

THE RECREATION OF THE NATION – ORIGINS OF THE HUNGARIAN POPULIST MOVEMENT

DEBORAH S. CORNELIUS
Rutgers University
USA

The interwar years in Hungary were a crucial period of social, cultural, and political transition. The partition of the Hungarian state after the Treaty of Trianon, in which both the territorial nature of the country and the psychological climate of its citizens had been drastically changed, demanded a rethinking of Hungarian national identity. For small groups of young intellectuals, both within and without Hungary's new borders, this was a period of intense questioning of traditional values and structures.

The new generation of university youth, their prospects for the future drastically diminished by Hungary's reduced size and status, were particularly affected by the tensions and conflicts within their socially stratified society; a society struggling to adjust to radically altered conditions. The uncertainty of their future was matched by uncertainty about the future of the nation; the "Magyar sorskérdés" or question of Hungary's fate. With several million Hungarians living outside the new borders, the very nature of "magyarság" (Hungarian-ness) came into question.

Searching for their Hungarian roots and their role in society, they turned to the villages, believing that here they would find an original Hungarian culture, the key to Hungarian identity. As they became aware of the problems of the large Hungarian agrarian proletariat, their movement turned from a romantic search for "roots" into a search for solutions to the economic and social plight of the agrarian poor.

Until quite recently there has been little historical analysis of the populist movement because of the political sensitivity of the subject. Populist reform methods, including the creation of an independent self-confident peasantry, were rejected by the Communist regime after 1948. Today, as Hungarian leaders search for alternative routes to reform, there is renewed interest in the ideas and methods proposed by populist writers, particularly the so-called "third way", a unique Hungarian road to reform.

Hungarian scholars usually speak of the populist "writers' " movement, referring to the activities of a number of influential writers in the 1930's who attempted to awake the literature urban population to the problems of Hungary's agrarian proletariat. These men of diverse background and views had indeed a powerful influence on the literate public in the late 30's and early 40's. Yet my research has convinced me that the writers were only the most visible part of a much broader movement beginning in the 1920's – a movement of young intellectuals to remedy the deep cleavages in Hungarian society through social and economic reform.

The origins of the movement can be traced to several small youth groups in the 1920's, radically different in composition and goals from the prevalent national student organizations.

In the second half of the 1920's a new type of youth organization was started..., which never became widespread, never took over the whole intellectual youth, never replaced the dominant student organizations which held the life of the university youth movement in their hands, but was still of lasting influence.¹

The activities and interaction of three youth groups; the St. George Scout Circle, later Sarló, formed among the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia; the Youth of Szeged, started by refugee students from Transylvania; and the Miklós Bartha Society in Budapest, founded by recently graduated refugee students from the lost territories, exerted a dynamic influence on Hungarian students and writers. Of primary significance were the unique aims and activities of the Sarló group, whose village exploring and village research program, widely publicized in Hungary at the end of the 1920's, created a model to be followed by young intellectuals in the 30's.

The future leaders of the Sarló movement were children at the time of the Peace Treaty of Trianon. Growing up in the newly established nation-state of Czechoslovakia, they were caught between two cultures. At school and in public they sang the new Czech national anthem: "Where is my home, where is my country". In their scout troops and in church they prayed for God's blessing on the Hungarians.² In their awakening self-consciousness as adolescents, they had to find a way out of this confusing duality, to decide where they belonged.

As the Czechs attempted to unify their multi-national population after the Treaty of Trianon and create a Czech national identity, the Hungarians were a suspect minority. The approximately one million Hungarians who came under the rule of the newly formed Czechoslovak state, openly opposed separation from Hungary and never accepted the new boundaries as anything but temporary.* To the Czechs it appeared a reasonable security measure to remove all Hungarians from state employment, even those in the predominantly Hungarian areas.³

The majority of the Hungarians who left Czechoslovakia after the change of governments were of the upper and middle classes, most who had been employed in the public sector; judges, administrators, teachers; even postal and railroad workers.** The elimination of this politically most conscious and articulate group seriously impaired the ability of the remaining Hungarian minority to function. They left behind them a predominantly agricultural population, stretched out in a ribbon of towns and villages along the new Hungarian border. Called the highlands, the area had been an integral part of Hungary. The inhabitants had no independent history as a region to unite them, as did the Transylvanian Hungarians in Rumania, and no natural center. The new generation of youth came of age in a vacuum of Hungarian leadership.

* Statistics on the number of Hungarians remaining in Czechoslovakia are disputed.

** Ibid., p. 48.

The formation of the personal identity and career goals of the new generation were dramatically affected by their position as a minority. They were fiercely conscious of their Hungarian identity. Yet they faced two contradictions. Legally they were Czech and not Hungarian citizens. Ethnically the Hungarians were a mixed group, the result of centuries of blending of Hungarian and various other ethnic groups who had absorbed the Hungarian culture and language. The older generation still identified with the 1,000 year old Hungarian Kingdom in which Hungarian culture was prized. The younger generation, the Hungarian Kingdom only a memory, were under pressure to forget their Hungarian culture. They needed new guidelines to establish their identity.

Their minority status created bonds between the members of this socially mixed new generation, uniting them to a degree unfamiliar in Hungarian society. The loss of lands and position of the former so-called "ruling classes" eliminated many of the social barriers that had divided them before in Hungary's strongly class-conscious society. As adolescents, facing similar contradictions between public and private life, differences in rank and social standing, so important to their parents, seemed inconsequential.

Edgár Kessler-Balogh, one of the organizers of the Sarló movement, described the transformation in his life when his father, a former officer in the Imperial Austrian Army, lost his position. The family lived from his mother's meager earnings as a teacher, and "I became a skinny adolescent, afflicted with lung ailments and *weltschmerz*", until a former gym teacher started a boy scout troop in 1921. The scouts, with its democratic spirit, "released me from a bunch of restrictions... As long as my father wore the uniform of the Imperial Austrian Army I was considered a 'young gentleman' and was invited to the formal teas at the governor's... When I became a boy-scout I became a brother to all those children who had never been invited to the governor's, the sons of middle-class lawyers, merchants, teachers, artisans".⁴

It was within the framework of Hungarian scouting that the Sarló leadership developed. During this time of flux, many youngsters found a refuge in the revived Hungarian scout units. The pedagogical ideas of scouting—self-reliance, peer leadership, learning activities in small independent groups—were well-suited to this generation—often at odds with their fathers' ideas. Seeking their role in society and believing that they had been selected to play a special role in history, they found fulfillment in the romantic ideals of scouting. The idea of service to humanity and the brotherhood of mankind gave substance to their sense of mission.

Jenő Krammer, teacher to a number of Sarló members, wrote:

Anyone who writes the history of the minority in the interwar period must examine separately the role of the Scouts. While Hungarian institutions were paralyzed, the scout movement was able to ignite the souls of Hungarian youth. The scout spirit, the requirement to be a more humane human, struck the youth of the post-war period as if it had been created for them.⁵

The organization of Hungarian scouting in Czechoslovakia was severely hampered by lack of official recognition from the Czech authorities. Individual troops found ways to function, usually under the auspices of the so-called "middle school", which included grades five through twelve. The movement thus excluded all of those Hunga-

rian youth whose schooling ended with elementary school. By June 1921, troops were already functioning in ten different towns.⁶ There were 689 Hungarian scouts in 1922 of whom 106 were girls, roughly one-sixth of the Hungarian middle-school students in Slovakia.*⁷ Considering that at the same time there were 5000 scouts altogether in the Czechoslovak Scout Organization and 4000 in Hungary, this was a significant sum, but still only a fraction of the youth in the Hungarian minority.⁸

Scouting created a communal framework for the minority youth, not only through scouting bonds, but as members of a unique Hungarian community. The scout publication, *A Mi Lapunk* (Our Paper) established in January, 1921 for the Hungarian student and scout youth of Slovakia, partially filled the communications gap left by the absence of an official organization, giving advice on common problems of the minority youth, keeping scouts informed of local and international scouting activities, even providing a "mailbox" for exchange of personal notes. Editor Lajos Scherer brings out their common cause, repeatedly emphasized, in the 1921 May issue, explaining that whereas scouts in other countries receive assistance from the state, the Slovakian-Hungarian scouts must rely on their own strength.

The new generation began to develop a world view in marked contrast to that of their elders. The young people, growing up with students of other nationalities, learning their subjects in a language that their parents did not even understand, began to realize that one could not go back to the world before Trianon. The generation gap was illustrated by an incident recounted by Edgár Kessler-Balogh. Once when his scout troop, returning from a hike, met a group of Slovak scouts wearing the same leather caps and the same green ties, he happily greeted them with the special three-finger salute which he had learned to use to greet brother scouts. At the end of the hike, the visiting scout leader from Budapest reprimanded their young leaders for allowing him to greet Slovaks as brothers. To the young scout, the Slovaks were scouts like himself. To the Budapest leader, they represented the opponent.⁹

The necessity of facing the realities of life as a minority came upon graduation from gymnasium. The Hungarian institutions of higher learning in Slovakia had been moved to truncated Hungary in the first years of the Republic. Not recognizing the Czech universities, Hungarians had sent their sons to university in Hungary, only to find that it was very difficult for the graduates to find suitable employment in Czechoslovakia.

It was members of the graduating class of 1924, Sarló's future leaders, who were the first to consider entering university within the Czech Republic. Since few of them knew Czech or Slovak most elected to go to Prague or Brunn to study in the German-speaking universities. A small brave group registered at the nearby university of Pozsony (Bratislava), where the language of instruction was now Czech.

* According to newspaper reports there were 538 Hungarians among the 7233 students in the 38 Slovakian middle schools (language of instruction Czech); 3028 Hungarian out of 3431 students in the twelve middle schools with instruction in Hungarian; 138 Hungarian speaking students in the three German middle schools. Thus altogether there were 3704 Hungarian-speaking students in middle school in Slovakia in the school year 1922/23. *A Mi Lapunk*. February 1, 1923. pp. 29-30.

The university experience cemented another bond among the young intellectuals. Away from the familiar home environment, uniformly poor and struggling with the language, they sought out their compatriots. Zoltán Boross, son of a county judge, was one of those few students who registered to study law at the university of Pozsony. His father, who had never mastered Slovak, encouraged his son to study in the language of the majority. A stranger to the city, Boross could understand nothing in his first weeks of classes. After some time, Hungarian friends took him to the Toldi Club where they held their Saturday evenings discussions. It was here that he first met Edgár Kessler-Balogh and heard of the formation of the St. George Circle.¹⁰

Kessler-Balogh was one of the number of Hungarian students who matriculated at the University in Prague. The students from the various Hungarian towns of Slovakia, universally poor and struggling with the language, were a social mixture—most of peasant background but some from the former gentry and intelligentsia. Kessler-Balogh and a friend roomed in an old house equipped with a petroleum lamp but no water. Fasting once a week and eating in cheap eating places, he contracted scurvy by the end of the first year.¹¹

The Hungarians were not the only strangers at the university. Prague was filled with refugee students: Russian and Ukrainian emigres, Armenian refugees from Turkey, Jews and other groups from Poland. Student life had come to be organized by nationality groups, since Czech and German organizations took care of the scholarships, dormitories, and clubs for their own students. After a time the Hungarian students also started to organize. Their first organization, the "Hungarian University and College Students of Prague", was formed in May of 1925 to "cultivate the Christian spirit and Hungarian culture, and for the financial support of its student members".¹²

Also during the spring of 1925 the St. George Circle senior scout troupe was formed by Kessler-Balogh and three Hungarian scout friends. Since the Slovakian-Hungarian Scout organization still had not received official recognition, the group was formed under the aegis of the "Studentsky Domov" Czech senior scout club. A Mi Lapunk announced the formation of the senior scout circle and the scouts two goals: mental and physical excellence, and the use their strengths in the service of society.¹³

The small group spent much time in their Saturday night meetings discussing the Hungarian minority problems that puzzled them. What was Hungarian culture? What did nationhood mean? How could the Hungarian minority continue to hold together? They agreed on the importance of solidarity among the minority, and began their efforts to unite the Hungarian youth in Slovakia. That summer Kessler decided to get to know the villagers who formed so much of the minority Hungarian population. He persuaded scout friends from Pozsony to join him in hiking through the countryside. Near the end of their tour as "guests" of the villagers, they were inspired by a group of German "wandervogel", who had had great success in entertaining the children of a German village group. They decided that they too would become "friends of the villagers".

In the fall of 1925, the St. George Circle had devised a plan to take the Hungarian scouts out into the countryside to make contact with the villagers. They decided to hold

a contest among the Hungarian scout groups to hold "story-telling afternoons" for village children. The contest was announced in the scout publication, *A Mi Lapunk*, their only means of communication with the scattered scout troops. Scouts would compete in storytelling for the village youth—their "neglected village brothers". Winners would be announced in the paper and receive prizes. Specific directions were given for the conduct of the "storytelling afternoons" including the number of children to invite, where to meet them, and what kinds of story material were suitable.¹⁴

The first results of the contest were modest, but *A Mi Lapunk* continued to report the successful "story-selling afternoon" which continued after the contest, spurred on by the symbolic title awarded to the most zealous story-tellers, "regós" or "minstrel", recalling the services carried out by wandering minstrels during the Turkish occupation, who carried information to the Hungarian settlements.

A significant step in the growth of the fledgling movement was the scout camp called by the St. George Circle in summer of 1926 for all Hungarian scouts in Czechoslovakia. All scout troops were asked to send representatives to the week-long meeting at Liptószentiván in order to create a "united Hungarian scout way of thinking in the Republic".¹⁵ The St. George Circle, which now had a second branch at the University at Brunn, hoped to transform the traditional self-contained scouting movement into a specifically Hungarian movement reaching out to the people, particularly the minority youth who were not part of the middle-school scouting population. Representatives from scout troops in seven cities adopted the idea of a "village friends movement" and agreed that the scouts should cultivate their Hungarian roots from the villages. Symbolically the St. George Circle scouts abandoned the Baden-Powell traditional leather replacing it with the Hungarian "Bocskay" cap.¹⁶

The participation and approval of university and middle-school scouts at the Liptószentiván camp immeasurably strengthened the small core of university students in the St. George Circle. In August the senior scouts from Érsekújvár and Pozsony together experimented with "regós" or minstrel wandering as a new form of Hungarian scouting. In groups of four they visited Hungarian villages, relying on the villagers' hospitality for food and lodging, and trying to make friends with the villagers, especially the children. One specific task was to recommend children's books and magazines for the village library. After the successful experiment they began to make detailed plans for more extensive "regós" wandering in 1927.

They hoped to extend the new program into middle-school scouting, encouraging the students to get to know the villages and the real conditions of life. The senior scouts hoped to revive the traditional middle-school "self-improvement circles", once intended to meet students' interests, but now – under the leadership of conservative middle-school teachers – concentrating on Hungarian patriotic literature. A Sarló member, Lajos Jocsik, explained the problem. The middle-school teachers, mainly from their fathers' generation, had grown up during the patriotic "Petőfi" years of the last century, and could only see the Hungarian future in terms of patriotic verses. Left out were the pressing social questions of the Hungarian minority. Jocsik found that under the existing type of teaching, one couldn't even talk about social problems in the self-im-

provement circles, and "the coming generation of students lose any feeling for the problems of today's life".¹⁷

The "regős" movement was quite successful in arousing the interests of the scouts. A poem, published in the scout paper in December, called them the "regős" students, a name which quickly caught on. In an article in the paper's January issue by the St. George Circle, the "New Year Regős Students" emphasized that scouting had grown so strong in the cities, that they could now turn to organizing village youth. An article by Zsigmond Móricz, well-known Hungarian writer, in the March 1927 issue of *A Mi Lapunk* entitled "Hiking is Good", inspired numbers of scouts to spend part of their summer vacation hiking through the countryside.

During the summer of 1927, the senior scouts carried out an extensive program of "regős" wandering. The existing branches of the St. George Circle in Brunn, Érsekújvár, and Prague, had been strengthened by the addition of a Pozsony group. Their mobility facilitated by organization in small groups, senior scouts visited more than fifty places in the countryside. Hiking through the villages they recorded ethnographical materials in their notebooks in order to preserve what they perceived as village traditions: interesting peasant farming terminology, superstitions, designs of wood-carvings, and painted tulip patterns on peasant chests.¹⁸

Throughout 1926-27 as more and more university and middle-school scouts took part in village activities, the expanding movement also gained public attention. In the Hungarian language paper in Prague, the "Prágai Magyar Hírlap", the popular young poet Dezső Győry began a public debate over the crisis of the traditional scouting movement, awaking the older generation to the new ideas developing within the youth group. The debate became a heated one. Some scout leaders questioned the village activities. Middle-school teachers were particularly concerned, since the "regős" movement had upset the activities of the traditional "self-improvement circles". A battle began in which the teachers, trying to protect their students from exposure to social problems, objected to their participation in village exploring. Finally, in the summer of 1928, the middle-school scouts were forbidden to take part in the "regős" activities.¹⁹

By 1928, the conceptual framework and aims of the St. George Circle members had begun to crystallize. At a scout camp called at Gombaszög from August 3rd to 13th, they declared publically the goals of their "Hungarian" scouting movement, with themselves as the new generation of leaders. The flags flying over the camp symbolized the transformation of the movement. On one sixteen meter flagpost, the St. George Circle green lily scout banner; on the other flagpole, the sickle (sarló), the "regős" symbol of Hungarian peasant power.²⁰

Rezső Peéry's words of greeting carried the message to the fifty assembled middle school, apprentice, and university scouts through the camp publication, "Vetés" (Sowing):

Lads, we have gathered together to harvest, to gather in our crop of three years. From Prague to Beregszász our crop waves [in the wind], proud, hard, firmly golden, but thinly sown... We cannot, we must not stop now, not to rest, not to enjoy our accomplishments. We harvest only for the new seeds.

The St. George Circle's camp at Gombaszög is the great compressor of our movement—a strong declaration of the new Czech–Hungarian generation's consciousness of its peasant roots, preparations for the building of democracy, and intellectual ethnic unity—so that after the harvest, with new strength we can spread the prepared seeds, with a marvelous vision of new larger sowing fields and billowing bronze colored Hungarian seas.²¹

The expansion of the regós program was a key element in expressing the “new Czech–Hungarian generation's consciousness of its peasant roots, and preparations for the building of democracy”. A “regós” school was held to explain the development of the new scout practice of going to the villages. Edgár Balogh explained that originally, going to the village youth to bring them culture, the scouts had found that the village had much more to give them through the cultural treasures of the people. Gradually the idea had developed of the cultural and social regeneration of the city scouts from the united strength of the Hungarian people. Eventually, through the practice of going to the villages – and contacts between scouts and village youth – a new Hungarian intelligentsia would develop with a democratic history.²²

At campfire discussions, a number of social issues to be addressed by the scouts were discussed including Hungarian workers unity and social problems, the legal position of the Hungarian scouts, village hygiene, modern Russian literature and the peasant conditions.²³ The Sarló flag was voted by the scouts to be symbol of regós movement, proclaiming the birth of a Hungarian scout movement with its roots in the people.²⁴

The students, now known as Sarlós, determined to broaden their village exploring with ethnographical and sociological work, conducted only by university students using scientific methods. When prevented from visiting the village in 1928, the Sarló groups turned to self-education seminars to learn the subjects that had been missing from their school curriculum: Hungarian history, Hungarian culture. The Hungarian university student organization in Pozsony set up a “Hungarian Scientific Seminar Organization” with specialized groups in law, medicine, liberal arts, and teacher training.

The first semester program, written up in a third issue of “Vetés” to help the Prague and Brunn students set up similar seminars, emphasized the role of the young people whose duty it would soon be to work in the villages. In writing about health problems in the Hungarian villages, Mihály Csader wrote of the need for new social thinking in educating the new generation of doctors. Young doctors did not need to live in the city but should turn to the villages to solve their problems of alcoholism, tuberculosis, and venereal disease.²⁵

In the session on the duties of young teachers in the village, the need for social renewal was discussed with an emphasis on Hungarian culture. The two most powerful weapons of the new generation of teachers, according the Béla Forgách, were the modern pedagogical reform and knowledge of the social sciences, which could be used for the benefit of the people.²⁶ In 1929 Sarló expanded its program to Hungarian worker youth, organizing separate groups for young workers and young agricultural laborers.

The students, now known as “Sarlós”, resumed their “regós” wandering in 1930, now with ethnographical and sociological research. They developed sociographical

questionnaires to gain a more scientific knowledge of the people, the medical students putting together 100 questions on people's health, and another group composing questions on the incidence of "colonial and class exploitation". In the summer of 1930 the completed research of four groups was compiled with the intention of publishing a collective work.

The activities of the St. George/Sarló group had reached a wide audience by 1930. The accounts of their first attempts to reach out to the people in A Mi Lapunk had been followed in intellectual circles in Hungary. Sándor Karácsony, a prominent educator and writer, took the idea of "regós" wandering from the St. George Circle to use with his scout troop.²⁷ Count Pál Teleki, statesman and honorary "Chief Scout" of the Hungarian organization, followed the village exploring activities closely. Both Dezső Szabó and Zsigmond Móricz, popular Hungarian authors, corresponded with the St. George Circle/Sarló group and wrote articles for A Mi Lapunk. In his visit to the St. George Circle in 1927, Móricz praised the intellectual quality of A Mi Lapunk, explaining that he and his daughters read it eagerly each month. On his return, Móricz wrote enthusiastically about the dynamism of the movement.

Starting in 1928 through their cooperative activities with the Bartha Miklós Society (BMT), news of their activities reached an influential group of university students and graduates. The society, one of the "new style" youth movements, had been founded by recently graduated students, refugees from the lost Hungarian territories, concerned with the problems of the remaining minorities. Influenced by the Sarló youth and their new leader, Dániel Fábián, the attention of the society turned to more general social problems within Hungary as well, and a number of prominent young intellectuals joined their circle, including several of the later populist writers.

The first contact between the two groups came through László Vass, a student from Slovakia studying at the renowned Eötvös Kollégium with several of the BMT members. The son of a village coachman, Vass had become friends with Zsigmond Móricz while in secondary school in Debrecen. On joining the BMT, Vass initiated a "Zsigmond Móricz 25th anniversary celebration" in the spring of 1927 which attracted a large number of students. That spring, Vass accompanied Móricz on his visit to Slovakia, meeting the members of the St. George Circle for the first time, and returned to take part in the declaration of "Sarló" at Gombaszög. Named Sarló's ambassador in Budapest, Vass spoke enthusiastically of Sarló's endeavors and circulated their articles to the elite student groups in the Eötvös Kollégium and the Pro Christo Diákok Háza.²⁸

In 1928 Edgár Kessler-Balogh studied at the University of Budapest, and with Vass became active in the BMT. Together the two helped to organize a second student celebration in memory of the poet, Endre Ady, revolutionary hero to youth. Balogh was asked to leave the country by the authorities a few days before the celebration, but the collaboration continued. The BMT took up the problems of the agrarian poor in their lecture series, and together with Sarló published several issues of the publication "Új Magyar Föld" (New Hungarian Soil) which publicized the activities and concerns of the Sarló group.

The high point of their cooperation, and also the last, came with the March 15, 1930 celebration of the 1848 Hungarian Revolution for independence, a traditional student holiday. The Sarló group had become convinced that the Hungarian minority problem could only be solved within the framework of a Danubian Federation of Peoples. They sent two emissaries to Budapest to place a wreath at the statue of Hungarian patriot Sándor Petőfi, the wreath with Hungarian national colors, but also with ribbons in the colors of the Czechs, Slovaks, Serbians, Croatians, and Romanians—celebrating their idea of the fellowship of the Danubian Peoples. Their action forbidden by the authorities, two other emissaries laid the wreath on the grave of Mihály Táncsics, accompanied by members of the Miklós Bartha Society.

The so-called "wreath affair" raised a storm in parliament, the debate prompted by social democrat representative István Farkas, who questioned the minister of the interior on the reason for forbidding the wreath laying.²⁹ Much of popular opinion was summed up in the answer of another representative: "Would the Czechs allow it if they put a Hungarian wreath on Masaryk's statue?"³⁰

The issue was publicized by the press throughout Europe. Hungarian conservatives accused the Slovakian Sarlós of betraying Hungary's efforts to regain its territories. Czech leaders applauded the students' idea of cooperation among the peoples of the Danube area. Sarló members were banned from Budapest and the Sarló action condemned by the conservative youth organizations for being anti-Hungarian. Only a small group from the Bartha Miklós Society supported them, breaking away from the organization.

The "wreath affair" marked the beginning of Sarló's decline. During the next few years the Sarló movement also split, as some of the members led by Edgár Balogh, became increasingly involved in the communist movement. As the members completed their studies, the ever-present problem of securing employment in Czechoslovakia became a greater concern. By 1934, when László Vass was imprisoned by the Czechs on charges of conspiring against the Czechoslovak state, and Edgár Balogh was forced to leave the country, the Sarló movement had ended.

Still, the impact of Sarló on the Hungarian intellectual community continued. Although the Sarló members were "persona non grata" in Hungary, leaders of youth movements such as Dániel Fábíán of the BMT and György Buday of the Szegedi Fialatok were free to visit them in Slovakia. In 1930 the leaflet "Out to the Village", written by Dániel Fábíán and the poet Attila József, had a strong impact in convincing university students to explore the villages. The "go to the village" movement was taken over by Hungarian scouting, and the sociographic research by university youth groups in Hungary.

By the mid-30's young populist writers in Hungary were beginning to expose the misery of the agrarian proletariat, shocking much of the literate urban population. Young intellectuals in the late 1930's, increasingly concerned with the need for internal reform, became active in the effort to create a leadership elite from among the agrarian population. "Folk High School" (népfőiskola) sessions for young adult villagers were started in Reformed Church schools during winter break, and quickly spread

throughout the country. Their aim was to encourage within the students a sense of pride and self-confidence in their own abilities.

University graduates lived, ate and slept with the villagers on an equal basis, breaking down ingrained social barriers. Seminars encouraged students to participate in debate and formulate their own opinions. Lectures by populist writers stressed the importance of Hungarian culture within the villages. Newspapers and workbooks for agrarian youth gave advice on proper social behaviour. A cartoon lesson in a workbook for Catholic Youth, trying to change social habits signifying inferiority, shows the young peasant that it is not necessary to bow to the ground when greeting a gentleman. "The self-confident young man simply inclines his head, even before his superiors."³¹

During the early war years in Hungary, with desperate attempts to find a third way between fascism and communism, folk high schools multiplied throughout the country. An effort was made to enroll talented village youth in university courses, and in 1940 a College for students of peasant origin was established in Budapest. A new concept of the nation was evolving, based on the renewal of Hungarian society through the creation of a socially mixed leadership, which would lead the Hungarian nation in a unique Hungarian road to reform. It is this concept, the so-called "third way", which is proving so attractive to Hungarian intellectuals today.

Notes

1. Miklós Szabó: "Új elemek az értelmiségi ifjúság mozgalmaiban az 1920-1930-as évek fordulóján." *A haladó egyetemi ifjúság mozgalmai Magyarországon 1918-1945*. Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1978. p. 135.
2. László Dobossy: *Két haza között*. Magvető Könyvkiadó. Budapest, 1981, p. 9.
3. István I. Mócsy: *The Effects of World War I. The Uprooted: Hungarian Refugees and Their Impact on Hungary's Domestic Politics, 1918-1921*. Brooklyn College Press, 1983. p. 41.
4. Edgár Balogh: *Hét Próba: Egy nemzedék története 1924-1934*. Magvető Könyvkiadó. Budapest, 1981. pp. 14-15.
5. Károly Drien: "A Sarló pedagógiai elvei és aktív szerepvállalása a nevelő munkában" *Ez volt a Sarló*. Kossuth Könyvkiadó. Budapest, 1978. p. 232.
6. László Fogarassy: *Magyar cserkészmozgalom Csehszlovákiában 1919-1932., 1933-1939*. Unpublished manuscript. pp. 6-8.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Balogh: *Hét Próba*. pp. 18-19.
10. Zoltán Boross: *Interview*. Debrecen. 3/22/88.
11. Balogh: *Hét Próba*. pp. 19-20.
12. *A Mi Lapunk*. 1925. June. p. 93.
13. *A Mi Lapunk*. 1925. June. p. 94.
14. *A Mi Lapunk*. 1925. December. p. 166.
15. *A Mi Lapunk*. June 1926. p. 110.
16. *A Mi Lapunk*. 1926 September. p. 126.
17. Lajos Jocsik: "Vetés." III. p. 10.
18. *A Mi Lapunk*. "Regősjárás 1927-ben." 1927. October. pp. 155-157.
19. Imre Nagy. p. 118.

20. *A Mi Lapunk*. 1928 September. p. 167.
21. "Vetés" I. August. p. 1.
22. "Vetés" I. p. 7.
23. *A Mi Lapunk*. 1928 September. p. 168.
24. "Vetés" I. p. 7.
25. "Vetés" III. p. 11.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.
27. Interview. Zoltán Boross.
28. László Vass, Jr.: „Debrecentől a Sarlóiig”, *Hajdú-Bihari Napló*. 1985. March 11, 18, 25, June 2.
29. *Budapesti Népszava*. 1930. III. 20.
30. *A Reggel*. 1930. March 20.
31. *KALOT Munkafüzet*. 1942, October 25–November 25. p. 38.