



## BOOK REVIEWS

A reformáció nyelve. Tanulmányok a magyarországi reformáció első negyedszázadának vizsgálata alapján. (Humanizmus és reformáció 34) [“Language of the Reformation. Essays Based on the Study of the First Twenty-five Years of the Hungarian Reformation (Humanism and Reformation 34)”]. By Zoltán Csepregi. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2013. 558 pp.

In the mid-1990s, in the introduction to his monograph entitled *Mezőváros és Reformáció* (“Market Town and Reformation”) historian Ferenc Szakály complains of the lack of sources that is generally considered characteristic of the early Reformation: “It is as if there were a curse on the first decades of the Reformation.”<sup>1</sup> Anyone who takes Zoltán Csepregi’s book in hand will soon realize that the curse has been lifted. A professor at the Institute for Church History of the Lutheran University, Budapest, Csepregi has provided the community of historians and scholars of theology with a sensitive, detailed, and complex analysis of the early phases of the urban Reformation in Hungary. In doing so, he has filled a gap in the historiography on the Reformation that had begun to seem enduring. He endeavored first and foremost to write a history of the early Reformation on the basis of a reassessment of the theological traditions of church-history. Perhaps the most innovative feature of his inquiry is his emphasis not on events, but rather on uses of language. This fundamentally new approach is possible in part because of a significant expansion of the sources on which he draws, by which I am referring not only to the discovery of new sources in Slovakia and Germany, but also—a more basic solution to the frequently mentioned lack of sources—to rereadings, recontextualizations, and reinterpretations of sources that were discovered and published long ago, sources that have been used and in some cases perhaps even forgotten by several generations. However, only a scholar armed with wide-ranging knowledge and strong theological armor could successfully discern in the sources the contexts and meanings that lie beneath the layers of meaning that have accumulated over time. Fortunately, Csepregi comes well-prepared.

1 Ferenc Szakály, *Mezőváros és reformáció. Tanulmányok a korai magyar polgárosodás kérdéséhez* [Market-town and Reformation. Studies on Early Hungarian Embourgeoisement], *Humanizmus és Reformáció* 23 (Budapest: Balassi, 1995), 16.

The story, which is divided into fourteen chapters, takes place in the territories of the swath of cities from Sopron in the west to Brassó (today Braşov in Romania) in the east. The fourth chapter, which examines the royal court and primarily the faith of Mary, Queen of Hungary, is also tied to this stretch of urban communities by the affiliations and links of the court preachers. Csepregi offers an overview of the manifestations of the Reformation in language from the first statements in support of Reformation ideas up to the national assembly of 1548. Only the fifth chapter, which is devoted to George the Pious, Margrave of Brandenburg-Ansbach (1484–1543), breaks the narrative of the urban Reformation. It presents the Reformation on the Gyula estates of the margrave as a “rural event.” The reason for the inclusion of this chapter probably lies in the discoveries Csepregi made in the Nuremberg State Archive, though this also enabled him to compare the role the key figures of the German and Hungarian Reformation played as church patrons in Hungary and Silesia.

While the religious and social history of the Reformation have long been separate, rival fields of inquiry, the cultural history of the Reformation, which began to gain ground in the 1980s, has persuasively demonstrated the close interaction of ideas and social practices.<sup>2</sup> Csepregi merges these two approaches, but not by adopting historical anthropology, an approach that has become common in Anglo-Saxon historiography. He uses several different methods in his nuanced inquiry, including thorough philological analysis, the history of concepts, detailed reconstructions of historical events, biography, the reconstruction of social networks, historical theology, and institutional history. He is thoroughly familiar with the German historiography of the Reformation, and he begins his book, which starts with a concise overview of the historiography, with a reference to Gerhard Müller, the Lutheran historian of theology. The author’s close links to German historiography cannot justify though that the overview of the East-European historiography of the Reformation published in the centennial issue of the *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* fails to mention Csepregi’s work, (most of which has been published in German as well) in spite of the fact that his contributions to the field could easily be compared with those of Alex Ryrie (for instance).<sup>3</sup>

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2 I am thinking first and foremost of the work of Robert Scribner, Natalie Zemon Davis and David Warren Sabean.

3 Maria Craciun, “Centre or Periphery? The Reformation in Romanian and Hungarian Historiography, 1945–2008,” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 100 (2009): 175–92.

The unity of the work, its subtitle (which refers explicitly to essays, not a monograph) and the many shorter chapters and subtopics notwithstanding, is palpable in two logically executed endeavors. First and foremost, the chapters are bound together into a coherent whole by the postmodern approach, which makes language itself the primary object of study (as indeed is indicated by the title of the book). This constitutes an acknowledgment of the fact that, like theological views, the use of language mirrors shifts in religious identity.<sup>4</sup> The adoption of this approach is itself perhaps Csepregi's most original accomplishment. Furthermore, in his inquiry it does not become a self-referential game, but rather retains its exterior referentiality: the analysis of the use of language of contemporary agents as a factor in identity formation serves as a tool with which the historian can orient himself or herself in the tangle of ideas, movements, and denominations. This means, to be specific, that he manages to identify the circle of people who identified with the ideas of the evangelical movement (a circle that until now had seemed impossible to circumscribe) by identifying the elements of their shared language, thereby providing a tool with which to systematize the jumble of late medieval reformers, Humanists, and evangelical preachers.

This approach itself is not new, but until now no one has thought to use it in the study of the early Reformation in Hungary. Csepregi uses philological methods, for instance minute intertextual analysis, to discern interconnections between the sources, for example in his discussion of a letter written by Bartholomeus Francfordinus Pannonius in 1522, which constitutes the first example of the use of a new kind of language in Hungary, though Csepregi convincingly argues that his style is more a representation of Humanist linguistic practice than it is of Reformation ideas. Csepregi also demonstrates how traditional criticism of the Church cherished by observant Franciscan circles intermingled with Luther's new ideas in the views revealed during the inquest against alleged heretics in the city of Sopron in 1524. In his reading, the rebellious miners of the mining town revolt in 1525 used Saint Paul's apostolic greeting (*gratiam et pacem*) as a means of identification within the evangelical movement, similarly to their co-religionists in Germany. Such careful reading of texts enables Csepregi to make the claim, with justified confidence and for the first time in Hungarian historiography,

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4 According to Csepregi, the use of the term "language event" (*Sprachereignis*), originally a notion introduced by Ernst Fuchs, began to spread in historical theology in the wake of Gerhard Ebeling's (1912–2001) lectures on Luther. Gerhard Ebeling, *Luthers Seelsorge: Theologie in der Vielfalt der Lebenssituationen an seinen Briefen dargestellt* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1997).

that the Reformation exerted a significant influence on the pre-Mohács (1526) German speaking communities in Hungary (Chapter II, “Hit által győztek meg országokat”: a szavak hatalma [“By Faith They Moved Nations”: The Power of Words]).

Alongside Csepregi’s focus on the linguistic events that accompanied the spread of the ideas of the Reformation, the methodological program of the urban Reformation also gives unity to his inquiry. The reader might well be prompted to ask why Hungarian historiography on the Reformation (which where other topics are concerned is often spry and agile<sup>5</sup>) is some 40 years behind when it comes to the study of the urban Reformation.<sup>6</sup> The explanation for this may lie in the fact that Hungary was a multi-lingual and multi-ethnic country, in which, broadly speaking, cities had German speaking populations, while market towns were inhabited by Hungarians. As a result, in the 1950s, the social history of the Reformation focused on market towns, which were enfranchised settlements that earned livelihoods through long-distance trade and assumed the functions of cities in regions without “real” cities. According to the narrative of the “market town Reformation,” the Reformation among the Hungarian population was the achievement of the “peasant burghers” of market towns, who brought—along with their cattle—new ideas and books into the country.<sup>7</sup>

One of the fundamental questions of the international (and therefore Hungarian) social history of the Reformation concerns who the agents of religious change actually were. Was it the clergy or the laity that made decisions regarding the proper teachings and the path to follow? One of the indisputable virtues of the paradigm of the market town Reformation (which Csepregi justifiably throws into question) is that it put emphasis not on celebrated preachers or their aristocratic patrons, but rather on the common man. Csepregi approaches the question of the complex relationship between pastor, community, and landlord from several perspectives. First, he writes several fascinating case studies on the reception of new teachings in the urban setting, the most interesting of which is perhaps the one on the city of Lőcse (today Levoča in Slovakia), in which

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5 As Csepregi notes in his introduction, the international program of the “rural reformation” was formulated in the 1990s. See for example C. Scott Dixon, *The Reformation and Rural Society. The Parishes of Brandenburg-Ansbach-Kulmbach, 1528–1603* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Hungarian historian Katalin Péter was prominent in the promotion of this thesis in Hungary. See Katalin Péter, *A reformáció: kényszer vagy választás* (Budapest: Európa, 2004), 74–89.

6 See Bernd Moeller, *Reichsstadt und Reformation* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, G. Mohn, 1962).

7 Szakály’s 1995 book is testimony to the resilience of the thesis. See note 1.

Csepregi concludes that in their decisions pertaining to matters of religion, city leaders were more concerned with maintaining peace than they were with theological tendencies (chapter X/5, pp.333–40). Moreover, the main actors of Csepregi's books are the urban reformers who worked in the shadow of the celebrated preachers. By providing his readers with biographies of these figures, Csepregi restores actors to the narrative of the cultural history of Hungary in the first half of the sixteenth century of whom historians have had at best distorted impressions. (For instance, with regards to the first generation of reformers, in addition to the frequently mentioned Franciscan friars, Csepregi calls attention to the prototypical figure of the Humanist parish priest or Humanist canon who turned towards the new teachings [chapter VII/4]). Another one of the “by-products” of the biographical sketches of the reformers is Csepregi's thoroughly documented insight that northern Hungary should be treated together with Moravia and Silesia as one region. The main actors moved within the borders of these territories in their searches for employment [chapter VII/2]). In the course of his detailed inquiry into these two topics, Csepregi gains the experiences which help him to reflect on the issue of historical agency. He calls attention to the importance of the dialogue between preacher and community. A preacher had to find his place within the complex web of local political relationships if he wanted to become the accepted leader of a community (p.362). One of the most recent and most frequently cited narratives of the English Reformation also places the political dimension of the process of the religious conversion of a community into the foreground, drawing attention, in other words, to the interplay of power relations and religious issues.<sup>8</sup>

By combining the linguistic approach with the study of the urban Reformation, Csepregi arrives at one of the most interesting, if hypothetical conclusions in the book. He observes that different communities often failed to learn one another's languages, and there was very little translation between the various vernaculars. He interprets this (along with other phenomena) as a sign that in the sixteenth century mother tongue was the determining factor in the creation of identity, not confessional difference, which was only subsequently perceived as decisive. In other words, to the ethnically diverse urban population, whether a sermon was delivered in its mother tongue mattered more than whether the teachings were Catholic or evangelical in spirit. According to Csepregi, the

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8 Ethan H. Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

polyglot nature of the communities offers an answer to an old question in the historiography, namely why did the decisive majority of Hungarians adopt Calvinism in the sixteenth century, in contrast to other nationalities in Hungary or in the neighboring states. As the borders of language shaped religious choices and differences, in their relative linguistic isolation the Hungarians followed their own path. In other words, in the sixteenth century there was a “Hungarian,” “German,” and “Slovak” religion, while Lutheran or Reformed identities became more significant only in the eighteenth century. According to Csepregi, the distinctive development of the Hungarian-language Reformation is explained in part by the fact that Hungarian reformers learned German poorly in Wittenberg (he notes somewhat sarcastically that because of their strong knowledge of Latin, they preferred to attend Melancton’s lectures in Latin over Luther’s exegeses, which were held in a mix of languages). This explains their “original theological thinking,” in other words the distinctly different substance of Calvinism in Hungary. Thus one of the important conclusions of the book is that the distinctive aspects of the Reformation in Hungary were due in part to the reformers’ insufficient knowledge of German.

I have mentioned only a few of the basic theses of the work. It also contains a discussion of the ideas of Mátyás Dévai, the first influential Hungarian reformer, who—a notion striking for its time—included women in Luther’s idea of the priesthood of all believers. Csepregi analyzes Dévai’s ideas not according to the mechanical accusation of Anabaptism, but rather in the context of his own “personal experience and creative vision.” Given the dire state of affairs in the country, which had been devastated by civil war, the reformer, who never married, may well have perceived it as the order of the day that women assumed active roles as preachers and confessors (VIII/5, pp.228–38). Csepregi also provides a similarly enlightening analysis of the concept of the Reformation in *Reformatio ecclesie Coronensis* (1543), a work by Johannes Honterus (a reformer of the Transylvanian-Saxon city of Brassó, known as Kronstadt to the Saxons). Csepregi situates Honterus’ notions at the intersection point of several traditions, including the philologically and pedagogically motivated Erasmus movement, the southern German urban Reformation, and the gradually emerging Catholic revival. In other words, at the time (the early 1540s) the term Reformation included reforms that were acceptable to every trend in thinking, thereby containing some promise of the preservation of unity. It thus fell quite far from the meanings it has acquired today, which emerged in the wake of the first centennial celebrations in 1617 (IX/7, pp.270–85).

I will stop here, lest I deprive the reader of the pleasure of making several fascinating discoveries on his or her own. This pleasure will come at the price of some pains, since Csepregi, who is thoroughly familiar with the complex texts and historical contexts, is inclined to abandon his reader at times in the thick of the data and arguments. His book constitutes a fundamental study of the early Reformation in Hungary. Like any fundamental study, it is dense. An attentive reader, however, stands to glean from it innumerable new insights and perspectives.

*Translated by Thomas Cooper*

Gabriella Erdélyi

Politikai korrupció a Monarchia Magyarországon, 1867–1918 [Political Corruption in Hungary of the Compromise Era, 1867–1918]. By András Cieger. Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 2011. 208 pp.

András Cieger's monograph makes a term that is rich with meaning and shifting in its content (both historically and from culture to culture) the subject of analysis within a chronologically and geographically precisely circumscribed framework. The framework is Hungary within the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy, which from the perspective of constitutional law was a well-ordered arrangement and harmonized essentially with the norms of the time, with an effective system of parliamentary representation. The chronological framework is the second half of the nineteenth century and the first eighteen years of the twentieth.

In this period, Hungary became an organic part of Western civilization. Thanks to its successful economic and social modernization, it caught up in every essential sphere with Western Europe. While in the period under discussion, Hungary's statutory law essentially harmonized with the principles of law in Western Europe, the mentality that found manifestation in the unwritten behavioral and ethical norms still bore the traces of a transitional phase. Modernization (parliamentarism, an open public sphere) was intricately entangled in tradition (feudal principles of authority and prestige, the persistence of old social structures, the role of nepotism).

In the introduction Cieger makes plainly evident that he has thoroughly studied the secondary literature on the phenomenon of corruption, though the legal, political, and historical scholarship offers little more than vague definitions that rest on generalizations, so instead he relies on the contemporary uses of the term in order to define the actual subject of his inquiry. Thus he includes in his examination all of the social practices that were characterized by contemporaries as examples of corruption, in other words as abuses of power and the moral depravity of power.

However, even using this as the defining criterion, it is still not possible to circumscribe the subject of Cieger's inquiry clearly. Significant differences may still remain, for instance, between perceptions of practices as corrupt in public opinion and acts that were either criminalized or sanctioned by the law. And indeed it is worth noting that the term corruption was not even used in the law of the Dualist Era (it does not occur a single time in the texts of the laws), even if it was frequently used in public life. The book presents several cases in which



an act was not prohibited by the law, but the resulting scandal was sufficient to prompt the public to condemn the person involved, which in the end led to his political downfall. There were also cases in which this was reversed. An act that was technically illegal was seen by a significant portion of the public as justified or at least tolerated.

From the perspective of the scholarship on corruption, given its complex and transformational nature, the era is of particular interest. At the beginning of the period under discussion, the transition from a political and social structure that was based on feudal privileges to a system based on civil equality and parliamentary representation was taking place at the same time as the transition from a traditional economic order, not based on the principles of the market, to a capitalist market economy and a time of ever greater public scrutiny. These changes brought about the transformation of the political culture and the emergence of new techniques in the exercise of power. In the process of this transformation, from the perspective of corruption (and in general the ethical expectations that were placed on the political order), the professionalization of the public sphere was of particular significance. The figure of the ideal politician before the Hungarian Revolution of 1848—the dedicated politician who was independent and lived for political causes, serving the public good and able to make the necessary personal financial sacrifices in order to play a role in the public sphere—was replaced with the figure of the professional politician of the Compromise Era, who saw politics as a long-term occupation and source of income and served party interests. Concerns arose from the outset that, as a consequence of the transformation of politics into a profession, the management of public affairs would slip into the hands of a narrow group that represented its own private interests instead of public interest.

The increasing use of the term corruption can be understood as a symptom of nostalgia for the so-called “gentleman” politician and skepticism regarding the professionalization of politics. According to public opinion, politics itself had been debased, and this was seen as a consequence of the moral decline of the political class. This public sentiment, however, was inconsistent with the fact that, with the widening of public scrutiny (first and foremost through the proliferation of organs of the media), it was in fact becoming possible to keep the political class under close watch.

Cieger succinctly and convincingly refutes two misguided (and mutually reinforcing) convictions prevalent in Hungarian historiography. According to the first, of the states that had a Western style democracy, Hungary was particularly

“infected” with corruption. Cieger refers to examples of other Western states and persuasively demonstrates that corruption was not peculiar to Hungary. The political institutional system and the legal order were slow to adapt to the social and economic changes in other lands as well, and the “grey zone” that emerged because of this lag was fertile soil for corruption. At the same time, as the comparison also reveals, the Western European parliamentary systems that were regarded as the models to be followed (first and foremost England) were much more consistent and consequential in their attempts to close at least the widest gates to corruption with legal and institutional reforms (for instance, the reform of the electoral system).

According to the other prevalent misconception, corruption was simply systematically encoded in the political order of the Dualist Era, or at least in the elements related to voting. The widespread acceptance of this notion is “thanks” in part to the contemporary literature, two prominent figures of which—Mór Jókai and Kálmán Mikszáth, both of whom are still regarded as major Hungarian authors of the nineteenth century—knew the business of politics at the time from the inside and often wrote about it in their works. In his explanation of Hungary’s deviations from the West, István Bibó,<sup>1</sup> the greatest political thinker of the twentieth century (or at least the one who had the greatest influence), ascribed key importance to this phenomenon. According to Bibó, the system that was brought into being with the Austro–Hungarian Compromise of 1867 was founded on lies and self-delusions that had been swept under the rug. Its legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens was weak, thus in a representative system this veneer of legitimacy could only be maintained through corruption, which led eventually to the complete ruin of the political culture, understood in the broadest possible sense.

Cieger analyses the results of elections and comes to the conclusion that it was not necessary to corrupt voters in order to maintain the legal and state

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1 István Bibó, “Eltorzult magyar alkat, zsákutcás magyar történelem” [Deformed Hungarian Character, Dead-end Hungarian History], in *idem, Válogatott tanulmányok* [Selected Essays], ed. Tibor Huszár, vol. 2, 569–619 (Budapest: Magvető, 1986). István Bibó (1911–1979) was a political thinker and indeed a politician. In his essays, most of which were written in the brief period of democratic rule in Hungary between 1945 and 1949, he addressed questions fundamental to the past, present and future of Hungarian statehood, the relationships between Hungary and the other peoples of Central Europe, and the potentials of the region for growth and development. He was a minister of state in the revolutionary government in 1956, and after the suppression of the revolution he was given a long sentence for his role in the events. His moral integrity and acumen as a scholar made Bibó the exemplary figure of the intellectual opposition in the late Kádár era and a symbol of democratic political culture.

system that had come into being with the Compromise (except perhaps in the first decade of the existence of the Dual Monarchy). The official data concerning the enforcement of electoral law does not support the hypothesis according to which corruption was widespread or pervasive.

According to Cieger, the so-called '67-ers, who created the Compromise and, with the exception of a short period of five years, governed until the collapse of the Monarchy, were less and less motivated, in their attempts to corrupt voters (which remained difficult to prove), by the fear of the rise to power of the so-called '48-ers opposition. The costs were relatively small, given the small number of people who could vote. Rather, they justified abuses of power that marred political life as necessary efforts in order to prevent the non-Hungarian nationalities, which together represented more than 50 percent of the population, from gaining ground in the political sphere. As of the turn of the century, this justification was buttressed with the fear of an organized working class that was demanding political representation. References to the maintenance of a unified Hungarian state at any cost, the "holy cause," eroded ethical norms in politics. However, the fact that the Hungarian political elite managed to maintain its monopoly on power throughout the period was not due so much to corruption as it was to the fact that they blocked attempts to extend suffrage.<sup>2</sup>

Cieger indicates two significant failings of the legal system at the time that allowed for and even encouraged the spread of corruption. The law barely dealt with the question of regulating party finances, in other words with the need to make party financing transparent. In an era of professional, party-based politics, regulations that were based on the anachronistic ideal of the "gentleman" politician remained in force. The discord between legal norms and actual political practice was therefore addressed in large part with illegal tools.

Cieger identified the other major failing as the lack or rather belated nature of regulations regarding conflicts of interest that arose as a consequence of participation in public life and private economic ventures, as well as the failure to adhere to these regulations when they existed. While the role of the state in the redistribution of wealth in the Dualist Era was small in comparison with the welfare systems of the twentieth century, in comparison with the early (feudal)

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2 Only adult males with a minimum level of property, income, and education (as set by law) could vote. People who enjoyed the right to vote represented 6 percent of the total population and 25 percent of the adult male population. This was not a shockingly low proportion in Europe at the time of the 1874 electoral law.

period it had grown abruptly. The state played a significant role in the process of modernization, which had begun late in comparison with the states of Western Europe. This role was palpable first and foremost in the development of infrastructure. The role of the state in the distribution of resources in the decades following the Compromise was most clearly visible in the construction of the railway network. Decisions regarding tenders that enjoyed state support, the granting of licenses, guarantees of profits, and investments of public funds were almost always subjects of scandal.

With the creation and expansion of the modern sectors of the economy and the ever more pronounced tendency of the state to play increasingly influential roles in the economy,<sup>3</sup> the possibilities for corruption proliferated. The relationship between institutions of finance and institutions of politics was particularly intensive. The problematic intertwining of the market economy and the state found clearest manifestation in the presence of people in influential positions in both spheres. Politicians (and not only representatives of the governing party), public servants who worked at the highest levels of state administration, were members of the advisory boards and supervisory boards of large banks and industrial and transportation share companies that were doing business with the state.

Cieger presents a few case studies (the examples of Prime Ministers Count Gyula Andrásy and Menyhért Lónyay) illustrating the extent to which the two major, simultaneous transitions, namely the emergence of a parliamentary civil state founded on the rule of law and a profit and growth oriented capitalist market economy, made the collective and personal norms of public life uncertain. The effort to represent the ideal of the gentleman politician is hard to reconcile with the role of the citizen seeking to secure his fortune, even if one does not have personal moral failings.

Cieger devotes a considerable share of his book to analyses of scandals. He examines the “people targeted,” the circles of those who sparked scandals, the growing role of the free press, the question of timing, and the eventual consequences. One of his most important conclusions was that the denunciations were rarely motivated by the desire to redress some offence to the legal order.

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3 The state either directly financed the major investments in infrastructure (the regulation of rivers, the construction of roads, railways, bridges, and harbors) or supported private ventures with guarantees of profits. The state also provided loans in cases of important goals. As of the 1880s, the state also provided support for the development of industry and some branches of agriculture in the form of long-term tax concessions, tax exemptions, and, after the turn of the century, subventions.

The outbreak of a scandal served some pressing political goal. If elections were imminent, then the aim was often to weaken the opposition, undermine its position in government, and deepen a government crisis. Cieger demonstrates this in part by examining the question of timing. People sometimes waited for years before revealing evidence of some alleged misdoing to the public. Furthermore, having achieved their political goal (for instance having succeeded in removing someone from his position), the people who had made some damning revelation to the public did not care whether the accused actually faced any legal consequences or not.

Cieger also devotes considerable attention to the relationships between the growth in the public forums in which questions of politics were discussed (which refers first and foremost to the growth in the number of dailies and the growth of their readerships), accusations of corruption, and the actual outbreak of scandals. The period proved transitional in this regard as well. In the course of a long process of learning, punctuated by many blunders, figures in public life learned the rules of the modern system of politics, which rested not on prestige but rather on winning public support. After the Compromise, the generation that thought of itself as heir to the liberal gentlemen politicians of the Reform Era were hesitant to accept that they could not simply heed their own convictions, but also, as figures in public life, had to pay attention to their image in the public eye.

Figures in public life who used the accusation of corruption as a weapon seem to have been more shrewd. They recognized that in the era of a new kind of public sphere assessments of character and virtue played important roles in deciding political fates. By shaking the public's confidence in the moral credibility of a politician, they could deprive his political views of credibility as well. In the era of mass media, prestige and good reputation were political capital that scandals prompted by allegations of corruption could easily destroy. Let there be no misunderstanding, Cieger is not saying that the cases under examination were mere political contrivances, but the reader does have the impression that similar procedures and proceedings were part of widespread political practice, and indeed the political elite was well aware of this. Thus the only aspects that really need explanation in a given case are why steps were taken against the given figure of public life *in particular* and why the accuser came forward at the particular time he did.

The relevance of this book extends far beyond political life in Hungary in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth,

even if the individual case studies all involve issues from Hungarian political history in the Dual Era. Historians dealing with the history of European law, the social history of politics, and the history of mentalities and the public sphere will find it revealing and useful, as will political and social scientists and even social psychologists dealing with the history of corruption. It would be highly worth having this focused yet widely relevant, highly readable monograph published in good English translation.

*Translated by Thomas Cooper*

Reviewed by Zoltán Fónagy

The Inauguration of Organized Political Warfare – Cold War Organizations Sponsored by the National Committee for a Free Europe / Free Europe Committee. Edited by Katalin Kádár Lynn. New York: Helena History Press, 2013. 604 pp.

There are eleven studies written by nine authors in this excellent book.<sup>1</sup> The studies of two of the authors, Katalin Kádár Lynn, the editor of the volume, and Anna Mazurkiewicz are of key importance in the volume. The book is an immense contribution to the history of émigrés and at the same time to the knowledge of the activities of the Free Europe Committee. Though the survey is far from complete—all authors have raised many issues for further research—the book is an important step in furthering our knowledge about the true nature of American policy toward Eastern Europe during the Cold War.

The volume begins with Katalin Kádár Lynn's keynote introduction: "At war while at peace: United States Cold War Policy and the National Committee for a Free Europe, Inc." (pp.7–70). It has long been known that Eastern European communist regimes deliberately drove their political opponents away from their respective countries. This book now basically tells us the story, or tells us *some* very powerful stories, of these exiles. It is not a general or overall history, but rather a very substantial overview of Eastern European émigrés' relationship with the Free Europe Committee (FEC) as an overt U.S. government tool. We are offered insights into different Eastern European exile communities (mainly Hungarians and Poles, but also Czechs, Slovaks, Bulgarians and Romanians), specifically their political links and personal

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1 The authors and their paper in the book: Veronika Durin-Hornyik: "The Free Europe University in Exile, Inc. and the Collège de l'Europe libre (1951–1958)"; Tibor Frank: "Imre Kovács and Cold War Émigré Politics in the United States"; Katalin Kádár Lynn: "At War While at Peace: The History of the National Committee for a Free Europe"; Katalin Kádár Lynn: "History of the Hungarian National Council 1946–1971"; Maria Kokoncheva: "George Dimitrov and the Bulgarian National Council"; Jonathan H. L'Hommedieu: "The Baltic Freedom Committees: Policies and Politics of an Exile Community"; Anna Mazurkiewicz: "The Assembly of Captive European Nations and the Free Europe Committee in the face of Nikita Khrushchev's US Visits in 1959 & 1960"; Anna Mazurkiewicz: "The Schism within the Polish Delegation to the Assembly of Captive European Nations (1954–1972)"; Marius Petraru: "The Romanian Government In Exile in the United States: 1947–1975"; Francis Raska: "History of the Council of Free Czechoslovakia"; Toby Charles Rider: "The Cold War Activities of the Hungarian National Sports Federation".

connections to the FEC. It is a joy to read these sophisticated analyses, which are based on excellent original research.

It is clear from the very beginning that the most fundamental question here is what exactly was the Eastern European exile's influence on the foreign policy of the United States? No doubt, the U.S. government at the beginning saw the émigré groups as a promising tool with which to undermine Soviet power in Eastern Europe. Therefore "bountiful funding, office space, salaries, and support systems" (p.34) were given to them. To be one of the chosen exiles in those times meant a safe haven for some selected groups of people, along with a significant dose of adventure and opportunities for creativity for those who were keen on such things. So the beginning at the FEC and the respective national Committees was promising, but "it was not until after their [national groups'] leadership arrived in the U.S. and U.S. Cold War policy was newly minted that these émigré groups became influential factors in their respective communities in the U.S. and abroad" (p.33). At the same time, however, let us wipe off any idealism clouding the issue, for these groups were under a tight control of the American policy, e.g. with representatives of the CIA and the Department of Defense present at the meetings of the National Committee for a Free Europe (NCFE) board meetings (p.37).

The story of these émigré groups is almost totally unknown in their former homes, in Eastern Europe today. This book turns this tragedy to an advantage, and this is what makes this scientific attempt so respectable and so unique.

Francis D. Raška tells us the "History of the Council of Free Czechoslovakia" (pp.71–120). One of his most important messages is perhaps that there were not only several Czech-Slovak organizations throughout the United States, Canada, Australia etc., but there were also some (rather brave) attempts to bring all exile organizations under the umbrella of the Council of Free Czechoslovakia. These attempts failed, for it was not easy to unite their political goals, nor was it possible to harmonize the tempo of collaborative actions. There were understandably disagreements in perceptions regarding the end of the exile period, as F.D. Raška tellingly remarks, quoting Rudolf Kopecký: "The majority of our politicians think it is a sprint, whereas I declare that it is a marathon" (p.74). This all can be put down to the fact that the émigré community was a complex one, and their members' "reactions to the Council's establishment were mixed" (p.75). This is a phenomenon that we have known from the history of the National Desks at the Radio Free Europe.



Toby C. Rider's paper entitled "Cold War activities of the Hungarian National Sports Federation" (pp.512–46) is a unique tale of the Hungarian National Sports Federation (HNSF), with two remarkable people in the forefront, Count Anthony Szapáry and Dr. George Telegdy. As leaders of the HNSF, they took the risk of helping 38 athletes (34 from Hungary and 4 from Romania) defect to the U.S. during the "Operation Griffin". T.C. Rider also shares many interesting details with us, such as Szapáry's and Telegdy's 1952 stubborn attempt to convince the International Olympic Committee to let sportsmen without citizenship compete under the name of the Union of Free Eastern European Sportsmen, or the Freedom Tour of the defected Hungarian sportsmen (a propaganda action similar to the tour of the Radio Free Europe [RFE] Freedom Bell) and many others.

Each of the authors confirms that the history of Eastern European émigrés cannot be addressed without researching propaganda. The link between the exile Councils and the RFE is more than apparent in Ferdinand Peroutka's case, where it is clear that "his position at the RFE gave him extraordinary powers on the [Czechoslovak] Council" (p.79). Not to mention such fascinating hidden American propaganda tools, like *Time's* involvement in clandestine operations, through its head Henry Luce, and certainly through *Sports Illustrated*, created by Time Inc. in 1954.

Based on extensive original research, the essays in this book are rich with suggestions of possible new areas of research. I personally wish we had a bit more in the book on the Bat'a Company's contribution to the support provided for the exiles, or Betka Papánek's and Cecilia Sárocky's contribution to the post-Helsinki Madrid conference, or the Palach Press, which was "founded in 1974 by Jan Kavan to provide prompt and accurate information on developments" in Husák-era Czechoslovakia. These topics may all well be worthy of further research, as are Albania and Yugoslavia, the two countries *outside* of the five Eastern European so-called target countries at the RFE, whose links to the FEC could widen our knowledge on Eastern European Cold War history.

Anna Mazurkiewicz has two studies in the book. The first is on the schisms within the Polish delegation to the Assembly of Captive European Nations (ACEN). The second is on the relationship between the ACEN and the Free Europe Committee in the context of U.S. Foreign Policy in the early phase of the Cold War (1950–1960). Her latter study is a *key study* of the book. It is important first of all because she has chosen Nikita Khrushchev's visits to the U.S. (in September 1959 and September 1960) as a subject of a deep analysis,

an interesting issue on its own. Mazurkiewicz describes in detail how the ACEN campaigned against Khrushchev during his visits, how it ran a series of poster campaigns, including a campaign asking people to wear black armbands in every city that Khrushchev visited. By the way, it is also an interesting point that during Khrushchev's visit to France (in March 1960) Eastern European exiles living in France were forcefully held on the island of Corsica to avoid troubles (p.421).

The ACEN was established in 1954, and it “functioned as a quasi-Eastern European parliament, or a lobby of exiled politicians” (p.397). What makes Mazurkiewicz's study extremely interesting is that she has selected “a period during which the exiles began to *openly disapprove* of American foreign policy”. (p.398) Here the author makes a point which is important to stress every time when speaking or writing on this issue *for Eastern Europeans*, i.e. that there was indeed “a widening gulf between the American policymakers and the exiles” regarding U.S. foreign policy in general, and policy toward the Soviet Union in particular (p.400). Eastern European exiles like Ferenc Nagy, Béla Varga, Imre Kovács, Stefan Korbonski, Joseph Czapski, Ján Papánek, Petr Zenkl, Mojmír Povolný, George M. Dimitrov, and many others indeed had an impact on American foreign policy, and no doubt the “ACEN has always to some extent functioned as lobby for Eastern European interest on the U.S. political scene” (p.425). But it has to be clearly stated, and Mazurkiewicz demonstrates this clearly and with great empathy, that gradually a divergence arose between the exiles and the core interests of the U.S. She reveals a great deal regarding this steady process, which needs to be considered carefully by historians when dealing with the *dynamics of the early cold war*. The U.S. government first reduced the political influence of the exiles, then it reduced their budget, and finally it ended their direct funding in 1972. This U-turn in American foreign policy was expressed in a key speech made by Dean Rusk on February 25, 1964 when he tried to explain, “why we treat communist countries differently”. In simple and maybe rude words, this means that despite all their genuine or even heroic efforts, active Eastern European political exiles were not the center of the American political solar system.

Some general conclusions can be drawn from the volume. The most importance of these, at least in my view, involves the dynamics of the early Cold War. While the non-professional historical discourse in many Eastern European countries is still built around the question ‘Why did no help come from the West?’, a new chronology of the Cold War is being written in the international historiography. After the Hungarian Revolution, a serious shift can be seen in

the Eisenhower administration's foreign policy towards an increasingly peaceful co-existence. If this is true, then détente started much earlier. This contradicts traditional Cold War chronology, and the notion has gained an important role in Csaba Békés' recent works.<sup>2</sup> And this is not just a theoretical question. It is a fact that had very practical consequences in the context of the topics covered in the book under discussion here, i.e. the émigré groups indeed fell victim to the international thaw. As Katalin Kádár Lynn puts it, "the real casualties were the émigré groups whose social, educational and cultural services all fell victim to the policy change" (p.59).

This book adds nuance to our understanding of the circumstances under which Eastern European exiles played a part in the U.S. Cold War propaganda. None of the authors in the book is so naïve as to deny the fact that is expressed in a document written by Willis D. Crittenger as FEC president. Crittenger states straightforwardly that "national committees are propaganda agencies of FEC" (p.408). Historians who have dealt with Cold War diplomacy know that many Cold War propaganda tools that proved to be effective, such as Radio Free Europe, for instance, were often looked down on and even disliked by professional policy makers. Francis D. Raška rightly states that "professional diplomats showed little sympathy for Czechoslovak exiles and no real support, except for propaganda purposes" (p.114). Seen with a healthy dose of cynical realism, the duty of the exiles on American payrolls was purely to give hope, as Toby Rider states.

Realism leads to more accurate understanding. But the authors are shrewd enough to be cautious when addressing the question: was it worth it for the exiles to cooperate with the institutions of Western propaganda. Was it worth it in spite of the fact that the U.S. administration was, more often than not, indifferent to the actual fates of the exiles? Was it worth it when at home their activities were strenuously decried? Was it worth it when, at the end of the day, the U.S. did not hesitate to sacrifice Eastern European émigrés on the altar of good relations with the Soviet Union, when the moment came?

Most of the authors emphatically insist that it was, for both the National Councils and Radio Free Europe were the most effective anti-Communist activities of the exiles. Mazurkievich's offers a heartwarming acknowledgement

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2 See e.g. Csaba Békés's "Magyarország, a szovjet blokk és a nemzetközi politika az enyhülés időszakában 1953–1991" [Hungary, the Soviet Block and the International Politics in the Period of Remission, 1953–1991], a thesis lecture he held at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on September 16, 2014. The manuscript is accessible at (accessed November 25, 2014) [http://real-d.mtak.hu/653/7/dc\\_499\\_12\\_doktori\\_mu.pdf](http://real-d.mtak.hu/653/7/dc_499_12_doktori_mu.pdf).

to the devotion and sacrifice of all of the people involved in this historical adventure: “For them [exiles], it was a matter of being able to act on behalf of their captive nations, and it was this goal that forged their dedication and commitment for the life of the organization” (p.428). This dedication and commitment has now gained them a place in history, a place to which this engaging compilation of essays attests.

Barnabás Vajda

Kisebbség és többség között. A magyar és a zsidó/izraeli etnikai és kulturális tapasztalatok az elmúlt századokban [Between Minority and Majority. Hungarian and Jewish/Israeli Ethnical and Cultural Experiences in the Last Centuries]. Edited by Pál Hatos and Attila Novák. Budapest: L'Harmattan–Balassi Intézet, 2014. 329 pp.

Hungarian Jews, historically speaking, represent a unique population in Central and Eastern European Jewry. There are many reasons for this. Some of these reasons have to do with the major traits that are attributed to the Jewry, some with their deeds, some with the political environment with which they had to cope or in which they actively took part, and some with the fate they suffered. When talking about Hungarian Jewry, one usually means a group of people residing in the territory of the Hungarian Kingdom at the time of the Hungarian nation-building project—or their descendants all around the world. This participation in the Magyarization project and Judaism are the basic attributes that seem to define the group. Research on Hungarian Jewry, as a rule, has mostly addressed this group of people (treating earlier Jewish settlements mainly as an introduction to the real story) or those who were seen as their successors in the post-assimilation era. The definition, however, is far from unambiguous.

Nineteenth-century discourses, representatives of the rising political anti-Semitism excluded, maintained for the most part the definition of Hungarian Jews as a group of Magyars who belong to a specific denomination. This appeared to be part of the “assimilation for emancipation paradigm,” or the assimilation pact as some would call it. Although operational for those parts of the Jewry who were willing to mingle with the rest of society, this discourse disregarded the non-assimilationist strata of contemporary Jewry. After research on Jews began in earnest in the 1980s (some of the pioneers of this research are among the contributors to the book under review here) and continued to flourish in the 1990s, one of the major shifts in paradigm was a turn towards those whose story was not told in the assimilationist, or Neolog—if using the Hungarian term to describe the Enlightenment-leaning wing of local Jewry—narrative. However, with the factual advancement of assimilation, which included a growing number of intermarriages and was also accompanied by a certain degree of secularization of the public sphere, the definition of Jewry as a religious group had become less and less satisfactory. This development was of course strongly driven by anti-Semitism, which was

occupied with questions concerning Jewish ethnicity and general otherness from the beginning and became increasingly racial until its full-fledged version ruled the scene in the interwar period. Hence the difficulty of talking about Jewish ethnicity in a neutral way. The pressure towards denying one's Jewish origins after World War II complicated things further. Research has thus defined post-assimilation Jewishness as a religion or a community connected by common origins, habits or cultural traits, but also in a looser sense, defining as Jews those who identify themselves, or are identified by others, with Jewishness.

Hungarian Jews have been described as showing traits of Western and Eastern Jewry, being urbanized but partly Orthodox, following patterns of political behavior typical to Western Jewry, but relatively numerous. The outstanding Jewish contribution to Hungarian culture, economy and modernization in general has been widely noticed. The emancipation of Hungarian Jews and the remarkable support it had from the Hungarian political elite at the beginning, and partly in later times, constitute the “most Eastern” example of Western-type emancipation projects. The Hungarian Holocaust, terrible in scope, almost entirely destroyed the Jewish communities outside of Budapest, while letting many to survive in the capital. The twentieth century also generated a remarkable diaspora of Jews with Hungarian origins in Western Europe, overseas, and in Israel.

Research on Jews flourished in particular after the transition—not forgetting the pioneering works and researchers who began to deal with the role and position of Jews in Hungarian modernization already in the 1970s and 1980s. The main thematic areas were the Holocaust, schooling and social inequalities, anti-Semitism, demography, economic history and culture. But while certain outstanding researchers were pioneers who set new goals for subsequent generations in terms of thematic foci, research has become even more diversified over the last two decades. We have also seen the establishment of several research centers dedicated to Jewish studies and Holocaust studies in the meantime. Of the most important achievements, I would point out the series of research findings published by Viktor Karády in many volumes and two enormous undertakings: Géza Komoróczy's monograph of the history of Jews in Hungary and György Kövér's book concerning the social environment

of the infamous blood libel case of Tiszaeszlár.<sup>1</sup> The volume under review is to be seen against this disciplinary background.

The book in hand is the outcome of a joint Hungarian–Israeli conference held in Budapest in 2011. The reader is not given especially extensive information either on the background of the conference or the criteria used in the selection processes. The lack of such data leaves the reviewer guessing about background information. A list of contributors at least with some biographical notes would perhaps have helped give the reader an impression of the whole. This would have been all the more important, since the articles differ considerably in length and style, some being previously published while some seem to be identical with the paper presented orally at the conference. Some clarification would have been helpful. Especially as—according to the title page—the publication is blessed with the luxury of a copy editor, in addition to the two scholars who are the editors—and apparently conference organizers. Nonetheless, the reader cannot escape the feeling that some proofreading would have worked miracles for this publication, and some effort towards uniformity of style would have made the book more professional-looking. Fortunately, for those who do not read Hungarian, an English version of the book was published in Tel-Aviv entitled *Between minority and majority. Hungarian and Jewish/Israeli ethnical and cultural experiences in recent centuries*, a strict translation of the Hungarian original.<sup>2</sup> Very rare and fortunate that conference proceedings see daylight in two languages, especially in two parallel volumes. This fact seems to indicate that the conference bears some special importance.

If it is of scholarly value, the editors fail to communicate this to the readership. Based on the description of the project provided by the editors, the occasion was more closely connected to the field of history politics or diplomacy than to pure scholarship. The conference was organized by the Balassi Institute, which characterizes itself on its website as the “top Hungarian governmental organization of cultural diplomacy.” Tibor Navracsics, deputy Prime Minister at the time, appears to have been the main patron of the conference, József Pálinkás, then president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, being the patron. Ms. Aliza bin Noun, Israel’s ambassador to Hungary at the time, opened

1 Géza Komoróczy, *A zsidók története Magyarországon* [The History of Jews in Hungary], vol. 1–2 (Budapest: Kalligram, 2012); György Kövér, *A tiszaeszlári dráma. Társadalomtörténeti látószögek* [The Tiszaeszlár Drama. Social History Aspects] (Budapest: Osiris, 2011). See Anikó Prebuk’s review about the latter in *Hungarian Historical Review* 1, no. 1–2 (2012): 253–62, accessed November 20, 2014, [http://www.hunghist.org/images/volumes/Volume\\_1\\_Issue\\_1-2/Bookreviews5.pdf](http://www.hunghist.org/images/volumes/Volume_1_Issue_1-2/Bookreviews5.pdf).

2 Pál Hatos and Attila Novák, eds., *Between Minority and Majority. Hungarian and Jewish/Israeli Ethnical and Cultural Experiences in Recent Centuries* (Budapest: Balassi Intézet, 2013).

the conference. If this is a piece of public history, which serves essentially political, ideological, and diplomatic purposes, as the list of supporters suggests, there is perhaps no need for further elaboration on the scholarly value of the book or the conference. In this case, the question as to whether this compilation of articles serves purposes of public history or political representation might well be more relevant. Seeing, however, that the actual articles, although differing in quality, style, subject and scope, are without exception works of scholarship leads us to the examination of the scholarly value of the publication.

As said, there is not much to examine. Instead of an introductory chapter, one finds a two-and-a half page “Preface,” most of which consists of an enumeration of the supporters of the conference, the articles’ topics, and the names of their authors. Again, a bit more elaboration on the background and purpose of the conference would have been welcome, for instance some insight into the genesis of the chapters and the backgrounds of the participants. The editors argue that the conference had a particular purpose and brought new approaches to the topics at hand, but this is hardly convincing. “The topic of the symposium differs to some extent from the approach that usually characterizes conferences meant for the Hungarian speaking academic public on Jewish history,” according to their formulation (p.7.). The allegedly different approach lies in the fact that (again, allegedly) “this book does not discuss Hungarian and Jewish history (including the history of Hungarian Jews) merely as a passion narrative, but how these communities are constructed, how narratives of individual and collective identities influence each other [...] these stories receive their meaning in a comparative manner” (p.7). While this is a very legitimate approach, it is difficult to see the novelty of it. Discussions concerning Jews’ position and identity between majority and minority status is a common topic in the realm of Jewish studies, and the more established participants in the conference have all been engaged in such research earlier. The reference to Hungarian and Jewish history as “passion narratives” is rather perplexing also. The manifest-like contention by the editors, according to which “the authors and the editors realize the uniquely tragic significance of the Hungarian Holocaust and deprivation of rights that lead to it” (p.8) does not make things any clearer, despite the apparent intention. In which sense are the editors entitled to speak on behalf of the participants on issues that are more ethical than scholarly? Why is it even necessary? It might not be self-evident, however, to understand the similarities between the Holocaust and the peace treaties following World War I in terms of scholarship. If the intention was to argue that discussion on the fate of Jews and on the loss of



territories according to the Trianon Treaty are similar, this would require explicit exposition of the this thesis. The editors apparently found the issue provocative and settled instead for a defensive move.

More problematic is the fact that the papers included in the volume do not really reflect on the problems described in those few sentences. Although the “Preface” lays emphasis on Jewish—Hungarian identity and its representation in a comparative manner, in the first sentence it describes the conference as one organized to tackle the problem of diasporas. However, none of the papers seem to intend on answering any of those questions except for the one by Viktor Karády, who starts his article with the following sentence: “It is highly problematic to answer directly the question posed by the Balassi Institute: where can we find possible parallelisms in the development of Hungarian and Jewish diasporas” (p.107). He spends several pages of his paper explaining why the topic outlined seems irrelevant. It is somewhat unusual, but one does not find a contradictory argument in any part of the book. Also, if the aim was to compare diasporas, the volume is rather one-sided. The Israeli diaspora is discussed in only one comprehensive article (Raphael Vago), while the non-Jewish Hungarian diaspora is only discussed in an article concerning Hungarian organizations in the United States (Attila Z. Papp). Guy Miron writes about the conceptual changes in the self-understanding of European Jewry under Nazi pressure, comparing German and Hungarian Jews in particular. Apart from that, the problematic of diasporas is hardly present in other articles.

However, if the reader does not concern themselves with the aim of the project, the product seems to be the result of a good if quite “regular” Jewish studies conference, with contributions by some of the most established scholars in the field. Regarding topics, the papers form various clusters. There are several articles on the problems of Hungarian Jewish identity. The one most directly targeting identity is András Kovács’ article about changing identity formation strategies, entitled “Stigma and Renaissance” (pp.129–36). He describes the major findings of intergenerational research among Hungarian Jews with those two words. Stigma refers to the attitudes of those who survived the Holocaust and their children, who tried to distance themselves from Jewishness, while renaissance describes groups which, after the fall of Communism, actively seek a Jewish identity. Judit Frigyes, known for her expertise in Jewish music, contributed a fascinating article entitled “Is there such a thing as Hungarian-Jewish music?” (pp.55–88). The question might seem rather provocative, and she gives an elaborate answer. The source base of the article is the outcome of fieldwork carried out during the

1970s among traditional Jews in Hungary. Her findings regarding the interaction between liturgical music and the music of the surrounding non-Jewish population are intriguing, and she includes Jewish secular music in her analysis.

Regarding questions of identity, Viktória Bányai comes up with an especially well thought-out, sophisticated analysis of the role of language in Jewish identity projects during the long nineteenth century. While the linguistic assimilation of Hungarian Jews has been a frequent topic in scholarship since the nineteenth century, there has been less discussion of the role of Hebrew in the modernization projects. The article also gives an assessment of the changes in the factual knowledge of Hebrew among different Jewish groups. Another expert of Jewish studies, Tamás Turán, contributes with a lengthy and generously documented (while some of the papers lack references altogether, he attaches a bibliography that is several pages long) article that offers a highly interesting Jewish–Hungarian comparison. The reader might even think it contains two texts. The analysis of Hungarian literary references to similarities between Jewish and Hungarian history is connected to the semantics of antique Jewish texts concerning collective identities by the concept of “shared destiny.” It would be interesting to know what the original language of Turán’s article was, but the only information given is that it was translated into Hungarian. Viktor Karády, an indisputable expert on Jewish schooling and problems involving the inequalities between denominational groups, has contributed an article that widens the geographical scope of analysis substantially. Following an extremely interesting discussion of the nature of diaspora in Jewish history, he compares data on schooling from all over East Central Europe to show how investment in education was a collective strategy of Jews in the region.

Two parallel papers reflect on the position and possible strategies of Jews between the dominant ethnicities of the respective successor states of the Habsburg Monarchy and the Hungarian speaking minority. Gusztáv Tamás Filep focuses on Jewish involvement in the public life of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, especially from the perspective of the possibilities of representation of minority interests. Attila Gidó analyzes the options of Transylvanian Jewry in the midst of Romanian, Hungarian and German anti-Semitism. His article summarizes the factors which shaped the social reality surrounding Jews and examines in particular a debate on possible Jewish “roads” from the 1920s. Levente Salat’s article seemingly belongs to this thematic group, as it concerns the Hungarian minority in Romania. Salat contributes with an analysis of the

notion of political community and its repercussions for the Hungarians in Romania. His article is among the lengthiest and most elaborated chapters of the book, appearing as a republication or revised version of three different articles.

Several papers are connected to the Holocaust, anti-Jewish legislation and the fate of Hungarian Jewry after the rise of Nazism. Balázs Ablonczy's essay, which is the leading chapter of the volume, attempts to establish a typology of letters sent to prime minister Teleki at the time of the introduction of the second anti-Jewish law (1939). Attila Novák, one of the editors, tells the story of the negotiations between the Jewish Agency and the Hungarian government. Szabolcs Szita uncovers some details about returning survivors from the Mauthausen camp.

It is difficult to determine, on the basis of the volume described above, whether the conference achieved its alleged goals. As far as I can tell, the published papers do not represent approaches that were not present in the study of Hungarian Jewry earlier. That Jews and non-Jews influenced each others' lives and adopted various strategies of identity formation in different moments of history in differing environments may be a thesis worth presenting to the larger public, but it is hardly any news for students and scholars of Central European history. However, thanks to the contributors, the volume makes interesting reading and sheds light on important aspects of the many collective identity projects in which Hungarian Jews have been involved over the course of the last two centuries.

Árpád Welker