Parallel Revolution: Hungarian peasants during the upheavals of 1918-1920[*]

Introduction

Hungary was the only country west of Russia that experienced communist rule before the end of the Second World War. On March 21, 1919 in Budapest, the fledgling Hungarian Communist Party under the charismatic leadership of journalist Béla Kun and his reluctant Social Democratic allies proclaimed the Hungarian Soviet Republic, which would last just five and half months until its collapse in military defeat and internal turmoil. The world's second communist state ousted a liberal regime established in autumn 1918 when the Habsburg Empire collapsed; led by the liberal aristocrat Mihály Károlyi, it could not halt the advance of new neighboring states' armies deeper into historic Hungarian territory. Kun was ultimately unable to solve the dilemmas he inherited, and his republic's demise would usher in conservative counterrevolutionary rule beginning with a bloody "White Terror" against the Soviet regime's most visible supporters. Through the revolutionary and counterrevolutionary upheavals of 1918-1920, the Hungarian peasantry posed one of the most significant challenges to successive governments in Budapest. Revolutionaries' inability, or unwillingness, to accommodate peasant demands for land reform and an end to wartime controls on the agrarian economy undermined their potential bases of support in the countryside. Disillusioned Hungarian peasants became amenable to a conservative restoration under Admiral Miklós Horthy, later acquiescing in the least radical agrarian reform undertaken in east central Europe after the First World War.

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Scholarship on this subject has generally portrayed peasants as more or less dissatisfied consumers of revolution emanating from Budapest. According to prevailing wisdom, the largely apolitical and inert smallholding population, scarred by four years of warfare, waited to see which party would champion their parochial interests, eventually casting their lot with the counterrevolution. To the extent that they involved themselves directly in politics or political violence, so this interpretation goes, they either embraced or rejected policies formulated in the capital.[1] On this, at least, conservatives, Marxists, and most post-1990 historiography could agree: cities led while the countryside followed.

Such assessments overlook the fact that villagers believed they had initiated their own revolution in late October and early November 1918 as Austria-Hungary crumbled. They measured Károlyi's liberal republic, then Kun's "councils republic," and eventually Horthy's regency against the aims and achievements of their own insurrectionary movement, which in the accounts of urban commentators and later historians figured as mere "unrest" or "disturbances." Yet, as this article will show, Hungarian peasants' parallel revolution in the wake of Habsburg rule profoundly shaped their attitudes to successive Hungarian governments in the turbulent first years of independence and left its imprint on Hungarian society for decades after. Historians working under state socialism after 1945 recognized that the Hungarian Soviet Republic had undercut itself by prohibiting the distribution of large estates to land hungry peasants; they contrasted Kun's myopia in this regard with Lenin's tactically brilliant 1917 Decree on Land, which in the short run legalized villagers' confiscations of estate land and property throughout the Tsar's former dominions. But in neither the Hungarian nor the Russian context—nor indeed in other modern revolutionary situations—did communists have monopoly over the meanings of the word "revolution." Communists did not simply attract peasants with concessions or repel them with a "rigid" and "pure" application of Marxist ideology. As in other cases, Hungarian peasant villagers

deliberated over whether communist policies fit their autonomous movements for sweeping societal change, or not.

Close study of Hungary's rural parallel revolution may offer new insights into the role of peasant uprisings in some of the modern era's major revolutionary conjunctures. From the 1950s to the 1970s, pioneering studies by historians and social scientists underscored the importance of the peasantry—a social class condemned by classical Marxist and liberal social theory to political irrelevance and disappearance—in fomenting and carrying out revolutions from Mexico to Russia, China to Vietnam, and beyond.[2] If peasant rebellions in the premodern world had often failed due to their isolation from other social groups (particularly townsfolk), modern rural uprisings had sometimes joined forces with, or been successfully coopted by educated city-based revolutionaries.[3] Thus, the French Jacobins capitalized on the Great Fear of summer 1789 to abolish aristocratic privilege, the Russian Bolsheviks exploited rural opposition to the war and to the Stolypin reforms when they seized power in 1917, and the Chinese Communists from 1927 to 1949 made rural class struggle against landlords and warlords into the centerpiece of their eventually victorious bid to conquer the Chinese state.[4] As hopes for socialist revolution in the West faded after 1945 with the hardening of Cold War boundaries, left-leaning scholars and social movements found renewed significance (and inspiration) in Third World revolutionary insurgencies launched in overwhelmingly agrarian societies. Eric Wolf famously argued that "peasant wars," especially those harnessed by organized professional revolutionaries, defined the twentieth century.

Yet the field of inquiry into the nature of modern peasant revolutionism has largely remained fallow since the 1980s, leaving important questions unanswered. One concerns the timing of peasant insurrections. Wolf located the origins of "peasant wars" in Mexico, Russia, China, Vietnam, Cuba, and Algeria in the spread of market capitalism, which "forced men to seek defenses against it" at the same time that it exacerbated the "tensions and

contradictions previously contained by the traditional system of power."[5] Yet the gradual diffusion of what he labelled "North Atlantic capitalism" provided at most a general structural background to contingent eruptions of peasant revolution that he then charted in discrete detail. The historian Henry Landsberger theorized the proximate causes of rural insurrection with more precision, highlighting, above all, peasant rebels' "(1) status inconsistency; (2) deprivation relative to some other comparable group; and (3) deprivation relative to one's own past status, or one's expected present status, or a feeling of threat concerning one's future status." [6] But his aim to provide an explanatory framework for uprisings stretching from the high Middle Ages to the 1960s forced him to neglect important features of the modern era.

The cases of Hungary in 1918-1920, Russia in 1917-1921, and a number of revolutionary insurgencies in the Global South demonstrate the paramount importance of war itself and peasant veterans in triggering "peasant wars." Recent scholarship on the Russian Revolution has underscored the trauma of wartime and the leadership of returning soldiers, along with soldiers' wives (*soldatki*), in effecting village-level radical change in 1917-1918.[7] Colonial conscripts and labor corps drawn from the peasantry in both world wars were key actors in rural uprisings of the Global South, some of which, particularly after 1945, led to broader revolutionary conflagrations.[8] The post-imperial upheavals in Hungary bring into sharp focus the decisive impact of military combat and the modern conscript army on peasant mobilization.[9] By the end of the First World War, peasant soldiers in Austria-Hungary and across world showed much more assertiveness in pressing their demands than they had before 1914.[10] They had learned how to use firearms along with basic military tactics, and they deployed their knowhow to challenge existing power structures.

In addition to providing training for potential peasant rebels, modern war, and above all the First World War, put immense strain on relations between the state and agrarian

society. Belligerent countries prioritized urban consumption, particularly that of workers in heavy industry, to sustain herculean mobilization efforts.[11] To ensure food supply at affordable prices, governments instituted compulsory deliveries of agricultural produce, price controls, and eventually forced requisitions. While food shortages had the potential to empower peasant producers who might now fetch higher prices for their goods, experiments in command economy limited profits for most smallholders, and even led to shortages in many rural areas.[12] Peasants in central and eastern Europe often found the wartime curtailment of capitalist activity more damaging than the prior spread of market relations highlighted by Wolf. The free market's revival several years after the war, embodied in Russia by the New Economic Policy (NEP), dampened peasant rebelliousness. In both the Russian and Hungarian cases, the state relaxed economic controls while it consolidated its coercive power, effectively bringing peasant revolutions to an end.

Another question raised but not answered by Wolf's peasant wars paradigm is how smallholding villagers were so often transformed from supporters of revolution into its enemies. Indeed, once in power, revolutionaries who had previously relied on peasant support tended to regard the village world as expendable. The Bolsheviks quickly alienated rural enthusiasts for their power seizure by reintroducing conscription and production quotas from 1918. From 1921, the NEP mollified peasant anger, yet it only constituted a temporary ceasefire in the Soviet leadership's "war on the peasantry," as revealed by the brutal collectivization campaign initiated in the late 1920s.[13] By the mid 1950s, even Mao's CCP, built from the ground up in the countryside with peasant cadres, felt strong enough to launch a full-scale assault on small peasant farming in the calamitous Great Leap Forward. When were the key turning points in revolutionary leaders' relations with the peasantry? In other words, how and when did "peasant wars" cease to be about peasants?

As important as such questions are, the case of Hungarian villagers' parallel revolution invites scholars to approach such questions from the opposite perspective. In Hungary, as elsewhere, urban revolutionaries did not just turn their backs on their erstwhile rural followers or enablers. Of greater salience were distinct and radical peasant movements unfolding in concert with, but eventually at odds with, their city-based counterparts. James C. Scott perceptively described such phenomena as the "revolution in the revolution"—the autonomous mass risings of the countryside without which urban radicals in mostly agrarian countries could achieve little popular purchase, but which tended to diverge in both means and aims from their putative "nationalist" or "communist" leaders.[14] At the same time, the fact that Hungarian peasants consciously staked out their positions and expressed aims vis-à-vis the urban center cautions against defining their revolution, as Scott did, with terms like "parochialism" and "localism."[15] As scholars associated with the Subaltern Studies Group have shown, seemingly archaic forms of peasant insurgency did not preclude modern political consciousness, albeit of a sort that was unrecognizable as such to many urban and educated observers.[16]

The roots of unrest

The Hungarian rural conflagration of November 1918 ignited tinder that had accumulated for decades, and particularly during the four years of world war. Despite rapid industrialization during the second part of the nineteenth century, Hungary in 1914 remained a predominantly agricultural land with around 62% of the country's population working in agriculture. Large estates predominated and latifundia measuring over 10,000 acres covered one fifth of the country's land. In 1920, in the territory of interwar Hungary, more than 1.2 million peasants had no land at all an another 1.8 million had less than five acres.[17]

Those with insufficient land joined landless laborers on internal seasonal migrations to work on large estates at harvest time. The 1.2 million farmhands who worked year-round on large estates generally endured the worst conditions. Living under the supervision of landowners, they received most of their wages in kind at rates set by verbal agreement with the estate owner. Such farmhands lived physically apart from the rest of the village-bound peasantry on land adjacent to manor houses.[18] Regardless of their wealth or social status, Hungarian peasants had virtually no political representation in the pre-1914 Hungarian parliament due to the limited franchise.

Nonetheless, from the early 1890s, peasant politics began to take shape. The hotbed of agrarian unrest was the so-called "stormy corner" located in the southeastern part of the Hungarian plain. Until the end of the 1880s, the numerous landless peasants of this region had been employed on great dam and railway construction projects; their completion or discontinuation due to economic downturn caused a surge in unemployment. In 1891, gendarmes in the small provincial town of Orosháza fired on peasants preparing for a May Day demonstration. Although nobody died, the authorities' unnecessary brutality provoked a militant strike wave in the region. Strikes repeated themselves throughout the 1890s, spreading to other parts of Hungary too. In 1897, around 15,000 people took part in a massive harvest strike.[19]

The peasant movement of the 1890s blended socialistic concepts with patriotism and Christian millenarianism. An unsigned complaint letter from poor peasants of Békéscsaba in 1891 demanded fair pay for women "because they raise the young soldiers for the holy Hungarian motherland." It continued with the phrases "Long live the holy King" and "Long live the holy law."[20] Land reform figured increasingly in their rhetoric. In 1897, peasants from Kisvárda summarized their demands: "We are socialists, down with the lords, we distribute the land, we do not need municipality, either priest, or gendarmerie, or civil

marriage, we will be in charge."[21] As such quotes demonstrate, it is difficult to characterize the political aims of the rebellious peasants using conventional labels. Their perception of the fair and just society they envisioned in many ways resembled the ideology of heretical movements during the early modern period. Their commitments to "socialism" entailed quasi-religious belief in the coming of an egalitarian society, the complete abolition of social hierarchies, and local autonomy. Peasant activists who suffered beatings or imprisonment were seen as martyrs to the cause, suffering for the salvation of the entire community.[22]

The urban-based Social Democratic Party (established 1890) had little interest in encouraging such heterodox and spiritual ideas. The few leaders who rejected the party's passivity toward agrarian radicalism broke away, such as István Várkonyi who in 1896 founded the Independent Socialist Party. Várkonyi's anarchistic program won support among the poor peasantry of southeast Hungary by calling for the abolition of the state and immediate redistribution of large estate land, though in the long run he too advocated collectivization.[23] By the early 1900s, interest in Várkonyi's party had petered out and Hungarian peasants gravitated toward other movements, such as The National Independence and 48-er Smallholder Party that arose in southern Transdanubia at the initiative of a well-to-do farmer of humble background named Istvan Szabó. Unlike the earlier parties, Szabó relied on landowning peasants and presented a more traditional, nationalistic, anti-Habsburg program. The party demanded social reforms and limited land redistribution.[24] With the outbreak of the war, some of its ideas, such as limited land reform gained wider currency; a few Christian Social leaders proposed the distribution of land to veterans, for instance, but the government rejected the plan.

The First World War fundamentally changed the lives of peasants in the Hungarian countryside. Mobilization caused a massive agricultural labor shortage, which, along with the Entente naval blockade, led to food shortages in the Central Powers. The situation in Hungary

was relatively better than in other parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but Budapest also gradually had to introduce food rationing from the beginning of May 1915. A year and a half later, in November 1916, centrally organized food requisitioning was introduced, compelling peasants to sell their surplus products at centrally determined prices.[25] To coordinate food distribution, the government established a semi-private company called Haditermény Rt (War Product Corporation), which relied on preexisting infrastructure and the personnel of private firms. For most peasants, this meant that pre-war wholesale companies, often owned or managed by members of the Jewish community, oversaw the purchase of their products at reduced (i.e. "unfair") prices. While Haditermény Rt was responsible for collecting food, public officials were entrusted with its distribution. In every village and town, they had to register "dependents" who were eligible for food rations. In major industrial centers, the state relied on Social Democrats and their consumption cooperatives to coordinate food distribution. This institutional infrastructure remained intact after the collapse of the empire. All governments in 1918-1919 relied on the same bureaucratic structure and the same staff. Despite all their efforts, food and fuel scarcity became more and more pressing during the winter of 1918/1919.[26]

While the lack of food caused headaches for the state administration, it also enhanced the relative position of smallholding peasants who were willing to take risks. Some sold their products on the black market at skyrocketing prices. Peasants living close to the internal border of the empire could smuggle food to the Austrian crownlands where starvation loomed. Alongside the enrichment of certain groups of peasants, the economic position of the urban middle class began to decline rapidly. But these relative advantages were not spread evenly among the rural population. Peasants were conscripted in proportionally higher numbers than the urban population, causing many families to lose their sole breadwinner and plunging them into immediate difficulties.[27] Already in September 1914, the wives of the

newly conscripted soldiers from the eastern Hungarian village of Gárdoros asked for the immediate help of the authorities. “We starve to death if you do not act immediately,” they wrote.[28]

Due to the wartime state’s inability to secure food for everybody, peasant hostility toward the authorities grew. As Julia Mogyoródi from Móri wrote in May 1917 to her brother serving at the front: “Everything is rationed, but ration cards can only be obtained with great difficulty […] First one has to go to the local administration for the ration cards, where one is ruthlessly pushed about, and from early in the morning until midday is made to run from one office to another.” [29] Many peasants felt that the state was not only inefficient but also deeply unjust in its dealings with them. In another letter confiscated by imperial censors, a peasant woman, Mrs. Szöllősi, complained, “for a week there was no bread in the house, and when I go in tears to the magistrate, he tells me we should eat the air, such people should be thrown out of office, it is an evil shame how a poor woman is treated here.” Peasant animosity was also directed toward the “rich,” meaning state officials and local economic elites. Poor farmers felt that the sons of the wealthy could avoid conscription and make profits while ordinary people suffered. Mrs. Böthi wrote ironically in 1917, “only the rich are at home because they are all deaf and blind, it's only their sack of money that can see […] the poor are all away at the front.” [30]

A parallel revolution: November 1918

One of the men receiving such letters was Péter Hornyák, a peasant from eastern Hungary, who was captured on the Eastern Front, interned in Russia, and then deserted from his unit upon returning to Austria-Hungary after the Russian Revolution. Along with countless other villagers, he took action in November 1918 to address the injustices of the home front. Looking back on immediate postwar events with profound satisfaction, he wrote,

"we established the 'socialist farmer party' in the village and got rid of the former notary. The land distribution committee was established and we had already planned to house the poor in the nearby palace of an aristocrat."[31] It is difficult to know precisely what Hornyák meant by the "socialist farmer party," yet the tone and content of his brief recollection neatly sum up the revolution that Hungarian peasants believed they had carried out after the disintegration of Austria-Hungary in late October 1918: they organized themselves politically in previously (and sometimes subsequently) unfamiliar ways, they ousted hated officials of the old order, and they took steps to implement a new economic order at the expense of former rural elites.

Hornyák did not comment on whether violence was involved in making these changes, though that was the issue that preoccupied non-peasant observers at the time and since. As the old empire collapsed, peasants sacked manor houses, railway stations and stores, and attacked local public officials, gendarmerie officers, and merchants. At least 500 villages and towns reported riots and uprisings. According to a very moderate estimate, more than 100,000 people participated in the insurrection.[32] Peasant risings broke out in almost every part of the Carpathian Basin, regardless of the ethnic composition of the local population. Slavic, Romanian, and Magyar peasants joined forces in toppling local administration. The rural revolution in Hungary lasted until mid-November. Local authorities were able to pacify large parts of the countryside through brute force and the promise of land redistribution. The precise social background of the peasant revolutionaries remains largely unknown, though it seems that the initiators of the uprisings were almost always soldiers. Many were older reserve soldiers who already returned from the frontline before the end of the war. Women and young adults supported them. Reports tended to emphasize the participation of the poorest peasants and marginalized groups, but in many villages well-to-do peasants also joined the rioters and participated in looting.[33]

The peasant revolution of November 1918 was only loosely connected with political developments in Budapest. The rebels' support for old or newly emerging political parties was limited, or seemingly submerged beneath other, more pressing agendas, which did not look to a clearly defined leader or express a single program. As in the case of the "Green Cadres"—armed groups of rural deserters that proliferated throughout the Habsburg Monarchy in the final year of the war—their ideology was a combination of new, often Bolshevik-inspired ideas and the sentiments of rebellions from past centuries.[34] They wanted to avenge perceived and real wartime injustices and lay the foundations of a new, just world. Their main enemies were the "rich," local representatives of the state as well as merchants and shopkeepers, whom they held responsible for their hardships during the war.

György Csík, a peasant soldier from the village of Békésszentandrás recalled that returning soldiers and peasants gathered in front of the town hall to settle scores with the head notary. They accused him of mistreating civilians, particularly poor women. During the war, he allegedly told needy women that their children "can go to the fields to graze."[35] The insurgents likewise aimed to avenge perceived injustices of military exemptions which the privileged segments of society had allegedly enjoyed. The notary of Újléta reported that he was blamed for taking peasants' sons, brothers, and fathers away.[36] Conversely, military service could save one's life: in the Kalocsa region, peasants spared a local public official because he was a disabled war veteran.[37]

The violence was also directed toward the establishment of a new, fairer economic system. In first days of the revolution, insurrectionists redistributed the supposedly ill-gotten and excess food and wealth of notaries and merchants to impoverished peasants. György Csík recorded how peasants broke into the home of the notary and, finding a stockpile of food, distributed it among the starving poor.[38] In the western Hungarian village of Nagyabony, peasants gathered in front of the village hall chanting, "the rich should pay now! We suffered

enough, we want bread, peace, and land!" After that, as one of them, Kálmán Fleischmann, described, "we laid our hands on everything: flour, money, palinka [fruit brandy] and much more palinka."[39] In such contexts, plunder figured in the eyes of perpetrators as communal justice.

Beyond such grassroots actions focused on the restoration of a shattered moral economy, peasant insurgents demanded or initiated more lasting economic change. In many villages, particularly in Békés and Hajdu counties, strongholds of the Hungarian agrarian movement, peasants began to occupy large estates and demanded their immediate redistribution without compensation.[40] Insurrectionists called for the end to price regulations and all other wartime economic restrictions. In Adony, in central Hungary, rioters both demanded the end of food rationing and the restoration of prewar prices for wood, potatoes, and tobacco. Not least, they wanted the complete annulment of an alcohol ban temporarily introduced by the Károlyi government in early November.[41]

As Hornyák alluded to, political changes accompanied the upheaval as well. Many villages elected new governing councils in the wake of the plunder, though the new councilors often hailed from the traditional local elite.[42] In other places, returning soldiers took over leadership of village councils themselves. János P. Szabó, from the small village of Doboz, recalled that after disarming the local gendarmerie, recently returned front soldiers marched to the town hall and established a new national council. In Gúta, today the small Slovak town of Kolárovo, only war veterans were eligible for council positions.[43] Many newly minted councils established national guard units that recruited from the same returning soldiers, and often arose on existing associational formations, such as volunteer firefighter squads or even gendarmerie units. The new national councils deployed these units to protect villages against further disturbances.[44] In some places, peasant self-determination took the form of autonomous local republics. In the northeast of historic Hungary, a Ruthene war

veteran named Stepan Klochurak established the so-called Hutsul Republic, named after the local subethnic group, with the aim of joining a future Ukrainian People's Republic.[45] Armed Hutsul peasants were able to control a relatively large area until April 1919. Similar experiments in republican self-government proliferated at the time in former Habsburg Croatian, Slovene, Polish, and Romanian territories and across vast expanses of Ukraine and central Russia.[46]

The Károlyi government and the promise of land reform

The peasant revolution in the countryside posed serious problems for Mihály Károlyi's new government in Budapest. All parties in the government agreed on the urgency of land reform. They included Károlyi's nationalistic United Party of Independence of 1848 (better known as the Károlyi party), Oszkár Jászi's small progressive movement, the National Radical Party, and the increasingly popular, if almost exclusively urban, Social Democratic Party of Hungary; István Szabó's Smallholder Party supported reform from outside the government. Although all parties adhered to the October 25, 1918 program that stated, "the land belongs to those who cultivated it," they were deeply divided over how to implement it. The Smallholders and the radical progressives demanded immediate land redistribution while Social Democrats were ambivalent. Socialist thinkers believed that distributing land would lead to the formation of a large rural petite bourgeoisie, a potentially large counterrevolutionary force. They also feared that land redistribution would disrupt food supply to their urban working-class base.[47] Large estates seemed to them the most effective form of production. For the socialist economist Eugen Varga, however, peasant land hunger made the parcellization of estates inevitable since, he predicted, peasants would reject collective farming even if it improved their condition. Social Democrats therefore proposed a compromise whereby land reform would be postponed to autumn 1919 to prevent the

collapse of food production during the next harvest. Meanwhile, the fledgling Hungarian Communist Party demanded immediate land reform and, following Lenin, the occupation of all estate land by the landless poor. But they possessed virtually no influence or propaganda outlets in the Hungarian countryside.[48]

The Károlyi government issued a decree on November 7, 1918, ordering the registration of every veteran who possessed less than five acres of land. Land distribution committees were established in every county, district, town, and village, mostly by war veterans. Peasants who had participated in riots or refused to demobilize were supposed to be excluded from the scheme. At higher administrative levels (district and county), representatives of political parties, generally the Smallholders and Social Democrats, occupied the key positions.[49] In many places, however, their party organizations were too thin on the ground to function, resulting in little coordination from the center over the course of the winter. While the process of registering peasants eligible to receive land approached completion in early February 1919, this was much too slow for most applicants. Tensions boiled over during the winter months with reports of village unrest over land reform and food shortages. In Békés county, farmhands refused to work the fields as they awaited the redistribution of estate land. [50]

A governmental reorganization in early January 1919 allowed István Szabó's smallholder party to assume full control of the Ministry of Agriculture. They designed the February 15 law on land reform, which divided up estates over 500 acres (and ecclesiastical lands over 200 acres) among the peasantry with compensation for former owners. Bowing to Social Democratic pressure, the law allowed peasants to form collective farms on newly acquired lands. As a symbolic act, President Károlyi, one of the biggest landowners of the country, travelled on February 23 to his estate in Kápolna and symbolically parceled out his own estate. [51]

Yet tensions remained high in the countryside. The actual pace of implementation was slow and peasants expected far more than just land. On March 13 in southeastern Tótkomlós, Slovak peasants issued a list of demands prefaced by a proclamation of loyalty to the Hungarian fatherland. In addition to the parcellization of the local estate, which had remained intact, they called for Slovak to become the official district language, for state-financed housing for the poor, and for a railway line to the nearby town of Makó. In the small town of Kinskunhalas, councilors on March 8 declared that "the revolution has not ended yet" and requested new leadership after the former mayor's resignation to finish coordinating the redistribution of estate land.[52]

The Hungarian Soviet Republic in the village

On March 21, 1919, Hungarian Communists together with a large number of Social Democrats toppled the Károlyi government in Budapest. Although Communists occupied most of the leading positions in the new revolutionary governing council, they had to strike compromises with the substantially larger Social Democratic party, which controlled most of the capital's trade unions. Despite disturbing news about growing discontent in the countryside, the revolutionary governing council only debated the issue of land distribution on March 27, 1919; that is, almost a week after the regime change. In the spirit of pre-1914 socialist thought, leaders of the new Republic of Councils wanted to prevent the emergence of a large, reactionary class of smallholders. And their main priority was to secure food supplies for the urban working class. As Béla Kun at the March 27, 1919 meeting of the governing council put it, "Hungary is an agrarian country. We act in every field, except in this one [in the peasant policy]. From the perspective of the proletariat the land question is a tactical and food supply issue. In this field, we should not only prevent the counterrevolutionary turn of the peasantry but we have to turn them into revolutionaries."[53]

Evidently, Kun thought this could be accomplished by means of an intense propaganda campaign that would persuade peasants to form collective farms and produce willingly for starving, more politically advanced urban areas.

To make matters worse, the revolutionary governing council abandoned the Károlyi regime's land reform over feeble resistance from moderate Social Democrats. The new April 4, 1919 decree on land ordered the nationalization of all large and medium estates without compensation. Distribution of land was forbidden while the establishment of collective farms was mandated. Only the land of so-called small- and dwarf-holders could remain in private hands. In practice, local county councils determined the threshold for nationalization, which could vary between 100 and 200 acres. At the same time, the regime tried to shore up its rural support base by increasing wages of landless farmhands by 25-30 per cent. Administration of agriculture fell to multiple competing sections of the state bureaucracy. An Agricultural Commissariat controlled large estates with minimal input from local political actors. 80 per cent of the city's food came from these large farms. Small and medium farms generally remained under the control of the county councils. [54] This multi-layered system led to confusion and rivalries between various sections of the state administration with small towns and villages attempting to keep crops for themselves to feed their own populations.

The implications of these policies would take some weeks to sink in. Meanwhile, peasants' initial reactions to the Hungarian Soviet Republic ranged from ambivalence to confusion. Many village "national councils" simply renamed themselves "directorates" with minimal changes in personnel. In eastern Hungarian Battonya, the head of the directorate remained the local Protestant pastor.[55] In nearby Vésztő, the council consisted mostly of respectable landowning peasants who tolerated only a few radicals in their midst.[56] Even where the new regime's slogans generated excitement, villagers were unsure what they meant. In the small central Hungarian village of Gyón, news of the revolution arrived on

March 26, prompting a crowd to assemble on the main square and elected a new council, which declared that all peasants now counted as "members of the socialist proletariat of Hungary."[57] They then sent a request to Budapest for clarification of these terms. While most villages received news of the political transition peacefully, peasants in parts of Tolna and Somogy counties looted granaries. Some Transdanubian villagers humiliated local landowners by forcing them to perform menial labor.[58]

The transition to Béla Kun's republic initially seemed to lend further legitimacy to peasants' own revolution, prompting them to interpret "socialism" in heterodox ways. After the arrival of news in the eastern Hungarian village of Tiszaeszlár, farmhands occupied the estate where they worked and "collectivized" it. Contrary to the intentions of Budapest, the farmhands planned to run a cooperative for their own profit without interference of the central government.[59] In Vésztő, peasants refused to establish a collective farm and forced the local directorate to instead officially endorse the distribution of the local estate land. In Gyón, the council asked Budapest whether they had the power to distribute grain reserves among the poor. They expressed their intention to lease the local estate land to the village poor, even inquiring about proper compensation for the landowner.[60] Many local councils clearly hoped that the regime change would accelerate the process of land redistribution. In the large town of Debrecen, the directorate called on farmers to register to receive plots, subsequently sending registries of interested peasants to the ministry.[61]

There were also encouraging, if limited, signs of expanded political participation in the Councils Republic. For the very first time, male and female peasants could vote in the council elections held across Hungary in early April. Turnout in the countryside was low, reaching around 18 per cent of eligible voters in the center of the country, for example, though this was still higher than in urban areas and in eastern Hungary. Despite the hype around the laboring classes finally being able to vote, those who cast their ballots could only

select pre-determined lists of candidates drawn up by the local directorate, which usually excluded "counterrevolutionaries."[62] Nonetheless, prosperous peasants who had formed part of the local elite before 1918 often found themselves elected to the village councils. In central Hungary, around 30 per cent of the newly elected councilors were smallholders. Throughout the country as a whole, only around 20-25 per cent of all the officeholders could be considered Social Democrat or Communist.[63] As a consequence, many new officeholders were closely connected to their villages and more likely to represent their peasant constituencies than the agenda of the Communist government.

If some experimentation could be tolerated temporarily on the domestic scene, the international situation required immediate decisive action. The Hungarian Soviet Republic enjoyed initial popular support only because it seemed a more plausible means of expelling the armies of new hostile neighbors from historic Hungarian territory. Isolated internationally, the regime issued a general call for volunteers on March 24, 1919. Peasants were exhorted to join up and fight a class war in support of world revolution. Local councils mostly followed this line but tempered it with calls for territorial self-defense, especially from mid-April when a Romanian offensive began to threaten the east of the country.[64] Peasant councils and officers from local regiments organized most of the recruitment in the countryside.

The mobilization had mixed results. In Transdanubia and central Hungary, very few peasants volunteered to serve. Recruitment was more successful in east and southeast Hungary where foreign invasion menaced.[65] Romanian troops' advance toward the Tisza River prompted local administrators in eastern Hungary to commit themselves fully to mobilization. Fearing the invading army, many peasant guards serving under the leadership of village schoolmasters or prosperous farmers retreated westward to join the Red Army.[66] Elsewhere, peasants' motivations to join the Red Army varied from economic hardship to

patriotism. János Bulyovszky, for example, recalled that he and his brother rallied to the flag due to privation in their home village.[67] Joining up was hardly an event for some as a significant number of war veterans had been serving in various paramilitary units since the end of the war. Károly Somogyi from central Hungarian Tápiószele recalled that he became a member of the National Guard in November 1918, then in March 1919 joined the Red Army at the encouragement of the local Catholic priest and head of the national council.[68] Peasants like Somogyi often heeded the instructions of their "own" leaders, while tending to shun "outsiders" or "townsfolk" who tried to persuade them to join the army. Recruiters from Budapest met with so much hostility in early April in eastern Hungary that the local Red Army corps urged the ministry to immediately relieve them from all such duties.[69]

Disillusionment and resistance

After initial passivity and partial support, many peasants quickly became disillusioned with the regime. For them, the introduction of collectivization meant an intolerable extension of the pre-war status quo. The large landowners, or at least their under-stewards, retained their positions and continued to ruthlessly administer latifundia. The local councils simply did not have the manpower nor the expertise to run the newly acquired estates. They also feared the economic consequences of such a change. "If we go through with the socialization in April, food production will stop and the land will not be sowed," one council member from eastern Hungary reported.[70] Péter Hornyák, whom we encountered above, expressed the frustration of countless other villagers when he wrote, "we were deeply disappointed when the news arrived that there would be no land redistribution, that the lords would remain in power and begin to employ their farmhands again."[71]

News of collectivization drew angry responses as well. Landless laborers in many eastern Hungarian villages rejected the idea altogether and insisted on immediate land

distribution. In other regions, local councils declared unilaterally that collective farms were unnecessary.[72] In order to ease tensions in the countryside, the government allowed local councils to implement land reform on a very limited basis, authorizing them to distribute up to five acres per capita among the neediest peasants. Church estates and paddocks were targeted for redistribution under this scheme. Seasonal laborers sometimes received small garden plots.[73]

Besides the "betrayed" land reform, peasant resentment sharpened in response to increasing requisitions. These became particularly frequent after the end of April when the army launched a series of offensives. As Miklós Stolcz, a soldier who participated in food requisitions recalled, "not allowing the land distribution was a great mistake. Thus, not only the kulaks but also the poor peasants were against us. They sabotaged the surrender of food, so it was very hard to provide food for the fighting soldiers and for the population of the cities."[74] Even when soldiers offered money for agricultural products, peasants tended not to trust the regime's recently issued "white money." Stolcz wrote, "we always paid with cash for the food. The problem was that the peasants only accept the old [i.e. Austro-Hungarian] money, what they called blue money." War zones, where large armed formations were stationed for lengthy periods, witnessed the most frequent abuses. Local peasant councils complained bitterly about the requisition of cattle, horses, and food by Red Army soldiers. When the fighting spread to the territory of today's Slovakia, groups of uniformed men looted villages and stole peasants' livestock. According to one report, local Magyar peasants even looked forward to the arrival of Czech troops to halt the thefts. [75]

Resistance began to manifest itself in various ways. The lackluster volunteer campaign prompted the army to introduce conscription, yet this proved ineffective as well. Thirty northern Hungarian villages provided a scant 700 men to serve, of which less than half were fit. Local directorates stopped cooperating with military authorities. Many council

members exempted themselves and their families. In the small village of Püspökhatvan, the peasant council refused to organize a draft as it coincided with Corpus Christi celebrations.[76] Meanwhile, the Red Army experienced a spike in desertions by peasant soldiers. This caused grave problems after the end of the Soviet Republic's successful northern campaign in late May and early June 1919, when the Hungarian Red Army occupied large parts of eastern Slovakia. After receiving an ultimatum from the Paris Peace Conference to evacuate the territory in exchange for Romanian-occupied eastern Hungary, Béla Kun withdrew his troops. The retreat caused deep disillusionment among both the officer corps and enlisted men. Despite the threat of court martial, many soldiers simply left their units and returned home. Desertion was particularly high among soldiers recruited from occupied territories.[77]

Peasants who remained at home sought ways to circumvent the command economy. Drawing on their experiences during the First World War, many of them became adept at concealing their surplus food supplies. As a Red soldier charged with finding food recalled, "on one occasion they [the soldiers] came back empty handed from a well-to-do German-speaking village. I went there and we rested near the church. Suddenly we heard the lowing of cattle. It turned out that the peasants had hid their cows in the church." [78] Village communities closed ranks in the face of intensifying requisitions to safeguard their own products, just as they had during the previous war. Complaints flooded the War Commissariat, while many councils simply stopped transporting food supplies.[79]

Open rebellion loomed ever larger. The first revolt broke out in early April in the western Hungarian town of Sopron. German-speaking winemakers of the region rose in protest against a fresh prohibition on the sale of alcohol and a ban on wine exports. Overnight they were cut off from their principal market, Vienna. Fearing a complete ban on wine production, they staged a march through town on April 3, 1919. Red soldiers shot at the crowd, leaving four men dead. Some protest organizers left the country while the regime

made concessions, allowing limited alcohol consumption in the county for "medical purposes."[80] The protection of lucrative local markets also figured in the late May establishment of the so-called Mura Republic in what is today eastern Slovenia. Peasants and soldiers who supported the short-lived state relied on cross-border smuggling to Austria and feared that the Soviet Republic would deny them their most important source of income.[81]

Collective action targeted other aspects of the wartime command economy. In central Hungarian Kunszentmiklós, farmhands went on strike, demanding to be paid only in blue money. Like Russia in 1917, women played a prominent role in riots that erupted with increasing frequency. After the reduction of meat rations in July 1919, peasant women rioted in the marketplaces of the central Hungarian towns Veszprém and Várpalota. After attacking the exchange shop where manufactured goods were traded for agricultural products, they looted the market.[82]

Peasants began to openly defy conscription. On May 14, in the southern Hungarian small town of Nagyatád, local craftsmen along with smallholding peasants gathered on the square to protest mobilization orders published in the newspapers a day before. They asserted their willingness to defend the village or even Somogy county but refused to serve on faraway fronts. Protestors also bristled at having to billet a Red Army unit of railway workers from western Hungary, since, in their view, local peasants could do the job themselves. In central Hungarian Kiskunhalas, peasants physically assaulted commissars arriving from town to recruit new soldiers.[83]

The largest rebellion erupted in mid-June in central Hungary in response to a renewed conscription drive and a harshening of the food procurement system. At that time, Hungarian troops had successfully occupied eastern Slovakia. However, their offensive in the west—begun on June 17—was stopped by the reinforced Czechoslovak army. Due to mounting losses, the Red Army desperately needed reinforcements. Meanwhile, food scarcity prompted

the Commissar for Agriculture Jenő Hamburger to announce a reduction in the food ration per capita per year to 72 kg of grain. While a limitation in consumption might have cheered peasant producers since it logically entailed less requisitions, in practice it meant that anyone with more than three acres of land had to deliver the entirety of their surplus produce to the state. This further expanded food requisitions in the countryside. Hamburger's speech in parliament was published in the press and rumors soon circulated about the decrease in food production causing much concern both among urban consumers and the peasant population.[84]

Regime leaders could not claim ignorance about discontent swirling in the countryside. During the mid-June debates of the National Congress of Councils—the de facto parliament of the Soviet Republic—delegates from the countryside complained about ineffective bureaucracy and the high-handedness of urban Bolsheviks. The seventy or so "provincials" (as their rivals called them) expressed their grievances with the republic's urban leadership in plainly anti-Semitic language, often using "capitalist" and "Jew" interchangeably or referring to reckless commissars "whatever their religious affiliation may have been."[85] This view was shared by some prominent Communist and Social Democratic leaders as well. Sándor Garbai, originally a Social Democratic stonemason from central Hungary and the head of the Revolutionary Governing Council complained to his comrades that only "Young Jews" were sent to agitate in the countryside causing resentment among peasants.[86] In the end, however, the urban majority defeated the agrarian lobby at the June congress and (again) prioritized the needs of urban consumers.

On June 18, word spread about an impending conscription drive in the large central Hungarian village of Dunapataj. A cartwright named János Imri recalled that nobody wanted to go to the army since, "we were so behind with work on the maize fields and the harvest was starting soon […] Those of us who had served in the army did not want to be soldiers again." Disgruntled farmers who had gathered in a nearby pub marched to the village center,

expelled the council, disarmed the Red Guards, and began to arm themselves.[87] Events in Dunapataj set off a chain reaction. Unrest spread to surrounding villages and then to the right bank of the Danube. For several days, Budapest lost control over the entire region.[88]

Instigators of the peasant rising in central Hungary were mostly village notables: landowning peasants along with schoolmasters, former officers, and discharged members of the public administration. Yet women, poor peasants, and unemployed laborers also supported it.[89] The rebels did not openly ally themselves with any political party or ideology. Rather, they felt that the Communist regime had betrayed the achievements of the genuine revolution in November 1918. The relatively prosperous smallholder István Váradi remarked that conscription was unacceptable since the "first proclamation of the dictatorship [sic] was that 'we do not want soldiers anymore'; there will be no more mourning widows with black head scarfs." [90] Váradi referred to War Minister Béla Linder's speech of November 2, 1918 regarding the demobilization of the armed forces. In his eyes, the regime change of March 21 was of minimal consequence as he still expected the government to fulfil its pledges from five months before. By returning to wartime practices, the Soviet regime had irreparably discredited itself.

Thus, many peasants who rose against the Communist authorities in summer 1919 saw their actions as necessary to safeguard the freedom from the state that they had won at the end of the First World War. Károly Móri, one of the peasant rebels and a son of a tavernkeeper, stated, "the peasant revolution has just arrived and wants to liberate you from the yoke of the robbing communists. […] We will be free, we won't be robbed."[91] Others framed their actions as the protection of property in general. István Váradi worried that if the Communist program were fulfilled, "nobody will be able to say: this is mine."[92]

In their anger, central Hungarian peasants targeted symbols of the Bolshevik regime. They cut red ribbons from soldiers' uniforms and tore down red flags. They preferred white

flags, generally refraining from the use of national colors. In many places antisemitism accompanied the revolt. Jews in the countryside were perceived as representatives, or at least beneficiaries, of the communist state since the proclamation of the Soviet Republic in March. In May, for example, a local peasant woman named Julis Oláh forced her way into the room of the Kalocsa town council and complained about the "many stinking Jews" who ruled the town and allegedly wanted to expel all nuns.[93] Jews were frequently attacked even if they proclaimed their support for the uprising. In the village of Dömsöd, peasants attacked one of their fellow rebels, Sándor Hirschler. They grabbed his rifle, shouting that Jews do not need weapons anymore and warned him to keep his distance.[94] In other cases, however, rebellious peasants showed strong solidarity with their own communities. Local Bolshevik leaders received better treatment than "townsfolk." Peasants sometimes roughed them up, but never killed them. For the peasants, they were also victims, misled by Budapest Communists.

Soviet authorities were able to quash the peasant uprising relatively swiftly, even if weak local Red Army units were initially unable to confront the armed peasants. Two days later, Budapest transferred troops to the affected area, including infamous red terror groups from the capital city. The reinforcements defeated the peasant forces, killing 50 people in combat and executing another 52 as retribution.[95] The rebels' inability to leave their farms for any extended period may have prevented the growth of a broader movement that could effectively challenge Budapest's hegemony. According to one report, peasant rioters occupying the town of Kalocsa went home for the night because they "had to feed their cattle."[96]

Despite its swift suppression, the central Hungarian uprising was one of the key events, along with an officer mutiny in Budapest, that shook the foundations of Communist rule. Leaders feared they had lost the support of the countryside altogether. At a July 4, 1919 parliamentary session during which agriculture was discussed, former Social Democrat

József Pogány proposed distributing large estate land in order to win the peasantry for the army. Although he was supported by some of the army's top-ranking commissars, the idea was rejected.[97] After the refusal of Romanian troops to vacate eastern Hungary, Béla Kun decided to launch a last desperate offensive in a bid to gain popular support. The poorly planned and executed campaign ran aground and at the beginning of August; Romanian troops occupied the capital city of Budapest with authorization from the Entente.[98]

Collapse and consolidation

Peasant resistance itself did not bring down the regime. As in the case of Károlyi's liberal republic, the Soviet experiment succumbed to pressures created by Hungary's international isolation and the state's inability to defend at least part of the former Kingdom's territories against incursions by neighboring states. The failed agricultural policies of both regimes contributed significantly to the overall destabilization of the country, however. Ironically, a restive countryside both enabled the rise of these successive revolutionary regimes and sealed their fate.

The situation of the peasantry did not improve much after the fall of the Soviet Republic. The new counterrevolutionary regime faced many of the same problems as the previous revolutionary governments. While the Romanian army occupied eastern and central parts of Hungary, requisitioning food and sometimes violently suppressing peasant resistance as it advanced, Miklós Horthy and his small but growing National Army incrementally took control of western and southern Hungary. Red Army soldiers were disarmed or, if not politically suspect, conscripted into the army while local peasant councils were disbanded. In many regions, paramilitary groups hunted down supposed ringleaders of the Soviet Republic. Altogether they killed between 1,000 and 2,000 people; most of the victims belonged to the lower middle-class, many of them Jewish, but some peasant council members also perished

in the atrocities.[99] In many places, local landowners invited paramilitary groups to settle scores with peasants for their actions during the winter and spring of 1918-1919 and restore the "normal" social order. As Pál Prónay, the infamously bloodthirsty paramilitary leader, wrote in his memoirs, "my aim was to restore the old good relation between the lord and the farmhands, especially in the manorial estates."[100] Prónay echoed urban-centric liberals and socialists in arguing that such actions were necessary to secure agricultural production. The new government in Budapest continued to carry out food requisitions in the face of continuing, low-level peasant resistance. Only in 1921 did the capital feel secure enough to discontinue the practice, partially thanks to food imports from western countries. That year, the government abolished fixed prices and the war finally ended for the Hungarian peasantry.[101]

Attempting to permanently pacify the countryside, Horthy's government introduced land reform. István Szabó's reorganized Smallholder Party, included in the government since autumn 1919, wanted to reinforce the position of the prosperous landowning peasants, providing them with extra land in a bid to create an economically self-sufficient landowning class. This was a more conservative plan than the law Szabo had introduced under Károlyi. [102] Yet it still met with fierce resistance from large landowners, represented by the Minister of Agriculture Gyula Rubinek. The Smallholders were outmaneuvered and in August 1920 they accepted Rubinek's modest reform proposal in exchange for Szabó's appointment as Minister of Agriculture.[103] The new law allowed peasants to buy or rent parcels offered by the large landowners, though ecclesiastical lands remained untouched. Local magnates and state administrators had ample room to decelerate or even sabotage the process.[104] Over the next ten years, just over 426,000 small parcels were distributed, improving the position of some smallholders, but the Hungarian reform remained the most conservative in central and eastern Europe.[105] The Smallholder party's influence steadily declined thereafter, especially after

Szabó's sudden death in 1924. Horthy's regime consolidated its position in the countryside. Free market relations resumed in the countryside and agricultural production rebounded, all under the watchful eye of the reorganized gendarmerie and national army.

The parallel revolution ultimately remained isolated in the countryside, disciplined or ignored by successive Budapest-based regimes. Unlike in Russia and China, urban communists did not attempt to make concessions to rural radicalism, let alone to recast the peasantry as a revolutionary class with at least partially progressive aims. Not that those who lamented Béla Kun's myopia toward the countryside told the full story. Hungarian peasants pursued their own revolution independent of directives emanating from the urban center. Because they lacked coordination or effective leadership, is tempting to slot their revolutionism into a centuries-long chronology of peasant insurrections that, despite their creativity, remained isolated from other social groups and therefore doomed to failure. Yet the First World War had created conditions that heightened the salience of the "peasant question" for entire belligerent societies, forging new administrative structures that subordinated agricultural production to urban consumption and producing millions of peasant veterans. Urban elites could not ignore these realities, much as they would like to.

The long shadow of peasant revolution

The post-World War I rural upheavals loomed on the margins of Hungary's political culture for decades after, resulting in, among other things, interwar society's nervous preoccupation with the rural world, its improvement and governance, as well as its meaning for the nation as a whole. Setting the tone was the hugely popular novel *The Village That Was Swept Away*, published in spring 1919, at the height of the political turmoil examined above, by the Budapest-based high school teacher Dezső Szabó. Szabó presented an idealized picture of Hungarian rural life in Transylvania under attack from nefarious foreign peoples,

namely Germans and Jews (though the author was himself not particularly nationalist or anti-Semitic), and their alien, urban ideologies of socialism, liberalism, and capitalism. The book cast peasant intellectuals, products of the pure village environment, as heroes of a coming, inevitable national renewal. *The Village That Was Swept Away* offered an attractive explanation both for the causes of the rural revolutions of 1918-1919 and for the country's territorial losses while providing a solution to many social and political problems facing Hungarian society. Its call to arms resonated so widely that Szabó became one of the most important literary figures of interwar Hungary.[106] Both Horthy's regime and its rural detractors found legitimacy for their positions in his book.

The counterrevolutionaries led Miklós Horthy consistently portrayed themselves as representing pure rural values, in opposition to the supposedly "urban," leftist-liberal revolutionaries of the Károlyi regime and the Republic of Councils. After the Romanian army's withdrawal, the former Habsburg admiral rode into Budapest on November 17, 1919 on a white horse at the head of his forces. In his inaugural speech, he blamed the revolutionary episode on the "sinful city," which, clad in "red rags," had supported the "treacherous" governments of Károlyi and Kun. The Hungarian countryside, in contrast, had remained immune to subversive foreign ideas.[107] If Horthy presided over only limited agrarian reform, his government financed extensive school construction projects and a scholarship program for the talented poor in an effort to "restructure" the "outdated" Hungarian middle class (a thinly veiled anti-Semitic diagnosis) with the fresh blood of peasant intellectuals.[108] As in many central and eastern European countries, land was also granted to veterans of the First World War and the National Army. Many recipients in Hungary belonged to Horthy's "Vitéz [Warrior/Gallant] Order," an organization that, unlike in neighboring countries, explicitly invoked conservative-feudal values in its bid to shore up rural support for the regime.[109] Meanwhile, the Social Democrats had agreed in 1922 not to

agitate in the countryside—the price for their legal reintegration into the political system—ensuring that left-liberal influence in the countryside remained muted.

The most serious challenge to the conservative interwar Hungarian regime did not come from the leftist opposition but from the so-called *népi* (meaning something like Narodnik or *völkisch*) intellectuals, who often drew inspiration from Szabó's novel. Despite their differences, this diverse group of writers, poets, and social scientists agreed that the Hungarian countryside was in deep crisis, warning urban elites about the urgency of reform.[110] They advocated a vaguely defined peasantist "third way" between the ruling conservative regime and the extremes of the Bolshevik experiment. Many of the leading figures had personal experiences with the rule of the Soviet Republic. Among the most prominent *népi* writers was Gyula Illyés, a native of a small Transdanubian village who became an enthusiastic supporter of Kun's republic as a high school student, then involved himself in the socialist movement in Hungary and in Parisian exile. After his 1926 return to his homeland, he penned numerous poems and novels, including his famous *People of the Puszta*, which described the hard life of latifundia farmhands. Illyés's work in turn inspired a generation of social scientists in the 1930s, such as Imre Kovács, Zoltán Szabó, and Géza Féja, who published exhaustive reports on rural poverty and called for immediate reform.[111]

These intellectual developments, coupled with the economic crisis of the 1930s, sparked a revival of peasant politics in Hungary. In October 1930, prosperous peasants reestablished the moderate Independent Smallholding Party with a program of franchise extension and agriculture-friendly policies. The head of the party Zoltán Tildy could hardly be characterized as a red revolutionary, having served as a Protestant pastor in various impoverished areas of Hungary. Nor was he a supporter of the Christian-conservative regime: his father-in-law, a schoolmaster, had been murdered by White paramilitaries due to his involvement in the Hungarian Soviet Republic.[112] In 1931, the eccentric Budapest journalist

Zoltán Böszörményi established the fascistic National Socialist Party, known by their emblem as the Scythe Cross party, which for a while found support among the landless poor of the Stormy Corner, the former stronghold of Hungarian agrarian socialism. The party enjoyed only a brief spell of regionalized popularity, but some *népi* poets joined the steadily growing far-right movement.[113] In 1939, leftist *népi* activists founded the National Peasant Party in response to the looming German threat and domestic right-wing radicalization. The party's most prominent figure, the writer Péter Veres, hailed from a poor peasant family in eastern Hungary and had served in the First World War before joining a peasant council in his native village and drifting toward an eclectic Marxism in the 1920s. His party's platform of immediate land redistribution without compensation attracted poor peasants in the east of the country.

Various solutions to Hungary's still unresolved agrarian crisis appeared to converge at the end of the Second World War in what was in some ways a brief coda to the parallel revolution of 1918-1919. When the Soviet Red Army arrived in eastern Hungary, local peasant leaders, some of whom were veterans of the post-1918 upheavals as well as the Scythe Cross, pursued forceful village-level self-determination. One of them, the self-described communist Imre Rábai, son of a 1919 Hungarian Red Army veteran, redistributed the property of deported Jews among the village poor until his imprisonment.[114] Meanwhile, the new interim government composed of Social Democrats, Communists, the National Peasant Party (NPP), and the Smallholders initiated sweeping land reform. Following the NPP plan, estates were expropriated without compensation and parceled out under the supervision of local peasant committees. The Communist Minister for Agriculture, Imre Nagy, won immense popularity for the rapid and successful reform.[115]

Yet it was the Smallholders who triumphed in the first postwar elections in November 1945, winning 57 per cent of the vote, while the leftist NPP won only 7 per cent. Taken

together, the peasant parties' electoral strength far outstripped that of the Communists, then trying to mobilize their own rural support base though the National Association of People's Colleges (NÉKOSZ)—a continuation of the peasant colleges established in the early 1940s, now under the tutelage of the Minister of Interior, László Rajk.[116] The Stalinist party could brook no such competition from the agrarians. After taking full power in 1948, the Communists crushed the Smallholder party, imprisoning its leaders or forcing them into exile, and disbanded NÉKOSZ; Rajk was executed after a notorious show trial in 1949.

Following Stalin's death, Nagy was able to capitalize on the popularity he gained in 1945 through the land reform, presenting himself as rural, moderate, down-to-earth Communist leader, in contrast with his more dogmatic urban comrades who had ruled the country 1948-1953. Many former *népi* intellectuals and politicians supported Nagy during the 1956 revolution and suffered persecution as a result. Other younger rural cadres, many of whom were graduates of the People's Colleges in the 1940s, assumed important roles in János Kádár's regime and helped make Hungarian agriculture the most liberalized and profitable in the Eastern Bloc.

Under Kádár, official histories drew explicit parallels between the counterrevolutionary Whites of 1919 and the anti-Communist uprising of 1956. This led to a rehabilitation of Kun's regime, previously denigrated in the Communist historiography of the 1940s and 1950s as a poor imitation of Leninism, in large part because of the debacle of its rural policies.[117] In the late 1950s and 1960s, public monuments to the Soviet Republic were erected and annual commemorations organized. In eastern Hungary, officials cultivated the heritage of agrarian socialism in the "stormy corner," above all in Békés Csongrád and Csanád counties, and museums and archives solicited recollections of 1919 Red Army veterans. Among the contributors was Péter Hornyák, whom we encountered above and whose heterodox views on a number of subjects prevented his memoirs from being

published.[118] The same fate met the testimonies of most post-First World War peasant revolutionaries—that is, the tiny minority who survived the Second World War and felt compelled to record their experiences. Even under conditions of its own choosing, the Communist regime could not entirely accommodate the village radicalism of 1918-1919.

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[1] See, for instance, Ignác Romsics, "The Great War and the 1918-19 Revolutions as Experienced and Remembered by the Hungarian Peasantry," *Region: Regional Studies of Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia* 4, no. 2 (2015): 173-194, 192-3. The classic Marxist interpretation of the Hungarian Soviet Republic is Tibor Hajdu, *The Hungarian Soviet Republic* (Budapest, 1979), 55-57. More recent works have begun to highlight the importance of peasant activism: Pál Hatos, *Az Elátkozott Köztársaság - Az 1918-as összeomlás és forradalom története* (Budapest, 2018); Pál Hatos, *Rosszfiúk világforradalma: Az 1919-es Magyarországi Tanácsköztársaság története* (Budapest, 2021); Tamás Csíki, 'A Parasztság "Forradalma" 1918-Ban', in *Háborúból Békébe: A Magyar Társadalom 1918-1924*, ed. Zsombor Bódy (Budapest: MTA BTK TTI, 2018). On Kun's republic in English, see Rudolf L. Tökés, *Béla Kun and the Hungarian Soviet Republic: The Origins and Role of the Communist Party of Hungary in the Revolutions of 1918–1919* (New York, 1967); in *Revolution in Perspective: Essays on the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919*, eds. Andrew C. Janos and William B. Slottman (Berkeley, 1971). Janos's second essay in the volume constitutes a partial exception to the urban focus of this literature.

[2] See especially Eric R. Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (London, 1971) as well as Barrington Moore, *The Social Origins of Dictatorship: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston, 1966). On peasants as precursors of revolutionary movements, see Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (New York, 1959)

[3] Henry A. Landsberger, "Peasant Unrest: Themes and Variations," in *Rural Protest: Peasant Movements and Social Change*, ed. Henry A. Landsberger (London and Basingstoke, 1974), 59-61.

[4] The now classic work on these three cases with attention to the role of peasant insurgency is Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge and New York, 1979).

[5] Wolf, *Peasant Wars*, 282, 283.

[6] Landsberger, "Peasant Unrest," 17-18.

[7] Orlando Figes, *Peasant Russia, Civil War: the Volga Countryside in Revolution 1917-1921* (Oxford, 1989); Aaron B. Retish, *Russia's Peasants in Revolution and Civil War: Citizenship, Identity, and the Creation of the Soviet State, 1914-1922* (Cambridge, 2008); Sarah Badcock, *Politics and the People in Revolutionary Russia: A Provincial History* (Cambridge, 2007); Mark R. Baker, *Peasants, Power, and Place: Revolution in the Villages of Kharkiv Province, 1914-1921* (Cambridge MA, 2016).

[8] On the aftermath of the First World War, see for instance, Ellis Goldberg, "Peasants in Revolt — Egypt 1919," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 24 (1992): 261-280; Kyle J. Anderson, "The Egyptian Labor Corps: Workers, Peasants, and the State in World War I," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 49 (2017): 5-24. The formative effects of the Second World War on Chinese, Indochinese, and Algerian peasants is discussed in Wolf (op. cit.).

[9] Teodor Shanin, "The Peasantry as a Political Factor," in *Peasants and Peasant Societies*, ed. Teodor Shanin, (Harmondsworth, 1971), 259: "The modern conscript army is one of the few nationwide organizations in which the peasantry actively participates. The segmentation of the peasantry is thereby broken. The cultural intercourse involved, even if there is no indoctrination, teaches the peasant-soldier to think in national and not just village-limited terms. He is taught organization, complex cooperative action, coordination, modern technique and military skills […] This increase in the peasant's ability to act politically is, while he is in the army, on the whole successfully curbed by rigid discipline and by control exercised by non-peasant officers. Yet, in a time of crisis, this repression may disappear and the attitudes, action or refusal to act of a peasant army may become decisive."

[10] Ignác Romsics, "War in the Puszta: The Great War and the Hungarian Peasantry," in *The Great War and Memory in Central and South-Eastern Europe*, ed. Oto Luthar (Leiden, 2016), 39-47; Jozo Tomasevich, *Peasants, Politics and Economic Change in Yugoslavia* (Stanford, 1955), 230-1.

[11] For an overview, see Matteo Ermacora, "Rural Society" in 1914-1918 Online: International Encyclopedia of the First World War (2015) https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/rural_society. On global agriculture's decisive role in the war's outcome, see Avner Offer, *The First World War: An Agrarian Interpretation* (Oxford, 1989).

[12] See the complex impact of the war on the Hungarian agrarian society: Hatos, *Az elátkozott köztársaság*, 26-42. On challenges faced by the Central Powers in particular, see Alexander Watson, *Ring of Steel: Germany and Austria-Hungary at War, 1914-1918* (London, 2014); Tamara Scheer, "Die Kriegswirtschaft am Übergang von der liberal-privaten zur staatlich-regulierten Arbeitswelt," in *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918 XI: Die Habsburgermonarchie und der Erste Weltkrieg. Der Kampf um die Neuordnung Mitteleuropas*, 2 vols., eds. Helmut Rumpler and Anatol Schmied-Kowarzik (Wien 2016) XI/1/1; Robert G. Moeller, *German Peasants and Agrarian Politics, 1914-1924. The Rhineland and Westphalia* (Chapel Hill and London, 1986); Benjamin Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany 1914-1923*, trans. Alan Skinner (New York, 2007). For an overview of the Russian wartime economy, see Peter Gatrell, *Russia's First World War: A Social and Economic History* (Harlow, 2005).

[13] Lynne Viola et al, eds., *The War against the Peasantry, 1927-1930: The Tragedy of the Soviet Countryside* (New Haven CT, 2005). See also Andrea Graziosi, *The Great Soviet Peasant War: Bolsheviks and Peasants, 1917-1933* (Cambridge MA, 1996); Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization* (New York, Oxford, 1994); Lynne Viola, *Peasant Rebels under Stalin: Collectivization and the Culture of Peasant Resistance* (New York, 1998).

[14] James C. Scott, "Peasants and Commissars," *Theory and Society* 7, no. 1/2 (1979): 97-134, 97, 110, 116. For an illuminating recent analysis of peasant revolution in southern Italy that picks up some of the same themes, see Rosario Forlenza, "Europe's Forgotten Unfinished Revolution: Peasant Power,

Social Mobilization, and Communism in the Southern Italian Countryside," *The American Historical Review* 126, no. 2 (June 2021): 504-529.

[15] Scott, "Peasants and Commissars," 97, 109-116.

[16] Partha Chatterjee, "A Brief History of Subaltern Studies," in *Transnationale Geschichte. Themen, Tendenzen und Theorien*, eds. Gunilla-Friederike Budde, Sebastian Conrad, Oliver Janz (Göttingen, 2006), 95-98. The paradigmatic application of this approach is Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Durham NC, 1999). On the notion of "multiple modernities," see S.N. Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities," *Daedalus* 129, no. 1 (2000), 1-29.

[17] Gábor Gyáni and György Kövér, *Magyarország társadalomtörténete a reformkortól a második világháborúig* (Budapest, 1998), 321-322.; Scott M. Eddie, "Agricultural Production and Output per Worker in Hungary, 1870-1913," *The Journal of Economic History* 28 (1968): 197–222, 198.

[18] Gyáni and Kövér, *Magyarország társadalomtörténete*, 91-92, 324.

[19] Péter Hanák, "Az agrárszocialista mozgalom mentalitása és szimbólumai," in A Kert És a Műhely (Budapest, 1988), 209; Simon at al, Földmunkás- és szegényparaszt-mozgalmak Magyarországon 1848-1949 (Budapest, 1962), 183-185, 268-269.

[20] Ferenc Bálint, A békéscsabai munkásmozgalom dokumentumai 1890-1944 (Békéscsaba, 1971) 10.

[21] Hanák, "Az agrárszocialista mozgalom", 207.

[22] Hanák, "Az agrárszocialista mozgalom", 220-21.

[23] Hanák, "Az agrárszocialista mozgalom", 206-207.

[24] *Földmunkás- és szegényparaszt-mozgalmak Magyarországon 1848-1949*, 431-434.

[25] Tibor Hajdu and Ferenc Pollmann, *A régi Magyarország utolsó háborúja: 1914 - 1918* (Budapest, 2014), 163-164, 208-209.

[26] Zsombor Bódy, "Élelmiszerellátás piac és kötött gazdálkodás között a háború és az összeomlás idején," in *Háborúból békébe: a magyar társadalom 1918–1924. Konfliktusok, kihívások, változások a háború és az összeomlás nyomán*, ed. Zsombor Bódy (Budapest, 2018), 155-158, 172.

[27] Adrienn Nagy, "A hátország rejtőzködő gazdasági stratégiái az első világháborúban. Csempészet az osztrák-magyar határ menti Vas megyében," *Múltunk* 64 (2019), 36; Tibor Hajdu and Ferenc Pollmann, *A régi Magyarország utolsó háborúja*, 114, 254.

[28] Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár, Békés Megyei Levéltár. [Hungarian National Archives, Békés County Archive] (MNL BéML) IV. B. 401. b. 313/1915 214.

[29] Péter Hanák, *The Garden and the Workshop* (Princeton, 1998), 179–212, 182.

[30] Hanák, *The Garden and the Workshop*, 182-183, 209-210.

[31] Hadtörténelmi Levéltár (Budapest) Magyarországi Tanácsköztársaság Katonai iratai [Military Archive, Budapest, Documents of the Hungarian Soviet Republic] (HL MTK) 1218. Vöröskatona visszaemlékezések [Memoires of Red Soldiers] 130. d. 11. Hornyák Péter

[32] Hatos, *Az elátkozott köztársaság*, 173.

[33] Tamás Révész, "Soldiers in the Revolution: Violence and Consolidation in 1918 in the Territory of the Disintegrating Kingdom of Hungary," *Hungarian Historical Review* 10 (2021): 737–67, 744; Tamás Csíki, "A parasztság "forradalma" 1918-Ban," in *Háborúból békébe: A magyar társadalom 1918-1924*, ed. Zsombor Bódy (Budapest, 2018), 136-138.

[34] Jakub S. Beneš, "The Green Cadres and the Collapse of Austria-Hungary in 1918," *Past & Present* 236 (August 2017): 207–41.

[35] MNL BéML XXXV. 46. Visszaemlékezések. Csík György 4.

[36] Hadtörténeti Levéltár Polgári Demokratikus Forradalom Iratai. [Military Archive, Documents of the Democratic Revolution] (HL P. d. f.) B/6. d. 3711. 101.

[37] Hatos, *Az elátkozott köztársaság*, 176.

[38] MNL BéML XXXV. 46. Visszaemlékezések. Csík György 5.

[39] HL MTK 1218. Vöröskatona visszaemlékezések 132. d. 2. Fleischmann Kálmán

[40] Károly Mészáros, *Az Őszirózsás Forradalom és a Tanácsköztársaság parasztpolitikája 1918-1919: különös figyelemmel Somogyra* (Budapest, 1966), 27.

[41] HL P. d. f. B/10. d. 4039. 37.

[42] Hatos, *Az elátkozott köztársaság*, 179

[43] HL MTK Vöröskatona visszaemlékeztések 13. d. 80. P. Szabó János; HL P. d. f. B/2. d. 3421. 69

[44] Révész, "Soldiers in the Revolution," 751-759.

[45] Csilla Fedinec and Imre Szakál, "A Hucul Köztársaság: történelem és emlékezet," in *Kérészállamok. Átmeneti államalakulatok a történelmi Magyarország területén (1918-1921)*, ed. Veronika Szeghy-Gayer and Csaba Zahorán (Budapest, 2022).

[46] For an overview of the village republics in the south Slav lands, see Bogumil Hrabak, *Dezerterstvo, zeleni kadar i prevratna anarhija u jugoslavenskim zemljama 1914-1918* (Novi Sad, 1990), 323-4; Ivo Banac, "'Emperor Karl has become a Comitadj': The Croatian Disturbances of Autumn 1918," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 70 (April 1992): 284-305, 301. See also Dragutin Feletar, *Dva seljačka bunta (Kunavečka buna 1903. i krvavu međimurski studeni 1918. godine)* (Čakovec, 1973), 63 on the "Goričan commune." For the Slovene Vinica Republic, see Janez Weiss, *Viniška republika. Pregled ob 90-letnici* (Vinica, 2009). On the Mura Republic in what is today Slovenia, see Julij Titl, *Murska republika 1919* (Murska Sobota, 1970). Regarding the "Tarnobrzeg Republic" in Poland see Marek Przeniosło, "Republika Tarnobrzeska (1918–1919): Fakty i mity," *Polska w XIX i XX wieku. Społeczeństwo i gospodarka*, ed. Wiesław Caban (Kielce, 2013), 477–484. On the Lemkos' republican experiments in the northern Carpathians, see Robert Paul Magocsi, "The Ukrainian question between Poland and Czechoslovakia: The Lemko Rusyn republic (1918–1920) and political thought in western Rus'-Ukraine," *Nationalities Papers* 21, no. 2 (1993): 95-105. For discussion of such experiments in Russia and Ukraine, see Orlando Figes, *Peasant Russia, Civil War: The Volga Countryside in Revolution (1917-1921)* (Oxford, 1989), 72-3; Dimitri Tolkatsch, "Lokale Ordnungsentwürfe am Übergang vom Russischen Reich zur Sowjetmacht: Bauernaufstände und Dorfrepubliken in der Ukraine, 1917-1921," in *Akteure der Neuordnung. Ostmitteleuropa und das Erbe der Imperien, 1917–1924*, eds. Tim Buchen and Frank Grelka (Frankfurt Oder, 2016).

[47] József Sipos, *A pártok és a földreform 1918-1919-ben* (Budapest, 2009), 221-223.

[48] Lajos Varga, *Háború, forradalom, szociáldemokrácia Magyarországon, 1914. július-1919. március* (Budapest, 2010), 405-406, 413-416.

[49] Sipos, *A pártok és a földreform*, 200-202.

[50] Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár, Országos Levéltár [Hungarian National Archive, State Archive] MNL OL K 440 PTI 607 f. 3. d. 31. Öe.; MNL BéML XVI. Szarvas város direktóriumának iratai. 1919. 01. 23. 104-105.; Sipos, *A pártok és a földreform*, 201.

[51] Sipos, *A pártok és a földreform*, 175-176, 208, 219.

[52] György Szincsok, ed., *Tótkomlós története és néprajza: a település alapításának 250. évfordulója tiszteletére*, vol. 1. (Tótkomlós, 1996), 194-195.; Iván Csicsay et al, eds., *Iratok Pest Megye történetéhez 1918-1919* (Budapest, 1969), 175.

[53] Magda Imre and László Szűcs, eds., *A forradalmi kormányzótanács jegyzőkönyvei, 1919* (Budapest, 1986), 95-96.

[54] Mészáros, *Az Őszirózsás Forradalom és a Tanácsköztársaság parasztpolitikája*, 106, 110-111; Hajdu, *A Magyarországi Tanácsköztársaság*, 377-378.

[55] László Takács, "Battonya a Tanácsköztársaság idején," in *A Tanácsköztársaság Békés Megyében: 1919*, ed. Ferenc Szabó (Békéscsaba, 1969), 292.

[56] Takács, "Battonya a Tanácsköztársaság idején," 292; Gyula Leiner, "Két Forradalom Vésztőn," in *A Tanácsköztársaság Békés Megyében: 1919*, ed. Ferenc Szabó (Békéscsaba, 1969), 336.

[57] Ignác Romsics, ed., *Dokumentumok az 1918/19-es forradalmak Duna-Tisza közi történetéhez*, A Bács-Kiskun Megyei Levéltár kiadványai 3 (Kecskemét, 1976), 370-371.

[58] Hatos, *Rosszfiúk világforradalma*, 213.

[59] Arató Ferenc, ed., *Negyven éve: jubileumi emlékkönyv: a Tanácsköztársaság Szabolcs-Szatmár megyei története* (Nyíregyháza, 1959), 66

[60] Hajdu, *A Magyarországi Tanácsköztársaság*, 382.; Romsics, *Dokumentumok*, 370.

[61] György Komoróczy, ed., *A Tanácsköztársaság Hajdú-Biharban: 1919* (Debrecen, 1959), 286.

[62] Ignác Romsics, "A Tanácsköztársaság Tömegbázisa a Duna–Tisza Közén," *Századok* 113 (1979), 238; Hajdu, *A Magyarországi Tanácsköztársaság*, 105-117.

[63] Vera Szemere, *Az agrárkérdés 1918-1919-ben* (Budapest, 1963), 112.; Romsics, "A Tanácsköztársaság Tömegbázisa," 239.

[64] Tamás Révész, "A National Army Under the Red Banner? The Mobilisation of the Hungarian Red Army in 1919," *Contemporary European History* 31, no. 1 (2022): 71–84, 76-78.

[65] HL MTK B/102. d. 3208. 463–64.

[66] For example, János Gaál, a peasant from Szarvas, marched together with three hundred comrades to the nearby large town of Kecskemét to volunteer for the army. HL MTK 1218. Vöröskatona visszaemlékezések 130. d. 35. Gaál János.

[67] MNL BéML XXXV. 46. Visszaemlékezések.3. d. Bulyovszki János 1.

[68] HL MTK 1218. Vöröskatona visszaemlékezések. 133. d. 25. Somogyi Károly.

[69] HL MTK B/102. d. 3203. 269.

[70] Arató, *Negyven éve*, 64-65.

[71] HL MTK 1218. Vöröskatona visszaemlékezések 130. d. 11. Hornyák Péter

[72] Arató, *Negyven éve*, 67-68.

[73] Hajdu, *A Magyarországi Tanácsköztársaság*, 377-387.

[74] HL MTK Vöröskatona visszaemlékezések 129. d. 36. Stolcz Miklós 7.

[75] MNL OL K 803 PTI 606. 13. d. 2/16. öe II.k. 120.; 154.; 8. d. XV. K. 1722; and 6. d. 2/3 öe. 219.

[76] MNL OL K 803 PTI 606 f. 10. d. 2/9. öe. 253.; HL MTK B/102. d. 3246. 916-17.; B/103. d., 3257. 363.

[77] Tamás Révész, *Nem akartak katonát látni? A magyar állam és hadserege 1918-1919-ben* (Budapest, 2019), 221-238.

[78] HL MTK 1218. Vöröskatona visszaemlékezések 132. d. 75. Herendi Dezső 6.

[79] Romsics, *Dokumentumok*, 438.; Csicsay et al., *Iratok Pest Megye történetéhez*, 211-212.

[80] András Krisch, "Ellenforradalmi megmozdulás Sopronban? Gazdapolgár-züntetés, 1919. április 3," in *Vörös És Fehér: A vörös és a fehér uralom hátországa 1919 vidéken*, ed. Szabolcs Nagy; *A Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Veszprém Megyei Levéltára Kiadványai* 30 (Veszprém, 2013), 112, 61-63, 67.

[81] László Göncz, *A Muravidéki magyarság, 1918-1941* (Lendva, 2001), available at: https://mek.oszk.hu/02200/02239/html/01.htm; Tibor Zsiga, *Muravidéktől Trianonig* (Lendva, 1996), 64-65.

[82] Romsics, *Dokumentumok*, 579.; Szabolcs Nagy, "'A klerikális reakció' egy fészke a kommün alatt," in *Vörös és Fehér: A vörös és a fehér uralom hátországa 1919 vidéken*, ed. Szabolcs Nagy (Veszprém, 2013), 112, 21.

[83] Péter Farkas, "A Vörös Őrség és a Latinca-század tevékenysége a Tanácsköztársaság alatt Somogy Megyében," *Clio Műhelytanulmányok* 5, (Budapest 2019), 26; HL MTK B/102. d. 3229. 232.

[84] Ignác Romsics, *A Duna-Tisza köze hatalmi-politikai viszonyai 1918-19-ben* (Budapest, 1982), 123-124.

[85] Andrew C. Janos, "The Agrarian Opposition at the National Congress of Councils," in *Revolution in Perspective*, 96.

[86] István Végső, ed., *Garbai Sándor a Tanácsköztársaságról és a zsidóságról : Válogatás a Forradalmi Kormányzótanács elnökének visszaemlékezéseiből*, Clio kötetek (Budapest: Clio Intézet, 2021). 41.

[87] *Dunapataj 1919: Írások, dokumentumok az 1919-ws dunapataji népfölkelés történetéhez és emlékezetéhez* (Dunapataj, 2019), 11.

[88] Romsics, *A Duna-Tisza köze hatalmi-politikai viszonyai*, 134.

[89] Csicsay et al., *Iratok Pest megye történetéhez*, 348.

[90] *Dunapataj 1919*, 16.

[91] Csicsay et al., *Iratok Pest megye történetéhez*, 345.

[92] *Dunapataj 1919*, 16.

[93] Romsics, *Dokumentumok*, 488-489.

[94] Romsics, *A Duna-Tisza köze hatalmi-politikai viszonyai*, 147.

[95] Romsics, *A Duna-Tisza köze hatalmi-politikai viszonyai*, 152.; Gergely Bödők, "Vörös- és fehérterror Magyarországon (1919-1921)" (Ph.D. diss., Eszterházy Károly University, 2018), 163.

[96] Romsics, *A Duna-Tisza köze hatalmi-politikai viszonyai*, 147-151.

[97] Hajdu, *A Magyarországi Tanácsköztársaság*, 382.; *A forradalmi kormányzótanács jegyzőkönyvei*, 463-465.

[98] Hajdu Tibor, *Az 1918-as Magyarországi Polgári Demokratikus Forradalom* (Budapest, 1968), 180-187.

[99] While the Hungarian scholarship tends to agree on the lower numbers, Béla Bodo challenges the validity of this results: Béla Bodó, *The White Terror: Antisemitic and Political Violence in Hungary, 1919-1921* (New York, 2019), 90-3.

[100] Pál Prónay, *A határban a halál kaszál: Fejezetek Prónay Pál feljegyzéseiből* (Budapest, 1963), 113.

[101] Bódy, "Élelmiszerellátás piac és kötött gazdálkodás között" 175-193.

[102] József Nagy, *A Nagyatádi-déle földreform 1920-1928* (Eger, 1993), 17-18.

[103] József Nagy, "A Nagyatádi-féle földreform lezárása és eredményei," *Történelmi Szemle* 31 (1989), 25-26.

[104] Ákos Bartha, "Rögös út az 1920-as magyarországi földreformhoz," in *Populizmus, népiség, modernizáció: fejezetek a kelet-közép-európai politikai gondolkodás 20. századi történetéből*, *Magyar történelmi emlékek* (Budapest, 2017), 94-95.

[105] Nagy, *A Nagyatádi-féle földreform*, 184-185.

[106] Lackó Miklós, "Válságkorszak – válságelméletek: Három alapmű a 1920-as évek magyar szellemi életéből," *Múltunk* 52 (2007): 4–39, 13-16.

[107] Dávid Turbucz, "Horthy Miklós beszédei 1919 és 1923 között," *Századok* 154, no. 1 (2020): 183–208, 193. See also Eliza Ablovatski, *Revolution and Political Violence in Central Europe: The Deluge of 1919* (Cambridge, 2021), 14-15, 164-5, 222-3.

[108] Gábor Ujváry, "Pozitív válaszok Trianonra. Klebelsberg Kuno és Hóman Bálint kulturális politikája," *Korunk* III (2012), 71-73, 70.

[110] About the movement, see Gyula Borbándi, *Der Ungarische Populismus*, (München, 1976).

[111] Papp, *A magyar népi mozgalom története*, 69-74, 106-120.

[112] István Vida, "A Független Kisgazda Párt 1930. évi békési programja," *Történelmi Szemle* 10 (1967), 25, 85-95.

[113] For example, József Erdélyi, a former Red Soldier from 1919, ended up in circles of the fascist Arrow Cross party, publishing poems celebrating the deportation of the Hungarian Jews in 1944. See János Gyurgyák, "Szélsőjobboldaliság a népi mozgalomban," in *A magyar jobboldali hagyomány,*

1900-1948, ed. Ignác Romsics (Budapest, 2009); Paksa Rudolf, "Szélsőjobboldali mozgalmak az 1930-as években," in *A magyar jobboldali hagyomány, 1900-1948*, ed. Ignác Romsics (Budapest, 2009), 284-5.

[114] Péter Apor, *Forradalom a hátsó udvarban: Tömegerőszak, antiszemitizmus és politikai átalakulás a második világháború utáni Magyarországon, 1945-1946* (Budapest, 2021), 157.

[115] Ignác Romsics, *Magyarország története a XX. században*, 2nd ed. (Budapest, 2005), 283-4.

[116] See Pataki, *A Nékosz-legenda*.

[117] Péter Apor, *Fabricating Authenticity in Soviet Hungary: The Afterlife of the First Hungarian Soviet Republic in the Age of State Socialism* (London, 2014), 14, 57-9.

[118] HL MTK 1218. Vöröskatona visszaemlékezések 130. d. 11. Hornyák Péter. Snubbing internationalism, Hornyák for instance wrote that he "particularly hated" Czechs.