have accepted this mission as a given model of a good and useful writer. A writer of this kind has tasks also outside the actual literary world. *Vátesz* is also a politically active writer, who fights for the citizens. The tradition was started by Sándor Pe-

tófi, who has been a model for later generations. The tradition has been carried on for example by János Arány, Endre Ady, Gyula Illyés and Sándor Csoóri.³

In Hungary the establishment created a special system with which it was able to control the discourse. Culture was an integral part of this system of control, and the discourse of culture itself was closely monitored mainly with the help of the 'system of the three T's'. The name comes from the Hungarian words meaning support, toleration and denial (*támogatás, tűrés, tiltás*). The principle was derived from Kádár's well-known slogan, "anyone who is not against us is with us" (1962) and it was officialized in the ninth party conference of MSZMP in 1966. The system was developed by Aczél, who exercised the strongest cultural power in Hungary, and it represents a revealing example of a system that includes discursive use of power. In this article the political culture of cultural policy is exemplified particularly through Aczél's role and the system of the three T's.

It is also a question of language, or rather of discourse, particularly of the ideologies and use of power which are concealed in a language. This discourse deals with the constituting of ideologies of languages. Discourse can be generally defined as an organised and recognisable way to transfer knowledge or information to someone else. It also includes the institutionalized conventions of conversing. In this sense discourse has two dimensions: firstly, what persons say from a certain position and, secondly, which kinds of regularities can be pointed out in their speech. The focus can, for instance, be on what kind of a role public discourse plays in constituting national political cultures.⁴ Also questions about language use have often led to political actions; it is, for example, usual to speak about 'politically correct' language use. Does a change in language lead to a change, for example, in attitudes? What is between the language of control (the language the ruling class uses and that helps it to maintain its control of the citizens) and the vernacular? A language serves as the principal means of expression, manipulation and also transformation of power relations and political relations. Likewise, the used form of language itself

has an effect through defining and concretizing concepts that have not perhaps been thoroughly clarified and defined. Language can also be used as a means of supervision in the entire field of social relations.⁵ Socialist rhetoric can also be defined as a way to shape the consciousness of the people.

Foucault's approach has come in for criticism, mainly because of a significant limitation: it seems to be more applicable for research on well-defined institutions (medicine, psychiatry) than to finding out how most discourses are limited or what the relations between institutions are.⁶ Foucault uses the term 'discourse' to refer both to literal and social conventions without offering any clear indications about where the discourse ends and other social life begins.⁷ On the other hand, Foucault does not define his work as a complete philosophical system or general theory, but, as he states:

All my books... are little tool boxes... if people want to open them, to use this sentence or that idea as a screwdriver or spanner to short-circuit, discredit or smash systems of power, including eventually those from which my books have emerged... so much the better.⁸

I will use some of Foucault's concepts and thoughts in this spirit, as well as some of the useful questions he generated, in order to clarify the political culture of cultural policy in Kádár's Hungary. Discourse, for example, is not a group of signs and texts for Foucault, but "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak".⁹ During his genealogical era Foucault was interested especially in what conditions, limits and institutionalizes discursive formations.¹⁰ One example of this use of power linked to discourse is the concept of 'the policy of truth' that Foucault uses. It means the power of the prevailing knowledge, that is to say, the policy which is practised through and with the help of the concept of truth. The concept of truth means the discourses that prevail, for example, in the field of science.¹¹

Thus the truth cannot be found, but every society needs to produce truth and create its own interpretation of it.¹² As to the policy of truth, it is also a case of power status and ruling positions, as well as the practices that ensure the validity of each policy of truth. In the end, in practice, it is also a case of how to strive to raise subjects who agree with certain policies. The institutions and discourses specialized in producing truth and information are vital for the preservation of the power structures, as relying on the produced truth guarantees that the use of power continues. Information manifesting itself as the truth is the object of continuous political disputes and social struggle. Every society has its own truth regimes, its general policies of truth.¹³ So, what are the grounds for language change and the models of using language in practice in a social organisation? What types of norms of speaking exist in certain social networks and communities? Which persons and institutions are the most influential when the structure of Foucault's factors is being defined? What are the effects of the structure and the ideologies supporting it?

In Kádár's Hungary the production of truth was mainly entrusted to the intellectuals, especially to the writers. The establishment regarded them as more suitable than the scientists to pass the truth to the people in a way that would produce the best subjects from the viewpoint of the preservation of power. On the other hand, the intellectuals themselves were the objects of the conditioning: consolidation applied to them the same way as to the 'ordinary' people, although at the same time they were the tools of consolidation. Another significant fact is that in Kádár's Hungary the intellectuals had a transmitting role: their task was to transform the values of the establishment to the people with the help of language and discourse.

1 György Aczél – 'Main Censor'

In the following I will discuss the general rules of the cultural system of Kádár's system, especially Aczél's way of using power inside the cultural system; in other words, I will ask the question Foucault generated: "how does power work?"¹⁴ This

way it is possible to see concretely what sort of power produces what and how. One can also ask which individuals, groups or classes have access to a particular type of discourse. How have the relations between discourse, speakers and the audience been institutionalized? How is the battle for the control of discourse between classes, nations, linguistic, cultural and ethnic communities conducted?¹⁵ Or who has the permission to define the limits of the desired discourse?

Cultural power belonged, without a doubt, to Aczél during the whole of the Kádár era. In practice, he was the second in charge in the administration although his official position varied. He, for example, never worked as the Minister of Culture, but as deputy minister. This exemplifies the opaque power contained in Kádár's system: the power and its topmost holders concealed themselves in a complex and ever-changing system, whose inner hierarchy and order relations were extremely difficult to outline. For artists and intellectuals the relationship with the regime practically equalled their (often personal) relationships with Aczél during the whole era. He was a member of the central committee from the beginning of the Kádár era to the end (1956–1989), a member of the Politburo 1970–88, assistant Minister of Culture 1957–67 and the cultural secretary of the Central Committee 1967–74 and 1981–85. After the Second World War Aczél got entangled into the show trial of László Rajk, and he was sentenced to imprisonment in 1949. He was released in 1954 owing to the amnesty following Stalin's death. At first he did not want to return to politics because in his opinion the country was inevitably being forced to choose between Stalinism and Fascism. In addition, the 1956 revolution nourished his nearly paranoid fear of Fascism (he was Jewish), so after the suppression of the revolution he joined Kádár's collaborationist administration supporting the communist dictatorship, which he saw as the only possibility for resisting the Fascist-type restoration.¹⁶

Kádár's administration immediately started to create a new cultural policy that was meant clearly to stand out from the previous cultural policy led by József Révai in Rákosi's time.

The leading figure of the new cultural policy was, at first, István Szirmai, who was the chief of the Agitation and Propaganda Section of the Central Committee 1957–59. Over the years till the end of the 1960s the main threat to the ideology was the so called revisionist thinking, and the official approach to the problem was represented by Szirmai and the agit-prop section. Aczél, however, quickly took control of cultural life and soon gained the position of second-in-command in the country's administration. He was practically the absolute authority in cultural and art-related matters all through the era from the mid-sixties. Cultural policy was an extremely important field, because the intellectuals were quite a dangerous group in the sense that they had a key role in shaping public opinion. Aczél, in particular, was responsible for the way the Party treated the most important intellectuals who shaped opinions. The foundations of the new literary policy were laid between the years 1957–1962: it was the time of literary reform, and the boundaries of the later consensus were drawn. The main question of the reform was whether to eliminate the intellectuals who continued to rebel or whether to try to compromise with them. The writers were an especially important group in this matter. From the Foucaultian viewpoint, therefore, the problem was what type of power relation could be achieved between the writers and the regime, so that the consolidation would develop optimally. Aczél had a considerable influence on the main policies, which stated that there would be an attempt to calm down the intellectuals who had played a significant role in the revolution and to get them to accept a compromise instead of terrorizing and silencing them.¹⁷

The entire administration of cultural policy was personified in Aczél, and literary life, in particular, was under his personal control. Although his dominance was the same as Révai's in the 1950s, Aczél's approach was more pragmatic than dogmatic. He had close personal contact especially with the writers, which was sometimes considered by the party officials to be a dangerous practice. They were afraid that subjective relations would

interfere with the objective solving of aesthetic and ideological problems.¹⁸

2 The Discursive Use of Power Contained in the System of the Three T's

Aczél's cultural policy was based on various principles. First, he supported the heterogeneity of cultural life (although not pluralism), and secondly, his opinion was that disputes over style could not be solved from the viewpoint of power.¹⁹ My other Foucaultian question handles the limits and forms of *the sayable* (that which is possible to say). What is possible to be talked about? What is the constituted domain of discourse? What type of discourse refers to this or that area of reality (in other words: what is regarded as an object of narrative processing, that is to say, an object of literal formulation)? What did Aczél's "heterogeneity", therefore, mean in terms of cultural activities?

In order to guarantee heterogeneity, Aczél created a categorizing system that enabled more specific defining of what was "non-hostile" and "clearly hostile" literature, and, in addition, possibly a kind of "concept of politically neutral literature". From the late 1950s onwards, Aczél drafted this regulation and censorship system, the so-called 'system of the three T's' that dominated the cultural and literary policy throughout the Kádár era.²⁰

The first official comment on literature was Aczél's report "About the state of our literature" (*Az irodalmunk helyzetéről*). The date of publication of the report (6 August 1957) has been called the birthday of the system of the three T's. The report consisted solely of broad definitions of policy, as the country was still in a state of transition. It was announced that writers were expected to represent their political commitment only through their literary works. Otherwise, it was important that the writers clearly expressed their political views on important political matters, such as on the émigré Hungarian writers.²¹ The most important section of the report, however, was the early formulation of the three T's:

In the first place, the Party and the government promotes socialist-realist art. However, it also supports other progressive, realist trends. Furthermore, publicity with due criticism, is granted to such non-realist trends too which are not in contradiction with the People's Democracy. Finally, we reject all attempts to undermine the social or public order of the People's Democracy.^{22*}

In September of the same year the strategy of the central committee of MSZMP was published – so far literary life had been practically stagnant. At that time a proper strategy for literary policy did not yet exist, and this document reflects a type of transition period in the birth of Kádarian literary policy. Another early sign of a new approach was the Party pamphlet “Guidelines of cultural policy” (*Művelődéspolitikai irányelvei*), which was published in August 1958. It abandoned the old rhetoric of the arts having a spontaneous need for socialist unity and guiding of the Party by stating that when building a socialist cultural life, the Party did not only allow, but actively promoted, diversity. This decision emphasizes that ‘realistic’ cannot be a genre, as “it is not possible to solve questions of style by orders/by fiat” (*stílusvitákat nem lehet hatalmi szóval eldönteni*). Additionally, it was stated that the category of tolerated books included works that were not realistic, but that nonetheless were humanistic, which did not threaten the social order and were not disruptive. According to the decision, the Party gave these books a chance of being published, but reserved itself a right to “discuss them”. The books that were considered to be disruptive were not tolerated: in other words, they

* “A párt és a kormány elsősorban a szocialista-realista alkotások létrejöttét támogatja, de segítséget ad minden más haladó, realista irányzatnak, s a bírálat jogát fenntartva nyilvánosságot biztosít olyan nem realista irányzatoknak is, amelyek nem állnak szemben ellenségesen a népi demokráciával. Ugyanakkor elutasít minden olyan törekvést, amely a népi demokrácia állami és társadalmi rendjét akarja aláásni.”

were banned.²³ The principles of the system of the three T's were already outlined, although not yet perfected. The publishing of the system did not, in fact, take place until 1959.²⁴

A view that was meant to be final was published in December 1958, even though a proper unanimity was not reached. The decision was meant to be a step towards literary consolidation and pacification of literary life. Literary policy was, however, still rather disorganised at the time, and the government made several decisions, which were often self-contradictory to some degree. Consolidation in the literary and cultural life meant essentially its de-politicization. The regime also wanted to emphasize that it had learned from the mistakes of the earlier cultural policy (led by Révai) and that the government did not favour any group in particular, but that the foundation of cultural life should be as broad as possible. This has been criticized by saying that whereas the cultural policy of Révai's time suffered from schematism*, Kádarian cultural life was grey, soporific and mediocre.²⁵ On the other hand, it was ideologically more colourful and politically and ideologically more free. In addition, the artistic production was of better quality than during Rákosi's time, because now, for example, strict adherence to the doctrine of Socialist Realism was not demanded.

The new viewpoint to literature and cultural life gained broader validity after the Party Congress in 1962. That congress is famous because of the slogan "anyone who is not against us, is with us". The outcome of the intensive debates over philosophy, literature, history, religion, etc. is crystallized in the declaration of the 9th Congress:

We shall give our support to socialist and other humanistic creative works that speak to broad masses, we shall accommodate endeavours that are politically and ideologically inimical, but we

* Schematism refers to a superficial, photographic realism in arts with stereotyped black and white characters soaked in shallow sentimentalism. It was a consequence of the slavish adaptation of the dogma of the socialist realism. See Lóránt Czigány, *The Oxford History of Hungarian Literature*. Oxford University Press 1984, 442. [Ed. note]

shall debar from our cultural life all manifestations that are politically inimical, antihumanistic or offend public morals.^{26*}

This is the official formulation of the three T's and, at the same time, the culmination of the political neutralisation and consolidation of the intelligentsia, which got its doctrinal form through the system of the three T's. This system was thereby the way in which party policy was converted into practice.²⁷

The system of the three T's was, above all, meant for categorizing rather carefully what was possible to say (*the sayable*) and what was not. The categories were not defined by any finalized rules or regulations: they were slackened and tightened depending on the prevailing political situation. Sándor Révész, who wrote the *Aczél* monograph, refers to this wavering of the rules when he states that the cultural policy of the three T's also contained an unsolved dilemma. It was a part of the basis of the system that the establishment did not by any means tolerate even the "tolerated" works without commenting on them. Instead, it pointed out their shortcomings, thereby attempting to prevent the hidden dangers (against the Socialist System) together with Marxist critique. In addition, as there were no exact, permanent and normative borderlines, the tolerated could change into the prohibited at any time (and *vice versa*). For example, one of the primary duties of an editor was to sense and conform to those changes. In case he did not pay enough attention, the "competent officials" of the Ministry of Culture or the Central Office of the Party, or at the highest level *Aczél* himself, could intervene.²⁸ It was not, therefore, possible to know in advance when tolerance would appear in the eyes of the Party leaders as an error in the publishing policy. Both the writers and the officials may have tried to test the boundaries, but the

* "Támogatásban részesítjük a nagy tömegekhez szóló szocialista és egyéb humanista alkotásokat, helyt adunk a politikailag, eszmeileg nem ellenséges törekvéseknek, viszont kirekesztjük kulturális életünk-ből a politikailag ellenséges, antihumanista vagy közerkölcsöt sértő megnyilatkozásokat." *A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt IX. kongresszusa*. Budapest, Kossuth Könyvkiadó 1966, 128.

only one who really knew what was allowed at a certain time was Aczél. In practice, Aczél often decided personally which literary works were to be published and how. The works could also be distributed only in certain circles, semi-officially, without allowing them to be published in the usual manner.²⁹ Defining *the sayable* was thus an ongoing process, and over the years the line between the first two T's became more and more indistinct and even the third category gradually decreased in significance. What remained constant, however, was a kind of contract between the writers and the government: the writers were not allowed to question the ideological basis of the system (in other words, the one-party system and Hungary's relations with the Soviet Union), but as compensation, they were able to freely express their personal discontent or problems.³⁰

In order to be ranked in the category of the "second T" (tolerated), the book had to meet some certain requirements. First of all, the work was not allowed to contain any, even implicit, political critique of the regime. Secondly, in order to ensure political neutrality, it was important that the book did not create any kind of feeling of a "negative atmosphere" in society, not to contain any mention of decadence gnawing at the social fabric. Even the section of society that did not politically support the regime was expected to feel reasonably comfortable under the given circumstances. The goal was that the feeling of comfort would in the end culminate in a "general feeling of well-being". Aczél felt that while trying to estimate the impact of a non-conformist book or poem on its potential intellectual audience, he was assumed to be on safe ground as long as he remained in the field of "realistic" literature. According to Aczél, realistic literature was written in a transparent way and it described social situations that conformed to the prevailing political interpretation (social class differences, poverty, etc.). Thus, the world of modern art was not familiar to him. When he had to act within that world, Aczél tried attentively to estimate how the so-called "negative atmosphere" present in avant-garde works or the artistic representation directed against the feeling of comfort and security would affect the general atmosphere.

He tended to ban the works on the grounds that they were “alienated” and that “their attitude towards life was not positive”. An example of a problematic writer was Miklós Mészöly, who broke the traditions of Hungarian literature consistently enough to arouse suspicion in the party critics right from the start, not only on ideological but also on formal grounds – particularly on the latter. Additionally, Mészöly was an ambiguous writer. All this was problematic from the Marxist viewpoint, and it shut Mészöly out of the prevailing Hungarian literary discourse for a long time, although he was allowed to publish.³¹

As examples of the variable rules one could mention the (temporary) cooling of the atmosphere and the changing categorizations of the writer Tibor Déry. In the beginning of the 1970s the opposition stood up against a “new economic mechanism” that had been launched in the field of economic policy. Cultural policy was also harnessed to suppress the opposition, and a sort of leftist counterattack against the “forces of the petit bourgeois” was agreed upon. Ideological control tightened not only in domestic policy but also in cultural and literary policy. At the same time also the set of rules concerning light reading, detective and adventure stories was tightened, as the leaders of the field of cultural policy thought it was too slack.³²

The writer Tibor Déry, on the other hand, is a good example not only of the indistinct boundaries of the three T's, but also how essential the naming of '1956' was. Déry was released from prison in 1960, and for several years he was not allowed to publish at all. In 1963 he was issued a passport. At the time he barely fitted the category of tolerated writers, and although during the same year he published his first book since 1945, his request to be permitted to travel to Sweden was refused. However, Déry was allowed to travel to Austria later that year. There he behaved so “gracefully” in a press conference that Aczél himself often referred to it afterwards. The next year, however, Déry's 70th birthday was celebrated only by a few official bulletins, and the magazine *Kortárs* was not allowed to publish an article which was intended to praise the writer. In any event, already in 1971 Déry was among the most sponsored writers.

Among other things, he had a villa in the hills of Buda and a western car – an example of Aczél's benefit system. In the end of the 1970s Déry held a press conference about the film *Szerelem* in the Cannes Film Festival. This film, based on Déry's script, was a big international success. In the press conference Déry stated that what had happened in Hungary in 1956 was a suppressed revolution. This caused problems not only to himself but also to Aczél, who had strongly supported the film. However, even after this Déry was able to publish his books on a regular basis.³³

The actual naming of the events of 1956 was a significant milestone between the *sayable* and *non-sayable*. It was important to call the year 1956 a counter-revolution, not a revolution, even though it was not until 1972 that Kádár officially stated that "a national tragedy has occurred, which is scientifically defined as a counter-revolution".³⁴ Also, Heino Nyysönen mentions "the most significant official authorities on '1956' in Kádár's Hungary, who guarded the 'right' interpretation".³⁵ Therefore, it can be said that by that time Hungary already had the persons or circles who had the authority to define the meanings to the Hungarian people and at the same time to interpret their history. This matter contains other questions such as the boundaries and forms of the memory and in what way the events of the year 1956 were allowed to be remembered.* Nyysönen writes about the politics of memory during the Kádarian regime. He states that the year 1956 was a taboo in Socialist Hungary. One of the strategies of remembering was the anniversaries. For example, the officials tried to confuse people's memories concerning October 23 to 30. Instead of people remembering the events of the year 1956, the officials put emphasize on November 7th, the day of the Russian Revolution. The aim was to get the public to forget '1956' through prohibition and censorship.³⁶ In addition, Nyysönen claims that the revival of the year 1956 was an essential part of the change in the political system at the end

* See also Nyysönen's article in this volume. [Ed. note]

of the 1980s. He refers to the epoch-making event in 1989 when Imre Pozsgay commented on the naming of 1956 as a counter-revolution: "It could be considered that it is not true."³⁷

3 Silence as a Weapon

If we follow Foucault's line of thoughts on how the conditions for the existence of discourse can be examined, it is interesting to focus on those writers who chose to be silent. Foucault says:

Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it.³⁸

Foucault understands power as a relationship. According to an analysis by Martin Kusch he sees that our identities as individuals cannot be separated from the power relations, in which we live and function and that people become subjects through these power relations.³⁹ What is essential in Foucault's conception of power is that he sees power as an internal relationship, in which relationships shape the participants. He also emphasizes that the possibility of resistance is always included in power. He presents this idea in a pointed way by claiming that there are no power relations if there is no possibility of resistance. Even though the relations can be unequal, power can only be exercised up to the point when those lacking power have the chance to, for instance, commit suicide, flee or kill the former.⁴⁰ According to Foucault there are resistance points everywhere in the power network and, moreover, quantitatively, they can only exist in this strategic field of power relations. Thus, each form of resistance is a unique case. There are various forms of resistance such as possible, necessary and unlikely resistance, or spontaneous, wild, guided or violent resistance,

etc. Also the possibilities for resistance vary from the wider to the extremely limited.⁴¹

In the case of Hungary the writers have exercised several forms of resistance. In 1956 they fought at the barricades in its concrete sense and lost the battle. After that there was a change in the power relations which resulted in a change in the forms of resistance, too. After the events of 1956 there were writers in Hungary who had no other option but silence: they were either imprisoned or silenced in other ways. Nearly every productive writer was an active member in political resistance. They were amongst the finest and most widely read writers, such as Tibor Déry, Gyula Illyés, Gyula Háy, László Németh, Péter Veres, István Örkény, Zoltán Zelk. Only few of the completely non-political writers such as Sándor Weöres, Géza Ottlik, János Pilinszky or Miklós Szentkuthy did not participate. In 1957 writers were even on strike: on 3rd December 1957 the Writers' Union decided that "the Hungarian writers will in all circumstances serve the Hungarian people, and we will not allow our works to be abused by any government or party."⁴² Many of those writers who had a choice boycotted the government's new publishing activities by simply refusing to publish. These silent writers could not be persuaded to publish even politically completely neutral poetry. Of those mentioned above, Déry, Háy, and Zalk were silent, for they were imprisoned. Aczél was given the executive power to decide the attitude towards the political resistance. For example, whether the previous active literary elite is to be replaced by Party followers and fiction-producing Party propagandists.⁴³

What took Aczél to the highest stage of decision making was the courageous choice he made concerning the matter. He decided to reintegrate the rebelling writers in the official literary life of the regime, at any price. To replace the intellectuals who were either rebelling or regarded as unreliable with more flexible ones was not an unusual solution. One can refer to the elimination of the blossoming and internationally acknowledged art avant-garde of the Soviet Union in the 1920s, or the activities of the Husák regime in Czechoslovakia after 1968. In

Hungary, however, it was thought that if the rebelling intellectuals were replaced by Party followers, the regime might easily turn the majority of the intelligentsia against them for a long period of time, thus jeopardizing the consolidation. After the uprising the essential problem for the Party was how to break the silence of the writers and in this way get them in an implicit way to acknowledge legitimacy of the regime. This was attempted by no longer emphasizing the dogma of socialist realism as the criterion for publishing.⁴⁴

The form of resistance chosen by some of the writers could be called the “policy of silence”. László Németh wrote in his diary: “If there are words or a word, the writing of which is prohibited, let’s not write them. The act of not writing can speak for itself, a white blank or a column in the censored newspapers of the First World War. There is no need to write things, but we must write in such a way that the white blanks are there.”⁴⁵ The rules on what could be said (*the sayable*) already existed even though the system of the three T’s was not yet officially formulated. However, as it is essential to differentiate between the verbs “reminding” and “making to forget”⁴⁶ it is also essential to distinguish “forcing” from “restricting”. On one hand the writers were not allowed to say what they wanted, on the other hand they had to say something: to be more specific, to say such things the regime had defined as *sayable*. By refusing to speak the writers were to some extent able to change the relationship between the power and opposing strategies. With strategies Foucault refers to the means of using power effectively or preserving it.⁴⁷

Because the writers chose the policy of silence as their strategy, Aczél needed to find a strategy with which to break this silence in order to preserve the power with his own system. Aczél performed the task in an exemplary manner: he did not use coercion, but chose seduction which in practice manifested itself as personal relationships and was in fact a kind of dinner table exercise of power. For Aczél had a number of tricks and manipulative devices which he used when trying to bring the key intellectuals closer to the regime. Aczél’s method can be

summarized in two terms: the policy of favours and informalization, the latter meaning personal contacts.⁴⁸

It needs to be noticed that power includes the possibility of consent, which can be assessed to be particularly essential in the case of seductive power, even though Foucault places it, as with violence, in principle outside power, but still as one of the possible features of a power relationship. Aczél focused namely on certain key figures in the literary life, whom he assessed to have the power to influence others' opinions as widely as possible. This way he strove to gain a kind of network of trustees among intellectuals, especially the writers. So, Aczél's exercise of power is exactly what Foucault talks about when he states that the mechanisms of power are, in fact, points in which power reaches individuals: power is exercised rather within a social community than from outside one.⁴⁹

4 The Economy of the Culture as a Control System

On a more concrete level controlling the discourse and activities of the intelligentsia were essentially about controlling and manoeuvring the publishing business, where both the number of titles and editions were increasing. Between 1960 and 1985 the volume of printed books and the titles of pamphlets more or less doubled reaching the total of 10,000, while the total volume increased from 53 books per thousand citizens both in 1955 and in 1960 to 98 books per thousand citizens by the year 1984. The result was that in 1970 Hungary rose to the same level as France, Belgium and Bulgaria. Ten years later Hungary was the only socialist country to reach the top third level of book publishing, together with West Germany, Finland and the Netherlands. Even more significant than the quantitative measures was the diminishing role of propaganda, while the work of earlier unknown and banned foreign writers were now more available and at reasonable prices.⁵⁰

However, censorship remained an essential part of the editorial work in the publishing business. There was no office of censor, but the guiding principles were commonly known and the publishers fulfilled an agreement of a kind of self-censorship. In

exchange, the Hungarian Government offered financial security to these “cultural workers”. This benefit system was organised in state supported and controlled organisations, such as the Writers’ Union, or foundations, such as the Literature Fund, and offered security to the writers who followed the Party policy. The punitive measures consisted of loss of benefits for a certain period of time.⁵¹

In addition, a characteristic feature in the literary life in Kádár’s era was the rehabilitation of popular genres and writers lacking any theoretical or political meaning. One of the writers was György Moldova, who at first gained an enormous readership by daring to choose to write about themes such as Judaism and Communism, which were earlier regarded as taboos. Later Moldova confused his admirers by choosing to write sensational disclosures on various social problems. Also the French Foreign Legion adventure stories by Jenő Rejtő, which were written before the war under the pseudonym P. Howard, were again allowed in book stores in the early sixties.⁵²

Rejtő can be regarded as a good example of the actual system of censorship, which had a strong effect on which works were published and which were not. In 1954 the *Kiadói Főigazgatóság* (KF), was founded in order to centralise the administration of publishers. The main agenda was to ascertain that the cultural-political goals remained intact. In reality, it was KF, which executed Aczél’s literary policies. The system of the three T’s manifested itself in a so-called *iv-ár* -method, according to which a price was set for books on the basis of the number of pages they consisted of. However, the value of a page was tied to its content. This price was based on certain price sheets: the cheapest (0.70 Ft/page) pages were the “Who is who” literature of Hungarian, Soviet and other contemporary People’s Democracies. Next on the list came classical works from the countries already mentioned. Even more valuable was the so-called foreign contemporary literature, and the most expensive literature was foreign classical and older literature in general, as well as such literature which was regarded as “light”, such as entertainment, detective and crime stories, etc. This system functioned

throughout Kádár's era. Thus, it was far from easy to get Rejtő's detective stories published, or at least it required a large amount of money. On the other hand, socialist Hungary was suffering from shortage of paper, and money could be earned with the help of the popular detective stories. Overall, this is a good example of the complex censorship system functioning in Hungary, even though it was never said out loud that such a system existed.⁵³

5 The Failure of Aczél's Power Strategy

Aczél's calming, neutralizing and integrating role lasted until 1968, when along with the Czechoslovakian crisis a new and self-confident generation of writers appeared. Their strategy was to found their own organisations as an opposing forum for the official, politically controlled structures of literary life and beyond. At the same time, they took the first step towards political pluralism by polarizing the field, which so far had been under bureaucratic control. Aczél had no means of coping with the situation, and no routine solutions were available. Thus, his methods did not succeed when he tried to apply them to this new generation of writers.⁵⁴

In his article *Subject and Power* (1982) Foucault defines power as a ratio of two operators, that is of *a* to *b*. This ratio can also be applied to Aczél and the writers. After 1956 there was, on the basis of a compromise, a balance of some kind in the relationship. Both parties had accepted the same rules for their actions. The question was clearly about the relationship, for Aczél could not operate only through the orders given from above, but he needed the writers' approval. In this way power became productive, in a concrete sense, which Foucault, too, stresses in his analyses of power.

At the end of the 1960s there was a change in the relationship between the writers and the regime, and Aczél's seductive power no longer attracted the young writers. On the other hand, it can be mentioned that once more they chose a more active form of resistance by forming nests in the field of power. In addition, they had none of the deep-seated fear of their liter-

ary creativity being jeopardized. Rather than unofficial and personal, they wanted their contacts with the regime to be objective and institutional. The new generation of artists wanted to rank the artists with a hierarchy based purely on artistic merits. They did not want official acknowledgement as the price of having to serve the regime's purposes. They had no intention of legitimizing the power by socializing with Aczél at his 'dinner table' and thereby consolidating the regime. In a Foucaultian sense the resistance of the young writers was opposition to those effects of power which were connected with knowledge, competence and qualification, a battle against the privileges of knowledge. Furthermore, it was opposition to the secrecy and mystification. Foucault also states that it is the forms of resistance which function as some kind of catalysts, which bring the power relations to light, point out their positions and applicability and the methods used.⁵⁵ This change that occurred in the power relations resulted in Aczél no longer being regarded as a successful stabilizer in the 1970s. At the end of the 1970s writers were in a growing number turning their backs on the compromise that had been in operation since the end of the 1950s. The writers wanted to treat themes and points of view that had been banned. This led to a new era when, in the beginning of the 1980s, the officials felt obliged to take action against someone or something almost every year, even though the boundaries defining what could be discussed in public were fading and the taboo concepts were shrinking.⁵⁶

At the turn of the decade political opposition emerged again and the means by which the political neutralization had been exercised turned out to be ineffective. The chances of Kádár holding on to his power were at the same time being questioned. Intellectuals' movement, similar to the ones in Czechoslovakia and Poland, collected names for various petitions, published *samizdat* magazines, founded underground publishing houses, organised "counter" universities in private homes and started the national movements. Soon it grew to a general political opposition, the objectives of which were to improve civil rights, to create an economic policy based on a market economy

and political pluralism. The aspirations of the Democratic Opposition were making progress at a similar pace with the movement of the young writers and the two became more and more intertwined. These movements were the vanguard of the alternative movement, and eventually that of the emerging political parties.⁵⁷

In the 1980s Aczél realized that the only way that Kádárism could resist the pressures for normalization was for it to become less oppressive. Neutralization was no longer sufficient, nor were Aczél's methods calming the rebellious intelligentsia. Their isolation, the last effort to keep them under control, was less and less successful. The Kádarian system went through a crisis during the 1980s, with the result that the policy for handling the intelligentsia lost its meaning and function. In addition, Aczél lost his position formally, and he was replaced in the middle of the 1980s. Thus, the situation changed during the 1980s and it can be argued that it was a form of post-modern change, which resulted in a culture and society which was more pluralistic and more difficult, if not impossible, to control totally.⁵⁸ However, the question was mostly about changes in the power relations. Foucault says that the idea is not to get rid of the power but to cause shifts within it.⁵⁹ Tuija Pulkkinen, for her part, points out that Foucaultian thinking does not attempt to suppress power but to cause transitions in what is caused by the power.⁶⁰ The intelligentsia did not submit to Aczél's power, which resulted in a conflict between the regime and the intelligentsia. There were other conditions at this time, too, which made it impossible to use violence.

1980s was the time of transition in Hungary. Bill Lomax (1998) claims that the Hungarian intellectuals during the 1980s were reminiscent of the intellectuals of Victorian England in the sense that they were both elitist. Even though the Hungarian intellectuals had not been that elitist as their Victorian predecessors they were still aware of their superiority. John Stuart Mill, regarded his fellow lights as "persons qualified to govern men's minds". According to Mill, society would develop towards perfection in the event that "the most virtuous and best

instructed of the nation would acquire ascendancy over the opinions and feelings of the rest". This illustrates the traditional role of the writer as a prophet. On the other hand, Hungarian dissident intellectuals combined in a similar manner a bohemian lifestyle, freethinking and scorn for authorities with self-assured feelings of intellectual superiority, chauvinistic attitudes towards women and patronizing attitudes towards the poor and the less educated. Rather like Mill, the Hungarian intellectual dissidents believed that it were the task of the educated class to civilize a nation. However, they did not have a genuine interest in the other classes' problems, such as those of the workers and peasants. This attitude derived from their own history, the Revolution of 1956 in particular. When naming the year 1956 as a revolution, instead of a counter-revolution, the dissident intellectuals supported the reformist communists more than the workers or street fighters.⁶¹

Only few of the members of the opposition were brave enough to challenge the dominant position of the elitist cultural ideology, and although a radical plebeian group did exist, it remained small, isolated and marginal. Eventually, the moderate main body of the opposition realized the significance of workers' councils in the events of 1956 and even regretted not taking more interest in them. After 1989 the interpretation of the year 1956 resurfaced to polarize the people with the intellectuals, on the one hand, who mainly identified with the martyr-reformist communists and their programme, and with former proletarian leaders and street fighters, on the other hand, who favoured mostly populist and right-wing radicalism. The situation remained stable even after the change of regime in the sense that the intellectuals remained above the people.⁶² This also explains the fact why it was so important for the regime to gain the support of the intellectuals. Perhaps this partly explains why Aczél lost his grip on the intellectuals in the 1980s. Both of the generations of intellectuals, the one after 1956 and the one following that, were, nevertheless, able to cause changes in the power and the power relations in Hungarian society in their own ways.

6 Conclusion

The political culture of Kádarian – or Aczélian - cultural policy consisted of a strong exercise of power. However, the way in which the power was executed differed from the earlier Rákósián cultural policy. In a Foucaultian sense it was tempting, even seductive. Foucault writes about power relations, in which both the possibility of violence and acceptance is included. In addition, he mentions the chance of violence as a power mechanism of a kind, but he does not see the exercise of power itself as being either violence or acceptance. The question is about the total structure of the functions directed at the possible activities.

Nevertheless, as we discuss the exercise of power it is not either one of the above, but rather for the nature of power to be encouraging, alluring, seductive and complicating as well as facilitating. In its extreme form power prohibits. However, Foucault always sees power as productive: it constitutes new knowledge and new areas of human existence. Violence, in contrast, forces, bends, crushes, destroys and closes doors for possibilities. According to Foucault, when faced with a policy of violence the only possible form of resistance is passivity, which the ruling power can only try to minimize.⁶³

Thus, the antithesis of violence can only be passivity. It was also chosen by the Hungarian writers after the suppression of the rebellion in 1956 but soon broken by Aczél with his seductive dinner table method. Aczél counted on these individually tailored privileges as being sufficient to retain the intelligentsia's support for the consolidation of the regime. In a wider sense this practice refers to the technique which helped the Kádarian regime to stay in power. The consolidation of Kádár's power and its consequences have often been called a compromise. A compromise can be defined as a contract between two active parties, even though the power relations were unequal and benefits were only offered to one of the parties. However, in this case only one of the participants, the Party, was active. It offered the writers, the passive participants, the benefits which only the party could impose. The benefits did not result from

the prevailing conditions but they were granted because the Party had the power to grant them. In the literary sphere Aczél attempted to charm most of the important figures and made it seem as if the privileges were granted as a result of the writers' high literary merits. Nevertheless, he also implied that in addition to these merits the writers had to express their loyalty towards the regime in an explicit way to gain any privileges.⁶⁴

As was already mentioned, this method was successful only with the generation active during 1956 and immediately afterwards. The following generation was immune to Aczél's seductive machinery and even to power itself. For instance, Péter Esterházy has declined the role of a literary prophet, or *vátesz*. He says that politics belongs to politicians, not writers. This way, by not accepting power, he at the same time gains a wider sense of freedom of speech. On the other hand, a proportion of the writers still take the prophesy of political influencing as their responsibility. Most visible also in today's political field have been Sándor Csoóri and György Konrád and one should not forget that the first president of the Republic of Hungary was in fact a writer and translator, Árpád Göncz.⁶⁵

In the atmosphere of the three T's the traditional role of Hungarian literature as public resistance, an awareness of the nation and as a substitute for parliament receded. As a general rule it can be said, however, that literary works were not forced into a position of illegal publishing and so the possibility to publish books legally caused some demoralizing self-censorship amongst Hungarian writers. The aim was to get the writers and other artists to say only such things that supported the regime, its values and objectives. This way the cultural policy was to support the Party policies. Culture was a means of propaganda and literature, in particular, manifested the propagandist and instrumental idea of it held by the new political elite. Thus, Hungarian literary discourse was a subject to a substantial execution of power.

At the core of the power relations there is "the stubbornness of will" and "unconditionality of freedom" constantly nourishing them.⁶⁶ And however unequal the power relation, there is

always a chance for resistance, Foucault claims.⁶⁷ When examining the relationship between the cultural regime, particularly Aczél, and the intellectuals in a Foucaultian manner in Hungary during the Kádár era, it is easy to say that it is fruitful to regard power as a relationship. It can also be perceived that both the parties of the relationship had an effect on how that relationship functioned: in a Foucaultian sense intellectuals, too, had freedom to influence their own positions and the field of discourse in which they functioned. Exercise of power was clearly discursive, for the limitations and the attempts of restriction were focused namely on what was allowed to be said. Thus, the question was about discursive relationships which always create boundaries for discourse.⁶⁸

NOTES

- ¹ Bart, István (2001a), "Világirodalom és könyvkiadás a Kádár-korszakban I". *Kritika* 1/2001, 6–7; Ständeisky, Éva, *Az írók és a hatalom 1956–1963*. Második, javított kiadás. Budapest, 56-os intézet 1996, 451.
- ² Foucault, Michel, "Politics and the Study of Discourse". In Graham Burhell et al. (eds.), *The Foucault Effect. Studies in Governmentality with Two Lectures by and Interview with Michel Foucault*. London, Harvester Wheatsheaf 1991, 59–60, 68–69.
- ³ Makra, Hajnalka, "Unkarin kirjallisuuden dilemmoja vuosituuhannen vaihteessa". In Katariina Grämer ja Kirsi Luukkanen (ed.), *Kulttuurien kohtaamisia. Folia Hungarica 9. Castrenianumin toimitteita 54*. Helsinki, Helsingin yliopisto 1998, 32–33; Márai, Sándor, *Ihlet és nemzedék*. Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó & Helikon Kiadó 1992, 185–187.; Vasy, Géza, *Sors és irodalom*. Budapest, Széphalom Könyvműhely 1995, 135; Ständeisky 1996, 12.
- ⁴ See Schieffelin, Bambi B. – Woolard, Kathryn A. – Kroskrity, Paul V. (eds.), *Language and Ideologies. Practice and Theory*. New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press 1998, 212–213; Dreyfus, Hubert L. & Rabinow, Paul, Michel Foucault. *Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Brighton, The Harvester Press 1982, XX and 48–49; Foucault, Michel (1982a), *The Archeology of Knowledge*. Transl. by A. M. Sheridan Smith. London, Tavistock 1982, 116–117.
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- ⁶ E.g. Hellinger, Marlis, "Effecting Social Change Through Group Action: Feminine Occupational Titles in Transition". In Kramarae et al. 1984.
- ⁷ Weedon, Chris – Tolson, Andrew and Mort, Frank, *Theories of Language and Subjectivity*. In *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies*. London, Hutchinson 1980, 194–216; Lemert, Charles C. and Gillan, Garth: *Michel Foucault: Social Theory as Transgression*. New York, Columbia University Press 1982.
- ⁸ Quoted in Patton, Paul, "Of Power and Prisons". In Morris, Meaghan and Patton (eds.), *Michel Foucault: Power/Truth/Strategy*. Sydney, Feral Publications 1979, 115.
- ⁹ Foucault 1982a, 49.
- ¹⁰ Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982, 104.
- ¹¹ Foucault, Michel (1976), "Two Lectures". In Gordon Colin (ed.), *Power/Knowledge. Selected Interviews and other Writings 1972–1977*. New

- York, Pantheon 1980; Foucault, Michel (1977), "Truth and Power". In Gordon (ed.), 1980; Kusch, Martin, Foucault. Tiedon kentät ja kerrostumat. Suom. Heini Hakosuo. Oulu, Kustannus Pohjoinen 1994.
- ¹² Foucault 1976; Foucault, Michel, *The History of Sexuality. An Introduction*. Harmondsworth, Penguin 1978, 21–23; Kusch 1994.
- ¹³ Foucault 1977, 131–133.
- ¹⁴ Foucault, Michel (1982b), "The Subject and Power". *Critical Inquiry* 8, Summer 1982, 788.
- ¹⁵ Foucault 1991, 60.
- ¹⁶ Révész, Sándor, *Aczél és korunk*. Budapest, Sík Kiado 1997, 48–51, 53, 57, 61; Szabó, Róbert, *A kommunista párt és a zsidóság*. Windsor Kiadó 1995, 251–253.
- ¹⁷ Révész 1997, 86; Romsics, Ignác, *Hungary in the Twentieth Century*. Transl. by Tim Wilkinson. Budapest, Corvina & Osiris 1999, 337.
- ¹⁸ Bart 2001a; Révész 1997, 244; Katkó, István, "Aki támogatott, túrt és tiltott egyszemélyben". In Szerdahelyi, István (szerk.), *Harc és játszma*. Budapest, Hét Krajcsár Kiadó 1998, 119–122.
- ¹⁹ Vass, Henrik – Ságvári, Ágnes (szerk.) 1973, *Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt határozatai és dokumentumai 1956–1962. Második, bővített kiadás*. Budapest, Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 268.
- ²⁰ *Az MSZMP művelődési politikájának irányelvei*. In Vass – Ságvári 1973, 228; Révész 1997, 101–102; Standeisky 1996, 393.
- ²¹ Révész 1997, 71; Cseh, Gergő – Kalmár, Melinda – Pór, Edit, *Zárt, bizalmas, számozott. Tájékoztatáspolitikai és cenzúra 1956–1963 (dokumentumok)*. Budapest, Osiris Kiadó 1999, 84–85.
- ²² Editor's translation. Vass – Ságvári 1973, 142.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 268.
- ²⁴ Cseh – Kalmár – Pór 1999, 91–94; Romsics 1999, 388.
- ²⁵ Kalmár, Melinda, *Ennivaló és hozomány. A kora kádárizmus ideológiája*. Budapest, Magvető 1998, 79, 84, 91–102; Standeisky 1996, 457.
- ²⁶ Romsics 1999, 388. Original wording: *Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt IX. kongresszusa*. Budapest, Kossuth Könyvkiadó 1966, 128.
- ²⁷ Cseh – Kalmár – Pór 1999, 85–86.
- ²⁸ Romsics 1999, 393.
- ²⁹ Révész 1997, 245; Romsics 1999, 389.
- ³⁰ Révész 1997, 136.
- ³¹ Györffy, Miklós, "The Magic of Facts. The Writer Miklós Mészöly at 80". *The Hungarian Quarterly*. Vol. XLII, no. 162, Summer 2001; Révész 1997, 196.

- ³² Az MSZMP Központi Bizottságának irányelvei a párt XI. kongresszusára. Budapest 1972, 31, quoted in Bart István (2001c), "Világirodalom és könyvkiadás a Kádár-korszakban III". *Kritika* 3/2001.
- ³³ Révész 1997, 120–121; see also Botka, Ferenc (szerk.), D. T. úr B-ben. Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum 1995, CXCIV.
- ³⁴ Seewann, Gerhard & Sitzler, Kathrin, "Ungarn 1956: Volkaufstand-Konterrevolution-nationale Trägödie. Offizielle Retrospektive nach 25 Jahren". *Südosteuropa. Zeitschrift für Gegenwartforschung* 1/1982, 16–18; cf. Nyysönen, Heino, The Presence of the Past in Politics. '1956' after 1956 in Hungary. Jyväskylä, Sophi 1999, 114.
- ³⁵ Nyysönen 1999, 114.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 11, 41, 114–119.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 16, Pozsgay, Imre, 1989. Politikus-pálya a pártállamban és a rendszerváltásban. Budapest, Püski Kiadó 1993, 223–224, quoted in Nyysönen 1999, 159.
- ³⁸ Foucault 1978, 100–101.
- ³⁹ Kusch 1994, 102.
- ⁴⁰ Foucault, Michel, "The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom". An Interview. *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 2-3/1987, 122–123.
- ⁴¹ Foucault 1978, 95–96; Foucault, Michel, The Eye of Power. In Gordon 1980, 142.
- ⁴² *Literatura*, 1989. 1–2. sz., 319–320.
- ⁴³ Standeisky 1996, 166–170; Cseh – Kalmár – Pór 1999, 83–84.
- ⁴⁴ Révész 1997; Czigány, Lóránt, The Oxford History of Hungarian Literature. New York: Oxford University Press 1984, 451–452.
- ⁴⁵ László Németh's diary (Új írás) May 1978. Quoted in Lahdelma, Tuomo et al. (ed.), Unkarilainen omakuva. Jyväskylä, Atena Kustannus 2001.
- ⁴⁶ See Nyysönen 1999, 41.
- ⁴⁷ Foucault 1982b, 793–794.
- ⁴⁸ Révész 1997, 146–147.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 75–81, 114; Foucault 1980, 39.
- ⁵⁰ See document "A könyvkiadás, könyvtárügy és könyvterjesztés néhány adata". In Tóth, Gyula (szerk.), Irányított irodalom. A Kiadói Főigazgatóság irataiból 1961–1970. Dokumentumválogatás. Budapest: Alfa Kiadó és Nyomdaüzeme 1992, 107–110; Romsics 1999, 398.
- ⁵¹ See the case of Tibor Déry described above. See Bácskai, Tamás: The Economics of Culture and the Culture of Economics. *The Hungarian Quarterly* vol. XL, no. 155. Autumn 1999.
- ⁵² Romsics 1999, 392.

- ⁵³ Bart 2001a, 6–8; Bart (2001b), “Világirodalom és könyvkiadás a Kádár-korszakban II”. *Kritika* 2/2001., 4–6; a document from 1968: ‘Tervezet a Kiadói Főigazgatóság vezetőjének rendelkezése a kulturális alappal kapcsolatos egyes kérdésekről’, where is the seven point list of the principles on ground of which the KF supports the literal works. In Tóth 1992, 393–396.
- ⁵⁴ Révész 1997, 163; Romsics 1999, 393.
- ⁵⁵ Foucault 1982b, 780–781.
- ⁵⁶ Révész 1997, 163; Romsics 1999, 393.
- ⁵⁷ Révész 1997, 277–279
- ⁵⁸ See e.g. Lyotard, Jean-François, *Postmodern Condition. A Report on Knowledge*. Minneapolis, University of Minneapolis Press 1985; Bauman, Zygmunt, *Intimations of Postmodernism*. London, Routledge 1992; Vattimo, Gianni, *End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Postmodern Culture*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP 1988; Baudrillard, Jean, *Selected Writings*, ed. by Mark Poster. Cambridge, Polity 1988.
- ⁵⁹ Foucault 1980b, 115–116.
- ⁶⁰ Pulkkinen, Tuija, *Postmoderni politiikan filosofia*. Tampere, Gaudeamus 1998, 110.
- ⁶¹ Lomax, Bill, *The Inegalitarian Nature of Hungary’s Intellectual Political Culture*. In Bozóki, András (ed.), *Intellectuals and Politics in Central Europe*. Budapest, CEU Press 1999, 173–174; Mill, John Stuart, *The Spirit of the Age*. In *Mill’s Essays on Literature and Society*. Ed. J.B Schneewind. New York, Collier Books 1965, 75.
- ⁶² Csizmadia, Ervin, *A magyar demokratikus ellenzék (1968–1988)*. Budapest, T-Twins 1995, 449–453; Lomax 1999, 174.
- ⁶³ Foucault 1982b, 788–789; Foucault 1978, 61.
- ⁶⁴ Révész 1997, 146–154
- ⁶⁵ See e.g. Mátraházi, Zsuzsa, “A politika olyan, mint a társadalom”. *Találkozó Eszterházy Péterrel. Könyvhét*. Kulturális kéthetilap. Február/2001, 5; Blomstedt, Jan, “Unkarilainen ‘mutta’. Kirjailijat harrastavat politiikkaa ja pohtivat kansallista identiteettiä”. *Helsingin Sanomat* 7.5.1989; Petäjä, Jukka, “Mukkulaan matkaava Péter Eszterházy: poliittinen tilanne on vähentänyt kirjallisuuden merkitystä Unkarissa”. *Helsingin Sanomat* 16.6.1991.
- ⁶⁶ Foucault 1982b, 790, 796.
- ⁶⁷ Foucault 1987, 122–123.
- ⁶⁸ Foucault 1982a, 45–46.

**History in the first Parliament:
The Politics of Memory in Hungary 1990-1994**

Heino NYSSÖNEN

In the transition to democracy Hungary could be remembered not only for its early political reforms but also as a country in which the leading party itself started to investigate its recent history at an early stage. In 1989 several symbolic political actions also took place such as a new interpretation of 1956, the reburial of Prime Minister Imre Nagy, and the declaration of the republic on October 23rd, i.e. precisely on the anniversary of the 1956 revolution.

In this paper we will take a step ahead and examine how the new Hungarian Parliament conducted debates on historical matters in the 1990s. The idea of this approach is based on the view that professional historians and scholars are ultimately one group of several who interpret and reinterpret the past. This is because the media or politicians deal with history and interpret and reinterpret the past in their comments and speeches. Dieter Langewiesche has noted that all six presidents of the Federal Republic of Germany commented on and interpreted the German past in speeches made to the public. Furthermore, as Bo Stråth has argued, myth and memory are history but in a process of constant transformation, so that the distinction between history and memory as opposites can no longer be maintained.¹

However, we have to bear in mind that the debates in Hungary were not unique in the 1990s, and the situation could be seen as an example of a broader discussion after the collapse of communism.

Moral and political problems can be found, for example, in dealing with the past in general, purges or the restriction of 'men of the past' from participating in contemporary political life. In this sense there are also many other examples from other countries such as The Truth Commission in the Republic of South Africa, Chile in the 1990s or the long-standing discussion of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in Germany. In those debates during, and particularly after a political change, the past, the meaning of it and how the past is dealt with in general are discussed.

In the context of the Hungarian situation it is argued here that the debates in Parliament were not only an interlude at the turn of the decade or just the consequences of the limited discussion and the taboos of the communist era. Instead, they are connected to Hungarian political culture which, in the view of the present author, is strongly bound up with earlier orientations of historical argumentation. Secondly, they dealt with difficult political questions of morality, justice and identity; and therefore they were intimately connected to the very nature of nationalism as well.

The main argument here is that at an identity level the past has been more political than the future – an argument frequently overlooked in the future-oriented transition literature. Quite a large consensus existed about the future, i.e. system change in general: therefore dealing with the past in Hungary has been more problematic.

We may argue that not only the leading communist party, HSWP, and its reformers engaged in politicking with history: since 1988, new parties also started to discover and rediscover their historical roots and rituals in order to dissociate from and identify with particular pasts in their argumentation. The political use of history did not end in 1990; critical studying of history and historical identity, thus, emerged at the turn of the decade. Defining 'we' and searching for historical roots for 'us' politicized history as well.

1 Change and the politics of memory

Particularly during transition periods the past belongs to the whole process of the change. The change itself consists of several alterations on separate levels – not all could be changed at the same time. Although the first free elections took place in 1990 and the whole parliamentary structure was soon completed, even as late as in 1999 a minister might still argue about “completing the system change”. Only in the summer of 2001 did the Prime Minister use the slogan that “the future has begun”.²

Hence, studies of mentality would suggest that changes in mentality occur slower than symbolic, economic or political alterations.³ Not only is ‘the new’ born from ‘the old’, but at the same time ‘the old’ remains a part of ‘the new’. In politics the change has also to be fashioned from rhetorical constructions of identities and differences. History in the Parliament is a significant part of this process. We cannot get rid of the past, but more problematic is the question of what should be done with it.

However, history itself is a broad concept and encompasses many agents. Frank Füredi differentiates between *History* and *history*, the former also including the future-oriented broad narrative, while the latter refers to critical historical thinking.⁴ The debate is not solely carried out amongst historians, but also occurs in public discussion and the media as part of ‘history culture’ (*Geschichtskultur*).⁵ According to Wolfgang Hardtwig, this concept refers to undefined but various means of keeping the past in the present.* We may also refer this phenomenon to the politics of memory (*Erinnerungspolitik*); hence maintaining and representing the past in the present needs political activity as well.

For these and other reasons I will use a concept which could be labelled ‘history politics’ (*Geschichtspolitik*) in this study. This con-

* “Geschichtskultur – das ist eine Sammelbezeichnung für höchst unterschiedliche, sich ergänzende oder überlagernde, jedenfalls direkt oder indirekt aufeinander bezogene Formen der Präsentation von Vergangenheit in einer Gegenwart. Sie ist nichts Statisches, sondern permanent im Wandel...”. Hardtwig, Wolfgang, *Geschichtskultur und Wissenschaft*. München, DTV 1990, 8-9.

cept deals with 'history as politics' (*Geschichte als Politikum*) and was first used by Edgar Wolfrum. According to Wolfrum, in 'history politics' the past is used to achieve mobilized, politicized or legitimised effects on the public (*Öffentlichkeit*).⁶ These effects could be found, for example, in discussions surrounding identity, nation, rituals, memorial and festival days, etc. There the political use of history does not only refer to a certain 'misuse', but also arguments such as 'revealing the truth at last' which need political – though not necessarily party political – activity.

When we discuss the connection between the past and politics, it is evident that it is not only related to historians and politicians, but to all human beings. The struggle for supremacy and the duration of domination remain struggles over history.⁷ Thus, on the one hand, the question in Hungary was about getting 'rid' of the past, but at the same time, and more important, it was about the political values of the new republic. Hence, we have come to history as an ongoing political debate of the past, and also to the judgement of that past, which always takes place in the present context. In Aristotelian rhetoric, a particular kind of forensic rhetoric deals with the past. There are two arts of forensic rhetoric: defending and accusing, which both also utilise arguments such as justice, injustice, honesty and disgrace. Aristotle was concerned particularly with courts, but parliaments are very typical examples as well.⁸

As a whole, this paper focuses on the first Hungarian Parliament and its discussions in the 1990s. During those years there were several debates concerning actual political issues and interpretations, in addition to which the Parliament was responsible for the creation of several laws which both directly and indirectly impacted on the ways of dealing with the past. Thirdly, the Members of Parliament, as well as the President of the Republic, maintained several commemorative rituals, such as laying wreaths, or representing the country through the practice of these public rituals.

2 The Hungarian Parliament 1990-1994

The Hungarian Parliament has been one of the most stable in East Central Europe: five out of the six parties elected in 1990 still held seats in the Parliament in 2001, and only one new party had emerged in the elections of 1998. In 1990 only 14 members out of 386 had been re-elected from the previous Parliament. However, conversely, there was also *a longer* continuity with the past: five MPs, mainly from the populist Smallholder's Party, FKGP, had already been MPs immediately after the Second World War.

A typical MP in 1990 was a man born in 1944, which was also the average age of members of the largest party, the centre-right Hungarian Democratic Forum, MDF. In three of the parties the average age was higher, which here is connected to personal experience as well: in the Hungarian Socialist Party, MSZP (1938), in the Christian Democratic People's Party, KDNP (1935), and the Smallholders were the oldest (1932) on average. On the other hand, the Alliance of Free Democrats, SZDSZ typically represented the 'beat-generation' (1948). The League of Young Democrats, FIDESZ, had an age limit of 35 in their membership guidelines; therefore an ideal FIDESZ MP was born round 1962. Hence, from the four Visegrad countries Hungary was the only one without premature elections in the 1990s. At first the centre-right Government of József Antall (MDF) – led by Péter Boross from December 1993 – held its positions until the elections of 1994. At that time the socialist party, MSZP, won an absolute majority of the seats.

The educational level of the Parliament in 1990 was the highest it had ever been, since 90% of its members had university level degrees. There were 100 teachers, 77 lawyers, 47 economists, but only three workers, as was pointed out by the newspaper *Magyar Hírlap* on 2nd May. There was a significant group of humanists and, in particular, 27 historians. The new Government might even be called the 'Historian's Government'.

In the parliamentary calendar, *Szabadon választott* (The Freely Chosen), the new members were given a chance to introduce themselves in 1990. There, for example, political activity in 1956

was openly considered a merit, especially in the Smallholders' Party, in which almost a third (29,5%) had had something to do with the 1956 revolutionaries. Moreover, the tradition of 1956 had played a significant role in the life of the new President, the author Árpád Göncz, of SZDSZ. Furthermore, two ministers in the new Government, the new Prime Minister, the historian József Antall and the Minister of Defence, the historian Lajos Für, had been directly involved in the events of 1956. Directly involved was also the Prime Minister of 1994-1998, Gyula Horn (MSZP), who had been on the other side of the front at the end of 1956.

In 1990-1994 the Government identified itself more to the right and the Opposition more to the centre and to the left. However, one peculiar, but not insignificant, case was based already on distributing the seats in the Parliament. In 1990, the seats were distributed as in Britain – the Government on the right and the Opposition on the left side of the Parliament – however, in 1994, the winners did not want the right side. FIDESZ agreed to be “the farthest right” but criticized the fact that the decision was not made according to *historical* tradition, but rather on *ideological* grounds. Thus, a historical left-right axis was not evident: it had to be identified and maintained by the parties themselves.⁹

3 The Significance of the 1956 Revolution and Fight for Freedom

The opening ceremony of the newly-elected Parliament took place on 2nd May, 1990. The moment was historic and the presence of the past obvious. The occasion was honoured by the presence of the 1945 Speaker of the Parliament, Béla Varga, and by Otto von Habsburg, a descendant of the last king of Hungary. In the first session, the new Parliament connected the present to the past and enacted a law which dealt with the symbolic meaning of 1956. In the first paragraph, its memory was enacted into law, and the second paragraph declared 23rd October a national holiday. The new speaker of the Parliament, György Szabad (MDF), an historian by profession, declared 1956 to be the most important connection to the historical past, and the most important basis for the creation of the future in Hungary.

This freely elected Parliament regards as its urgent task to codify the historical significance of the October Revolution of 1956 and its struggle for freedom. This illustrious chapter of modern Hungarian history can only be compared to the 1848-1849 Revolution and War of Independence. The Revolution of 1956 lay the foundation for the hope that it is possible to achieve a democratic social order, and that no sacrifice for our country's independence is made in vain. Although the ensuing suppression reinstated the old power structure, it could not eradicate the spirit of 1956 from people's minds.

The new Parliament assumes the responsibility to preserve the memory of the Revolution and the ensuing struggle for freedom.

The Parliament underscores its determination to do everything in its power to secure multiparty democracy, human rights, and national independence by proclaiming in its first session the following law:

- (1) The memory of the 1956 Revolution and its struggle for freedom is herewith codified.
- (2) October 23, the day of the outbreak of the Revolution of 1956 and the beginning of the fight for freedom, and also the day of the proclamation of the Hungarian Republic in 1989, shall henceforth be a national holiday.

We may argue that the first Hungarian Parliament began its work with studying the past and already "preserving the memory". The first paragraph concentrated on several matters: it codified an event into law and defined it as an historical event. The act, almost unique in a democracy, becomes more understandable from the point of view of 'history culture'. When we focus on the Hungarian penal code, we are able to locate several examples of such laws from the communist era and before. As mentioned in the text above, 1848-1849 was enacted into law on its 100th anniversary in 1948, although this is merely one example among many. Since 1848 several anniversaries and, in particular, the commemoration of certain deaths were codified in law. Besides Hungarian national heroes such as Deák, Széchenyi or Horthy, Francis Joseph (1916) and Josef Stalin (1953) were also designated for commemoration. The memory of Stalin was de-canonised, however, as late as 1989, by the reform communist Government as a part of the democratization process.¹⁰

Moreover, in July 1990 the new Parliament requested that the Soviet Union condemn the intervention of 1956. The request was directed to the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union, and this was also a parliamentary document that dealt with history. According to the Parliament the...

... military intervention in 1956 was merely a contemptible act against the country's sovereignty and a serious crime against the Hungarian people... Parliament requests that, in a re-evaluation similar to that of the situation in Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Supreme Council of the Soviet Socialist Union should deem illegal and condemn the 1956 military intervention by the Soviet Union.¹¹

This step, according to the statement, would strengthen the Soviet Union's commitment to having respect for the sovereignty and independence of the Hungarian Republic, would contribute to the creation of amicable relations between their respective peoples, and would be a sign of encouragement to the Central and Eastern European people with regard to the hastening of the process towards the change to a democratic system.

Already, on the following day, Gennadi Gerassimov commented that the intervention was unpardonable and agreed with the request. The final answer was delayed until after the 1991 coup in the Soviet Union and took place in December, when Prime Minister Antall signed several bilateral treaties in Moscow and Kiev. During that visit, Mihail Gorbachev declared that thirty-five years earlier the Soviet Union had intervened in the domestic affairs of Hungary.¹²

On the first anniversary of the republic – and thus on the 34th anniversary of the uprising – the Parliament held an extraordinary session at which relatives of the 1956 martyrs and heroes of the revolution were present. On that occasion President Árpád Göncz and Prime Minister József Antall made speeches on the significance of 1956. Both pointed out historical analogies with 1848 and, in particular, Antall stressed the significance of 1956 as an essential part of Hungarian national mythology.

Finally, the name and memory of Imre Nagy, who had been executed in 1958, was prominent in several discussions. At the end of June 1990, the MPs discussed the possibility of withdrawing from the Warsaw Pact. At that time the Parliament renewed Nagy's declaration from 1956 in which he affirmed that Hungary had already left the Pact. Furthermore, in June, a general amnesty was also declared – symbolically the name of Imre Nagy was added in that law.¹³

4 National Symbols, Holidays and Memorials

The old kings's crown and its connection to politics has been a matter of debate many times in Hungarian history. In 1990, the Parliament eventually selected as the national emblem the coat of arms with a crown which had been used before 1946, i.e. also during the Horthy era. However, an alternative was suggested by the Opposition: to choose the so-called Kossuth emblem – the same emblem but without a crown – which, according to its supporters, was a more democratic political symbol.

In June of 1990, *Medián* published a poll conducted the previous November about the issue. According to the poll, 49% preferred "the crown", 34% the Kossuth emblem, and 15% the current coat of arms with a star. Among the younger citizens, more educated people, the residents of Budapest, protestants and atheists, the Kossuth emblem was more popular, while older people, catholics, less educated and people from the "countryside", i.e. outside Budapest, preferred "the crown".

In the Parliament, "the crown party" had a majority over "the Kossuth party", although in the first vote, held on June 19th, the crown did not receive the necessary constitutional majority of two thirds. Miklós Szabó, a historian and an MP of the Free Democrats, opposed the idea and contended that the crown alternative might be interpreted abroad as reflecting a yearning for the pre-45 period; on the other hand the Kossuth emblem would represent the democratic efforts of 1918, 1946 and 1956. However, the Government once again suggested "the crown" on July 3rd. The opponents made a counter-proposition that in certain sites and on certain oc-

casions the Kossuth emblem could be used, while “the crown” would be used on more solemn occasions. Prime Minister Antall, also a historian, replied that there are many republics which have a crown in their coats of arms. The crown alternative was eventually selected with the bare two thirds majority required by the constitution. The present coat of arms is designated in the constitution, as was its predecessor as well.¹⁴

The discussion about the national holidays of the new republic took place in March 1991. A total of three alternatives were suggested and the Parliament was forced to decide which of the three national holidays would be promoted to *state* holiday. In the debate, Government circles tended to support Saint Stephen’s Day, i.e. the memorial day of the first king, which was commemorated for the first time in 1989 since the 1940s. The supporters argued that this day best expressed the ideas of the Hungarian ‘state’ and ‘constitution’. Christian Democrats added that the day was also a Christian day. Representatives of free and young democrats preferred March 15th (the 1848 Revolution), based on the consideration that the day represented the unity and ideas of democracy.

In the final vote, the winner, August 20th, was backed more in the ranks of the Government and March 15th by the Opposition. Hence, on the basis of the vote, August 20th became the state holiday of Hungary (*állami ünnep*), but the two others also maintained a certain position: they were defined as national holidays (*nemzeti ünnep*). In the law, October 23rd was defined with two meanings as “the day of the beginning of the 1956 Revolution and the fight for freedom, and as the day on which the Hungarian Republic was declared in 1989”.¹⁵

Although a national holiday refers in other countries to a king or the royal family, in Hungary the most important day of the state refers to medieval history, and to the first king to whom the Hungarian Kingdom is connected. In addition to this, August 20th also had actual political significance in 1991, because it connected Hungary also to the conservative traditions which were used prior to 1945. This helped to strengthen prejudices of the Opposition regarding the basic ideals of the new republic.

Moreover, a few debates concerning memorials took place in the Parliament. These could be divided into three categories: 1) unveiled statues, 2) removed statues, and 3) memorials which were debated but not built. Initially, in the autumn of 1990, the Foreign Minister, a historian, Géza Jeszenszky (MDF), opposed the idea of re-establishing the statue of Trianon. The basic problem could be connected to nationalism and revisionism, in other words whether the statue – the four points of the compass, i.e. the four areas lost in the Treaty of Trianon – would give rise to the old ideas of the Hungarian revisionist policy between World War I and II. The debate continued later in the 1990s as well, because the only Soviet liberation memorial left in Budapest since 1989 had been built precisely on the same spot.

Secondly, since 1991 The Reconciliation Statue Foundation (*Megbékélés Emlékmű Alapítvány*) had planned a memorial to the memory of both sides of combatants of 1956. The original idea was to build another memorial for the *martyrs*, which would be located beside the existing statue of the *victims* on Republic Square. In October of 1991, some art historians rejected the idea. With the signature of the leader of the Budapest Gallery, himself a Member of Parliament in the leading Government party MDF, they expressed their doubts about the existing consensus and the function of the memorial.

The plan of the joint-monument did not materialize, and the memorial which had been erected in 1960 was abolished in September 1992. In November, the memorial issue reached the Parliament floor, when the chairman of the radicalized 56-veteran organisation TIB, Tibor Zimányi (MDF), condemned the idea. According to Zimányi, nowhere in the world was it possible for the fallen of both sides to be included in the same memorial. The case of Spain was not an appropriate example for him, because the country had not fallen under foreign rule. Alajos Dornbach (SZDSZ) responded that a black and white division between killers and revolutionaries was impossible, because both sides had innocent victims and bystanders. Finally, more than 400 memorials were unveiled after 1989 to commemorate 1956.¹⁶

Outside the Parliament the anniversaries were used for political demonstrations as well. On the third anniversary of the new Republic, on October 23rd 1992, an incident occurred when groups of neo-Nazis gathered on the Kossuth Square. When President Göncz tried to make his speech, they whistled and shouted at him. On 26th, the issue was discussed for three hours in Parliament, and it was debated whether the Government or the Opposition had been responsible, and especially why the police had not prevented the action of the skinheads. On the basis of this incident, several members of the MDF created an initiative to prohibit Fascist and Bolshevik symbols. Since then, the hammer and sickle, red star, SS-badge and swastika have also led to proceedings in court.

5 Justitia Plan and Reckoning with the Past

The Czechoslovakian example of banning former communist functionaries in 1991 is the most well-known case in East Central Europe. However, although collective guilt was never accepted in Hungary, emotional elements were not lacking in the discussion. The debate polarized parties, and there were proposals which were not completely considered and prepared at all.

Already at the end of August 1990, a detailed *Justitia* plan was made public. In the space of eleven paragraphs, the plan put forth a broader settlement with the past, expressed a desire to identify responsible parties, and wanted to take legal measures against the leaders of the old system. Representatives of the MDF had given the plan to the Prime Minister in June, and it was made public in August, although the proper debate began only a year later.¹⁷ The whole debate culminated in the word *igazságtétel*, 'making justice'. *Igazság* means both 'truth' and 'justice', and thus, two meanings were entangled in one word. The 'truth' from 1956 also meant 'justice' for 1956, and it became an issue in the hot-tempered political debate on how to deal with the past.

As an interlude in March 1991, the Attorney General, Kálmán Györgyi, answered one interpretation, which concerned volley fires (*sortüzek*), i.e. firing into a crowd of demonstrators, which had occurred in 1956. There was no possibility of punishing the perpe-

traitors as war criminals because Hungarian law from 1945 dealt only with the Second World War. However, he saw the opportunity to change a law on the conditions of international commitments so that crimes committed during the communist era would have no statute of limitations.

In the summer the *Justitia* plan once again became part of the political agenda of the MDF. It is essential to note that it dealt with quite an extensive political reckoning with the past. According to the plan, it was time, for example, to speed up the system change, as well as to revitalize and change the spirit of Hungarian radio and television. The plan was to be carried out regardless of whether or not it was supported by the majority.¹⁸

At the end of October, the Parliament discussed the issue of homicide, treason and disloyalty between 1944 and 1990. In one of the most intense debates of the new democracy the MP Ágnes G. Nagyné Maczó (MDF), for example, stated that until then the Government had failed in its responsibilities and that those people, "who have destroyed Hungarian culture", should be brought to justice. Another MP argued that this question was outside party interests, i.e. above parties. The third opinion concerned the future: guilty and not guilty should not be equal in the future. On the other hand, socialist MP Iván Vitányi stated that they would awaken a spirit of reprisal, and that moral judgement belongs to society, not to Parliament. The leader of the Young Democrats argued that this judgement must be based only on the law, and not on emotions.

Finally, the law was accepted in Parliament on November 4th, i.e. it was timed precisely for the anniversary of the second Soviet invasion in 1956. The proposal dealt with homicide and treason committed between December 1944 and May 1990. The Parliament accepted it by a vote of 197 for, 50 against and 74 abstaining. An open vote was requested, because the bill was not compatible with Hungary's international agreements. The vast majority of the Government parties voted for, and from the opposition FIDESZ and MSZP (one absent) voted against. The majority of SZDSZ were absent, four of them voting for and two against.

After the vote, President Árpád Göncz made the decision to turn to the Constitutional Court to clarify the content of the law. Another 1956 veteran and MP, Imre Mécs (SZDSZ), considered the bill harmful from every point, and threatened to refer it to the Constitutional Court. In addition, close relatives of the deceased made a statement that they did not accept the Government's proposal. They had created an alternative: instead of court proceedings the real criminals should be named in public, with the full extent of their actions made known. In November the Chairman of the Human Rights Committee in Hungary stated that the criminals of the dictatorship should be punished only within the framework of the rule of law. Moreover, an ex-56 veteran and MP, Miklós Vásárhelyi (SZDSZ), condemned the law, while another ex-veteran, János Dénes (ex-MDF), even demanded hangings.

Finally, the Constitutional Court made its decision in March 1992, finding all paragraphs of the law to be against the Constitution. They decided that the paragraphs were not clearly defined, and a law must already be enacted before a crime is committed. When President Göncz commented on the decision, he reminded everyone of two principles: every nation has the right to know its past, and legal responsibility does not mean that the state should not re-open events of the last decades, i.e. the question also deals with people's sense of justice. From the ranks of the Opposition it was argued that the rule of law had won, and that the democratic state structure was functioning. A representative of the governing party argued that in the European value structure and Judeo-Christian culture, crime and punishment could not be separated.¹⁹

In April, Attorney General Györgyi opposed the idea of a new bill, noting that retroactive punishment would be against the law. However, in September it was reported that the Government was preparing a new bill which was based on the bill VII/1945, concerning war crimes. The model was taken from present-day Czechoslovakia, in which legal proceedings were to be modelled on the basis of the law enacted in 1950. According to the newspaper, lawyers had advised Prime Minister Antall two years previously that it would be extremely difficult to get convictions. Both

the Hungarian Martial Court in Budapest, and the local Martial Court at Győr, had refused to prosecute in the case of volley fire which had taken place in Mosonmagyaróvár in 1956. They argued that prosecuting would mean the death of the rule of law, because in Hungarian law manslaughter has a statute of limitation of fifteen years, which had run out in 1971.

In the Parliament there were several proposals. A few MPs asked for an investigation of 1956 on the basis of war crimes. Because the law still existed, the Attorney General ordered the investigation. Politically, the debate took place in the Parliament around the 36th anniversary of 1956, when skinheads had whistled the President down and prevented his speech. The Government, however, did not unambiguously defend the President. On the contrary, the Minister of the Interior, Péter Boross, rather understood the situation by claiming that “perhaps a Socialist Hungarian Nuremberg is not a bad formulation”. Finally, socialists opposed the bill; Free Democrats and FIDESZ abstained from voting on the Government version.

In March of 1993, President Árpád Göncz, having been asked to, solicited the viewpoint of the Constitutional Court before he would sign the bill. The Court made its statement at the end of June, and again declared the bill unconstitutional. In October, it became apparent that the Geneva Convention of 1949, which protects the victims of war, defined international armed conflicts and forbade actions that were not international armed conflicts from being prosecuted. According to the Constitutional Court, the first paragraph of the bill was unconstitutional; however, the second was not.

Despite its complicated sentences, the message was clear: crimes committed in 1956 were not considered war crimes, but crimes against humanity. On October 22nd the President signed the bill.²⁰ Finally, constitutional solutions had won and strengthened the idea of rule of law in Hungary. However, the processes themselves have been as difficult to carry out as the law itself, and several cases were still open at the turn of the millennium.

6 Screening Law

Screening has become a pivotal tool in clarifying the past in several post-communist countries. In Hungary, the law “for controlling persons chosen to particular important positions” was enacted in March 1994, and it came into force on July 1st 1994. According to the law, the persons should be screened in order to enhance the democratic functioning of the state. After incriminating evidence has been established the person should either resign or his/her name was to be published. However, from the point of ‘history politics’, the law not only deals with official and secret members of the former counter-intelligence (III-III). It can cover more distant past as well, because it also concerns persons in the armed forces (i.e. people who collaborated with Soviet forces right after the uprising) as well as members of the Fascist Arrow Cross Party before 1945.

According to critics, the timing of the law prior to the May 1994 elections suggested that its motivation was to damage the Government’s major political rival, the Hungarian Socialist Party, which was leading in the polls. The discussion itself had already begun in the autumn of 1990, when the free democrats proposed their own version of the law. At that time their proposition was, however, rejected by the Government parties.²¹

In the next phase of the discussion, the Minister of the Interior, Péter Boross (MDF), referred to a forthcoming law and a commission, which should consist of the Prime Minister, President, Parliament Chairman and the Chairman of the Constitutional Court. This commission would investigate whether a person had been a member of the III-III, the armed forces between 1956 and 1957, the ÁVH, or whether there were aggravating circumstances in the cases before. The Minister speculated that the results would be secret, or would only be published after consultation with the person; in June, the III-III archives were declared state secrets.²²

Thus, quite soon, it had become apparent that the question was not only about the former members of the old ruling MSZMP or counterintelligence, but it was a far deeper problem in which the past could also be used to compromise someone in the present.

Party membership, i.e. collective guilt did not become a criterion for processes or discrimination but, on the other hand, there were some ideas about ousting persons. The Minister of Justice, István Balsai (MDF), argued that the Government should further restrict those who had belonged to organisations like the ÁVH or workers' guard from public action. According to another allegation, any person who had participated in the reprisals could not lead the Committee of Foreign Affairs.

In February of 1993, the newest version of the bill – known also as the “little brother” of the retrospective *igazságtétel* – outlined several categories of co-operation: a secret informer, documents provided and signed by hand, an informer, and belonging to the armed forces between 1956 and 1957. On the basis of the draft, the law would touch a large number of people: Members of Parliament, those nominated for office, those who would take an oath, the Government, political secretaries, judges, lawyers, ambassadors and the President and Vice-President of the National Bank.

The discussion in Parliament finally began in October of 1993. The bill was referred to as a ‘fluoroscopy’ and also had the nickname *pufajkás* law, named after *pufajkás*, who was a man who had aided the Soviet army after November 4, 1956. According to the new law, the files of the security services would not be made available to the public until July 1st 2030, i.e. 30 years after the screening or lustration process (*átvilágítás*) would have ended. The Government parties voted for, whereas among the Free Democrats, only one supported the bill and the others abstained. Ten socialists voted against it, and the remaining two votes came from SZDSZ and independents.

Although the law ordered lustration, the issue has been controversial ever since. The Hungarian Parliament could not deal with the question as quickly as the Czechs did, and, compared to the proposition of the Free Democrats in 1990, aroused suspicions that also the Government had something to hide. Secondly, the law went far back into the past, and, thus, for example forgot economic commitments – in fact an adult of 1944 would be over 70 years old

when lustrated for the first time. In its broadest version the process itself is quite cumbersome to carry out.²³

7 Hungary Between Two World Wars

In the first Parliament not only was the state socialist past dealt with but, as our examples demonstrate, the whole of Hungarian history was in principle used as a political argument. During the post-1945 era Hungary between the World Wars had become a certain “anti-period”, but since 1990 many analogies to this era have also started to come to the fore. Already in September 1990 the largest Opposition party, SZDSZ was worried about the ideals of the new republic. The party took out page-long political advertisements in both *Magyar Hírlap* and *Népszabadság*, in which it evaluated the first hundred days of the Government. They argued that the Government was building less and less continuity with the years 1956 and 1947, rather it clung to the ‘great deadlock’ of Horthy’s Hungary.*

Earlier in June, Prime Minister Antall had commemorated Trianon, and expressed concern about the fate of minorities in neighbouring countries. His words that he wished in his soul to be the Prime Minister of 15 million Hungarians became famous, because they also meant Hungarians living outside the present Hungarian state. At the time – on the 70th anniversary – the Speaker of the Parliament, György Szabád, had also asked Parliament to commemorate Trianon, and the faction of the Young Democrats, FIDESZ, left the room in protest. The Foreign Minister Géza Jeszensky, however, clearly torpedoed the idea to rebuild the old

* “Fears have risen about the undisguised nostalgia which the parties of the governing coalition feed in the direction of Hungary prior to 1945. The spirit of the coalition recalls [idéz] the Hungary between the two World Wars. The governing parties decreasingly admit the continuity with 1956 and 1945–47, and increasingly refer to our historical deadlock of Horthy’s Hungary. It alarms the people who do not want the system change to bring back the vanished world of upper classes [úri világ] and who want to move towards the democratic Europe of the turn of the millennium” *Magyar Hírlap & Népszabadság* 3 September 1990 (Transl. HN).

memorial statue of Trianon which had existed in Budapest between the wars.²⁴

Until 1944 the country had been ruled by Admiral Miklós Horthy, who was then exiled to Salazar's Portugal, where he died in 1957. Little by little, the Horthy-question also began to actualize in post-communist Hungary. In February 1991, *Népszabadság* had posed the question "Horthy to be Buried in Hungarian Soil?" According to President Árpád Göncz, Horthy had the right to 'rest' in his motherland, but if he were to be buried officially, it would also be an acknowledgment of his policy. In October, the Minister of Justice István Balsai (MDF) denied juridical rehabilitation, but considered it obvious that political rehabilitation was only a matter of time. According to Balsai, it was unlikely that Horthy's tomb in Estoril would continue to be acceptable to Hungarian public opinion. The end result would be the same regardless of whether it was carried out by the Government or any other organ.

In November, socialists made an interpellation regarding whether the Government was planning to rehabilitate and rebury Admiral Horthy. The reburial had political precedents and expectations, because in Hungarian history there have been several reburials. These reburials, more or less, have had political consequences and have been used by different political forces. Imre Nagy's reburial in summer 1989 was one of the most important events of the year. According to the MSZP's interpretation, a democratic human being could not oppose Horthy's reburial, but there was speculation about the role of the state. When Prime Minister Antall answered the question, he stressed that because Horthy had not been sentenced, he would not be rehabilitated or reburied by the state either. Thus, at that time Antall rejected Horthy's reburial as a state event.²⁵

However, it seemed at first that the reburial would be organised by the family in accordance with ecumenical ceremonies, as opposed to being organised by the state.²⁶ When Horthy was finally reburied in Kenderes in September 1993, the President and seven Government Ministers participated in the occasion. As in the case of Imre Nagy's reburial in 1989, the struggle over what

was private, official or public domain became actual. No particular sense of rhetoric was needed to define the prejudices of “repetition” or of “cyclical time”, particularly in the polarized political situation which characterised Hungary at that time. For example, the MP Tamás Bauer (SZDSZ) argued that if there were a private funeral, the state should not issue a medal, the national television would not broadcast it, and ministers should not reveal beforehand whether or not they are planning to attend. Finally, the day before the reburial, the liberal-minded intelligentsia held a symbolic demonstration, “The Final Goodbye to the Horthy System”, where they bade farewell to the Horthy era.²⁷

According to foreign comments, the funeral itself became a political event. Critical comments were issued from Slovakia, France and from Bucharest. The Slovak Vice-Prime Minister, Roman Kováč, for example, noted that six ministers who attend a public function cease to be “private persons”. In the Government, the Horthy-criticism seemed to fall upon deaf ears. Antall, for example, had noted that they did not expect Western or international history writing to want to place Miklós Horthy in his correct place.²⁸

Although Horthy’s reburial did not lead to the rehabilitation of his policy, certain and sometimes propagandist fears existed in the neighbouring countries. In a situation in which three neighbouring countries had split, analogies to the past, particularly to the 1930s were presented and specially in countries with Hungarian minorities. In 1938 and 1940 Horthy’s Hungary had received territories back with Hitler’s assistance. Thus, it was no wonder that Hungary’s role in the Second World War and its consequences were debated in the Parliament as well.

8 Compensation

Compensation and privatisation became issues when history and historical past were discussed in the Parliament. In January 1991, local peasants occupied their former land, which began a wave of occupations lasting for several weeks. Swift compensation, already in “the air”, quickly became a current matter, and the first consti-

tutional version of the compensation law was accepted in June 1991.

In the discussion the Free Democrats first supported some more compensation for the general public, socialists supported only partial compensation and FIDESZ generally opposed the idea. The Government backed the idea of returning estates to their former owners and of recreating the *domestic* private ownership in the first place. Already before the general elections of 1990 the Smallholders' Party promised that it would restore private ownership, particularly in agriculture to the level of 1947, if the party participated in the Government.

The proposal restricted compensation to former owners who had lost their property after June 8th 1949. Hence, a certain limit was defined; however, at the same time it left earlier injustices without compensation. This politically unfortunate bill seemed to leave most Jews and their descendants out of the question and created speculations and expectations of anti-Semitism. For example, in Autumn 1990 newspapers debated whether the slogan *hordót a zsidónak* (let's give compensation to Jews as well) was anti-Semitic or not.

It is important to bear in mind that the year 1949 was ousted from the bill in the parliamentary debate. It was done by the Government party. At the same time, they accepted a principle that in the future a forthcoming law of compensation would be based on the limit of 1939. Later, in 1992, two other laws were enacted which broadened the temporal basis of compensation: now the limit was set between May 1st 1939 and June 1949, and between March 11st 1939 and October 23rd 1989. However, when we study political cleavages in the first Parliament, it is essential to know that in June 1991 the Parliament rejected the Opposition's proposal that would have extended the time-limit until 1939. Moreover, another law was accepted without a broad consensus in July 1991; the Parliament returned estates, building-sites and cemeteries, but neither land nor rented houses to churches.²⁹

9 Conclusion

This paper studied how the Hungarian Parliament dealt with history between 1990 and 1994. History was not only debated as “history” with a small “h”, but also as “History” with a capital “H”, i.e. referring to identities. The past appeared even more political than the future: political identities and the new image of the ‘nation’ were constructed at the same time through the attempt to thoroughly research and document the problematic past. Not only were different concepts and views of history confronted, MPs also formed opinions on historical issues, and also the new Parliament has become a certain *lieux de mémoire* for national commemoration.

For several historians, the era was ‘historic’ and historians found a new political mission in defining political platforms for parties. Analogies from the past were used, and in connection with all three national holidays, political commemorations took place which gave space for political speeches as well. The first Prime Minister József Antall even defined his party and tried to keep its three wings together with historical terms.

However, it became apparent how difficult it was to found a new historical ‘basis’ for the future. At first, models and influences were taken from 1956, but little by little, other, and even inconvenient, images of the past emerged. These historical cleavages, and particularly the mistrust and expectations of “the other”, i.e. political opponents, moved and influenced people.

The most controversial discussion dealt, in its broadest sense, with retrospective *igazságtétel*. Although there were other difficult issues as well, this question might drastically have polarized the political atmosphere. Neither the Truth Commission nor the idea of collective guilt emerged; however, there were four ways of dealing with the past since 1988: *compensation, rehabilitation, naming* and *punishment*. Punishment was the severest of these and its commemorative influence was restrictive and juridical. Naming the perpetrators could also restrict, although in the Hungarian case of 1991 it was more liberal for the perpetrators, because instead of punishment moral judgement was preferred. The character of the retrospective proposal was evidently very political, in

that its purpose was to settle old injustices, and particularly to reach those who had participated in the political repression after November 4th 1956.

On the whole, the discussion of punishment evidently cleansed the atmosphere in the long run; however, it *also* essentially polarized and widened the gulf between the Government and the Opposition as well as between the Government's supporters and those who support the Opposition. In particular, polarization and radicalization came to the fore after the decision in the Constitutional Court in March 1992.

Although the debates were partly labour pains of the new democracy, they have the potential of revealing something more about the Hungarian political cultures and their commitments to the past as well. However, the Hungarian debate is not unique in the world after 1989. According to Welsh, "the weight of the past" is particularly significant in the "transitional countries".³⁰ Particularly in those societies dealing with the recent past, the political question is broader and more complicated than mere historical writing. There are also obvious consequences, such as whether the policy of reconciliation will work, and if so, how soon it might work.

NOTES

- ¹ Langewiesche, Dieter, "Geschichte als politisches Argument: Vergangenheitsbilder als Gegenwarts kritik und Zukunftprognose - die Reden der Deutschen Bundespräsidenten". *Saeculum* 43/1992, 42-45; Stråth, Bo, "Introduction. Myth, Memory and History in the Construction of Community". In *Myth and Memory in the Construction of Community. Historical Patterns in Europe and Beyond*. Ed. Bo Stråth. Brussels, P.I.E. - Peter Lang 2000, 19.
- ² *Népszabadság* 9 December 1999; 21 August 2001.
- ³ Cf. Vovelle, Michel, *Ideologies and Mentalities*. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press 1990; Le Goff, Jacques, "Mentaliteterna, en tvetydig historia." In *Att skriva historia. Nya infallsvinklar och object*. Stockholm, Norteds Tryckeri 1978.
- ⁴ Füredi, Frank, *Mythical Past, Elusive Future*. London, Pluto Press 1992.
- ⁵ Cf. Koselleck, Reinhart, "Geschichte". In *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*. Herausgegeben von Otto Brunner & Werner Conze & Reinhart Koselleck. Band 2. Stuttgart, Ernst Klett 1975, 593-594; Carper, N. Gordon, *The Meaning of History. A Dictionary of Quotations*. New York & Connecticut & London, Westport 1991.
- ⁶ Wolfrum, Edgar, "Geschichte als Politikum – Geschichtspolitik. Internationale Forschungen zum 19. Und 20. Jahrhundert". *Neue Politische Literatur* 3/1996, 377.
- ⁷ Wolfrum 1996, 376; Langewiesche 1992; Habermas, Jürgen, "Vom öffentlichen Gebrauch der Historie. Das offizielle Selbstverständnis der Bundesrepublik bricht auf". *Die Zeit*, 7 November.1986.
- ⁸ Aristoteles, *Rhetorik*. München, Fink 1980, 1358b. Cf. also Collingwood, R.G., *The Idea of History*. Oxford, University Press 1963, 242; Nyysönen, Heino, *The Presence of the Past in Politics. '1956' after 1956 in Hungary*. Jyväskylä, SoPhi 1999.
- ⁹ Nyysönen 1999, 178-189; *Youth and History. A Comparative European Survey on Historical Consciousness and Political Attitudes among Adolescents*. Vol A. Description. Eds. Magne Angvik & Bodo von Borries. Hamburg, Körber Stiftung 1997, 282; Szabadon választott. *Parlamenti almanach* 1990. Budapest, Idegenforgalmi Propaganda és Kiadó Vállalat 1990; *Népszabadság* 10 June 1994.
- ¹⁰ 1990-94 Országgyűlési Értesítő, 22; *The Hungarian Revolution of 1956. Reform, Revolt and Repression 1953-1963*. Ed. György Litván. London & New York, Longman 1996, x; *Törvények és rendeletek hivatalos gyűjteménye* 1990. 1 kötet. Közzéteszi az Igazságügyi Minisztérium és a Minisz-

tertanács Hivatala. Budapest, Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó 1991; 1948. évi törvénycikkek. Jegyzetekkel ellátták Dr. Vincenti Gusztáv, Dr. Gál László. Franklin-társulat kiadása 1949; Nyüssönen 1999; 1875-1876. évi törvénycikkek. Budapest, Franklin-társulat 1896; 1930. évi törvénycikkek. Budapest, Franklin-társulat 1931; Törvények és rendeletek hivatalos gyűjteménye 1989. 1 kötet. Közzéteszi az Igazságügyi Minisztérium és a Minisztertanács Hivatala. Budapest, Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó 1990.

Since 1994 the two other Hungarian Parliaments have also enacted memorial laws to commemorate particular historical events. First in 1994 the new socialist-liberal Government commemorated the Provisional Government which had gathered in Debrecen in 1944. The Prime Minister of the 1956 Revolution, Imre Nagy, was codified on the 100th anniversary of his birth in 1996. The third debate took place in the Autumn of 1999, when the Government prepared for the 1000th anniversary of the first king, Saint Stephen, who is considered as the founder of the Hungarian state. At that time Stephen's memory was codified in law and the crown was transferred from the National Museum to the Parliament.

¹¹ *Magyar Hírlap* 24 July 1990; Nyüssönen 1999, 182-183.

¹² Magyarország Politikai Évkönyve [hereafter MPÉ 1991]. Eds. Sándor Kurtán, Péter Sándor, László Vass. Budapest, Ökonómia Alapítvány - Economix RT 1991, 476; *Magyar Hírlap* 25 July 1990; 7 December 1991.

¹³ 1990-94 Országgyűlési Értesítő, 312; cf. Antall, József, Model és valóság II. Budapest, Athenaeum 1994; *Magyar Hírlap* 13 June 1990; *Népszabadság* 27 June 1990.

¹⁴ *Magyar Hírlap* 23 June 1990; 1990-94 Országgyűlési Értesítő, 1215-1228.

¹⁵ 1990-94 Országgyűlési Értesítő, 6519-6537; Törvények és rendeletek hivatalos gyűjteménye 1991. 1 kötet. Közzéteszi az Igazságügyi Minisztérium és a Miniszterelnöki Hivatal. Budapest, Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó 1992; *Népszabadság* 6 March 1991.

¹⁶ *Magyar Hírlap* 10 September 1990; Prohászka, László, Szoborsorsok. Budapest, Kornétás Kiadó 1994, 73-74; Boros, Géza, Emlékművek '56-nak. Budapest, 1956-os Intézet 1997, 150; 1990-94 Országgyűlési Értesítő, 21059-21063.

¹⁷ Cf. MPÉ 1991, 277.

¹⁸ 1990-94 Országgyűlési Értesítő, 6580-6581. The whole plan was revealed by the newspaper *Népszava* on 5th September. The basic idea was that those who were responsible for the present situation should not be in a better position than those who had suffered as a result of the system. According to Imre Kónya (MDF), the idea belonged to the political philosophy of the party. Practically, the reckoning meant supporting the

initiative of a retrospective law, reduced pensions on the basis of activity in certain organisations having to do with the former ruling party MSZMP. Moreover, historians and lawyers should investigate the illegalities occurring after 1956, and the Chairman of the Academy of Sciences should provide information concerning these illegalities at the request of the Prime Minister. In Kónya's view, the change had been too risky to have been carried out earlier. *Népszava* 5 September 1991.

¹⁹ 1990-94 Országgyűlési Értesítő, 11132-11187; *Magyar Hírlap & Magyar Nemzet & Népszabadság* 5 November 1991; Magyarország politikai évkönyve 1992 [hereafter MPÉ 1992]. Eds. Sándor Kurtán, Péter Sándor, László Vass. Budapest, Demokrácia Kutatások Magyar Központja Alapítvány - Economix Rt 1992; *Népszabadság* 19 November 1991; 22 November 1991; *Magyar Hírlap & Népszabadság* 4 March 1992.

²⁰ *Magyar Nemzet* 29 April 1992; *Népszabadság* 22 September 1992; *Magyar Hírlap* 17 October 1992; Juhász, Gábor, "A megnevezéstől a háborús bűnösségig. Igazságtételi törvényhozás Magyarországon 1990. február - 1993. február." *Mozgó Világ* 4/1993, 38; *Népszabadság* 30 June 1993; 13 October 1993; *Törvények...* 1994.

²¹ Cf. *Törvények és rendeletek hivatalos gyűjteménye* 1994. 1 kötet. Közzéteszi az Igazságügyi Minisztérium és a Miniszterelnöki Hivatal. Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó 1995; *Népszabadság* 9 March 1994; Welsh, Helga, *Dealing with the Communist Past: Central and East European Experiences after 1990. Europe-Asia Studies* 48, 3/1996, 422; *Magyar Hírlap* 5 September 1990.

²² The discussion began again in May 1991, when 12 Smallholder MPs had voluntarily asked for their own lustration to clarify their past. In the end of May it was the Prime Minister who gave their files to them, thus causing a debate of power political relations and if someone was ruling someone else's past, cf. MPÉ 1992, 432-433. At the time they speculated that there could be 50 spies in the Parliament, and wondered whether the publishing of the names could also be used for political purposes *Népszabadság* 11 May 1991; *Magyar Nemzet* 13 May 1991; 13 June 1991.

²³ *Népszabadság* 13 February 1993; 17 January 1994; 9 March 1994; Welsh 1996, 418. It was estimated that the law in its present form would apply to some 10,000 - 15,000 people. If they did not resign, their names would be published in official papers and given to the newsagency MTI. However, there were voices criticizing the possibilities of putting the law into practice, and the National Association of Judges remarked that the screening work had political dimensions, *Magyar Hírlap* MH 10 December 1994. During the socialist majority Parliament its scope was limited to

500-600 persons. At the same time they established a special institute, the Historical Office, *Történeti Hivatal*. This office was finally opened in September 1997. It offers the possibility for citizens to view their files. The Historical Office, however, does not contain all essential documents. This is due in part to the fact that the secret police destroyed some of the material in early 1990. In summer 2000/2001 the law was again prolonged for the next four years by the right-wing Government. They extended it to concern ca. 15 000 persons including media, 2500 judges and 1400 lawyers. A year earlier, the Constitutional Court made a decision, which kept the amount of screened persons unchanged. *Népszabadság* 23 June 2000; 13 July 2000; 28 July 2000; Nyssönen 1999, 279-280.

²⁴ *Magyar Nemzet & Népszabadság* 4 June 1990; 5 June 1990.

²⁵ *Népszabadság* 25 June 1991; 21 October 1991; 1990-94 Országgyűlési Értesítő, 11641-11645.

²⁶ In April 1993, Horthy's widow promised to organise the event strictly as a family affair, which the Government supported. However, at the end of July, they planned a memorial medal for Horthy, *Magyar Hírlap* 31 July 1993, and it was announced that several members of the Government would participate in the ceremony as private citizens, *Népszabadság* 16 August 1993.

²⁷ *Népszabadság* 19 August 1992; *Magyar Hírlap* 6 September 1993; 4 September 1993.

²⁸ *Népszabadság* 9 September 1993; *Magyar Hírlap* 23 August 1993.

²⁹ 1990-94 Országgyűlési Értesítő, 5719-5749; *Népszabadság* 13 October 1990; *Magyar Hírlap* 21 April 1993; 1990-94 Országgyűlési Értesítő, 8868-9101.

³⁰ Welsh 1996, 419.

**Continuities and Discontinuities in Kádár's Hungary:
Everyday Life in a Socialist Town****Sándor HORVÁTH**

The image of socialist cities generally influenced the image of industrial cities in Hungary in the socialist period. Stalintown (Sztálinváros) represented the typical image of a 'real existing' socialist city in Hungary. It did not meet the utopian ideas of an ideal socialist city, but its building stock as well as its spatial structure reflected the architectural developments of 40 years of a centralised and planned economy. As an industrial and 'socialist' city Stalintown became a symbol of 'socialist life' in the fifties.* The image of Stalintown in the propaganda shows a town in which technology and nature no longer negate each other, where urban setting and countryside no longer confront each other as aliens, where factory and home are not separated by long distances which devour time and energy. In this healthy complex of work and residential area, the worker was promised to have space enough to develop his personality, and unlimited possibilities to follow his bent in a cultivated existence bound up with nature. Stalintown accordingly was constructed in the 1950s as a model community in Hungary in order to represent the 'communist dream'.

* Also the Finnish radio broadcasted reports on the building and life in Stalintown in 1952. See Dömötör to Budapest 29 Nov. 1952. MOL, KÜM, Finn-TÜK-XIX-J-1-k-21/a, 01155/5. 18.d. [Ed. note]

At the beginning of the rapid industrialisation in Hungary, during the period of the first Five Year plan (1950-1955), a party and a government decision ordained the building of a metallurgy works closely attached to a new town, nearby an old village (Dunapentele) on the left bank of the Danube. The preparatory work commenced in the spring of 1950 and on 2nd May the construction of the ironworks and the town began. The constructions attracted labour force from all parts of the country, and from very different social classes. At the end of 1950 the population of the village even reached 4200, while the number of people working on the building sites was 7100. In spring 1953 the population of Stalintown had already reached 25,000.¹ In 1960 it exceeded 30,000, in 1970 44,000.

The vitality of the town was represented by the age structure of its inhabitants: Stalintown was an industrial city of the 'youth' and, as the propaganda suggested, the town was built according to the wishes of the people who live in it, bedded in green parks and lawns, threaded by shopping streets, modern houses with central heating, laundries. Its houses were gay with colour, comfortable within and worthy of their inhabitants, built in a simple style of architecture, devoid of fussy decorations. The images of heroic founders and 'classless society' were also common pictures to show the 'socialist lifestyle' of workers in a 'socialist town'.²

In memoirs and police reports there is another 'story' told about this 'socialist city': Stalintown was a town of 'juvenile delinquency', and there were more pubs and prostitutes to be found than in the whole county.³ The cultural conflict involved in urban adjustment can be shown by the story of the most known pub of Stalintown, called *Késdobáló* (*To the Knife-Thrower*). The story of this pub represented the most important conflict between 'urban' and 'villager' lifestyles, which had a very significant role in the official language. The pub was opened at the foundation of the town in 1950. The pub-goers were mainly semi-skilled workers and bricklayers. As the occupational structure changed in the town many articles were published in the local press about scandals in the pub. The pub started to become

the symbol of 'non-urban' and 'non-socialist' life and its customers were described as "criminals" and "villagers". At the end of 1954 the municipal authorities closed the pub to urge the spread of 'a socialist lifestyle' through the "town of socialist workers". Pubs had a special importance in the public sphere of Stalintown. The immigrants created in them a distinctive social institution of their own that symbolised not only a rejection of some of the cornerstones of official lifestyle but also an acceptance of alternative public modes of sociability and solidarity.⁴

One of the persistent myths about the socialist cities has been the notion that most people accepted the opposite mythology of the town centered around acquisitive individualism, gold rush and chaos of socialist cities. The conventional discourse about an undifferentiated 'culture of socialist cities' suggested that almost everyone shared the same set of values. A look at the pubs, family trials or youth cultures of socialist cities calls into question this myth of cultural consensus. The myth of solidarity was one of the first myths which appeared in the mythology of Stalintown, and the myth of the heroic founders and solidarity belonged to the identity of the towns' inhabitants. The culture of Stalintown pubs was an alternative but not a countercultural phenomenon. The official discourse suggested the pub-culture was a countercultural phenomenon because of the official efforts, which tried to stigmatize every non-planned and non-official phenomena. These efforts generated a public debate about the pubs. In this debate pubs and their customers were represented as 'non-urban' and 'non-socialist' phenomena.

For many members of the 'upper classes' and the members of local authorities of Stalintown, pub-going and public celebration represented the image of many forms of working-class recreation. However, many of them similarly viewed workers who drank on the common as affronts to modesty and conventionality. The notion of public was a more limited one which did not encompass many forms of public celebration, like pub-going.

The city center and the main street had a special importance in socialist cities: the main street in Stalintown thus had the function to represent a place in a socialist city where people parade

primarily on 1st May, and this street was designed to have additional functions attached to sociability. The main street of Stalintown, according to the ideal of the time, got the name of Stalin (after 1961 it got a new name: Ironworks Street). Stalin Street had to be the busiest street in the town, filled with active people and traffic, and it had to represent the public life of 'socialist people'. The planners of Stalintown designed little flats to raise the level of collectivity in the town. However, the inhabitants of the town did not want to meet each other on broad streets but in little pubs.

The local authorities thus perceived this form of working-class recreation as a challenge to the dominant culture, to family and factory, to socialism and property. They responded to this assumed challenge with a variety of campaigns aimed at changing or restricting pub-culture through disputes in the local newspaper, police steps, and administrative proceedings. The Stalintown Police had been implementing a policy of constraining pub-culture after 1954, introducing a classification system for pubs on the basis of social class. The police recognized acceptable and unacceptable pubs, according to their customers. The first and second class pubs in the downtown area could be tolerated because of their affluent customers, but the third or fourth-class ones were associated with semi-skilled workers and bricklayers, so the police directed their activities primarily against these "underclass institutions". The main idea was that the town center must be cleared. In the first years the police did not regard pubs and drinking as a primary target for police action. As the occupational structure of the town changed and a new myth of its founders had to be constructed the arrests occurring in pubs rose quite dramatically. It is also clear that the arrests in pubs depended not only on this policy but also on the manpower levels of the police and official expectations. The criminal rate in Stalintown was the highest in Hungary in the fifties, not because of the high immigration rate of criminals, but due to the distinct control of the socialist towns and the special attitudes of policemen towards the arrests of semi-skilled workers taking part in pub scandals.⁵

According to the ideas of city planners the spatial structure of Stalintown had to be clear and transparent in order to control the everyday activities of people living there. Working class youth created an alternative subculture, which expressed the rejection of the dominant culture for contemporaries. The discourse in the local newspaper concerning this phenomenon shows the typical social conflicts between the local authorities and working class boys represented in the image of the town. This particular kind of delinquency of working class boys, or "hooliganism", in Stalintown was the product of a public discourse, which rejected the consumption of western goods to demonstrate that a socialist society could function better than a capitalist one. The ideological concept of equality determined the new form of youth delinquency: the consumption of western music and dance (such as jazz, beat and rock-'n-roll), western or extravagant clothes (blue jackets, black shirts, and coloured shoes), the use of slang words and expressions.⁶

Stories about this form of "hooliganism" (*jampecek*) were frequently published in the local newspaper as part of a campaign for raising the general level of urban culture. The working class youth wearing extravagant clothes and dancing rock-'n-roll was described in these articles as gangsters or bamboozled boys following the remnants of the old way of life. The struggle against hooliganism meant the struggle against any sort of individualism, and its main function was also to demonstrate that a socialist community could be more fair than a capitalist one.

The interclass conflicts were frequently represented in the language of the local authorities of Stalintown by the different lifestyle of rural people coming to the town. Stalintown, as other socialist towns, was growing at a rapid rate and much of the growth was directly attributable to a massive rural immigration. The people with rural background were characterized by the official discourse leading disordered, untidy lives, almost totally devoid of the local community. Instead, their social relations were characterized by spontaneity and capriciousness and that is why they were often placed at the margin of society. Their lifestyle was often characterized by stories about their raising ani-

mals in bathrooms, scandals in pubs, immorality of country girls, who came alone to work at the factory, etc. This discourse led them to participate in the local society only in limited and highly selective ways.

The process of adjusting to urban life was represented as a constant struggle of people to maintain the integrity of family and personal life in a strange new setting. Many of the migrants, however, expressed pride in their own origins. On the other hand, a man from a rural background who moved to Stalintown into semi-skilled factory labour could feel that he was lucky to have such a good job; a man from an urban middle class background who moved into the intermediate ranks of industry could feel blocked, but the one who became an engineer could feel satisfied. This experience was not universal, but it was common. In the first years of the town many peasants worked to earn money for specific purposes back in their own communities, for example, for the purchase of agricultural equipment, and thus were more interested in money than in working conditions. Others, who migrated only to work in Stalintown, decided to stay near to the factory because they did not have other options, but it did not mean that they lost their connections to their own communities. Many of the migrants tended to enter the unofficial tertiary sector of urban economy, working as vendors on the black market, domestic servants employed by affluent families (such as engineers, physicians, heads of factory), and in various "services". The cultural conflict involved in urban adjustment had a significant role in the discourse, but its main function was to demonstrate the official attempt which tended to represent in Stalintown a classless society and to level urban – rural differences. It is doubtful if there have ever been totally harmonious communities, peasant or otherwise, whose members always got along perfectly together. Although the image of Hungarian villages has suffered in the past from overly romanticised interpretations, the image of the villagers of socialist towns had the function in the official discourse to represent the disorders of local society.⁷

The barracks in Stalintown were basic shelters for the majority of the rural population till 1965. At the beginning of the fifties they relentlessly met the eye of anyone who walked the town's central streets, but having built the central area the barracks were relocated nearby the factory, which was far away from the town. After 1954 the blight of these barrack-slums could be more easily ignored, because the local officials tended to cleanse the inner town area. Slum sensationalism, however, became an especially popular subject in the local press at the end of the fifties because of the transformation of public policy-making, which seemed now to be much more on the side of raising the living standards than at the beginning of the rapid industrialisation in Hungary. In Stalintown the barrack-slums became the subject of a new type of popular reform journalism.

Newspaper discourse on barrack-slums and judicial proceedings against people living there highlight the transformation of images and stereotypes of barracks. This discourse was a dramatic essence of the story of Stalintown, because the bricklayers who built the houses usually lived in barracks for many years whilst the flats went usually to the engineers and the skilled workers. However, it was the petty crime and violence of the barrack-slums, which filled the first pages of Stalintown's more sensational newspaper. The inhabitants of the slums were identified as deviants in order to uphold the legitimacy of the centralised flat allocation system. The main economic function of the slums in Stalintown was that the 'dirty work' was done. The existence of slums in the discourse generated by the local newspaper and officials, however, helped to guarantee the status of those who were not living in such poor conditions, but in planned flats. Social mobility was a particularly important goal of the state socialist system, and people needed to know exactly where they stood. The discourse about the barrack-slums in Stalintown also encouraged all those living in planned flats to feel fortunate for being spared the poverty, which officially did not exist in socialism. From one point of view, however, the barrack-slums could even be optimistically viewed as an integrative element – a sort of staging area in which the rural immigrant was

initiated into the mysteries of the life of the first socialist town, where he could learn new forms of solidarity, acquired new social skills, but this view was not highly represented in the local press. In the history-writing the barrack-slums of socialist towns served as “dark stories” of the socialist period to substantiate the opponent political point of view.⁸

The official discourse and the image of families living in Stalintown were particularly influenced by ‘the myth of the declining family’. This image was evidenced by the high rate of divorce and abortion, and had the function to foster the idea that in urban, industrial societies, the family is no longer the unit of economic production. However, oral history interviews and private letters of villagers living in Stalintown show that the people concerned maintained close kinship ties and even kept many of their former practices in the town.⁹ The official image of families in Stalintown and the urban paradigm of family life of socialist cities worked for the macro-level characteristics of the city. However, it did not hold true at the neighbourhood and family level, which were more integrated and personal. The villagers in Stalintown regularly visited their relatives in the countryside; the first generation of immigrants tended to settle in urban areas where they already had kin. The immigration into Stalintown was a kin-related migration similarly to other industrial cities.

The emancipation of women, however, was a principal issue of socialist propaganda: the typical working class families were sexually segregated in Stalintown. Husbands and wives had separate family roles; the husband was the breadwinner as a result of the high rate of unemployment or low wages of women. Working class husbands spent their free time with other male companions, women with other women, and most of social life took place among relatives, neighbours and workplace friends. In spite of the fact that the divorce rate of Stalintown was one of the highest in the country, the marriage rate was also extremely high. One reason for the high rate of married people was that only married couples could obtain a flat.

Socialist towns are myths. They are constructions of the imagination. This is not to say, for example, that Stalintown,

Nova Huta, Eisenhüttenstadt, Dimitrovgrad or Magnitogorsk did not exist. Nor is it to dispute the extraordinary living conditions that characterized the everyday life of people living in new socialist towns. I do not mean that socialist towns were not real. Socialist towns were, after all, a universal feature of Eastern bloc countries and from a microhistorical perspective they can represent the main issues of the social history of these countries in the post-war period (such as urbanization, migration, gender roles, culture of consumption, making of the working class and especially the social limits of state control). Their reality, however, lay in the constructions of official and unofficial conviction, and in the belief of public knowledge, rather than in the material conditions of everyday living. To discuss socialist towns is to deal with discourse, and the concepts they communicated, rather than the state ordinances or social geography of the new towns built in post-war socialist countries. The struggles over pubs, behaviour of the youth, immigrants with rural background and barrack-slums in Stalintown helped the growth and development of interclass conflicts. These conflicts fostered the definition of 'socialist' modes of behaviour, socialist towns and the boundaries of the various social groups. These tendencies determined the myths of Stalintown and generally influenced the mythology and imagination of socialist cities in Hungary.

Many historical analyses tend to view the Stalinist period as the 'ideal-type' for examining state-socialism, and the post-Stalinist period as an 'ideal-type' for examining the so-called social process of 'destalinisation'. This phenomenon can lead to an ahistorical analysis. For example, there are many historical analyses which argue that at the end of the fifties economic policies turned decidedly more pro-consumption in Hungary. If we describe post-Stalinist regimes in terms of a 'social contract', the state ensured rising living standards in exchange for popular political calm, for the so-called Kádárist social compromise. This kind of description can work for the macro-level characteristics of Kádár's Hungary. However, it did not hold true at the level of everyday life, which can be characterized by considerably more continuous social phenomena than discontinuous ones.

NOTES

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Agriculture and the New Economic Mechanism

Zsuzsanna VARGA

When I was invited to the conference, held in September 2000 in Budapest, I was asked to give an introduction on the effects of the New Economic Mechanism on agriculture. In my lecture I asked the question another way around: what influence did agriculture (and within it the agricultural co-operatives) have on the process of economic reform.

If we take together the package of measures introduced on 1 January 1968 with agricultural reform measures then they do not neatly fit together. In 1965 the concept by which the whole economic system was to be redesigned was being devised, while the debates around agriculture were already dealing with practical and side issues. For example, the abolition of machine tractor stations or the cancellation of agricultural co-operative debt. In 1966 when the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP) Central Committee accepted the initial principles of the economic reform, producer prices were increased in agriculture. In 1967, as the planners prepared for the economic reform, two important pieces of agricultural legislation came into force, while interest representation organs were created for the members of the co-operatives.

Therefore, the changes in agriculture, and especially as they affected agricultural co-operatives, occurred from 1966 onwards, two years before those that replaced plan instructions in the economy as a whole.

How is this discrepancy to be explained? The most common explanation is that agriculture was nothing more than the laboratory for the reform. However, this begs the question of whether this was simply a question of unintended outcomes, or whether it was the result of planned attempts by the state? What other factors need to be taken into account? For example, we might consider the impact of the agricultural co-operatives themselves, what came from below, and what the effect was of interaction between the planners and economic actors.

This study is based on the results of archival research and oral history and attempts to explain how agricultural reform and economic reform were connected. In the following parts of my paper I would like to concentrate on three principal issues:

- 1) The major problems of collectivized Hungarian agriculture during the first half of the 1960s.
- 2) The peculiarities of agricultural reform during the decade.
- 3) The effects of the New Economic Mechanism on the agricultural co-operatives.

1 The major problems of collectivized Hungarian agriculture during the first half of the 1960s

The problems of collectivized agriculture largely result in the fact that the state's opportunity for representing its interest was greater than that of the co-operatives, that is the collective decision-making process of the individual co-operative members. Indeed, as a result of the state's dominance certain process began which were against the interests of the party-state itself.

What were the major problems?

Just as from year to year the co-operatives sold a higher percentage of their produce (mainly to the state) the volume of their production hardly increased at all.¹

The second contradiction showed itself in the fact that while the co-operatives were able every year to fulfil their obligations to the state, their operating budgets were insufficient for their needs. Behind this was that pricing policy in fact drained the resources of the co-operatives, while the use of their revenue occurred in a way largely prescribed by the state. The so-called

'remainder principle' meant that any income of the collective farm was firstly spent on repaying its obligations to the state. The impact of these factors was that the co-operatives never had sufficient funds for investment and for this reason could only buy machinery on credit or with state subsidies, and therefore they became indebted. Dependence on the state translated into state control, even though the state did not formally own the co-operatives.²

The pricing system and distribution of income also prevented the co-operatives from giving a decent income to the membership. As a result of the insecure and inadequate income provided by the common farming within the co-operatives large numbers left them. Not even the three-year ban on leaving after joining could prevent this because the new industrialization drive launched in 1959 created demand for workers. This movement was largely made up of the most employable of the young, and particularly the men. Those leaving did not only represent a problem for the co-operatives but so did those who stayed because many hardly ever worked or worked poorly in the common farming element of the co-operative.³

By autumn 1961 it had become clear that the problems, together with the restrictions on investment directed at the agricultural sector, prevented the state from fulfilling their aim of "more production, more produce". This was serious as the Kádár regime's living standards policy was only visible through the provision of foodstuffs, because most people still spent most of their money on food.

At that time the HSWP sought two kinds of solutions to the problem.

The first was that in 1961–1962 the party leadership launched a reform programme, planned to end in 1963.⁴ It had three planks:

- 1) The reform of the agricultural pricing, taxation and financial system
- 2) The examination of agricultural management
- 3) The introduction of a new co-operative law

On the other hand, until the end of the reform, efforts had to be made to do something about stabilizing the situation of the co-operatives. A large number of examples arrived from the socialist countries, simply because in the first half of the 1960s there were reactions to the problems that appeared in the agricultural sector in both the Soviet Union and in other Eastern and Central European countries.⁵ As a result, they reorganized the party and state direction of agriculture. Under the influence of these reorganisations the channels of influence were open to the central authorities in the fields of production and purchase, while both agricultural co-operatives and state farms came under unified direction.

The Hungarian leadership did not choose to go down this road, but instead from 1960-1961 chose their own strategy for dealing with problems. This rested on the recognition that the production responsibilities of the co-operatives, alongside the constraints imposed by investment, could only be fulfilled if they secured or expanded the interest of the individual member in both collective production and production on the household plot.⁶

The improvement of the work ethic of the membership could only be secured through giving them supplementary sources of income. The possibilities for securing such extra income were definitely constrained. At the same time the 1959 Law No. 7 that regulated the co-operatives laid down the basic institutions for binding the membership financially to the co-operative through the basic institution of the 'remainder principle' – the 'work unit' system.⁷

It was in the resourcefulness of the peasants that the solution was found that ensured the realization of the interests of the membership came before the interests of the state. They used forms of remuneration (like share cropping and periodic bonuses) that allowed for the realization of this. At this time there were very many semi-legal solutions which had one simple constraint. The local initiatives of the co-operatives could only to a very defined extent mitigate the larger negative forces that affected the co-operatives (the income, however it was distrib-

uted, was always too low). This is so even without speaking about how the effect of state intervention on the agricultural co-operative really constrained the interest realization of each unit.

2 The peculiarities of agricultural reform during the decade

These experiences were built into the reform measures in agriculture that were implemented in the first third of the 1960s, and these were connected to the two means of dealing with the problems that are referred to above. The realization of the reform measures was frustrated at the turn of 1963 and 1964 because of macro- and micro-economic problems.⁸ At the same time numerous large questions of principle had already been decided by the reform attempts in 1963, and therefore in large part the 1966–1967 reform package was built on the 1963 reform package.

The next part of this study concentrates on comparing and contrasting the 1963 reform plans and the specifically agricultural parts of the 1968 New Economic Mechanism.

As a result of the initiatives that were introduced from below and the financial problems of the co-operatives the question of the realization of interest came to the fore. The new model for the financing and income distribution of the co-operatives had already been formed in 1963. The financial infrastructure for independent enterprise production had to be created. In 1963 political considerations had interfered in its implementations, mainly in the maintenance of low consumer prices. The question of consumer prices, far more than ideological considerations, was a crucially important crisis because it made the low level of agricultural prices necessary, so that grocery prices could be kept low, and thus wages kept down.

By the middle of the 1960s it was widely accepted that solutions to the problems of giving adequate incentives could not be solved either at the level of the membership or that of the co-operative, unless the price system was restructured.

The Politburo on 6 July 1965 decided to raise agricultural prices by 9% in 1966, and a further 10% in 1967–70.⁹ The increase in prices was not, however, sufficient to allow the co-

operatives to wipe out their debt. For this reason, as part of the same decision, the state wrote off 60% of total co-operative debt. Alongside this, short-term loans were converted to long-term loans.¹⁰

The co-operative model introduced in 1966 together with the price and financial measures taken did not, however, go much further than the 1963 reform plan, except in the respect that the authority for making decisions about investment and finance remained with state bodies. The major constraint, therefore, on the enterprise based production was that of state investment policy.

The creation of independent co-operative production was not only necessary in order for a larger proportion of earned income to remain with the farms, but also for the co-operative to decide itself what it did with its income. Already in 1963 it was recognised that the agricultural co-operatives had to have responsibility themselves. At that time the greatest weight was placed on the amortisation fund. In the middle of the 1960s the criticisms of the system of distribution co-operative income became stronger.¹¹

The Law No. 3 of 1967 on agricultural co-operatives set up the new financial system. Within its scope fell the creation of the amortisation fund, as well as the share fund.¹² The importance of the latter lay in the fact that the sums paid to the members for their work were counted as an expense of the co-operative, and that its payment took precedence over the needs of the state and the supplementation of economic means. In this way the system was reformed.

The shift to independent enterprise production did not only require the securing of an appropriate financial background, but whole spheres of decision-making authority were transferred from the state to the co-operatives. The major changes only took place with the financial measures in the middle of the 1960s. In contrast to the previous situation, the role of the state to intervene in the affairs of the agricultural co-operatives was restricted, and this increased the independence of the co-operatives from both the central and local organs of govern-

ment, and particularly the bureaucracies in the district councils which had frequently directly intervened. It is, however, necessary to point out that the ability of central organs to intervene still remained strong.

In order to validate these changes there had to be amendments to the law as well. In the three reform packages designed in 1963 the envisaged end result was a plan for a new agricultural co-operative law.¹³ During the drafting of the law the major effort was to attempt to eliminate the asynchronous relation between the *de jure* and *de facto* elements of co-operative life. They did this so that the practice of co-operatives was incorporated into the law, allowing for the legalization of various informal initiatives at the level of work organisation and remuneration.¹⁴

The 1963 plan defined the agricultural producer co-operative through two basic principles in just the same way as Law No. 3 of 1967. On the one hand, it stated that the co-operative was an agricultural plant that was a productive enterprise based on independent accounting. On the other hand, it talked about the co-operatives' organisation and economic independence. Agricultural co-operative independence was legally protected in two ways. On the one hand, it stated that the owners of the co-operative were the members: in other words that they were responsible for their own affairs. On the other hand, the law stated that to some extent the co-operative came under state direction, but that its directing role was not the same as direct control over co-operative members and property. It emphasized that state bodies could not make a decision that affected production, farming and the distribution of income.¹⁵

The novelty of the 1967 package was the proclamation of legal equality for agricultural co-operatives. Behind this was one very important political decision. Previously official ideology had regarded only direct state ownership as the highest form of socialist property. Every other form of property figured as the indirectly socialist form of property like co-operative property. With the law co-operatives were recognized as a directly socialist form of property, and a major ideological revision occurred.

It is important to draw attention to the fact that this political decision, taking into account the great differences between socialist countries, was not without its problems. It is only necessary here to mention that in the Soviet Union many *kolkhozes* turned themselves into *sovkhozes*, drawing attention to the higher nature of their form of property.

3 The effects of the New Economic Mechanism on the agricultural co-operatives

The New Economic Mechanism, introduced on 1 January 1968, cleared away many ideological, judicial, constitutional and financial obstacles in the path of agricultural development. In this changing political and economic atmosphere it was the agricultural co-operatives that adjusted themselves to the new possibilities most rapidly and most successfully. While produce in the entire agricultural sector increased by 5.5% a year, the growth of the agricultural co-operatives was 9.4% after the reform.¹⁶

What were the factors which promoted this dynamic growth? In the last third of the 1960s the quantity of agricultural investment increased, which had not only state farms but also agricultural co-operatives receiving their share. The end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s affirmed the tendency that the major part of the investment did not serve as a compensation for the implements anymore that had fallen short as a result of collectivization, but was used for real development instead. This period also brought forth a decisive change in the structure of investments. The centre of interest was shifted from building investment to machinery investment.¹⁷

Beside large-scale mechanisation, the extension of the utilization of chemical agents and artificial fertilisers as well as the appearance of 'closed production systems' was carried out in this period. Due to the reform the process of technological regeneration grew stronger. Traditional large-scale production was gradually replaced by industrial-type production systems using engines of high capacity that had mechanized the entire process of production as well as efficient chemical agents in

great quantities.¹⁸ An important preliminary condition for the reception and the adaption of the above mentioned had been the rise of an adequate staff of managers and experts within the co-operatives by the beginning of the 1970s, thanks to a wide-ranging agricultural secondary and university education.

The spread of 'closed production systems' in Hungary in the second half of the 1960s commenced with the produce of chicken-meat and eggs and then continued with the field growing of plants in the 1970s. The new system was applied most successfully in the domain of maize-cultivation, employing organisational and technical experience from the United States among others and partially making use of their imported machine systems. By the middle of the 1970s about half of the quantity of maize was cultivated within the scope of the new system.

The first results of the efforts to boost the technical and intellectual background of agricultural production were making themselves felt in a short time. The abrupt increase in the average yield of both wheat and maize formed the basis – through the increase of cattle stock and meat produce – of the tripling of Hungarian agrarian exports between 1965 and 1975.¹⁹ This growth is of great importance considering that the country had been in need of bread-grain and meat imports up to the middle of the 1960s.

Underlying this running-in of the co-operatives' produce we find the particular division of labour between the household plots and the communal part of the co-operatives. While large-scale production operated very well in the field growing of plants, household plots succeeded significantly in labour-intensive growing (e.g. horticulture and viticulture). 25% of the total returns of plant cultivation and stock-farming of the agricultural co-operatives were produced by household plots. This level of production could be achieved in spite of the fact that they were in possession of a mere 12% of the entire area of the co-operatives and had a rather scanty stock of implements, since the instruments of production they needed were largely missing from the market or were extremely expensive. The de-

gree of co-operation between collective and household farming was different in virtually every single co-operative. Many co-operatives undertook the production, purchase and distribution of the main implements needed by the household plots (seed-corn, breeding animal, artificial fertiliser, plant protectives, fodder). It was more accepted to sell produce excess through the co-operatives.²⁰

Household small-scale produce, thus, had had an important role in stabilizing large-scale production success. In fact, we may add, it had become a significant factor of the gross national product and Hungary's export capacity. There had been another important aspect of the collaboration between collective and household farming. The communal part of the co-operative ensured but a small income to the members; the household farming in turn provided an opportunity for industrious members to grow richer and rise socially. Countryside families were willing to make enormous efforts to obtain durable consumer goods, build family houses of personal property, and, last but not least, to provide school education for their children. The greatest change in the way of country life in the history of the twentieth century in Hungary took place.²¹ The immense change in the consumption and the standard of living of countryside families made this era the golden age of "consumer's socialism".

Beside the household produce, the widening range of co-operatives' supplementary establishments played a significant part in the rapid increase of co-operative and membership earnings. The restrictions of the Soviet *kolkhoz*-model limited the activity of agricultural co-operatives to plant cultivation and stock-farming and restrained other temporary activity; albeit this had had a long tradition in Hungary in the organisations of both the old *latifundium* and the peasant farming. Following the reform of the Mechanism, the non-agricultural, subsidiary activity (so called ancillary enterprises) – including activity in industry, building industry, transport and trade – grew considerably wider, in fact, tripled in the period between 1968 and 1975. The net receipts of the co-operatives outside the base ac-

tivities grew from 9.2 billion a year in 1968 to 22.4 billion a year in 1971 (271%), building industry activity increased from 3.2 billion to 6 billion (182%), the net receipts coming from trade grew from 2 to 7.4 billion (350%).²² These ancillary enterprises developed particularly vigorously in the co-operatives which had significant drawbacks in agricultural produce, since they retrieved the earnings the base activities would not cover, and, on the other hand, ensured continuous employment, and, thus, a guaranteed income, for the members.

The positive effects of the agricultural reform could be perceived in the entire society through improving food-supply or through the appearance of goods regarded until then as scarce material. A significant outcome of the period between 1966 and 1972 had been a rapid and balanced increase in consumption, as well as the improvement of commercial balance. Both the population and the state, thus, had become beneficiaries of the running-in of agricultural co-operatives. Despite all this, an anti-co-operative campaign started to develop in the beginning of the 1970s. Who were the leaders of this fight and why did they battle against agricultural co-operatives?

In search of the reasons we must first consider that there had been opponents of the economic reform of 1968 from the very beginning. One of the opponent groups was represented by the big industrial enterprises. In the course of a development of nearly a quarter of a century the priority of industrialization had led to heavy industry (metallurgy, steel metallurgy and machine industry) obtaining the greatest part of investment. In addition to this a strong lobby had emerged, even supported by the idea that in the building of socialism, the prominent part should be taken by the working class (which, by the way, had never come about). All this had ensured them privileges not only in the obtaining of resources but in each and every question of political supremacy. Their representatives took the key positions in the Party, the trade unions and the state institutions.²³ After 1968, they had to realize to their great astonishment that co-operatives could make more capital out of the adaptable scope enabled by the reform than giant factories.

They had also been disturbed by the agricultural lobby that had gained strength in the meantime and had started to formulate its interests with a growing explicitness. The lobby criticized the extremely high retail price of agricultural machinery and industrial raw material and the growing gap between prices of agricultural and industrial products.²⁴

This conflict itself, however, would not have been sufficient for an assault on agricultural co-operatives. The decisive factor had been the fact that international opinion on the reform had changed. The stifling of the reform process in Czechoslovakia by force of arms did not only mean that Hungary had been left alone with the reform but also that the Hungarian developments had attracted the close attention of the other socialist countries with special regard to the conservative leadership of the Soviet Union led by Brezhnev. They were afraid that the New Economic Mechanism would result in undesirable consequences for politics, power and ideology. The “follow-wind” from Moscow showed favour towards all with an aversion to the New Economic Mechanism from the beginning. Factory managers, heads of trusts, the general staff of the Central Council of the Hungarian Trade Unions, as well as loyal, but non-expert party members from central and county economic boards formed the opposition of the reform, led by Béla Biszku, Zoltán Komócsin and Sándor Gáspár. They were disturbed by the fact that through the dynamic growth of household farming and ancillary enterprises, the income of large-scale industry workers had gradually been overtaken by the income of co-operative members. Moreover, the heavy industry lobby insisted that the sudden development of co-operative farming, and, as a result, the income of peasants, could not have taken place in a “legal” manner.²⁵

Since opposition could not be overtly aired in public, the covert attack on the reform was launched with a reference to the protection of the interests of large-scale industry workers. The decisions of the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party Central Committee made in their session on 14–15 November 1972 meant practically a suppression of the reform process.²⁶ Within

the next two years, the politicians involved closely with the reform (Rezső Nyers, Lajos Fehér, Jenő Fock) were dismissed.

The main line of attack had been the sector of agricultural co-operatives and the measures taken ranged from ideological debate, economic regulators and executive measures to legal and criminal proceedings.²⁷ Despite the fact that the reform of 1968 had acknowledged state and co-operative property as equal, the debate whether co-operative property – including household plots and ancillary enterprises – had to be considered directly socialist property, started afresh in the press in the beginning of the 1970s. There had been comparable discussions regarding the interests involved. The hierarchy of interests, a pivotal formula of the socialist system, had declared that interests hierarchized downwards from the top to the bottom. ‘People’s economy’ ranked first, an enterprise or a certain group second, the individual last. This had also been a hierarchy of assertion, which means that the interests of the socialist economy and society represented by the Party had always had the upper hand of the group interests of co-operatives or the interest of their members.

The agricultural co-operatives could see their situation growing worse not only in the field of ideology but also in the domain of economic regulators. Their assessed taxes had been increased, the taxes on household parts had been steepened retroactively, which was a case without parallel. The subsidization of their investments had been reduced. The collective farms’ non-agricultural activity had been limited by executive means. First, steps had only served for preventing expansion, later they were also used to restrict industrial activity outside of the state sector. A number of restrictive measures were taken from the beginning of the 1970s. From 1 January 1971 on, the progressive taxation for all activities in the co-operatives had been increased. Rates and taxes applying to state officials had been extended to co-operative employees as well. First in Budapest and its environs within a radius of 60 kilometres and later in the surroundings of other towns as well, they prohibited outworker-activity for the machine-, chemical-, and light

industry of the co-operatives. Thirty-eight different scopes of activities had been deemed completely forbidden for agricultural co-operatives.²⁸

Conservative anti-reform forces were not content with a mere acceleration of the regulation system. Legal and criminal procedures had been launched against many co-operative-leaders overstating a common activity which, however, did not suit the opinion of the opposition to the reform. They picked out a few people involved in these activities with the intention of setting an example and intimidating the others. The people prosecuted were exactly the ones who made the greatest effort to meet the expectations of the New Economic Mechanism, hence, those striving for greater efficiency, more profit in farming and the assertion of the spirit of a market economy. These show trials particularly affected the most ambitious people, who had risen above their fellow leaders through their creativity and their spirit of enterprise. This process was the farthest-reaching wave of political retribution in Hungary since the massive retaliation that came to an end in the beginning of the 1960s. Legal and criminal proceedings against co-operative-leaders made it clear that unlawful show trials still belonged to the set of instruments applied by the so-called "soft dictatorship".

The negative consequences of the restrictions and interventions concerning co-operatives came out in a short time. The spectacular fall-off in household produce, the forcing back of the supplementary activities provided by the agricultural co-operatives had the most unfavourable effects on food-supply. Since the self-legitimation of the Kádár-regime had largely depended on accomplishing the policy of living standards, from the middle of the 1970s, they started to revoke the measures that had had disadvantageous effects on the development of both producing capacity and the basis of production.

4 Summary

Two years before the introduction of the New Economic Mechanism, from 1966 on, the managements of agricultural co-operatives launched the switch-over from central directives to

economic regulators. By doing so, they had built up a system based upon the idea that economical regulators might substitute for central directives, moreover, in the event they could add to the producer's interests, they might help the implementation of central objectives even more effectively.

The most recent archival research affirmed that experience gathered in the agricultural sector as well as material on the reform completed by 1963, had had a stimulating effect on the entire process of economic reform.

In the course of general reformist endeavours, deliberate efforts were made to make use of models of work organisations, remuneration, decision-making in state-owned companies that had worked very well in the co-operative sector. We must add, however, that there still remained a discrepancy between realization and its adoption. Furthermore, since the traditional conflict of different ideologies and interests could not have been settled in the beginning of the mechanism reform, the asynchronism between official conception, legal regulation and practice still remained, albeit in a much milder shape. Moreover, conservative anti-reform forces started a counter-attack in 1972–1973, causing serious damage in the national economy.

The 'attack' on agricultural co-operatives illustrated clearly that their fate had continued to depend largely on the political climate. Underlying all this was the fact that the New Economic Mechanism had been based on the notion that politics and ideology were separable. The cancellation of the reform process had resulted exactly from the revelation that the changes started in the economy would inevitably affect the remaining domains of society. The process that had resulted in agricultural co-operatives becoming independent was deemed particularly perilous. Dogmatic forces of the political structure were afraid that co-operatives' growing independence would result in unfavourable political and ideological processes. In the first half of the 1970s, however, they managed to drive the genie back into the bottle.

NOTES

- ¹ Mezőgazdaságunk a szocialista átszervezés idején, 1958-1962. Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, Budapest 1963, 176-178.
- ² Magyar Országos Levéltár [Hungarian National Archive, hereafter MOL] 288.f. 28/1961. 6.ő.e., 230-237; Tájékoztató jelentés a Politikai Bizottság részére a termelőszövetkezetek 1960. évi zárszámadásáról. (1961. április 15.)
- ³ Mezőgazdasági Statisztikai Zsebkönyv. Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, Budapest, 1963., 1964.; MOL 288.f. 28/1961/8.ő.e. Előzetes jelentés a mezőgazdasági termelőszövetkezetek 1961. évi termelési és pénzügyi tervének várható megvalósulásáról és a tsz tagok várható jövedelméről.
- ⁴ MOL 288.f. 5/245.ő.e. Jegyzőkönyv a Politikai Bizottság 1961. szeptember 26-i üléséről; 288.f. 4/45.ő.e. Jegyzőkönyv a Központi Bizottság 1962. február 9-i üléséről; 288.f. 4/47-48.ő.e. Jegyzőkönyv a Központi Bizottság 1962. március 28-30. üléséről.
- ⁵ For more on the reorganisations of party and state direction in Soviet and East European agriculture see Chaykin, Piotr: "Noviye organi upravleniya sel'skovo hozyaystva – organizatori proizvodstva". *Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta*, 40 (1962); Khrushchev, Nikita Sergeievich, Organizovanno provedi perestroyku sel'skovo hozyaystva. *Pravda*, 28 March 1962; Komjahov, Valeriy, Uluchsheniye rukovodstva - vazhnoye sredstvo podyoma sel'skovo hozyaystva. *Ekonomika Sel'skovo Hozyaystva*, 8 (1962):20-29.; Nove, Alec, An Economic History of the USSR. Harmondsworth, etc., Penguin Books 1978, 468-488; Wädekin, Karl-Eugen, Agrarian Policies in Communist Europe. The Hague/London, Allanheld, Osmun Publishers; Martinus Nijhoff Publishers 1982, 44-62.
- ⁶ Varga, Zsuzsanna, Politika, paraszti érdekérvényesítés és szövetkezetek Magyarországon, 1956-1967. Napvilág Kiadó, Budapest 2001, 71-81.
- ⁷ A Népköztársaság Elnöki Tanácsának 1959. évi 7. számú törvényerejű rendelete a mezőgazdasági termelőszövetkezetéről és a termelőszövetkezeti csoportról. Törvények és rendeletek hivatalos gyűjteménye 1959, 95-104.
- ⁸ Pető, Iván and Szakács, Sándor, A hazai gazdaság négy évtizedének története, 1945-1985. I. Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó 1985, 527-531.
- ⁹ MOL 288.f. 5/369.ő.e. Jegyzőkönyv a Politikai Bizottság 1965. július 6-i üléséről. 6. napirendi pont: Előterjesztés a mezőgazdasági ár-, adó- és pénzügyi rendszer továbbfejlesztéséről.
- ¹⁰ Fazekas, Béla, A mezőgazdasági termelőszövetkezeti mozgalom Magyarországon. Kossuth Könyvkiadó, Budapest 1976, 167-170.

- ¹¹ László, János, A gazdasági irányítás és a termelészövetkezetek anyagi érdekeltsége. Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, Budapest 1970, 254-258.
- ¹² Mezőgazdasági termelészövetkezeti törvény. Földjogi törvény. Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, Budapest 1968, 68-73.
- ¹³ MOL 288.f. 28/1963./4.ő.e. Az új termelészövetkezeti törvény vitaanyaga, 1963. január.
- ¹⁴ Varga, 112-117.
- ¹⁵ Mezőgazdasági termelészövetkezeti törvény. Földjogi törvény. Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, Budapest 1968, 9-14, 151-154.
- ¹⁶ Szakács, Sándor, "A reform kérdése és a termelés". *Agrártörténeti Szemle* (1-4) 1989, 109-110.
- ¹⁷ Donáth, Ferenc, Reform és forradalom. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest 1977, 230-231.
- ¹⁸ Swain, Nigel, "The evolution of Hungary's agricultural system since 1967." In Hungary: A decade of economic reform. Eds. Hare, P. G., Radice, H. K. and Swain, N., George Allen & Unwin, London 1981, 236-240.
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- ²¹ Valuch, Tibor, Magyarország társadalomtörténete a XX. század második felében. Osiris Kiadó, Budapest 2001, 284-294.
- ²² Mezőgazdasági Statisztikai Zsebkönyv. Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, Budapest, 1974-1978.
- ²³ Budapest Oral History Archive (OHA), Interviews with Economic Leaders.
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**Planning in Finland –
The Beginnings of a Market Economy in Hungary**

Erkki PIHKALA

Although Finland has never been regarded as a planned economy in the Soviet style, it is useful to examine what kind of elements of planning there were in the Finnish economy and how extensive they were in the post-war years and especially in the era of President Kekkonen (1956-1981). This is interesting as many post-war Western European economies, impressed by the achievements of the socialist planned economies were applying the idea of a planned economy, as did, for example France by its indicative planning system with four year plans.

The Hungarian experiments with a market economy from 1968 onwards using the scheme of the New Economic Mechanism (NEM)*, although an exception in the socialist countries as a real experiment, offers at the same time an interesting counterpart to the Finnish attempts to apply planning or rather the systematic development of the national economy as advocated by President Urho Kekkonen himself.

After the Second World War in many Western European countries, as in the United Kingdom and France, the socialisation or rather nationalisation of certain major branches of production and services (coal and steel, traffic and communications, insurance, etc.) was common, partly for ideological rea-

* Cf. Varga's article. [Ed. note]

sons and partly in the name of reconstruction. In Finland there were also similar demands and a committee was set up in 1945 to plan it. However, the enthusiasm was over by 1948 and, as a matter of fact, no branch of the economy or company was eventually nationalised. This was partly because of the continuing strict regulation of the economy. Rationing lasted in some form until the mid-1950s, and the price controls in some form until the 1980s. Foreign trade was liberalised only from 1958 on as a reflection of the Finnish membership of the GATT since 1950. This was followed by the Finnish association in the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) in 1961.¹ On the other hand, there was little that could be called “national economic planning” in the original meaning of planning applied in the socialist countries.

An important turning point in the Finnish post-war economy came with the expiration in 1955 of the fixed-term Emergency Powers Act used by the government to control the economy, including prices and wages, since May 1941. This was one of the causes leading to the three week General Strike organised by the Labour Unions, which started on March 1st, the very day President Urho Kekkonen started his first period of office.

1 Germs of the ideas of national planning

It has been claimed that the idea of the Soviet-style economic planning was adopted by Lenin from the German war economy during the First World War. The structure of the German war economy was, no doubt, a practical response to the problems of allocation caused by a total war. The same is true for the regulative solutions adopted during the Second World War in Finland, as in the other European belligerent countries, and regulation presupposes planning in advance. But the ideas of a planned or rather a systematically developed national economy had in Finland also other origins, which are worth mentioning.

1.1 Before the Second World War

The ideas can be traced back to the influence of the ideas of the German Younger Historical School through the *Verein für Sozialpolitik* and its Finnish counterpart *Yhteiskuntataloudellinen*

yhdistys (Social-Economic Society) in the 1910s. The German Younger Historical School criticized the English liberal school of economics and emphasized societal planning and social policies aimed at removing social evils by publicly announced objectives. Urban circumstances were considered problematic and rural depopulation was thus to be prevented by improving living conditions in the countryside.

On the basis of these tendencies the first full professor in economics and chief editor of the influential *Yhteiskuntataloudellinen Aikakauskirja* (Social-Economic Journal), J.V. Vennola, wrote in 1916 a programme on how to develop the Finnish national economy. Vennola was later, in 1919-1920 and 1921-1922, the prime minister and several times a minister in the government. In his programme Vennola moved further away from economic liberalism represented by the English school, which had caused many economic and social ills. An ideal for Vennola was an “autonomic state” based on its own resources. This meant reduced dependency on imported grain, land reform and improving the credit conditions for agriculture, which was employing 70-80 per cent of the population and development of forestry. The need for energy was to be solved by building water power stations. The local ores had to be refined as much as possible. The main emphasis was to be laid on the development of the wood, paper and chemical industries and the flour mills. One way to achieve this was customs policies and the improving of the seafaring and good relations with Russia and the Russian markets. A permanent economic central organisation was to co-ordinate the economic policy of the society by annual plans. This advisory body to be established, was supposed to include the representatives of the most important branches of the economy and the economic organisations.² The thoughts of Vennola found support in practice in 1928 as the *Taloudellinen suunnitteluneuvosto* (Council for Economic Planning) was established. In 1929 it outlined the principles of economic policies to be followed during the recession of the 1930s.

1.2 The post Second World War stage

The positive experiences of the rather extensive state-run industrialisation in the interwar period were seen among other things reinforcing the defence capabilities of the country. In the Finnish war economy the influence of the *Sotatalousesikunta* (Staff of War Economy) had until 1944 grown crucial in the allocation of resources.³ After the war it was in practice replaced by SOTEVA (Delegation for War Reparations Industries) which had the power to regulate the allocation of resources. The very regulative role of the state was also obvious in the post-war systematic settlement of the Karelian evacuees and the veterans.⁴

After the war the left-wing parties, especially the People's Democrats (Communists) wanted to change the government's powers to regulate the war economy in the direction of a planned economy. The right-wing parties advocated deregulation and especially the dismantling of the "hated" rationing system in order to promote a return to the "free market" system. Formally there was no national planning as such, but the regulative system of the *Kansanhuoltoministeriö* (Ministry of Supply) working in keen co-operation with SOTEVA in the distribution of import licenses and especially in the distribution of foreign currency by the Bank of Finland meant economic planning in practice, since the plans for the future had to be set in an order of priority. The positive political climate for state-run industrialisation found support not only from the developments in the new socialist countries in Europe, but also from the United Kingdom, France and Italy.⁵

In 1951 the *Taloudellinen suunnitteluneuvosto* (Council for Economic Planning) was founded, but in practice its mission was reduced to preparing the stabilisation programme of the year 1951 and the Basic Programme for Economic Policies of 1954.

1.3 Urho Kekkonen's vision

While the end of the war reparations to the Soviet Union loomed, a discussion was started, as to whether this should be achieved by a reduction in taxation or as a public investment programme advocating industrialisation. Urho Kekkonen, who

acted at that time as the prime minister, was for a rapid industrialisation by “radical means”, as expressed by a leading economist (Bruno Suviranta) of the time.⁶ In his book *Onko maallamme malttia vaurastua ?* (Does Our Country Have the Patience to Get Affluent?) in 1952 Kekkonen emphasized the role of forced saving in order to finance the investments needed to industrialise, in particular, Northern Finland.⁷ The Soviet model of industrialisation since 1928 and the industrialisation programme of Poland (e.g. Nova Huta) were presented in this connection as positive examples.⁸ Kekkonen demonstrated that in 1938 the role of the state had grown bigger in total investments than in 1950.⁹ Since agriculture was an economic burden, the settlement of people had to be stopped and agriculture had to deliver a workforce for industry.¹⁰ The industrialisation of Northern Finland was seen as possible only by state investments in the heavy industries and in order to produce the electric energy needed. This was achieved by harnessing the river Kemijoki from 1953 onwards as the works on Oulujoki river were finished.

2 Efforts towards systematic planning in Finland

The period around the General Strike of 1956 was not a time for planned economic growth. The Economic Council (*Talousneuvosto*) of 1957 ended up with nothing, but in 1959 the government set a committee to work out a production programme for the next few years. The committee proposed the establishment of a corporative Economic Council consisting of the representatives of the state and the government and the different main interest groups. In 1962 the new Economic Council was thus established and in 1966 its functions were enacted by law. In 1967 the Economic Council made its proposition on the development of an Incomes Policies. In this manner it was following the tendencies of development in the OECD countries.¹¹ The efforts to develop the national economy systemically were also reflected in different branches of the economy.

2.1 Agriculture

In agriculture the systematic planning was closely connected to the Incomes Policies adopted after 1966. It aimed at securing the income level of individual farmers and this was connected with the objectives to cut the agricultural production in order to reduce heavily subsidized exports.¹²

2.2 Forestry

The increased use of raw wood due to the systematic expansion of the forest industries was reflected during the first years of the 1960s in that the annual drain exceeded the estimated annual increment of the growing stock in forests. Thus, in 1962-1975 four major long-term programmes (TEHO, MERA I, II and III) were set up in order to increase the future growing stock of timber. The result was heavily increased artificial regeneration, seedling-stand improvements, forest fertilisation, drainage of swamps and construction of forest roads by subsidies (from 20 to 70 per cent of the costs) and long term cheap loans (20-25 years) granted by the state. The MERA III programme was partly (16 per cent) financed by the World Bank.¹³ The annual increment of the growing stock went up from 57 million cubic meters at the end of the 1960s to 75 million cubic meters twenty year later and the increment was expected to be around 90 million m³ in 2040. The popularity of big forest improvement programmes faded after the MERA III programme: this was partly for ecological reasons and also simply because the work was completed. The long term annual drain also remained at the same level from 1955 to 1995 mainly due to increased imports of timber from the Soviet Union. Thus the *Metsä 2000* (Forest 2000) programme of 1983 did thus not find the necessary support.¹⁴ Before that the *Metsätalousskomitea* (Forestry Economy Committee) of 1981 had outlined the abandonment of the centralised forestry policies and advocated private initiatives instead of the tight control of the authorities in the treatment of the forests. The new line was criticized by the older economists, claiming that there are too many individual forest owners who

were not able and/or who would not use their forests effectively and thus would be in a need of expert control.¹⁵

2.3 Manufacturing

As industrialisation with a strong capital formation necessitated by it was accepted as a national goal, the Industrialisation Committee of 1951 presented the means for an investment programme emphasising the role of the traditional forest industries and the metal industries expanded by the war reparation deliveries.¹⁶ The investment programme for the expansion of the capacity of the forest industry was partly financed by the World Bank (IBRD) until 1962 and partly by the export deposits paid after the 1957 devaluation by the forest industries into the Bank of Finland.

The industrialisation of North Finland advocated by Urho Kekkonen was mainly worked out by allocating resources from annual state budgets for founding state-owned companies to use the resources in North Finland. They also got loans from the Bank of Finland. In this way the state owned companies *Kemijoki Oy* (electricity), *Kemijärvi Oy* (pulp), *Otanmäki Oy* (mining), *Rautaruukki Oy* (1960, steel), were founded and the plants of the former ones (*Veitsiluoto Oy*, (timber, pulp and paper), *Typpi Oy* (fertilizers) and *Outokumpu Oy* (non-iron metals) were expanded. Since 1957 the most important counterbalancing power to Kekkonen was the President of the Bank of Finland (Klaus Waris), who demanded that these projects should be commercially profitable.¹⁷ The starting of oil refinement by *Neste Oy* in 1957 was important for the development of imports from the Soviet Union. The last scheme of state-led industrialisation was the establishment of *Valco Oy* in 1977 to produce television tubes in cooperation with the Japanese *Hitachi*. It, however, was a disaster since neither the engineers nor the workers were able to master the production process. After that the state cautiously began to sell its firms to private companies, starting with the small ones.

On the other hand, the state had traditionally had a dominant role in some branches of production, since only the state had the capital and could take the risks needed. The following table (1) shows the percentage of workers employed in the state dominated enterprises in 1938/1949 in proportion to all workers in the respective branch of industry:

Table 1.

Branch of production	1938	1949
Mining	91	95
Metallurgy	2	8
Engineering shops	15	23
Chemical industry	9	16
Wood working	6	10
Paper mills	13	15
Electricity	10	17
Printing	6	6
In total	6	11

Source: Kekkonen, Urho: Onko maallamme varaa vaurastua?, 95

This supports the *Gerschenkron thesis* on the role of the state in the economic growth of late industrialised countries. In addition to the role of the Finnish state as a public owner of the key industries, the municipalities traditionally controlled the production and distribution of electricity, gas and water and the largest traffic companies in the cities according to a law dating from 1895. In addition to this the telephone business, some retailing and banking were traditionally co-operative in their character (table 2). All this decreased the needs in post-war Finland to nationalise these activities. Also the education and health services were from early on dominated by public ownership supported by the state and municipalities.

Table 2. The distribution of gross domestic production (GDP) by form of business and branches of production in 1956 and 1975.

Branch of production	Form of business, in per cent							
	1956				1975			
	Pri	Bus	Cop	Pub	Pri	Bus	Cop	Pub
Agriculture	96	1	1	1	98	0	1	1
Forestry	52	30	3	15	53	29	3	14
Manufacturing	6	75	6	12	4	75	5	16
Electricity, water, etc.	0	37	1	52	0	34	0	66
Building	34	28	2	35	39	35	4	21
Traffic and communicat.	16	41	1	41	13	34	4	48
Trade and commerce	22	55	21	1	20	56	23	1
Banking, insurance	–	61	20	19	–	55	25	20
Ownership of dwellings	78	16	1	5	74	19	1	6
Public administration	–	–	–	100	–	–	–	100
Education and health	8	0	11	81	5	0	7	88
Other services	22	20	38	20	17	18	32	33
Total production	30	39	8	23	21	41	8	30

(Pri = Private ownership, Bus = Private companies, Cop = Co-operatives, Pub = Public companies and public enterprises). Source: Suomen taloushistoria 2, 517.

2.4 Development of the traffic network

The development of the traffic network is in principle ideal for planning purposes. In the 1950s and in the 1960s the construction of the traffic network was in Finland, however, dependent on the annual unemployment situation and the subjective wishes of the different ministers to get new roads in their constituencies. Kekkonen was very successful in this respect. In 1952 a “North Finland Billion” was allocated for the road construction. Between 1955-1960 all the roads proposed specifically

by Kekkonen himself were build by prisoner workers. They were popularly called "Kekkonen's roads".¹⁸

In 1955 the Road Committee of 1952 issued a ten-year plan for the development of highways, but the plan was not realized for financial reasons. The Committee had proposed partly foreign financing, but only in 1964-1971 Finland could get three big (15 year and 5½-6 per cent) loans from the World Bank for highway construction. A main condition for the loans was a systematic plan for the use of the money, which presupposed a feasibility study on the traffic conditions in Finland to be made by foreign experts. The study was conducted by a Dutch engineering firm, NEDECON, and the conclusions drawn were about the same as those by the Finnish traffic authorities.¹⁹ Thus, thanks to the demands set by the World Bank, the traffic planning in Finland came to approach the practices already usual in the advanced market economies. A parliamentary traffic committee issued its plan for highways in 1975 with heavy impact in turnpikes. The plan run, however, into difficulties due to the energy crises and it did not became actual again until the mid-1980s.²⁰

The State Railways traditionally controlled the rail traffic. The losses and the development of the branch were financed by the annual state budgets. Air traffic was in the hands of the state company, (*Aero Oy*) *Finnair Oy*.

2.5 The state budgets

The years 1948-1966 were in Finland characterised by different kinds of short term coalition governments, which lasted less than one year on average. The Peoples` Democrats (Communist Party) was permanently left in opposition. But in the years 1966-1982 the Popular Front Governments or governments formed by the Agrarian Party, Social Democrats and Peoples` Democrats were typical. The political change in 1966 was also reflected in economic planning.

Since 1966 the Economic Department of the Ministry of Finance started to make 4-year plans for budget planning. Thus for the years 1966-1969 a basic budget was prepared. It was,

however, more like a summary on the expected expenditures of different branches of the state economy than a total plan for the state economy.

The first Medium Term Economic Plans (*KTS*) were prepared by separate ministries for the years 1968-1972, as instructed by the Ministry of Finance in 1967. They were supposed to consist of a plan of action and calculations on incomes and expenditures. The plans for 1968-1972 were considerably late, and so the *KTS-plans* for the years 1969-1973 expired. Since 1973 the changes caused by the oil crises, instability of currencies and inflation invalidated the requisites for planning.

The net saving of the government economy was considerable from the 1950s to the 1980s although there were difficult cash deficit crises during recessions (1958, 1967, 1976). Thus, in practice the financial planning of the government economy did not succeed. From the point of view of Keynesian theory the budget policy was reinforcing the economic cycles and not smoothing them off.²¹ This was due to the fact that separate ministries were eager to present large-scale development schemes from their field of operations in the common optimism of building a welfare society. These plans did also find support in the Parliament as the resources to realise them seemed to be there. In order to master the parliamentary race for new societal schemes the use of parliamentary committees to outline the development was strengthened. This tended to emphasize corporatism in making political decisions.

The Finnish ambitions for long-term public budgets reflected the developments in the other Nordic countries, aiming at creating welfare states according to the ideas of the Social Democratic parties, especially by long term planning of the public expenditures. These efforts were spiced with demands for “economic democracy” in the private sector by increasing the worker’s participation. The centralised planning system of the public economy, however, failed due to the political limits to it, the cyclical reasons since 1975 and problems of total coordination.²²

2.6 The local level

The needs for a planned economic development on the local level were reflected by the creation of voluntary regional planning organs. The first organs were started in the 1940s and at the beginning of the 1960s the whole land was covered. The 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s was the golden age of regional planning, with promising perspectives for the development of industries, especially manufacturing, but also tourism, the traffic network, educational facilities up to university level, etc. Most of these plans, aimed at lobbying the state authorities and politicians to allocate money from the state budget to the region in question, did not result in anything. The money to implement them was just not there especially after the mid-1970s with the energy crises.

3 The Hungarian aims for markets²³

The main economic policies in immediate post-war Hungary included the stabilisation of the currency, changes in the nature of rural land-holdings and the beginning of nationalisation. The era of balanced economic development represented by the three-year plan (1947-1949) aimed at bringing the economy up to pre-war levels came to an end with the five-year plan of 1950-1954. Its Soviet (Stalinist) model of industrialisation, based mainly on heavy industries in a small country lacking the raw materials (ores and fuels) needed, was one of the causes of the uprising in 1956. The critics of the Soviet model of industrialisation with extensive centralisation, emphasis on extensive growth, rigidities in the planning mechanism, incentive problems and the continuing problem of poor productivity and inadequate adoption of technical advances forced the Communist Party to adopt the New Economic Mechanism (NEM) in 1966 with effect from 1968 in order to promote efficiency.

It is true that already in the 1950s some efforts had been made to effect a liberalisation of the Stalinist bureaucratic and administrative framework of economic planning. In 1953, after the death of Stalin, the guidance and control on enterprises, previously exercised by ministerial industrial boards, was

turned over to newly organised trusts operated to maximise profits, with the component enterprises defraying the expenses. In 1957, for example, individual enterprises were relieved of the obligation to submit monthly and quarterly plans for the approval of higher authorities. In 1964 industry was made to pay capital charges to the state on fixed and circulating capital in their possession. Ideologically these interests in fact were justified because capital is nothing else than materialised labour, and as such should be rationally distributed.

3.1 The New Economic Mechanism

The introduction of the New Economic Mechanism (NEM) substantially reduced central government intervention in the economy at the enterprise level. NEM was the only somewhat successful economic policy reform introduced on the basis of reform initiatives widely discussed at that time in the Socialist countries. In the Soviet Union the ministerial system of planning was back again in autumn 1965 replacing the *sovnarkhoz* (regional) system. Economic efficiency was debated under the title of “libermanism”, which in 1967 eventually led in the Soviet Union to the so called Kosygin reform emphasising the role of profits and capital charges in allocation. In Czechoslovakia the more wide economic reforms ended with the intervention of the Soviet troops in 1968.

The objective of NEM was to combine the central direction of relatively few key variables with local responsibility for the remaining decisions. The NEM thus made the enterprises independent economic units with the right to determine the structure of their production and sales. Instead of the previous detailed and intricate plans, only broad guidelines were provided for enterprises to follow. Enterprises were thus given latitude in determining their own production mix on the basis of their preferences with respect to quality, styling and pricing. The enterprises also got the right to establish direct contacts with foreign firms, conclude contracts and engage in independent foreign trade activities. To facilitate this shift, price flexibility was

introduced so that some domestic prices could respond to changes in foreign currency prices. This implied a genuine economic (as opposed to accounting) function for the exchange rate in a socialist planned economy.

A modified market economy was thus permitted in which enterprises could react to consumer preferences on the basis of their resources. The central planning authorities, however, were able to exercise control over enterprise production through the use of economic levers designed to induce cooperation by making it more profitable to produce certain items. Profits were to be used as an indicator of success, and above all, the utilisation of profits by the enterprise to finance decentralized investment. The administrative control was to be replaced by “economic regulators”.

3.2 The ideological and regulatory constraints of the NEM

But as all major macroeconomic decisions concerning economic development, investment and consumption remained in the hands of the state, enterprises and individuals soon discovered that indirect regulation (implemented by the planners, the banking system and state agencies) and especially severe price and wages controls, exercised by the state provided severe constraints on the functions of the markets. This was also rather easy, since Hungary had in 1970 only 812 industrial enterprises with an average of seven plants each. There were no intermediate-level industrial authorities, which meant that planners could talk to enterprises rather easily (in a kind of oligopolist industrial structure). The enterprises, on the other hand, tended to expand their investments unnecessarily and had little incentive to develop effective exports or substitutes for imports.

Since there were no corresponding political reforms, the NEM came into conflict with ideological and political issues, with Soviet influence and vested domestic interests, and was thus watered down. Job security and the income distribution system, which did not distinguish between the competent and incompetent enterprises and/or workers, continued to inhibit the increase in labour productivity. This was combined with

limited tolerance of unemployment and inflation and problems in the mobility of the labor force.

Unfortunately abrupt changes in world oil prices since 1973 turned the terms of trade with both the Western and the *CMEA* countries severely against Hungary. The reflections of the rise of oil prices, as a consequence, made it necessary to connect external and internal prices on a permanent basis. In practice this led, combined with Soviet political pressure, to the reversal of the NEM, which until then had produced a good economic performance for Hungary. Domestic prices became less meaningful as indirect taxes and subsidies were introduced and the control over enterprise financial behaviour was strengthened. Economic performance was declined and foreign debt was accumulated, which entailed measures to control the trade imbalance and emphasising the equilibrium in the domestic economy. From 1980 to 1982, in the years of the second oil crisis and of a recession in the western economies, the rate of economic growth averaged only one percent.

3.3 Reversions of the 1980s

In the early 1980s the role of prices as regulators in the system was again increased. In order to make it possible for the enterprises to compare the domestic and foreign prices, the multiple exchange rates were abandoned in 1982. Economic reforms introduced in 1984 and 1985 were aimed at increasing the efficiency of state enterprises and effectively combining market and plan mechanisms in a manner consistent with central priorities. A compulsory reserve fund, introduced in 1968, was eliminated. The reserve fund had been a prescribed percentage on after-tax profit and as a result the disposable enterprise income was reduced. From now on the reserves held were based on the decisions of individual enterprise managers. The state enterprises could now also issue bonds to be sold to the general public. Since 1985 the director and management staffs of small and medium-sized state enterprise were selected by the workers, who were also given the right to recall them. Earlier they

had been chosen by the Communist Party and/or by the appropriate industrial ministry.

In large state enterprises enterprise councils composed of the elected representatives were introduced. The enterprise council was responsible for the election of the managing director, it approved the company's annual budgets, strategic plans and other major resource allocations, mergers and acquisitions and financial statements etc. The state was, however, able to exercise some control over an enterprise through the appropriate branch within the Ministry of Industry. The reforms made since 1988, however, are a different story.

The rules to form a co-operative were quite liberal and they were in widespread use in agriculture. Production quotas were, however, to be fulfilled, but private plots of land were permitted. The private production of food was thus quite extensive.

Hungary thus attempted to develop a market-socialist system, to some extent following the ideas of Oscar Lange on market socialism. This gave it some lead to the other socialist countries in reforming the system further as the socialist economic system collapsed in 1989-1991.

4 Conclusions

In the immediate post-war years the challenge of socialism was taken up also in the capitalist countries, mainly as an ideology. These ideas were thus initiated as nationalisation or by developing strong state-owned enterprises as a kind of substitute for nationalization. On the other hand, the support of state owned enterprises can be traced back to the ideas of nationalism or even national-socialism, in which the development of national heavy industries had an important practical role already in the 1920s.

These influences are seen in the ideas of President Urho Kekkonen regarding the means of the developing of the Finnish economy at the beginning of the 1950s. The founding of state-owned large enterprises was started in Finland already in the 1920s and was continued until the 1970s. At first this policy was supported by the idea of a strong national state. After the

Second World War the founding of state enterprises was supported mainly by the leftist parties as a means of reinforcing the role of state in the economy and/or as a means of regional policy. During the 1970s the enterprises became to such an extent knowledge intensive instead of the earlier capital intensity, that the direct possibilities of state venturing were run out.

The attraction of socialism and nationalisation faded during the 1950s, but in the 1960s the achievements of socialism made the capitalist countries, even the big enterprises, interested in the possibilities offered by medium and long term planning as a specific tool to achieve good economic results. In the Nordic countries the possibilities of planning especially the development of the public sector were seen as optimistic.

In the socialist countries, on the other hand, there was an increased interest to combine the market information given by prices to the implementation of the plans. These developments were both a cause of and an inspiration to the theories of convergence discussed especially by the New Left in the west and to theories of market socialism in the east.

It seems that in Finland the regulation of prices and of the foreign trade together with the active founding of state owned enterprises was a surrogate for systematic economic planning until the end of the 1950s. In Hungary these were effectively used to dilute the ideas of the New Market Mechanism advocated by its liberal supporters in the 1960s.

The price distortions caused by the abrupt rise in oil and energy prices in 1973 and again in 1979, however, restored the ideas of applied planning in Finland, as in general in the west, and dreams of market socialism in Hungary, in the previous models of economic policies. It is difficult to say whether the ideas of NEM were a prelude of the entire collapse of the economic system of planned socialism at the end of the 1980s.

NOTES

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- ² Vennola, J. H., *Kansantalouspoliittisia tehtäviä nykyhetkellä*. [The tasks of economic policies at the moment]. Helsinki 1916. The problems caused by the ongoing war were not reflected in this writing.
- ³ The Finnish War economy has been dealt with in Pihkala, Erkki, "War Consumption and Financing in Finland in the Second World War". In *The Sinews of War. Essays on the Economic History of World War II*. Ed. by Geoffrey T. Mills and Hugh Rockoff. Iowa State University Press. Ames 1993. A corresponding article for Hungary in the same book is Csöppus, István, "The Hungarian Economy in World War II".
- ⁴ Pihkala 1999, 32-33 and 36-37.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 40-41 and 47.
- ⁶ Pekkarinen, Jukka, Vartiainen, Juhana, Väisänen, Jarmo, Åkerholm, Johnny, "Suomalainen finanssipolitiikka ja kysynnän säätely". In *Sata vuotta suomalaista kansantaloustiedettä. Kansantaloudellinen yhdistys 1884-1984*. Vammala 1984, 220-223.
- ⁷ Kekkonen, Urho, *Onko maallamme malttia vaurastua?* Helsinki 1952, esp. 97-128.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 61-65 and 81-82.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 31-33.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 47-49.
- ¹¹ Komiteamietintö [Committee Report] 1967:B1 and Ollonqvist, Pekka, *Metsäpolitiikka ja sen tekijät. Pitkä linja 1928-1997* (1998), 122. The term "Incomes Policy" was first used by the OECD in 1962.
- ¹² Pihkala, Erkki, "Maa- ja metsätalouden uusi asema" [New state of agriculture and forestry], 392-396. In *Suomen taloushistoria 2* [Economic History of Finland 2], Helsinki 1982, 392-396.
- ¹³ Ollonqvist 1998, 164-167.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 212-215.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 278-279 and *Metsätalouskomitean osamietintö II* [Committee Report], 1981:67.
- ¹⁶ Komitean mietintö [Committee Report] 1951:12.
- ¹⁷ Ollonqvist 1998, 120.
- ¹⁸ Levä, Kimmo, "Poliitikot ja tiepolitiikka". In *Pikeä, hikeä ja autoja. Tiet, liikenne ja yhteiskunta 1945-2005*. Toim. Masonen, Jaakko & Hänninen, Mauno. Helsinki 1995, 63.
- ¹⁹ Nenonen, Marko, "Tienrakennuksen ja työllisyyspolitiikan yhteiselo päättyy". In *Pikeä, hikeä ja autoja*, 156-157.

²⁰ Levä, Kimmo, "Valtakunnansuunnittelusta yhteiskuntasuunnitteluun".
In Pikeä, hikeä ja autoja, 205-207.

²¹ Pekkarinen, Vartiainen, Väisänen, Åkerholm, 1984, 211 and 245.

²² See for example Christoffersen, Henrik, Danmarks økonomiske historie efter 1960. Gylling, Narayana Press 1999, 126-136.

²³ The Hungarian economic reforms towards the market economy are here dealt with on the information available in some textbooks on comparative economic systems. They are Schnitzer, Martin C., Comparative Economic Systems, Cincinnati, Ohio 1991, 311-312; Gregory, Paul R. and Stuart, Robert C., Comparative Economic Systems. Second Edition, Boston 1985, 380-387. See also Schnitzer, Martin C. and Nordyke, James W., Comparative Economic Systems, Cincinnati, Ohio 1983, 271-272.

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