Abstracts

Bödők, Gergely
Red terror in Hungary in 1919

The Hungarian Soviet Republic, established on March 21, 1919, was the first attempt at a radical left-wing political organization in modern Hungarian history. Since support for the new system was limited, the political leadership – in addition to the Red Guard, which played a primary role in law enforcement – set up various armed organizations in March. The role of the so-called 'Lenin boys' and other terrorist groups was to deter the population from organising and participating in movements against the regime, but at the same time, alongside the Red Guard and, at times, the Red Army, they also acted against sporadically unfolding counter-revolutionary movements across the country. In addition to measures against the former elite, several former opinion leaders, the members of the middle and upper classes, aristocrats, and former political leaders were arrested, taken hostage, and were sometimes detained for weeks or months. The violent actions carried out by the terrorist troops were commonly described as 'red terror.' They began to collect the number of its victims as early as 1920. The royal crown prosecutor, Albert Váry's registry listed nearly six hundred people. However, this number can be refined. In addition to the list of victims, with a sample of several hundred people, we could learn who the feared 'Lenin boys' were.

Csunderlik, Péter
The explanations of the fall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic in pamphlets and memoirs during the early Horthy Era

Almost immediately after the fall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic on August 1, 1919, a great number of pamphlets and memoirs interpreting the recent events were published, the examination of which can be particularly interesting to the scholars of the discourse on the Hungarian Soviet Republic during the Horthy Era. Most of these publications were once popular – but nowadays forgotten – anti-Communist works, which were banned in 1945 as '*fascist, anti-Soviet, and antidemocratic publications.*' Among them were short propaganda booklets and more than two-hundred-page accounts of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Although they were written for different purposes, they all attempted to narrate and interpret the unprecedented experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat before the 'official' narrative of the history of the commune became established.

The article describes how the various authors in different positions – representing disparate ideologies – explained the fall of the dictatorship of the proletariat in various ways, with diverse motivations. By comparing the interpretations of the fall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, we can get an insight into the struggle that began after 1919 in the Horthy Era for the possession of the narrative of the past.

The discourse analysis divides these stories into different groups based on their interpretations of the fall of the Commune, which are the following: 1) Communism is incompatible with the divine, natural, and/or economic order, 2) Communist Hungary was unviable in a hostile (capitalist, Entente) environment, 3) Communism is incompatible with the Hungarian national character, 4) and the contradiction between Budapest, the 'sinful' cosmopolitan capital and the unspoiled *'völkisch'* countryside as a decisive factor. Finally, the last group (5) contains publications that claimed that the dictatorship of the proletariat had been overthrown by the counter-revolution, which required a 'genius' who organized the 'national forces.' But the person of this counter-revolutionary 'genius' in the narratives depends on whether the authors wanted to build the cult of Gömbös, Friedrich, or Horthy.

Following a comparative analysis of the pamphlets and memoirs, the article concludes that these post-1919, anti-Soviet works were not designed to bring their reader closer to the understanding of the 'real' historical causes of the proclamation and fall of the dictatorship of the proletariat, rather they aimed to use its 'history' as a tool in the political struggles, tailored to current political needs, namely the discrediting of political opponents and supporting the needs of their political camp. In this way, from these anti-Soviet pamphlets and memoirs, we can learn more about the commemorative communities of the Horthy Era – their relations and rivalries–, than about the Hungarian Soviet Republic itself.

Romsics, Gergely
Foreign policy thought in the Hungarian Soviet Republic

This paper offers an overview and interpretation of the streams of foreign policy thinking during the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919. It focuses on governmental and bureaucratic actors, reconstructing their cognitive frames and the dynamics of decision-making to explain the outcomes of foreign policy. Additionally, it explores how considerations in foreign policy appeared in the press and how propaganda constructed an image of the international system and its processes in 1919. The analysis rests on an overarching theoretical and a complementary empirical argument. Firstly, the paper proposes to interpret the foreign policy thinking of the day through the notion of revolutionism as constructed by the English School of International Relations, which permits a coherent presentation of the multiple factors pushing official policy towards conceptualizing international politics as inherently conflictual and the Hungarian Soviet Republic as embroiled in a necessary conflict with the bourgeois great powers. Secondly, it also registers the gradual emergence of an alternative, less conflictual approach to foreign policy during the period, represented by the former Social Democratic cadre and intellectuals. Their opposition – latent, later explicit – represents an alternative path of foreign policy

thinking during the revolutionary period. Yet, as the paper demonstrates, by the time this alternative was articulated with sufficient clarity and commitment to offer a challenge to foreign policy hard-liners, the Hungarian Soviet Republic was already on the brink of collapse, and the Social Democrats' foreign policy preferences were never transposed into practice.

Vörös, Boldizsár
Horticultural gardens instead of racetracks, Marx instead of Árpád: the cityscape of Budapest during the Soviet Republic of Hungary

During the dictatorship, the opinion leaders of the Soviet Republic of Hungary made changes in the cityscape of Budapest that – as the capital of Hungary – bore special significance. These transformations were meant to be either permanent (turning racetracks into horticultural gardens, removing sculptures) or temporary (posters, covering or erecting sculptures). The radicalism of these methods was at the same time suitable for representing the radicalism of the leaders of the Soviet Republic in pursuing to create a new world. This was also accentuated by the fact that the new propaganda works often replaced something with an expressly different ideological message. The acts of removing and covering the statues of those historical figures (erected before the dictatorship) who were judged negatively by the opinion leaders of the Soviet Republic of Hungary, and erecting the temporary statues of those who were considered as outstanding, highlight that along with the symbolic occupation of the cityscape, they strove to symbolically seize time as well – by creating a new system of tradition and a historical narrative supporting the Soviet Republic. And even if the political leaders had no sufficient time to implement their concepts, their actions are representative of the main tendencies. Thus, the case of the cityscape of Budapest during the Soviet Republic in 1919, pointing beyond itself, also stands for the processes of how the spaces of a city – during the reign of leaders who pursue radical economic, social, and political transformations – can symbolize these actions and become the 'theatre of the revolution.' What is more, the utterances of the contemporaries can also exemplify how the members of the target audience can react to these propagandistic works and the actions of political opinion leaders.