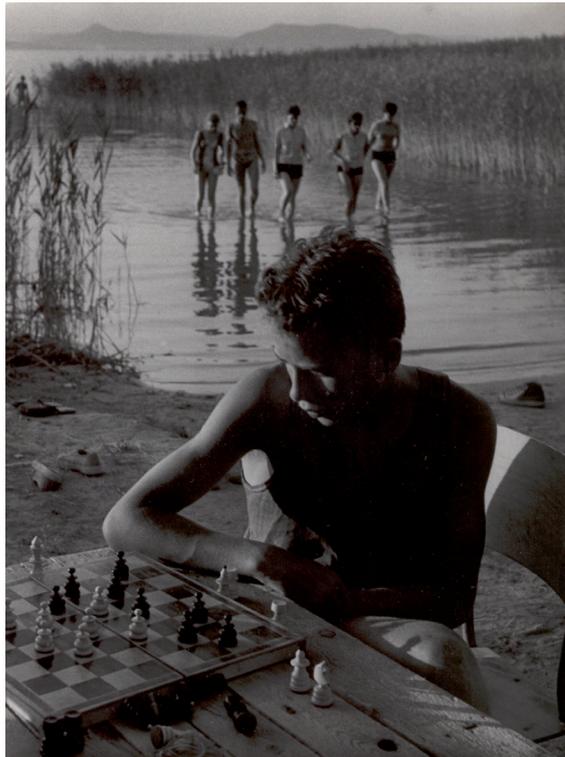


Tuomas Laine-Frigren

Searching for the Human Factor

Psychology, Power and Ideology in Hungary
during the Early Kádár Period



JYVÄSKYLÄ STUDIES IN HUMANITIES 280

Tuomas Laine-Frigren

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UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

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ABSTRACT

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Diss.

During the 20th century the social and cultural significance of the psychological sciences grew as they were applied in a number of contexts such as schools, families, hospitals and the workplace. In Western and Northern Europe especially, psychological expertise was also closely linked to the building of the welfare state after WWII, but Eastern European perspectives have been missing from these narratives until quite recently. This dissertation examines the role of psychological expertise in the politics of social control in Hungary during the early Kádár period. From the ashes of the 1956 revolution, a paternalistic regime arose which increasingly supported sociological and psychological research and expertise in trying to build its legitimacy and future viability. The position of 'individualist' psychology within the collectivist regime was problematic however, as it became stigmatised as a bourgeois pseudo-science after the communist takeover in 1949, and this took some time to fade, especially with the retrenchments after 1956. This study nevertheless shows how psychologists managed to carve out meaningful professional spaces for themselves, where they could act and create within the context of a party-controlled science and cultural policy. Psychologists could utilise, for example, the political urgency attached to juvenile delinquency in the shadow of 1956, and argue that existing practices of socialist upbringing be humanised. For instance, while struggling for the establishment of child guidance centres, psychologists adopted a critical approach to those social and psychological conditions which produced neurotic symptoms and adaptational problems among socialist youth. Also, despite the public hostility towards Freudianism, pre-war psychoanalytic traditions were reinvented and negotiated at the local level. The workplace was also quite a natural field of intervention for socialist psychology. Thus, in line with the general tendency in the Eastern Bloc at the time, Hungarian psychologists were also engaged with 'rationalising' the management of work. Some quite interesting and even original work-related discourse was produced also in the political margins. In social psychology especially, Ferenc Mérei's thinking embodied the promises attached to psychology as an emancipatory discourse. The developments followed in this book thus throw more light on larger changes that were occurring in science and learning in the Eastern Bloc, and eventually in socialist society itself. It should also contribute to a more balanced understanding of the history of the psychological sciences in Hungary during the Cold War.

Keywords: Hungary, East Central Europe, Twentieth Century, Cold War, History of Human Sciences, History of Psychology, State Socialism, History of Mental Health

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The dissertation you are about to read tells as much about its author as it is a study about peoples and things in the past. The process started as an exploration of a largely uncharted terrain. Not much had been written about psychological sciences or mental health in communist Europe. I also had little previous knowledge about the history of psychology in general, but I decided to take a leap of faith and trace the historical developments in post-war Hungary, trying to connect what I encountered with the larger social and political developments in 20th century Europe. The result is before you; but it could have been something totally different. So let me just say a few words about how this journey unfolded.

I'm somewhat puzzled by the whole 'Hungarian Rhapsody' of this process. The first careful overtures in this research direction happened when I stepped into the office of my future supervisor, Anssi Halmesvirta, quite soon after finishing my Master's thesis in 2008. But it didn't really kick off until the late summer of 2010, when I left my relatively safe position as an editor in a middle-sized Finnish publishing company thinking that perhaps I could be a historian. For opening the gates to this research project the biggest thanks go to the Finnish Doctoral Programme for Russian and East European Studies (1998-2015) at the Aleksanteri Institute, and to the Department of History and Ethnology (HELA) at the University of Jyväskylä. I am also grateful for the financial support given by the Ellen and Artturi Nyysönen Foundation.

The research process has had its share of ups and downs, promising deviations and perplexing dead-ends. This said I've been lucky to have enjoyed the help and support from several people along the way. Docent Anssi Halmesvirta is in many ways responsible for where I'm standing now. I'm very grateful for all his advice over the years. The most important thing however, is that he has taught me what it takes to be a real scholar, not only of history but of humanity. Thank you Anssi for your friendship! I'm also grateful for the support I've had from my other supervisor, docent Heino Nyysönen. A tireless analyst of Hungarian contemporary politics and a true Rolling Stones fan, he has also taught me how basically everything can be analysed politically. Thank you Heino for your good company!

I want to thank my reviewers, Greg Eghigian and Csaba Pléh for their encouraging comments and valuable advice. I also thank Associate Professor Eghigian for accepting the duty of being my opponent. I feel very honoured that he has found time for my work; and I'm also grateful for all the help I've received from Professor Pléh - especially one meeting with him in Budapest's Centrál Kávéház in the autumn of 2013 left a lasting impression. It wasn't just the amazing breadth of his knowledge and scholarship, but I was very happy because of his friendliness towards me. I'm also grateful for all the other Hungarian psychologists who have accepted my proposal for an interview. They have invited me to their homes and workplaces, offered tea and biscuits, and once even Pálinka. Special thanks go to János Pataki, a mathematics

teacher, who managed against all odds to arrange for me to meet his father for the third time.

It is a self-evident fact that scholarly work does not happen in a social and cultural vacuum. I am deeply aware that many people have contributed not only to my work but also to what I am as a person. To cultivate this a bit further, it is a historical fact that great inventions and scientific discoveries are seldom isolated events happening in the minds of one or two 'great men' but rather social, cultural, economic, and political processes. The engineers and scientists were inspired by poetry and the artists by the steam engine; and this is the case also today, although I'm sceptical as to whether our policymakers always recognise this. But let's stay in the positive side, and bravely believe that someday the field of scholarship will not be so strangely divided into those who 'produce' and those who allegedly do not.

Over the past years I've repeatedly felt myself privileged in having been able to work and socialise with people who want to go across the inherited boundaries, and more often than not, love their work. The HELA community has been my home-base from the beginning, providing me a safe place for orienting myself towards the future. Knowing that there are wonderful and funny people around has made the life in this crazy world a lot easier. I would like to thank the following colleagues and friends for their inspiration and support.

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For a student of life it is impossible not to mention some great artists and musicians who not only have inspired me but also managed to make my life better in countless ways during the research process. So thank you writer László Krasznahorkai for the strange world you created in *The Melancholy of*

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I thank my parents Hanna-Liisa and Heimo Laine, and my grandmother Aune, for just being there for me. Visiting my home village in Lohja has always meant a much needed moment of rest and meditation. As grandparents especially, their help has been priceless. The same goes to my in-laws, Kirsi-Leena and Jukka Frigren. Their house in the country-side of Pori has always been open to us, and the blueberries and venison always somehow find their way to our freezer. My daughters Irene and Venny, you are an endless source of hope and truth. Thank you for teaching me about life! You've also witnessed over and over again how research can be a family business when there are two historians in the family. Thank you Piritä for your love!

About deviations once more; it was the summer of 2012 when I started to like jogging. Once I was jogging in Pori near the Sands of Yyteri. I wanted to find out the location of the dog beach, got lost several times, but luckily managed to find the right place. That evening, in a cottage nearby, I realised what I really wanted to write as the preface to my dissertation: what I like most in jogging is the curious search for new places and ways of getting there. I think this is how I also feel about research.

I dedicate this book to my late grandfather Matti Laine

Jyväskylä, 18 January 2016

Tuomas Laine-Frigren

ABBREVIATIONS

APB	Agitprop Committee (<i>Agitációs és Propaganda Bizottság</i>)
APO	Agitprop Department (<i>Agitációs és Propaganda Osztály</i>)
ÁVÓ	State Protection Department (<i>Államvédelmi Osztály</i>)
ÁVH	State Protection Authority (<i>Államvédelmi Hatóság</i>)
DISZ	Union of Working Youth (<i>Dolgozó Ifjúság Szövetsége</i>)
HNF	Patriotic Peoples' Front (<i>Hazafias Népfront</i>)
ICP	Institute for Child Psychology
KB	Central Committee (<i>Központi Bizottság</i>)
KISZ	Hungarian Young Communist League (<i>A Magyar Kommunista Ifjúsági Szövetség</i>)
NÉKOSZ	National Association of People's Colleges (<i>Népi Kollégiumok Országos Szövetsége</i>)
NEM	New Economic Mechanism
MDP	Hungarian Workers' Party (<i>Magyar Dolgozók Pártja</i>)
MPTT	Hungarian Psychological Scientific Association (<i>Magyar Pszichológiai Tudományos Társaság</i>)
MRT	Hungarian Radio and Television (<i>Magyar Rádió és Televízió</i>)
MSZMP	Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (<i>Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt</i>)
MTA	Hungarian Academy of Sciences (<i>Magyar Tudományos Akadémia</i>)
OGYIT	National Council of Child and Youth Protection (<i>Országos Gyermek- és Ifjúságvédelmi Tanács</i>)
OPI	National Institute for Pedagogics (<i>Országos Pedagógiai Intézet</i>)
RFE	Radio Free Europe
SED	Socialist Unity Party of Germany (<i>Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands</i>)
TDK	Scientific Student Circles (<i>Tudományos Diákkörök</i>)
TIT	Association for the Popularisation of Science (<i>Tudományos Ismeretterjesztő Társulat</i>)
TKKO	Department of Science, Culture, and Public Education (<i>Tudományos, Kulturális és Közoktatási Osztály</i>)
TKO	Department of Science and Culture (<i>Tudományos és Kulturális Osztály</i>)
TMB	Committee for Scientific Qualifications (<i>Tudományos Minősítő Bizottság</i>)
TtK	Social Science Library (<i>Társadalomtudományi Könyvtár</i>)
TTIT	Association for the Popularisation of Social and Natural Sciences (<i>Társadalom- és Természettudományi Ismeretterjesztő Társulat</i>)
VB	Executive Committee (<i>Végrehajtó Bizottság</i>)

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The psychological aftermath of 1956

He feels himself totally healthy. He does not mention anything about delusions or wrong ideas, even when he is explicitly asked. He is a young man with ruddy cheeks. There is no detectable sign of pathological abnormality. My understanding is that Péter Mansfeld is not mentally ill and does not suffer from any such disease that would prevent the execution of his sentence.¹

Péter Mansfeld (1941-1959) was a turner's apprentice who helped the fighters at Széna-square during the 1956 revolution in getting weapons and food. He also acted as a contact person. After the revolution, however, Mansfeld's life took a turn for the worse. While working in a factory, he stole equipment and committed several other crimes. In 1958, for example, he stole a car with his friends and kidnapped a police officer with the intention of establishing an armed resistance group. However, he was soon caught by the authorities and the case went to court. In one of his trials, a forensic psychiatrist gave his expert opinion on Mansfeld's health. It essentially stated that the young man was both physically and mentally well at the time he committed his crimes. In legal jargon, Mansfeld was *compos mentis*; and besides, he did not regret his actions - in fact he was even openly proud of his role in 1956. At the end of the year Mansfeld was sentenced to life imprisonment. But soon the verdict was changed to a death sentence and Mansfeld was eventually hanged a few days after he turned eighteen.²

Although Mansfeld conducted most of his crimes in 1958, popular imagination often connects his fate to 'heroic' acts he carried out in 1956. As László Eörsi shows, the court case against Mansfeld and his companions presented a carefully constructed narrative of the events and actions which led to the show trial. He argues that, while 1956 was used as a significant reference point by the judges, the final remorseless decision was based on Mansfeld's

¹ Cf. Stefka 2003, 250; Halmesvirta & Nyysönen 2006, 138-139.

² Eörsi 2002. In fact, Mansfeld's age did not matter: a law passed in July 1957 allowed anyone over sixteen to be sentenced to death.

behaviour in court. Because he was unshaken in his young man's beliefs and even stood up to the judges, it was evident that he was an irremediable counter-revolutionary (*ellenforradalmár*).³ Seditious actions such as these needed to be suppressed by setting an example, even if this meant sentencing a teenager to death.

The year 1956 was certainly a significant turning point in the history of Hungary after the Second World War. The Communist Party faced an inner political crisis,⁴ which saw the basis for its legitimisation crumble, as workers and young people set up workers' councils and revolutionary committees and went onto the streets with guns in their hands.⁵ If this was a revolution, it was a heavy blow to the simple ideological constructions that had preceded it: how could the mind-set of people be determined by their socio-economic position, as Marxist-Leninism seemed to imply, if even the working-class did not act in the way it was supposed to?⁶

In the immediate years after 1956, at the same time as the Hungarian Academy of Sciences was being purged, the new discipline of psychology emerged from the academic margins of communist science. After the Communists took over in 1948-1949, psychologists had been labelled as representatives of bourgeois pseudo-science (*áltudomány*), and their academic institutions had been almost totally wiped out. However, with the death of Stalin in 1953, and the new political constellation that became apparent, the previously suppressed social sciences (e.g., sociology and psychology) were rehabilitated and became valid career paths again. Although still treated with some suspicion, psychological methods, tools, and diagnoses began to be seen as more pertinent after the upheavals of 1956 and the field was integrated into communist academia with very clear aims in mind.

The rehabilitation of the social sciences at this time is one example of the changes that were occurring (particularly in the relationship between ideology, politics, and science) during the transition from a Stalinist to post-Stalinist political culture. This research therefore uses the particular case of psychology to study this transition more closely. It aims at filling the gap in current historiography on the history of psychology in state socialism by examining the complex relationship between the psychological sciences and communist politics. It asks how the change in political climate influenced the orientation of psychology by assigning particular tasks to it, and how the psychological discourses that ensued first encountered and then became entwined with the policy aims of the regime.

³ Ibid.

⁴ On 31st of October 1956, the Hungarian Workers' Party (MDP) was dissolved and reestablished as the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP). See Békés, Byrne & Rainer (eds.) 2002, 191-216, 211.

⁵ For more on Workers' Councils, see Pittaway 2012, 205-252; Horváth 1998, 113-209; Varga 1994, 199-237. The Central Greater Budapest Workers' Council was a hub for militant opposition after the Soviet invasion.

⁶ Pittaway 2012, 3.

By looking at the way childhood crime was being discussed in psychology only a few years after 1956, one gets the impression that something had really changed at that point in time. It seems that a new language, more in tune with a variety of individual experiences, was introduced to address the issue of juvenile delinquency. Even with political undertones, it was now described as being the consequence of “emotionally wounded” or “abnormal” personalities, and thus it ideally needed to be handled with the cooperation of various experts. Of course, there was a difference in the seriousness of crimes branded as ‘counter-revolutionary’ and those that were cases of ‘hooliganism’ (a new category of political crime invented after 1956)⁷; but it is still relevant to ask what these new psychological explanations of behaviour revealed about the wider changes that were simultaneously occurring in the socialist order.

* * *

Almost 20 years ago, Roger Smith challenged historians of the human sciences by claiming that the Eastern European history of psychology after the Second World War was “particularly open to revision”. Without discussing just how this revision should take place, Smith went on to stress the inherent paradox of Marxist science. The Soviet theory of the party-state was simultaneously a human science and a distinctive argument about how mankind is socially and historically constructed. Marxism-Leninism was, after all, considered to be an inherently scientific world-view. Furthermore, the party-state was understood to be a unique institution of power. As formulated by Tibor Valuch, the Party was a charismatic organ in the communist imagination. Because it was a vehicle for political and social progress, it was perhaps the most “valuable treasure” of the working class.⁸

Marxist-Leninist science therefore claimed to be objective about the parameters of human action. In psychology, the dominant discourse (in its crudest and most dogmatic form) claimed that the human mind is determined by the position one occupies in a social environment, which for Marxist-Leninists meant the position one has in the system of production. Thus, it tended to provide readymade answers to questions on what emotionally affected (or ought to affect) people. It was argued that since Marxism-Leninism was a science in itself, it would be able to make the human sciences more objective.⁹

These theories had particular consequences for psychological research. For example, as Oleg Kharkhordin has shown, for much of Soviet-era social psychology, studies of community behaviour were often influenced by the presupposition that human beings have an innate tendency to form higher order collectives from groups simply understood as an “aggregate of

⁷ Horváth 2009, 63–73.

⁸ Smith 1997, 783, 797; Valuch 2005, 127.

⁹ Smith 1997, 783–784; Eghigian 2008, 43.

individuals".¹⁰ In other words, as Anssi Halmesvirta aptly puts it, Marxism tended to preformulate the phenomenon being studied and so "omit the phenomenon itself".¹¹ Meanwhile, Lenin's theory of knowledge expressed in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* was used in psychology to argue that human consciousness was a reflection of the "objective world".¹²

Smith goes on to argue that, in the end, the state did not manage to study the very science it presumed itself to be based on. This was because science was too closely identified with state power. At its Stalinist extreme, the state tolerated no theory which the state itself had not formulated. Maybe the most infamous example of politics meddling in the substance of science was the case of Lysenko in Soviet agriculture.¹³ Because of the perceived threat to political power, Smith argues that state socialism took a particularly heavy toll on empirical social studies of human action, such as social psychology - especially if they dealt with the relationship between society and the individual. The consequence was that this presupposed objectivity in effect destroyed the basis of objectivity itself, as it was forbidden to properly test anything, and this almost eliminated the sciences themselves.¹⁴

Indeed, very soon after the Second World War, communist regimes of science and higher learning were established in Eastern and Central European countries occupied by the Soviet Army - with different national outcomes and manifestations.¹⁵ The Cold War had begun, and boundaries were now drawn between two different political and economic systems, which also made it more or less difficult for the scholars in what became known as the 'second world' to participate in the larger international scientific community. The situation of the human sciences was further aggravated by the existence of both open and hidden forms of authoritarian oppression and denial of autonomous spaces of self-expression in countries under communist rule. Quite naturally, then, not long after the Cold War ended, Smith approached the experience of Eastern European scholars from the vantage point of western liberal regimes by stressing that their "constructive survival" during difficult times had already become "legendary".¹⁶

It is almost commonplace to now say that the 20th century was the century of psychology. As Nikolas Rose has argued, especially after the Second World War, the psychological sciences were closely bound up with programs and techniques for the "governing of the soul".¹⁷ According to Ian Dowbiggin, the transition to a so-called 'therapeutic culture' - and indeed the 'psychologisation' of social processes during the 20th century - was further stimulated by the war-related need to treat large numbers of mentally ill veterans. As Dowbiggin

¹⁰ Kharkhordin 1999, 76-78; 97-101.

¹¹ Halmesvirta 2005, 60.

¹² Pawlik & Rosenzweig 2000, 577.

¹³ On Stalinism and Lysenko, see Pollock 2009 & 2006.

¹⁴ Smith 1997, 783-784.

¹⁵ Péteri 1998; Connelly 2000; Macrakis & Hoffmann 1999, 14-17; Kósa (ed.) 2000, 325-336.

¹⁶ Smith 1997, 797.

¹⁷ Rose 1999, 15-52.

notes, the winning side could even use the war as an opportunity to evince what the psychological sciences, medicine and technology had, until then, only suggested to be true. For example, the mother-child relationship and attachment theories in developmental psychology were greatly influenced by the experience of deprivation and uprooting caused by war.¹⁸

During the reconstruction of Europe, the new belief in psychological and therapeutic knowledge also coincided with the faith in social and economic planning, manifested in the vision of the 'welfare state' and the future of democracy.¹⁹ According to Tony Judt, the idea of welfare state planning was widely shared by a broad European political spectrum, including the European Christian Democratic parties. But the ultimate institutional and policy-level outcomes varied considerably, depending on the national traditions and choices made in their particular political contexts.²⁰ Fascism and Nazism had indeed thrived on social despair but, as Judt notes, the welfare state was not simply conceived as a "prophylactic" against political upheaval; there was also a background of eugenics, conceptualisations of race, degeneration, and mental 'hygiene' that came into play; and this was accompanied with the active agency of the generations of experts that contributed to debates on the health and well-being of the population (and public policy). Therefore, by 1945, there was a broad consensus that the physical, mental, and moral condition of citizenry was a matter of common interest, and perhaps even a responsibility of the state.²¹

However, the situation was somewhat different in war-ravaged Central Europe than in those countries of the allied powers that had remained relatively unscathed. In the countries occupied by the Soviet Union, welfare could only be actively distributed via the Communist Party, which favoured some and excluded others.²² Based on the ideological notion of full employment, 'social politics' would be made a redundant concept due to the presumably quick improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the working-class. Residues of the old order, with all its social and psychological problems, would be swept away with the progress of 'history', understood in Marxist-Leninist terms.²³ Thus in Hungary, when resources were distributed after the communist takeover, psychology was not a very high priority.

As a new society that was more open to psychology emerged in the west, various psychological and psychotherapeutic techniques were put into practice in schools, hospitals, and prisons; and applied to contexts ranging from family,

¹⁸ Dowbiggin 2011, 133-134. See also Richards 2010, 368-370; Leahey 2004, 483; Ash 2008, 272; Zahra 2009.

¹⁹ Hayward 2012; Zetterqvist-Nelson & Sandin 2013; Oosterhuis 2014. In the Netherlands, after World War II, psychiatrists and mental health professionals discussed democratic citizenship, not only in terms of political rights and obligations, but also by asking what would be the psychological, moral, and social psychological conditions that individuals needed to be able to develop themselves, and to be able to act in responsible ways.

²⁰ Judt 2007, 68-69.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 72. On conceptualisations of citizenship, public health and mental hygiene in Finland during the first decades of the 20th century, see Helén & Jauho 2003.

²² *Ibid.*, 74.

²³ Horváth 2012, 26-27; Ferge 1998, 99.

marriage, and the bedroom, to the factory and workplace. As Smith notes, a belief in the normative and discursive power of psychological knowledge to explain human nature was internalised enough in people and policy-makers' minds that it was almost taken for granted. While the emphasis of this knowledge concerned personal matters, there was also a market emerging for everyday therapeutic techniques that could resolve various problems.²⁴

Understandably, psychotherapeutic interventions and techniques for the management of personality were everything *but* politically or morally neutral.²⁵ They carried multiple interests, not least for the professionals themselves who were keen on exercising their special status in the welfare state. The tasks of governing, safeguarding and treating health were invested with the potential for greatly influencing society. One of the key actors to introduce psychological techniques after WWII in the Anglophone West was the Tavistock Institute in Britain.²⁶ As Smith notes, it had an influential role in spreading the idea that psychological expertise carried power and authority, and could teach society and policy-makers lessons about human relations.²⁷

These are highly valuable perspectives; but one cannot help wondering if something is missing. Namely, the Eastern Central European perspective and especially the experience of state socialism during the Cold War is still either non-existent or given a very small role in the modern history of psychological sciences.²⁸ Of course, there is nothing strange in this if we understand the history of psychology from the perspective of the 'winners'. But there are also the practical difficulties of the language skills required to effectively include small countries in the general historical narrative; as well as the sheer fact that they are small and thus represent the peripheries of knowledge production in terms of intellectual and financial resources. Nevertheless, it is precisely because such countries have been neglected, that Hungary is the focus of my attention here. It could prove an important example of what happened in the psychological sciences behind the Iron Curtain.

In Hungary, social psychologist Ferenc Pataki (1928-) reflected on the wider social processes of modern psychologisation in a public lecture in 1977. The lecture was called to mark the 75th anniversary of the Institute for Psychology in the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA). As the newly

²⁴ Smith 1997, 578, 615-616. For the various problematic aspects of psychologisation as seen by one critical commentator, see Sennett 1977.

²⁵ As Csaba Pléh notes, it has been generally very common for modern psychology to stress its value-free nature as a true science. This has served the struggle for academic autonomy, the emancipation from other disciplines such as philosophy and education. However, as Pléh also notes, there is an intimate connection between different views on society and particular psychologies. See Pléh 2003, 165.

²⁶ Tavistock Institute powerfully introduced the psychological approach to childhood and also insisted that family was the seminal source of human fulfilment. It would form into a center of psychodynamic psychotherapy in Britain: See Lunbeck 2008, 668.

²⁷ Smith 1997, 573-575.

²⁸ Pawlik & Rosenzweig 2000; Pickren & Rutherford 2010; Janoušek & Sirotkina 2008, 431-449. In a considerably older general review, several chapters can also be found on psychology in socialist countries: Sexton & Misiak 1976, chapters 2, 8, 25 & 28.

selected head of this prestigious academic research institute, Pataki assessed the evolution of psychology in Hungary with a presentation entitled “Timely reflections on the historical path of psychology in Hungary.”²⁹ Being both an attempt to invent academic traditions and to evaluate the current and future prospects of the field in Hungary, Pataki began his account with the progressive founding fathers in early 20th century Hungary, sailing through the interwar years, the hard times of the war, and the Stalinist 1950s, to finally arrive at the post-Stalinist 1960s and ’70s.

According to Pataki, a psychologist had several roles and identities in the minds of both professional and lay people alike. Besides being a “healer”, a psychological researcher was also an “everyday judge of character” (*emberismerő*), and could assume the role of general expert. Hence, according to Pataki, he was “a modern priest, a TV-star, a counsellor (*tanácsadó*) and an educator”. Far from being just some dry academic, a psychologist was also a “prophet and social engineer”, a theoretician, public intellectual, and even an ideologist.³⁰ According to Pataki, this variety of possible roles sometimes caused friction among Hungarian psychological experts, as various people tended to enforce their own conception of true science on others. However, plurality was a necessary condition for a truly academic field, he reassuringly continued.

Keeping in mind Smith’s arguments on the struggle for survival of Eastern European intellectuals, one might wonder if the social and cultural roles enumerated by Pataki were in fact really there for psychologists under Hungarian socialism; or whether this was a careful piece of uplifting rhetoric to celebrate the surprising success of psychology in a political environment which, not so long before, had condemned it to oblivion. To further add to the confusion, we may ask an intentionally naïve (and rather general) question: if what Pataki said was true, *why* at this particular moment in the wider history of socialism were psychological explanations of behaviour now being accepted, when according to historical materialism the main determinants of human behaviour were socio-economic?

This research combines the methods of intellectual history, history of science, and political history to examine the genesis of psychology in state socialism as a socially and historically situated discourse among experts. The research is carried out by focusing on the psychological discourse in selected fields of research and expertise, and sets out to discover how it was promoted and disseminated, where it was used, and what it was used for (namely, in child welfare, socialist education, and the workplace). It is shown how all these social fields were seen to require intervention by psychologists with their various claims to knowledge. The idea was promoted that if the proper socialist was to be rationally governed and his behaviour channelled towards ‘normal’, efficient and healthy outcomes, psychology-based solutions were needed. It is suggested in this research that the decision-makers in the new political

²⁹ Pataki 1977.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 576.

constellation expected help from social scientists in building the legitimacy and future viability of their system, and to rationalise the various policies of social planning that were put into place. At the same time, by focusing on essentially human factors, psychologists were also trying to incorporate into this system the discourse surrounding 'the individual'.

The Hungarian variant of Eastern Central European political dictatorship controlled the small space in which social scientists could operate in the era of state socialism. Although this left little room for academic freedom, this space itself was not static and unchanging and, as David C. Engerman argues, science has always had a certain degree of autonomy in relation to the prevailing political context. Engerman goes on to say that science tries to build on the work of its predecessors and has its own interests and agendas - which of course can be quite immediately related to political, ideological, and personal interests.³¹ But science also tends to produce its own norms of quality and socialisation around these, which can be quite the opposite of those promoted by politicians. Based on this premise, the hypothesis presented here is that the development of psychological discourse - both in official and more informal areas of society - had its own 'laws' bearing in mind the conditions of 'soft' dictatorship in Hungary at this time, and these were not always related to the preferences and ideologies of the one-party state. The research thus also inquires if there was something which could be called an alternative psychological discourse.

1.2 Earlier research

Over recent years there has been a growing academic interest in the history of psychological disciplines and mental health in the Soviet Union and Eastern Central Europe. The peculiarities of the Soviet and Russian experience have been at the forefront of a lot of this research: for example, Susanne Cohen's research on Soviet social-psychological "trainings" in the 1970s and 1980s, Benjamin Zajicek's dissertation on Soviet psychiatry, and Rebecca Reich's research on psychiatric and literary conceptions of insanity.³² Concerning other countries of the Eastern Bloc, Sarah Marks has studied the aetiologies of mental disorders in Czechoslovakia, especially from the perspective of transnational exchanges and the corresponding flow of knowledge. In her dissertation, Marks challenges the simplistic assumptions that psychiatry and therapeutic interventions in the Soviet satellites were Pavlovised. Furthermore, she demonstrates that research in Czechoslovakia was not cut off from international developments, although the experts themselves may have had to use certain tactics to adapt to the ideological and rhetoric conditions of the socialist space in which they had to operate.³³

³¹ Engerman 2010.

³² Cohen 2010; Zajicek 2009; Reich 2010.

³³ Marks 2015.

There is also a growing body of individual articles that approach the history of psychological disciplines in postwar Eastern Europe as being both a symptom and a cause of the peculiar social and political conditions of state socialism.³⁴ The latest manifestation of this burgeoning interest is the book by Savelli and Marks on *Psychiatry in Communist Europe*.³⁵ What is fascinating (and challenging) with these kinds of topics is that they are situated on the borders of several historiographical fields. Similarly, the topic of this research - the political implications of psychological discourse in Cold War Hungary - also calls for an interdisciplinary approach.

1.2.1 Internationalising the history of psychology

The wider relevant framework for this research is the historiographical tradition which stresses the need to inquire into the social and political context of past psychological discourse. Representatives of this tradition share the basic claim that the psychological sciences and their practitioners are bound to historical space and time in a very real sense.³⁶ As Roger Smith has stressed in his groundbreaking article "Does history of psychology have a subject?", the subjects of psychological research are not "natural entities" (e.g., an abstract "child"), but rather they are the product of specific historical processes. Thus, in line with the post-structuralism of Michel Foucault, he argues that the history of psychology should also adopt the thesis that there are particular relations between bodies of knowledge and various forms of power (institutional, occupational, personal, etc.), and these relations merit further investigation in the history of human sciences.³⁷

Another more recent trend in the field has been the search for international or transnational perspectives. Kurt Danziger has argued for the importance of what he calls a *polycentric* understanding in the history of psychology.³⁸ The notion of polycentrism implies that there is never just one history of psychology, but several. In Danziger's use, the term stresses not only the importance of widening the focus towards global and transnational processes, but also being aware of the existence of several regional centres (and their peripheries) where psychological sciences and practices have been studied, applied, and disseminated. This approach is naturally interested in the social, cultural, and material contexts in which knowledge is produced and used. This may mean, for example, asking how well knowledge, concepts, institutional models, and diagnostic categories within psychological sciences travel, and how they are adapted and given particular meanings in distinct local contexts.³⁹

³⁴ See, for example: Antić 2014; Savelli 2012.

³⁵ Marks & Savelli (eds.) 2015.

³⁶ Danziger 1990; Rose 1998.

³⁷ Smith 1988, 150.

³⁸ Danziger 2007.

³⁹ See, for example: Ernst and Mueller (eds.) 2010; Gijswijt-Hofstra, Oosterhuis & Vjlselaar (eds.) 2006; Promitzer, Trubeta & Turda (eds.) 2011.

Internationalising the history of psychological sciences has been promoted in a number of ways by Adrian C. Brock, Greg Eghigian, and Csaba Pléh.⁴⁰ In their research they pay greater attention to local, peripheral, and (in many cases) marginalised perspectives within the history of psychological sciences that may have been forgotten in the better known narratives of the field.⁴¹ They stress that the actors in local contexts were not just passive imitators of the knowledge and practices emanating from the centres of psychological research but active interpreters who combined and reinterpreted existing knowledge.

The general discussion surrounding the history of psychology - or how it should be written - has also paid attention to the 'Whiggist' tendency of mainstream historiography to overrepresent the winners in history, which presupposes that history is a linear and teleological development towards the present, rather than one of many alternative histories. Consequently, the experimental side of psychology has been highlighted, together with its affinity towards the natural sciences. Secondly, the predominance of American psychological theory and practice in the latter part of the 20th century has made the history of the discipline focus more on American psychology than anything else.⁴² This tendency has meant that other cultural and scientific traditions have thus been somewhat neglected.

In this sense, the book by Joy Damousi and Mariano Ben Plotkin entitled *Psychoanalysis and Politics: Histories of Psychoanalysis under Conditions of Restricted Political Freedom* has provided some useful comparative perspectives for this research.⁴³ Especially the articles on social and political roles adopted by psychoanalysts in 20th century South America, under military dictatorships. They support the general thesis suggested in the present study, that psychological discourse and expertise has easily lent its support to projects and policies of very different political regimes. Indeed, one of the most flourishing psychoanalytic cultures in the world - in Argentina - initially emerged from within the strict confines of a particularly authoritarian political system.⁴⁴

In my work, I adopt a polycentric approach: not only by recognising that the development of psychological sciences in socialist Hungary was both a national and transnational enterprise; but also by studying both the official, as well as the more informal places, that psychological discourse took place after 1956. In practice, this means that the research does not limit itself simply to the narrow evolution of the academic discipline, but also examines its wider ramifications. Because of these methodological and theoretical choices, the professionalisation of the field is not rigorously followed in a step-by-step fashion as this would prevent the inclusion of more informal contexts. For similar reasons, the decision-making processes are not overly traced in detail either.

⁴⁰ Brock (ed.) 2006; Eghigian 2008; Pléh 2008.

⁴¹ For an interesting example of "peripheral" psychology, see Louw 2006.

⁴² Silvonon 2006, 11.

⁴³ Damousi & Ben Plotkin (eds.) 2012.

⁴⁴ See, for example: Ben Plotkin 2012. On the politics of mental health in South Africa during Apartheid: Laurenson and Swartz 2011.

Over the past decade, there has been a growing number of researchers in the field of Cold War studies who have become interested in studying the cross-border movements of people, goods and ideas. Complementing the traditional focus on high politics and bipolar relations between the superpowers, this research has increasingly focused on encounters across the Iron Curtain at various levels, in terms of the cultural and scientific flow of knowledge, and the connections and networks that existed across the borders.⁴⁵ Riikka Nisonen-Trnka's study on the Czechoslovakian chemists, Otto Wichterle and František Šorm, during the Cold War should be mentioned in this context. Nisonen-Trnka shows how these scientists - who held different and shifting positions with regard to the political establishment - used their contacts and networks while building relationships with the international scientific community. However, the national and international scientific communities worked according to different rules. This meant trouble for the scientists but also encouraged certain coping strategies.⁴⁶

Another interesting example of studying the interplay between the local and global, is the research by Johanna Bockman on Eastern European economics in the era of state socialism. Her latest book in particular, *Markets in the Name of Socialism: The Left-Wing Origins of Neoliberalism*, examines how Hungarian economists who were intent on reform cultivated international connections after 1956 and readapted globally circulating neoclassical models and methods for their own reformist ends. They were thus far from being passive receivers of western knowledge.⁴⁷ Nisonen-Trnka also questions the idea of a unidirectional West-East flow of knowledge. Furthermore, while showing that Wichterle and Šorm in Czechoslovakia used their political convictions and the prevalent ideological discourse as survival strategies in the political context of their national science, Nisonen-Trnka also stresses that scientists did not remain passive followers of state policy. Even when they were not members of the communist party they still managed to negotiate with the regime. There was a seemingly simple explanation for this: the Party needed them in the era of "scientific technological revolution".⁴⁸

Cold War history offers something distinctive to the transnational approach: the borders to be transcended were not exactly those of nation states, but supranational boundaries produced by the Iron Curtain which divided different socio-economic and political systems. As György Péteri notes, in the Cold War, transnational took on "the added import of the transsystemic". One dimension of this was the way the "West" became a concept at the core of self-understanding under Communism, and a key part of its identity, due to the

⁴⁵ Mikkonen & Koivunen 2015; Autio-Sarasmo & Miklóssy 2011.

⁴⁶ Nisonen-Trnka 2012.

⁴⁷ Bockman 2012. See, also: Bockman & Eyal 2002. In her article, co-written with Gil Eyal, Bockman uses Bruno Latour's actor-network theory to show how intellectual "artefacts" moved within the transnational network. By her analysis she shows how Hungarian reform-minded economists had already, in the 1960s, started to engage in international academic exchanges with their counterparts in US universities, gaining exposure to economic ideas, such as econometrics and linear programming.

⁴⁸ Nisonen-Trnka 2012, Introduction.

fundamental claim that Communists were constructing a “superior, alternative modernity”.⁴⁹ As Péteri notes, the west was a powerful referent for the communist world, but this not only related to Khrushchev’s goal of ‘catching up and overtaking the west’ with ultimately western yardsticks to measure industry, technology, or consumerism. The relationship was significant also because the west represented, “a mirror, mirror on the wall” - a place in which one looks to judge oneself against others. Therefore, the west was both a useful (perhaps even appealing) rival, and yet also a part of the (cultural) fabric of socialist societies. In the cultural field, for example, the communist discourse described state socialism as continuing the best traditions of western civilization.⁵⁰

However, it was not only the west but also the North that was an important source of intellectual and cultural models and resources.⁵¹ As Anssi Halmesvirta has shown in his research on Finnish-Hungarian academic relations during the socialist era, cooperation between psychologists and criminologists, for example, on questions related to ‘deviance’ and traffic accidents, was encouraged by the shared understanding of social threats caused by modernisation and urbanisation. As Halmesvirta notes, psychological problems caused by the dislocation and alienation of certain sections of the populations in both countries “resembled each other greatly”. Thus they could be studied using the same methods, even if some of the basic social values and goals remained somewhat different. Nevertheless, the political conditions for uncomplicated academic relationships still had to be created. This was relatively easy with this particular northern country though, as Finland not only had a history of ‘kinship ties’ with Hungary, but also a comfortable political profile there - described by some contemporaries as “rose-coloured”.⁵²

A cross-border perspective is important if one accepts that the construction of socialism was not a project carried out within exclusively socialist bloc countries. It was instead entwined with several external contexts, such as international scientific conferences⁵³ or cultural exhibitions.⁵⁴ In the present study, neither cross-border connections nor the transsystemic dimension is the focus of attention. However, the historical realities of the Cold War are acknowledged where they are relevant to the discussion. In particular, when looking at the politics of childhood deviance in chapter 3, I show how psychological ideas and concepts disseminated by experts in this Eastern European ‘periphery’ were readapting popular psychological ideas that were circulating in post-war Europe.

⁴⁹ Péteri (et.al) 2008, 704.

⁵⁰ Bren 2010; Castillo 2010

⁵¹ Halmesvirta 2005; Miklóssy 2011.

⁵² Halmesvirta 2005, 10. See also Halmesvirta 2015.

⁵³ Moscovici & Marková 2006; Schönplflug & Lüer 2013.

⁵⁴ Péteri 2012; Jakelski 2015.

1.2.2 Psychologisation in socialism

Greg Eghigian has noted that, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the questions concerning the role of clinical psychology in state socialism stemmed from critical interest in the presumably communist nature of psychiatry in the Soviet Union and its satellites in Eastern Europe.⁵⁵ Indeed, towards the end of the 1970s, it had almost become commonly accepted that the Soviet Union used psychiatric institutions to discipline and punish dissidents.⁵⁶ Especially after General Secretary Nikita Khrushchev stated that an anti-communist consciousness was the manifestation of a mentally distorted mind, it became a common diagnosis to explain the presumably deep reasons behind “poor social adaptability”, such as “gradually advancing schizophrenia”, or “paranoid fantasies” about reforming society. Windholz has claimed that the initial political aim of Khrushchev was to solve the problem of dissident intellectuals who were too outspoken in their anti-Stalinist criticism. Consequently, giving them the status of a hospitalised psychotic or schizophrenic was meant to depoliticise (or medicalise) what had formerly been the subject of open show trials.⁵⁷

After 1989, there was interest in whether similar methods were also possibly used in other state-socialist regimes. Furthermore, it was asked whether there was something essentially ‘communist’ about the psychological sciences in Eastern Europe. As Eghigian puts it, did political ideologies relate to the form and content of psychological ideas and services provided? For example, did totalitarian political regimes necessarily translate into totalitarian psychiatric regimes? Perhaps influenced by this general framework of ideas, critical writer Miklós Haraszti wrote in the dissident journal *Magyar Füzetek* (1982) that expert diagnoses in Hungary were sometimes at least implicitly political. Although there was no political revenge masked as psychiatry, there were cases where the doctor explained deviant behaviour within a hegemonic biological paradigm and diagnosed the patient who displayed no physical changes as “pathologically paranoid”.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Eghigian 2006, 183–184.

⁵⁶ For example, when the International Union of Psychological Sciences (IUPsyS) convened in 1976 in Paris, platform was set for the public discussion of ethical and human rights issues in clinical psychology. Not only the Soviet practices were at the target, but also psychology-based interrogation techniques in South American military dictatorship. The General Assembly of the congress published a special resolution on “Inviolable rights of human beings”. See Rosenzweig (et.al.) 2000, 167–168.

⁵⁷ Pietikäinen 2013, 343–345; Windholz 1999, 344; Kovai 2010, 44.

⁵⁸ Eghigian 2006, 183–184; Haraszti 1982, passim; See also Lányi 1997, 154. In Hungary, it has been estimated that politically motivated abuse of psychological sciences was rare. The infamous cases of psychiatrists István Bálint and Ernő Szinetár, one time psychological advisors for the ÁVÓ during the Stalinist period, are considered exceptions for the rule. Regarding East Germany, Christine Leuenberger has pointed to a peculiar diagnostic category called the “Wall Syndrome”. Particularly in psychiatrist Müller-Hegemann’s writings, social and political conditions (e.g., feelings of being enclosed or imprisoned by the Wall, or being an informer against one’s will), could produce symptoms which could not be explained by the existing terminology. See Leuenberger 2006.

Following Eghigian, we might well ask if these kinds of inquiries, about what made the psychological sciences different under communism, are based more on certain preconceived ideas of 20th century dictatorships than on any empirically based historical scholarship. While the ‘totalitarian narrative’ (see section 1.3) has tended to produce simplified visions of the relationship between the one-party dictatorship and its citizens, there is also the notion of a homogenic Eastern bloc which may well have blurred the significant differences in ideology and practice that almost certainly existed between (and even within) these states. It is also worth bearing in mind that, though the warehousing of political dissidents in psychiatric hospitals was a distinct case of human rights abuse and not to be condoned, politically motivated diagnoses have happened, and continue to do so, under many other political systems too.⁵⁹

In the historiography of psychiatry, a strong case has been made for understanding madness or mental illness as a social category which refers to puzzling and irrational forms of behaviour, and to the politics of social control.⁶⁰ Thus, in healing, controlling, preventing, and categorising behaviour deemed problematic in one way or another for the social environment, psychology has an inherently political function. As Eghigian notes in his comments on the existence of politically motivated psychiatry in East Germany, Party and state security officials (as well as some psychiatric experts) were ready to use the mental health system as a “policing tool for rounding-up and warehousing those deemed social undesirables, such as alcoholics, prostitutes and delinquents”.⁶¹ Clearly, psychologically informed administrative practices related to harnessing deviance cut across borders in 20th century Europe whilst at the same time having different aims, qualities, and manifestations in different political contexts.

Eghigian goes further to note that, while the origins of psychological knowledge as a means to control society have been increasingly studied by several authors from the 1960s onwards,⁶² the prominence of psychological expertise in public endeavours during the 20th century has been particularly popular as a topic among Dutch, US, and British historians. He argues that these scholars do not so much approach the psychological sciences as a tool being used for social control, but instead as part of the modern *liberal* project of “promoting more autonomous, intelligent, happy, and enterprising citizens”.⁶³

⁵⁹ In his provocative study of the relationship between race and mental health, Jonathan Metzl shows, by studying the case of Ionia Mental hospital in 1960-1970s America, how schizophrenia became a “black disease”. Once considered as non-threatening disease of the white middle-class, it became associated with hostility and violence among black men, when thrown into stark relief against the backdrop of the black civil rights movement. Metzl even suggests that African-Americans were diagnosed as schizophrenics on a biological basis because of their civil rights ideas. See Metzl 2009.

⁶⁰ Gomory, Cohen & Kirk 2013, 120–122.

⁶¹ Eghigian 206, 183.

⁶² Eghigian mentions Thomas Szasz, Michel Foucault, Klaus Dörner, Charles Rosen, and Andrew Scull.

⁶³ See, for example Oosterhuis 2014.

The work of Nikolas Rose has been particularly paradigmatic in this respect, for combining the Foucauldian *governmentality* approach to a particular liberal bias as will be discussed in more detail below.

Eghigian's research on the psychological sciences in East Germany has offered both a comparative perspective and an interesting theoretical framework for this study. It also works as a sophisticated and empirically grounded criticism of Rose's claim that psychology and liberalism are inherently intertwined.⁶⁴ As Eghigian writes, under Walter Ulbricht's 'New Economic System' (1963-1969), a new generation of scientists was taken onboard to advance the cause of scientific technological innovation and expertise. These would now be the keys to realising the goals of socialism. Also psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers were recruited, as experts on the psychological and psychopathological causes of deviant behaviour, to help reform and reinvent the 'model' society. Eghigian argues that building the Wall in fact encouraged reformist thinking inside the Party, because they could no longer so readily blame the influence of the west. Instead they were compelled to look 'inward' (both domestically and subjectively) to explain the existence of deviant thinking and behaviour.

Thus, the traditional aversion of Party officials to psychological explanations for social conduct gradually waned in the 1960s. Although the theorists of socialist personality in East Germany seemed to renounce the psychodynamic view of man, the individual (personality) was still invested with a more complicated psychology than it had been previously. Hence, the dual effects of social environment and individual constitution on human behaviour were intrinsically linked in the notion of 'development', understood as being a valid object of psychological investigation with the explicitly articulated goal to support a scientific, knowledge-based construction of socialism.⁶⁵

Importantly, Eghigian suggests that there were similar trends under 20th century communist (and fascist) regimes that have also been detected in the west, i.e., a growing prominence of psychological sciences in various public endeavours, and a concurrent search for psychological explanations of human conduct. Thus, his general argument is that there was a transsystemic tendency across much more of Europe than previously thought, in which psychologists increasingly adopted public roles in the "management of (ab)normality", and adapting human beings to everyday life.⁶⁶ In the background, there was a

⁶⁴ On the heyday of psychoanalysis in early Soviet Russia, see Etkind 1997.

⁶⁵ Eghigian 2006, 185-188; Eghigian 2008, 42, 51; Busse 1993.

⁶⁶ Eghigian 2006, 185. Christine Leuenberger shares this idea in her research on East German psychotherapy. She argues that psychotherapy was quite possibly presented in public as being consistent with the socialist mission. The discourse surrounding how socialism should be built in the GDR also proved to be a significant stimulus for psychology. Both services were provided with socialist society in mind and the more general task of forming "socialist personalities" gave a specific task for psychologists, especially as this "personality" possessed (or ought to possess) distinct social qualities. See Leuenberger 2001.

strong vision that human beings in their various societies could be “known, changed, and managed”.⁶⁷

In my research the question is posed as to whether this general theoretical approach might be used to study the role of the psychological sciences under Hungarian state socialism, as it has not been made in this context as yet. Indeed, regarding such purportedly totalitarian states, the agency of experts and professionals has often been articulated in terms of either ‘collaboration’, ‘resistance’, or ‘acquiescence’. But using these metaphorical terms may ignore how psychology has served in the management of individual differences in very different political projects, and in the consequent transnational developments.

1.2.3 Psychology in one country - a revisionist approach

This study finds its orientation from the revisionist brand of history. I understand revisionism as a general theoretical and methodological approach which avoids constructing the image of the party-state as a monolithic whole with an all-encompassing ability to enforce its will on citizens. Instead it conceptualises the state as a layered entity consisting of different and even conflicting interests.⁶⁸ Furthermore, a revisionist approach stresses the significance of studying local practices and interactions within the institutions of the party-state. In this way it has shown that, in practice, power was exercised unevenly, and in some cases events were even led to some degree from the local level.⁶⁹

The totalitarian narrative became an influential paradigm during the Cold War and remains so, especially in Cold War studies⁷⁰. The narrative has had a life of its own in former socialist countries which have each developed their own way to work with a demanding past.⁷¹ As noted by Barbara J. Falk, the idea of Communism being a monolith based on the dominant Soviet model has been especially persuasive, although it was already being questioned in the 1970s when studies on dissidence were beginning to emerge.⁷² And as K. Horváth suggests, social history - from the 1980s especially (e.g., the work of James C. Scott and Michel de Certeau) - also contributed new perspectives on the relationship between the socialist system and its subjects.⁷³

⁶⁷ Cf. Eghigian (et.al.) 2007.

⁶⁸ Haney 2002, 7, 63; Nisonen-Trnka, 26-27.

⁶⁹ Especially late Mark Pittaway utilised the approach from ‘below’ in his significant work on Hungarian industrial communities after 1945. See Pittaway 2012.

⁷⁰ For the critical view, see Autio-Sarasmo & Miklóssy 2011, 2-4; Yurchak 2005, 4-6; Nisonen-Trnka 2012, 26.

⁷¹ K. Horváth 2006, 37-38.

⁷² Falk 2011, 320-322. As Falk notes, already Gordon H. Skilling in the 1970s not only denied that Communist society was totally penetrated by the party-state but that there were several relatively autonomous fields and interest groups within the privileged elites with their informal behaviours, such as the army and the secret police on the one hand, and the economists, writers, and lawyers, on the other.

⁷³ K. Horváth, 2006, 37-38. Horváth also refers to Barrington Moore’s claim that in totalitarianism there was no space for “experiments concerning the past and the

The totalitarian narrative tends to carry simplified assumptions about the relations between the party-state and its citizens. Riikka Nisonen-Trnka has drawn attention to the way the narrative usually takes the mega-concept of “regime” to evoke an all-encompassing, unified and omnipotent totality, that imposes its will on uniformly atomistic citizens. This can lead to a simplified interpretation of agencies and roles in the regime, which means historical identities are often described in black and white terms (e.g., the dissident as hero), disregarding the possibility of having different, and even conflicting social roles.⁷⁴ In the same vein, cultural anthropologist Alexei Yurchak has noted that assumptions about Soviet socialism often tend to get reduced to an overly simplistic binary metaphor, such as oppression vs. resistance; repression vs. freedom; language vs. counter-language; the public self vs. the private self; the truth vs. lies; reality vs. dissimulation; and corruption vs. morality.⁷⁵

In previous Hungarian research on the relationship between the Party and the intellectuals during the Kádár era, there has also been a somewhat one-sided tendency to focus on either ideology and political control, or dissidence. As the political system was based on the seemingly all-invasive power of the party, the interest of historians has been to show the limited and controlled space of intellectual action, the nature of (self-) censorship, the lack of freedom of expression, and different disciplinary techniques used by the party-state.⁷⁶ Éva Standeisky argues, for instance, that the Kádár era did not actually differ so much from previous Stalinist times because there were still certain taboo questions (e.g., the relationship with the Soviet Union and the role of the dictatorial Party), which meant the “hands of the leading intellectual circles were tied”.⁷⁷ However, a critical question should be asked at this point: if this was indeed so, then how *did* the Stalinist and Kádárist eras differ from each other?

Alejandro Dagfal points out in his research on psychoanalysis under Peronism and anti-Peronism that commonly used political categories, such as “authoritarianism”, “democratic government”, or “dictatorship” have to be carefully put into the local context to find out how these notions relate to the status of psychological forms of knowledge and discursive practice.⁷⁸ Indeed, the question of theoretical gaze becomes crucial if we choose to inquire into the *changing* relationship between Hungarian one-party politics and a particular academic discourse.

One significant aspect of this change, which also affected psychologists’ room for manoeuvre, was the intricate system of the “three Ts” (*tiltott, tűrt, támogatott*), which designated whether statements, activities or events and representations of these were either supported, tolerated, or forbidden. In this

future”. These kinds of simplifications have been increasingly questioned in revisionist scholarship.

⁷⁴ Nisonen-Trnka (2012), 26; See also: Bolton 2012, 13–14.

⁷⁵ Yurchak 2005, 4–8.

⁷⁶ Standeisky 2004; Csizmadia 1995.

⁷⁷ Standeisky 2004, 272.

⁷⁸ Dagfal 2012, 135–136.

system, introduced by the Party soon after 1956, and particularly related to the name of the most powerful cultural politician of the period, György Aczél, slightly unorthodox cultural or scientific representations were allowed to be made public after informal negotiations.⁷⁹ Thus to effectively study the relationship between psychological discourse and political power in Kádárist Hungary, it is clearly necessary to inquire into the fine lines between these three categories; and one significant change that evidently needs to be taken into account was that previously banned psychological discourse was now supported (*támogatott*), or at least accepted (*tűrt*).

The gradual opening of the intellectual sphere, from the early 1960s onwards (followed by repeated political backlashes), has also been discussed mainly from the angle of political control, as a ‘compromise’ between the authorities and intellectuals, or as a system of negotiation at different levels of society.⁸⁰ Valuch suggests it was important to those in power that intellectuals were seen to remain loyal to the party. In exchange for this loyalty, the party then relaxed ideological expectations, and the amount of direct control correspondingly decreased.⁸¹ This narrative thus ascribes the birth of new disciplines such as sociology and psychology, and their integration into the existing context of cultural and political control, as part of a ‘liberalisation’ of the regime, during which the political loyalty of intellectuals was accepted in exchange for a loosening of the state’s ideological grip. Nevertheless, perhaps this kind of approach does not fully take into account the various expectations that were also made of the newly accepted social sciences after 1956.

Indeed, previous research has shown that, at the start of the 1970s, the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party (MSZMP) actually began to allocate *more* resources to the social sciences.⁸² Attila Becskeházi has even shown how sociological discourse became, in many ways, the dominant language of late socialism.⁸³ In addition, research (at home and abroad) has shown how the status of economists changed with the Hungarian economic reform policies of the 1960s.⁸⁴ By the 1970s, the Party wanted to know more about what actually happened in the so-called ‘second economy’ - at the fringes and beyond the state sector.⁸⁵ In this dissertation, I suggest that psychologists also benefited from this wider change in science policy preferences. I argue that MSZMP wanted the backing of psychologists for its social policies to increase the coherence and viability of the state.

Presuppositions about the totalitarian character of one-party dictatorships may have overshadowed the existence of ‘soft’ techniques and practices to produce consent and create political legitimacy. Martin Dimitrov, for example, has studied the role of the “citizen complaint system” in socialist countries as a

⁷⁹ Révész 1997, 82-83, 86.

⁸⁰ Csizmadia 1995, 17-37; Révész 1997, 99-101.

⁸¹ Valuch 2001, 151

⁸² Csizmadia 2001, 112-113.

⁸³ Becskeházi 1992, 115-116.

⁸⁴ Péteri 2002 & 1993; Bockman 2011.

⁸⁵ Sik 1996, 707-708; Germuska 2008, 71.

means for building legitimacy, which offered a peculiar channel of communication between the Party and citizens for a substantial period of time.⁸⁶ As he suggests, maybe we should not be so blinkered in asking only questions that simply focus on why these regimes ended, but perhaps ask instead why they indeed lasted so long. The idea that state socialist systems were doomed to fail, and this was ultimately because of their illiberal political systems, may also partly explain why the psychological sciences in Eastern Europe have been neglected within the historiographic framework of psychology.

János M. Rainer's studies, for example, seem to start with the assumption that these socialist states had many characteristics of a totalitarian regime; one of these being the "Kádárist feeling" peculiar to Hungary after 1956. This allowed people to simultaneously think they lived in the "best of existing worlds" (though maybe not the best of all possible worlds), and that things could get worse (and only worse) at any given moment.⁸⁷ Rainer claims that Kádárism was *only a shift* within the system, and not state socialism endowed with a "special human face" as some of his contemporaries have argued.⁸⁸ Although for a large proportion of ordinary people, socialism became easier to live with, there were still significant continuities from the era before 1956. For instance, the state security services were still an all-powerful presence,⁸⁹ but to suggest there was merely a "shift" in a historical study that purports to be thoroughly investigating change, it is not enough.

As Majtényi points out, the revisionist approach has the power to show that it is not simply the Party, or the behaviour and personality of its leader that are the only factors responsible for consolidating a regime; it is also, in the Foucauldian sense, the people (in this case psychologists) who by their actions accept, transform, and create it. In this respect, it was almost certainly a 'jointly-developed' process to which Kádár adapted.⁹⁰ This emphasis on how power is created might help to explain how, simply by taking part, and thus being complicit, various social groups might well have contributed to the 'human face' of the Kádár regime. In this sense, Eghigian's claim resonates with the wider revisionist agenda; i.e., that the wider problematic of deviance in the

⁸⁶ Dimitrov 2014, 274.

⁸⁷ Rainer 2011, 146. But is this not one of the general conditions of life, i.e., of being aware of how fragile all the things we love in life are? I thank my editor Alex Reed for formulating this point.

⁸⁸ Cf. Majtényi 2013, 671.

⁸⁹ Rainer 2008, 260. Rainer argues that, in many senses, the secret police continued their "usual" practice, which had been learned and internalised before 1956.

⁹⁰ Majtényi 2013, 671–672. The revisionist classics most often mentioned in Soviet studies are Sheila Fitzpatrick and Stephen Kotkin. Fitzpatrick uses Erving Goffman's idea of the "usable self", which demonstrates how citizens used particular identities in their encounters with party-state bureaucracy. Similarly, Choi Chatterjee and Karen Petrone use the term "pragmatic self". As for Kotkin, he has treated Stalinism as a "civilisation", or a particular way of life, where people learned how to "speak Bolshevik" to try to solve their everyday problems. Kotkin also pays attention to the role of symbols, attitudes, and linguistic resources, and to various ways of behaving - even dressing - in public and private life. See Fitzpatrick 2008, 68, *passim*; Chatterjee & Petrone 2008, 976, *passim*; Kotkin 1995, see, for example, 215–223.

GDR was a result of the joint action of psychologists, social workers, and criminal lawyers (for example), who had their own agendas and interests at stake.⁹¹

In Hungary, Sándor Horváth especially has followed the general revisionist approach in his wide-ranging study of everyday life under state socialism. Horváth has published work on several topics of relevance to the present study.⁹² For example, he has studied the socially constructed nature of the “youth problem”, pointing out the layers of practical interests involved in categorising someone as a “hooligan” after 1956. According to Horváth, child and youth protection (*gyermek és ifjúságvédelem*) was most often cited, in the 1960s, in reference to criminal investigations by the police. The police were both promoting their status in society, and answering to political expectations when, for example, they used the politically loaded concept of “gang” (*galéri*) in public. It often happened, that law enforcement authorities constructed the image of an organised (and thus dangerous) groups while the social reality was more likely to have been that they were a peer-group of teenagers.⁹³ A lot of labelling was thus used in the public discourse concerning the topic of youths.

As regards the discourse surrounding child welfare, the experience of the “counter-revolution” was at times used as a reference point. As Horváth notes, there were fears among the political elite that the role adopted by young people in the revolution of 1956 would resurface. Consequently, one of the aims of policies concerning the youth after 1956 was to prevent any kind of conflict arising, and to prevent adolescents from getting involved in any “political questions”.⁹⁴ Besides the police, the tabloids and popular press contributed to the construction of the youth problem - in the interests of selling more newspapers - and this no doubt contributed to the atmosphere of moral ‘panic’. These papers also served as a mirror of those values that were expected from the decent socialist citizen.⁹⁵

In his study entitled “Happiness in two storeys” (*Két emelet boldogság*), Horváth looks at the changes and transformations in Hungarian social policy regimes from the 1950s to the early 1980s, focusing particularly on the local interests and motives revealed in municipal documents from Budapest.⁹⁶ Using this perspective, Horváth ingeniously shows the different meanings attached to the concept of social politics both at state and local levels. It shows that, while the Party decided on various family policies and introduced price supports meant to back up ‘socialist consumership’, its social policy at the local level also intervened in “disadvantageous situations” to address the problems that were seen to truly exist within the framework of socialism.

The socio-economic position of the working class, on the one hand, and child welfare on the other, became once more tied to the agenda of political

⁹¹ Eghigian 2008, 44–45.

⁹² Horváth 2012, 2009, 2005a & 2005b.

⁹³ Horváth 2009, 71.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁹⁵ Horváth 2005a & Horváth 2005b,

⁹⁶ Horváth 2012

decision-making. This was because the political elite needed to legitimise their actions after the shock of 1956, and Soviet comrades also demanded this from them.⁹⁷ As Horváth briefly remarks, the professionalisation of these social political fields also started in the 1960s. Keeping in mind that socialism had, in general, been hostile or at least indifferent to psychological interpretations of social problems up to this point, it may be relevant to ask what role psychologists played in this process. This perspective may prove valuable, for example, in explaining those factors which led to the realisation that the state of mental health in Hungary was rather poor.⁹⁸

Lynne A. Haney's book, *Inventing the Needy: Gender and the Politics of Welfare in Hungary*, has also been an inspiration for the present study.⁹⁹ Haney examines the changes in the state socialist welfare regime from the perspective of gender. She examines the period spanning the 1950s to the 1990s, using methods from history and social anthropology. She focuses on mothers who encountered social workers and child guidance psychologists in their everyday life as women and mothers. She challenges the commonly held view that the Kádár regime withdrew from the private life of its citizens. Namely, she argues that Hungarian welfare state policies actually became closely allied with professional forms of expertise (e.g., psychology) from the 1960s onwards. As a result, new paternalist forms of control and intervention in families were introduced; and in the process, women especially became the targets of "control and care".¹⁰⁰

What is particularly interesting in Haney's research is her argument that psychological discourse and expert agency became very much part of socialist welfare policies after 1956. This "maternalist" regime - as Haney calls it - was supported by psychological experts who provided a form of "quality control" for motherhood, with more sophisticated, professionally-based modern techniques of "surveillance". As Haney indicates, the introduction of child guidance centres was instrumental in professionalising the culture of child-rearing. It provided an alternative to the less flexible "carrot-stick" approach of social workers, and the simplism of the "good mother/bad mother" dichotomy.

With the introduction of Child Guidance Centers, the institutional welfare apparatus [...] was infused with professional models that de-emphasized clients' institutional positions and highlighted their child-rearing acumen. New welfare practices then arose: domesticity tests to gauge maternal competence, psychological exams to ferret out maternal ambivalence, and personality tests to search for deep-seated emotional problems [...].¹⁰¹

Inventing the Needy also contributes to theoretical discussions which are still relevant today. Informed by Nancy Fraser's theories on the politics of the

⁹⁷ Ibid., 28–29, 61–63; Bíró 1999, 83.

⁹⁸ As Horváth notes, many people, who were later active in the 1970s and 1980s in unofficial (and illegal) civil institutions of social care, started their careers in Child Guidance Centres.

⁹⁹ Haney 2002.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 101.

¹⁰¹ Haney 2002, 97; 99–100.

welfare state, Haney depicts the party-state as a multi-layered and even a self-conflicting entity, comprised of both *redistributive* and *interpretive* apparatus.¹⁰² By analytically separating these spheres, she manages to show how state policies, and especially those who implemented them (social workers, psychologists, and other experts), could interpret and define those who were “in need”. She also raises the valuable notion of individuation in an officially collective society. Although public discourses were collectivist in tone, this did not mean that on the everyday level of discursive practices, individuals were not the target. As Haney points out, the preoccupation with ideology in literature up until the 1990s had perhaps been one reason why scholars were unable to explain “the ways citizens related to the state in their everyday lives”.¹⁰³

Despite all the merits of her analysis however, Haney fails to take into account the perspective offered by the history of psychology under the particular conditions of political dictatorship. Therefore, she at times misrepresents the role and status of psychology in Hungary at the time. In my opinion, she somewhat overestimates psychologists’ room for manoeuvre and fails to take into account that they not only manifested forms of expert power but also acted with an intention to heal. Furthermore, perhaps because of her particular focus, she is unable to shed any further light on key elements of Hungarian psychological research tradition.

Hungarian research into the subject really began in 1994, when a state-funded research project was launched to specifically uncover the history of psychology in Hungary during the socialist era. As Gusztáv Lányi writes, the project was undertaken to address the lack of systematic historical work on psychology after 1945. The project set out to study the period from institutional, political, and personal perspectives, so as to go beyond the traditional history of science interested more in theoretical or empirical ‘achievements’ of great scholars.¹⁰⁴ In this spirit, the questions were asked about those institutional power mechanisms that influenced the fate of psychology as a discipline, but also about the ways in which the social, cultural, and political context influenced and shaped the professional careers of psychologists in their respective fields during the socialist era.

The project adopted the periodisation which has traditionally divided the history of psychology after 1945 into three periods: (1) limited freedom (1945-1948); (2) total repression (1949-1956); and (3) the gradual return (*visszatérés*) of psychology and its professionalisation (1957-1975). A fourth possible phase (“of increasing professional differentiation and diffusion”) was consciously left out,

¹⁰² Haney 2002, 7.

¹⁰³ Haney 2002, 63. In order to support her argument at this point, Haney refers to Martha Lampland’s study on the “individuation” of rural workers during the Kádár era. “While the regime trumpeted collective sentiments in its media and propaganda, its everyday techniques of rule targeted individuals; through the piece-rate system, wage policies, and labour surveillance, collectivism gave way to the individuation of workers. It is precisely these kinds of complications that get obscured through purely ideological accounts of the socialist state.”

¹⁰⁴ Lányi 1999, 195–197; Andor & Bodor 1999, 206.

as it was understood to be too close to the present to be properly classed as the *history* of science.¹⁰⁵ Essentially, the periodisation follows the major dividing lines in Hungarian political history after the Second World War. In the present work, this periodisation is also more or less used as a starting point.

In practice, the project begun in 1994 had two ambitious aims. The first aim was to gather, register, and classify all relevant documents and ultimately build a sophisticated database for further use. The register materialised in a CD-ROM produced at the end of the 1990s, but the sophisticated database that was to follow never materialised, in spite of the very best intentions. And unfortunately for the author of this study, even the CD-ROM that was produced has been impossible to obtain. The second ambitious aim was to gather personal narratives from psychologists whose careers coincided with the socialist era. As a concrete result of this valuable work, an anthology, entitled *Önarckép háttérrel* (Self-Portrait with a Background) was published in 1997, consisting of 33 first-person narratives written by psychologists from various subfields of the subject. As all of them were born before 1940, they had first-hand experiences of life under socialism.¹⁰⁶

For very good reasons then, there still remains a lack of comprehensive studies on the history of post-war psychology in Hungary; and notwithstanding a few significant exceptions, there has been little interest in the subject outside the psychological profession. In other words, the history has mostly been written by professional psychologists who have developed a historical interest in their field.¹⁰⁷ As a work of history, this research thus aims to complement and challenge the existing Hungarian research on the topic.

Bearing in mind the significance of psychoanalysis in Hungary, it is no surprise that the history of the movement has quite often been the focus of attention.¹⁰⁸ Zsuzsanna Vajda's research on the educational thinking of the 'Budapest School' of psychoanalysis has served as an important background for this study. Regarding the socialist era, Vajda's research on the psychoanalytically trained child psychologist Alice Hermann has proved to be insightful; investigating the subject not only from the perspective of victims of the system.¹⁰⁹ Like several other authors, she has shown instead that the psychoanalytic tradition in Hungary managed to live and develop in spite of the hiatus of WWII and the initially hostile political conditions of a socialist dictatorship following this. By so doing, it also served as a model and an

¹⁰⁵ Lányi 1999, 196.

¹⁰⁶ Bodor, Pléh & Lányi 1997.

¹⁰⁷ Some of the most important exceptions are: K. Horváth 2011 & 2006; Gál 2013; Kovai 2010; Sáska 2008a & 2008b.

¹⁰⁸ Erős 2011; Mészáros 2010; Hidas 1997; Harmat 1986. On psychoanalysis in the Austro-Hungarian army during the World War I, see Erős 2010. Although Pál Harmat's book mainly deals with the most famous early decades of the Hungarian psychoanalytic movement, it has also provided some important pieces of information concerning the socialist period. Despite that Harmat produces a rather clear-cut divide between the "good guys" and the "bad guys", its love for names and publications have helped in mapping the field.

¹⁰⁹ Vajda 1999, 1996 & 1995.

inspiration for other psychoanalytic movements in the Eastern Bloc.¹¹⁰ Vajda suggests that Hermann's case shows that active manoeuvring and self-motivated action was possible "even in the conditions of dictatorship". These manoeuvres ranged from active collaboration with the regime to total withdrawal from the professional field.¹¹¹

Social psychologist Ferenc Mérei (1909-1986) comes up most frequently in Hungarian historiography. Mérei's life and work has been studied by Anna Borgos, Ferenc Erős and Zsolt K. Horváth.¹¹² Mérei was a pioneer of socially oriented (*társas*) child psychology, but his professional activities extended also to clinical psychology, psychodrama and the psychology of art.¹¹³ As Erős has pointed out, Mérei's work represents a particular Eastern Central European variant of "role-hybridisation" which, historically, has also been common in social psychology.¹¹⁴ Due to his significance in Hungarian psychology after the war, Mérei is unavoidably present in this study too, especially in the last chapter.

A common thread that often seems to connect the narratives on Hungarian psychology in the socialist era is the motive of *survival*, expressed either in cynical or heroic terms. For example, in Gusztáv Lányi's research on the political and ideological constraints laid on psychologists under socialism, the professionals are often seen as resorting to various tactics of survival. According to Lányi, the experience of suppression during the Rákosi period caused "self-protecting" reflexes that remained steadfastly anchored in psychologists' minds thereafter for a long time.¹¹⁵ Thus, they tried to safeguard their respective fields from political attacks by resorting to "tactical mimicry".¹¹⁶ Lányi mentions two seminal cases. The first was the Pavlovisation of "Wundtian traditions", manifested in the work of leading Hungarian experimental psychologist Lajos Kardos, the other tactical mimicry was the social psychologist Ferenc Pataki's use of Anton Makarenko's pedagogics to 'save' psychology.¹¹⁷ It seems pertinent to ask here if there was a peculiar tactic of over-reassurance at play - a kind of internalised need to over-protect oneself from criticism which was liable to come, but from which quarter was hard to say.

¹¹⁰ For a general review on Psychoanalysis in State Socialist Poland, see Aleksandrowicz 2009.

¹¹¹ Vajda 1999, 157-158.

¹¹² Borgos 2006; Erős 2006 & 1993; K. Horváth 2011 & 2006.

¹¹³ On Mérei's child psychology, as told by two of his close associates, see Binét 1989; Nemes 2006.

¹¹⁴ Erős 2006, 129-130.

¹¹⁵ In the Hungarian imagination, this notion of "self-protective" reflexes may also relate to the discussion on the lack of socially critical psychology in Hungary. As Pál Harmat claimed in the Hungarian emigrant journal *Magyar Füzetek* in 1984, Hungarian psychology was "as scared of politics as it was of fire". See: Harmat 1984.

¹¹⁶ Lányi 1998, 228. Regarding "tactical mimicry" in social psychology, see Csepeli 2006, 61-76.

¹¹⁷ Lányi 1998, 228-229. As both Kardos and Pataki appear later in this research, they are not introduced here further.

Lányi goes on to note that, in a “paradoxical way”, strong ideological tones were used to legitimise psychology in the 1960s in almost the same way as they had been used to practically abolish it previously under the Stalinist political atmosphere. In the same vein he argues that by “dressing up” ideological trends sufficiently, it was possible to safeguard the professional interests of the field. This ideological ‘acting out’ is treated by Lányi with a mixture of irony and cynicism: for example, he describes the psychologists who did this as attempting to “redeem a place in the kingdom of the righteous”. Then, just to leave no doubt, Lányi then sticks the knife in a little further when he indicates that this kind of compromise with the regime meant psychologists would eventually “lose their [true professional] identities”. Indeed, especially in early state socialism, he argues that psychology was forced to be the “maid” (*szolgálólány*) of socialist education, with the result that psychologists did not even call themselves psychologists any more.¹¹⁸ Hence Lányi’s perspective portrays true scholarship as being a victim of the political context, with the end result that psychologists are forced to sacrifice their academic integrity.

These notions uncover valuable insights into some of the social and political realities experienced in the socialist era. However, the story they tell is clearly one-sided. Most of the existing narratives approach the history of psychology from the narrow perspective of how the academic discipline has evolved, including perhaps the interventions from outside that hindered the development of ‘true’ science. Hence, psychology in the socialist era is mostly described as “hiding” (*rejtőzködni*), or waiting out the storm for better times to come. Furthermore, the narratives often make distinctions that facilitate dividing the past social and political field into clear camps in line with traditional historiography of the Cold War era.

Csaba Pléh has probably done the most to disseminate the history of Hungarian psychology among a wider audience. His wide-ranging research looks at the history of psychology and science studies from a comparative perspective. Perhaps his most important work, in this sense, is the comprehensive *Lélektan története* (The History of Psychology¹¹⁹), which for the author of this study has served as an important tool for placing Hungarian psychology in the wider European context. Pléh’s approach to the history of psychology is theoretically inviting as it pays attention to the *social field* of psychological knowledge production. In doing this, he also follows on (in the sociology of science context) from the so-called ‘Strong Programme’ of the Edinburgh School in this field.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Lányi 1998, 233.

¹¹⁹ Pléh 2010.

¹²⁰ One of the starting points of the Strong Programme is impartiality, meaning that not only the social and political genesis of clearly pseudo-scientific and false theories should be studied (e.g., the case of Lysenko and Michurin), but rather that the development of scientific theories in general is understood to be socially and culturally conditioned by, for example, social interests and personal networks. See Bloor 1976, Introduction.

As Pléh has shown, Hungarian psychology developed three different “role-hybridisations”¹²¹ from the turn of the 20th century onwards, giving birth to a distinctive Eastern Central European profile. Firstly, there was the emerging *academic tradition* (Géza Révész, Pál Ranschburg, etc.), that became combined with a practical orientation.¹²² Secondly, the *functionalist tradition* strongly oriented itself to questions of education and the problems associated with socially adapting to a modern urban life. It was child-centred (e.g. László Nagy), community-oriented, and more or less reform-minded, sometimes radically so. Thirdly, the *psychoanalytic tradition* had an Eastern Central European flavour, in a clinical approach that stressed the role of life history in the genesis of sickness. In Hungary, psychoanalysis also had a visible educational orientation.¹²³

One recurring theme in Pléh’s work on psychology in socialist Hungary, has been about continuity vs. interruption. One could certainly argue that there was a clean break between the pre-socialist and socialist eras by the fact - noted by Pléh already in 1979 - that in the psychological literature published in the period 1958-1975, there was not a single mention of those who were not contemporary.¹²⁴ Significantly enough, although this clearly illustrates the idea that history’s “winners always wipe out the past”, there remains the definite possibility that once influential role-models could still be discussed among informal networks of students and people outside official science. In other words, these influences were present but not cited.

Of particular interest to the present study are Pléh’s descriptions of the psychological field and its dynamics vs. the field of power and ideology, particularly with regard to the role of negative competition (see chapter 2). He also highlights the significant role of informal networks in psychology, competing visions of scientific progress, and the issue of activity vs. passivity in theories of human behaviour and cognition. Regarding the latter, Pléh utilises the ideas of the Edinburgh School by using the notion of “social symbolic” to stress those often invisible ways in which scientific theories enter the social world. For example, interpreting perception as an active process in the 1960s could be seen as a major leap forward from the official standpoint which maintained that, according to Leninist mirror theory, perception was just the passive intake of information.¹²⁵

The ‘bad guys’, in Pléh’s estimation, were evidently those psychologists close to the establishment who usually shared the official idea that the

¹²¹ Joseph Ben-David and Randall Collins popularised this term in the 1960s in discussing the origins of experimental psychology. They presented a model that drew on the particular historical context of 19th century German academia. They argued that higher status scientists (physiologists) left their competitive home base for the less competitive pastures of philosophy, which had a lower status at the time. This gave birth to experimental psychology. See Hess 1997, 73–74.

¹²² For example, experimental psychologist Pál Ranschburg established the “Hungarian Royal Psychological Laboratory” in 1902. In the institute, retarded children were both treated and studied.

¹²³ Pléh 2003, 161.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 162.

¹²⁵ Pléh 2008, 183–184.

foundations for social order had already been laid. According to Pléh, this vision of society was hierarchical, and often coincided with a passive image of mankind. Thus psychological theories could be at odds with one another, as they implicitly represented competing social ideals. But perhaps the notion of activity should be seen as part of the more general (revisionist) reassessment of socialist history (i.e., the question of the active vs. passive/atomised man). But, as mentioned earlier, we must also bear in mind that this might oversimplify the greyer shades of historical reality (in which people often had seemingly contradictory roles at the same time) into a convenient black and white.¹²⁶ This idea, of the social symbolic in science, is elaborated further in chapter 4.

According to Pléh, there were also those who felt the need to depoliticise the field in order to safeguard their profession. This created a distinctive social dynamic after 1956. Particularly the more experimentally oriented psychologists did not want serious and scientifically solid psychology muddied by Marxist reinterpretations. This was a key struggle for what constituted ‘proper and relevant’ social and political progress. Experimental psychologists saw it as being more autonomy for science, while Neo-Marxists saw it as being a more ‘active’ political man. However, as Pléh indicates, the unwelcoming attitude of many psychologists towards Marxism in psychology perhaps stemmed more from the recent experience of professional discrimination.¹²⁷

These differences eventually became epistemological disputes. As Zsolt K. Horváth notes, a particular type of positivist ethos became a distinct characteristic of Eastern Central European social sciences, as it began to look beyond just the politically and ideologically constructed vision of society disseminated by the Party.¹²⁸ Pléh, for example, points out that many psychologists were in fact quite suspicious of the *social construction of knowledge* theory which was fashionable in many Western circles from the 1960s onwards (e.g., Berger & Luckmann). Just the idea itself was seen by them to threaten the autonomy of science.

1.3 Sources and methods

The source material of this work consists of archival documents produced by various organs of the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party (MSZMP) and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA); published and unpublished psychological articles; reports and other discourses; autobiographies; and interviews. Some practical difficulties related to the availability of the source material should be mentioned here, since they somewhat dictated the choices

¹²⁶ See, for example, Falk 2011, 321–322.

¹²⁷ Pléh 2008, 191–192.

¹²⁸ Horváth argues that contemporary Hungarian socio-reports and sociological research insisted on cognitive realism in the absence of a proper public sphere, and were thus implicitly claiming that the political elite were ignoring the reality of social conditions. This also became an ethical vocation for intellectuals. See Horváth 2014, *passim*.

made during the research process. For example, the fact that the papers of the Institute for Psychology within the MTA are not catalogued and preserved in any one archive designated for that purpose (in practice, the existing files are scattered among a number of offices, shelves and drawers around Budapest), has meant I have not been able to focus on the strictly institutional evolution of the psychological sciences in Hungary. This was also one reason for the decision not to focus solely on some particular organisation or institution of psychology as a *case* (e.g., work psychology laboratories, or child guidance centres).

Furthermore, although the archives of the Hungarian Psychological Association are preserved in the University of ELTE, they are not catalogued either. This would have meant much longer stays in Budapest than would have been possible to find all the relevant documents. Thus, I quite early on decided that digging deeper into these documents to reveal more about the institutional side might not be so relevant for my approach. One more limitation also has to be mentioned here. Namely, the documents of the so-called 'Pavlov Committee' (established in 1952), and working under the auspices of the 5th Scientific Department of the MTA, are also missing from the archives of the MTA. This is unfortunate since the task of this short-lived organ was to control and guide the development of psychology towards the Pavlovian integration of biological and psychological sciences. Some traces of its work have remained, however.¹²⁹

Psychology was initially a marginal field in the wider framework of communist science policy preferences. The priority was instead on the natural sciences, engineering, and - due to the economic orientation of reforms that were particular to Hungary - economics in the era of 'scientific and technological revolution'. This lack of interest among the political decision-makers would explain, as Andor & Bodor have remarked, the very small number of Party documents immediately related to the political control of psychology in the 1960s.¹³⁰ In this book I have used various resolutions, reports and memoranda produced by or for those central controlling organs of the Party which were responsible for issues related to psychology. These were the Agitation and Propaganda Committee (or Department), and the Department of Science, Culture and Public Education. Many of those documents that are preserved in the archives of the MTA, were also found in the MSZMP archives. One relevant exception was some documentation from the Psychology Committee (*Pszichológiai Bizottság*), but it could only be used in some cases as the archives had not been systematically preserved.

Of all these sources, the most widely used is psychological discourse published in academic journals, popular books, and periodicals, such as *Magyar Pszichológiai Szemle* and *Valóság*, or produced via more informal sites for restricted use. Because of the existing system used to control, harness, and use the public sphere, there have been significant differences between the status of texts published in different contexts. For example, if psychological discourse

¹²⁹ See, for example Zádor 2000.

¹³⁰ Andor & Bodor 1999.

was published in the leading ideological journal *Társadalmi Szemle*, it was both a significant act in itself and a product of various editorial processes (regardless of the quality of science in the article); while the journal *Valóság* represented the Association for the Popularisation of Science, and due to its liberal editorship was also a platform for analytical, and even critical public discussions in the 1960s (e.g., on alienation¹³¹). This journal was also an important medium for disseminating information on the latest developments in western social psychology, anthropology, and sociology.¹³²

Some of the analyzed texts are not psychological in the academic sense but rather linked to some more general topic in which psychologists were involved. This is the case, for example, with the documents produced by the so-called 'National Council of Child and Youth Protection' (established in 1957). Some critical remarks about these sources need to be made at this point. With some texts (party reports, for example), it is almost impossible to disentangle all the voices which potentially influenced the final outcome. Such questions as who decided on the formulations in some resolution, what kind of discussion was "hidden" behind the final document, and even who wrote them, are at times difficult to answer.

As additional source material, I have used 33 autobiographical narratives, published as an anthology entitled *Önarckép háttérrel: Magyar pszichológusok önéletrajzi írásai*.¹³³ The narratives (or "self-portraits") were gathered in the early to mid-1990s by the editors of the anthology. All the psychologists, for whom questions were sent, were born before 1940, and were chosen by the editors so that it would be comprehensive in scale.¹³⁴ As noted earlier, the anthology was produced as a part of a wider research project into the history of the psychological profession in Hungary after WWII.

As the editors state in the introduction to the book, the narratives are interesting not only for reconstructing the history of a scientific discipline in one country. They are also valuable because the personal starting point widens the perspective to include various institutions in which the psychologists in question worked in their careers. Therefore, the narratives offer a glimpse of the history of the profession.¹³⁵ In substance, the narratives tell of difficult, often very banal conditions that the authoritarian one-party regime (and its

¹³¹ The sociologist András Hegedüs started the public discussion about bureaucracy and alienation under socialism in 1964. The discussion was greatly influenced by the publication of Karl Marx's early 'anthropological' work, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, which came out in Hungarian in 1962. For more on Hungarian political thinking in the 1960s, see Kovács 2004, 216-222.

¹³² On editorial processes and censorship in *Valóság*, see Kőrösi 2010, 140-143.

¹³³ Bodor, Pléh & Lányi (eds.) 1997.

¹³⁴ There were six questions asked. (1) How and why did you become a psychologist? (2) What makes a psychologist (do psychologists have characteristic personality features)? (3) What or who influenced you intellectually and personally, within or from outside the world of the academia? (4) What intellectual movements or schools of thought have influenced Hungarian psychology? (5) How have social, political and institutional changes during the past decades in Hungary affected your professional career? (6) What were the institutions in which you found meaningful roles and pleasant working environments during socialism?

¹³⁵ Bodor, Pléh & Lányi (eds.) 1997, 7.

bureaucratic practices) put the psychological sciences through. These experiences are seen from the point of view of both academic and applied psychology, although the emphasis throughout is on the difficult conditions and the survival strategies applied in these conditions. Thus, several psychologists have told a history of working silently and stubbornly in hostile or indifferent conditions. Another point made is that psychology had great traditions in Hungary, and yet these were partly or totally forgotten after the Stalinist break, although informally preserved in some fields, for example in psychoanalysis.

Some of the narrators have adopted a personal style, while others are clearly avoiding the more difficult or delicate issues, insisting that factors external to science are irrelevant. This makes the material methodologically quite challenging for the historian, especially as it was collected in the aftermath of the change of system in 1989-1990. Because of this historical break, bridging the gap between now and then has meant that the narratives, as works of memory, need to be analyzed carefully. We need to be particularly conscious of the ways in which the narratives might have been influenced by feeling the need to identify with a particular political or professional persona within the new post-socialist context.¹³⁶

This research combines approaches from intellectual history, political history, and the history of science with the methodology of *multi-sited* text-analysis. This is because psychological expert discourses were disseminated in different public, semi-public, or non-public sites; and as psychologists were conceptualising such themes as “personality”, “abnormality”, “adaptation”, and individual “autonomy” vs. the “community” in various ways, a multi-sited approach seemed to have clear advantages. Firstly, because it involves a careful contextual interpretation, it can help to find previously hidden articulations and motives. Secondly, paying attention to psychological texts which were produced for different uses, and according to different rules, it is possible to show the real variety of voices and positions which have previously been ignored. In short, the analysis of an intentionally ‘eclectic’ variety of documents is carried out in order to pinpoint the existence of several voices in the past.

A particular methodological problem relates to the analysis of published texts with clear ideological tones, i.e., they operate within a socialist linguistic space. An interesting tool for analysing texts in such a context is offered by Alexei Yurchak in his book *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*.¹³⁷ The starting point for Yurchak is the paradox of why

¹³⁶ The influence of the changed environment is also suggested by Christine Leuenberger who has studied the history of East German psychotherapy. According to Leuenberger, psychotherapists from the former GDR, who were now narrating about the past in a new political and professional environment, used the post-socialist context as an “interpretative resource” in their narratives. According to Leuenberger, the discourse by former East European psychologists about the meaning of the socialist past for their field has tended to be intertwined with the social, professional, and intellectual concerns of these psychologists after 1989. See Leuenberger 2001.

¹³⁷ Yurchak 2005.

the fall of the Soviet Union was totally unexpected and yet, at the same time, not particularly surprising for the younger generation that experienced it in their thirties. Keeping this in mind, Yurchak sets to elaborate the paradox by studying discourses from the late socialist era in their various institutional and cultural contexts, from party meetings at different levels to various fields of official and alternative culture, especially keeping in mind the *performative* dimension of language.

Yurchak argues that during the Brezhnev era the dominant Marxist-Leninist language was “ritualized”. In his opinion, this language became imminent, static and fixed. As the dominant discourse was thus endlessly repeated on different occasions (e.g., in celebratory speeches, and in the minutes of party meetings), the ritual and performative dimension of the language became more central than what was actually meant to be conveyed otherwise (constative dimension). In other words, although one could hear the same ideological slogans over and over again, this did not mean the people who used them actually denoted something that existed in reality, but rather used these familiar phrases in their own ways and to their own ends for their “performances”. This, in turn, opened the possibility for unexpected and uncontrolled meanings.

Yurchak’s argument is that after the death of Stalin (the “great editor”), political culture was influenced by transformations in what he calls the “discursive regime”. In this regime, for the reader or receiver of the message, it became *less* important to read ideological representations for literal (referential) meanings than to understand their performative side, i.e., the speech act itself and its conditions of production (the author, the medium, etc.). Referring to Pierre Bourdieu, he notes that the power of a speech act resides in the institutional conditions of its production and reception. The anti-Stalinist situation was thus in many ways defined by the lack of a final word, which had previously been uttered by the great man himself. Because of this, the discursive regime - even if it seemed to be just as conventional, ritualised and ideological as before - was now open to more unexpected interpretations.¹³⁸

This research follows Yurchak’s theoretical propositions in two ways. Firstly, it assumes that there were psychologists whose positions and messages were clearly influenced by both the political and academic ramifications of what they uttered. For example, by faithfully reproducing the prevalent forms

¹³⁸ Yurchak also challenges the famous view expressed by Vaclav Havel in his book *Power of the Powerless* (1978/1986). Havel famously used the example of the shopkeeper who does not believe in the system at all but still hangs a sign on his door saying “All the workers of the world, let us unite!”, claiming that people publicly acted as if they supported ideological slogans but privately knew they were fake. In other words, they were “actors” or “dissimulators”, and this role was adopted so they could live their private lives in peace. Yurchak’s challenge is epistemological: how is it possible to say that people have some authentic knowledge of reality before they conceptualise it? He believes Havel’s statement presumes that the people who lived under totalitarian/authoritarian conditions knew from the beginning what life was *really* like, and because of this, they could go on pretending. Yurchak suggests that Havel is ignoring the possibility that language may construct reality.

of ideological language they managed to inhabit the position of “authorized spokesperson” (Bourdieu), and in so doing became endowed with a form of “delegated power”. This notion may be especially relevant for those people who were both insiders and outsiders; and in Hungarian political culture there were indeed professionals who adopted this kind of intermediate, blurred position. Secondly, the resources (or linguistic conventions) offered by the socialist discursive regime were now also actually *used* to get the message through. In other words, even if phrases and concepts were still ideologically loaded, they could now be used by psychologists in safe and possibly effective ways.

The political dimensions in these texts are disentangled by carefully contextualising them with their respective environments, and with the discussion they were meant to belong to. Not only is it important who wrote the texts, but in what kind of institutional environment and for whom they were written. There were also certain preconditions and presuppositions for public utterances that were clear to those who participated in the discussions. It is crucial to see that some of these concepts (i.e., *rendellenes személyiség*; Eng. ‘abnormal personality’) may have appeared as scientifically neutral descriptions of the state of things, but in fact they carried normative judgments, so in this respect they are both *representational* and *normative*. According to Quentin Skinner, by rhetorically manipulating the reference points of these kinds of terms societies create, maintain, question, and change their moral identities.¹³⁹

Thus, I study this discourse as a rational, intentional mode of speech which at times moralises, especially in cases when the author’s point seems to be that the state of “ideal man” (*embereszmény*) is threatened by prevailing conditions, be they parents’ educational methods or deeper social structures. In this sense, the method used here could be described as ‘eavesdropping’ on past discussions (cf., Stephan Collini) to disentangle how experts in the margins of psychology took the opportunity to use their knowledge-based claims to suggest social reforms for Hungary.

Another Skinnerian approach is to study the rationality of these texts in terms of the rationality of the historical actors themselves.¹⁴⁰ Skinner sees that the intellectual historians may have a tendency to seek those mechanisms which hinder people in the past from seeing the folly of their own beliefs, i.e., their irrationality. Perhaps this kind of approach almost naturally follows as one encounters the socialist context, which has often been seen as polluted by ideology. Although it is a valuable consideration that intellectuals who represented politically delicate fields may have resorted to various rhetorical means to make their point, there remains the danger that there is then a pressure to constantly read between the lines, searching for hidden messages or sensing the psychological pressure caused by repression. Hence, Skinner’s notion about the “convention of truthfulness” should at least be considered, if

¹³⁹ Skinner 2002, 149.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 31.

not rigorously observed here. This means that it may sometimes also be relevant to simply study the texts as they are.¹⁴¹

In this research, psychology is conceptualised as a special form of expert discourse. According to Nikolas Rose, to best understand the historical genesis of psychology as a discipline and as discourse, it is not enough to refer to the professional strategies and interests of experts trying to enhance their economic and moral status, or to claim that they promoted knowledge-claims with an aim to securing exclusive control in their field of interest. As Rose notes, we should also inquire into the social and political conditions of different actors' shared interests while they were engaged with the "reform of conduct" (educators, psychologists, politicians etc.). In this approach the genesis of psychological discourse itself is problematised by asking what factors actually caused that various social problems became identified with psychological terms.¹⁴²

Rose places the historical emergence of psychology as a distinctive scientific language within the late 19th century context of *liberal* governmentality. According to Rose, the birth of psychology was intimately linked to the process of building modern (western) states and societies. The need to achieve social and economic objectives was understood to be dependent on individuals and their abilities. Thus, the question that begged an answer was how these attributes should be "coordinated with one another and how those 'lacking' could be identified and excluded".¹⁴³ For the government of a population, national economy, enterprise or a family, it was necessary to have a language with which to represent the governed domain, its core processes and main characteristics. Psychiatry, psychology, and psychoanalysis, claims Rose, provided the means for the "translation of human subjectivity" into the new languages used to govern schools, prisons, factories, the labour market, and the economy.¹⁴⁴ In other words, Rose stresses the role of psychological discourse in *inventing* new dimensions of reality for policies of social control.

Rose's thesis about the inherent connection between psychology and the modern liberal project has been criticised in the light of historical evidence.¹⁴⁵ For example, Adrian C. Brock has argued that Rose has a theoretical bias which ignores that psychological discourses were also invented in (illiberal) state socialist regimes. As Brock writes, his general argument is based on an idea that liberal "governmentality" has an aversion to the direct exercise of political power, and because of this, citizens have to be ruled in less direct ways.¹⁴⁶ However, the mere existence of a particularly East German psychological society proved for Brock that Rose was mistaken.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 41.

¹⁴² Rose 1998, 84.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 101–102.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 102.

¹⁴⁵ For a critical view on Rose's idea that psychology has a special affinity especially with the liberal political system: Brock 2006. See also: Eghigian 2006, 184.

¹⁴⁶ Brock 2006, 152.

These statements were made in a particular context. The chapter [in *Governing the Soul*] is based on a paper that Rose gave at the conference in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) in 1990. I was present at the conference and could not resist the temptation to point out that Rose's audience consisted mainly of East German psychologists; that the discipline was flourishing in the GDR; and there had been no need for liberal democracy for that situation to occur. I could say that with confidence because I had been an exchange student of psychology at the University of Leipzig and had previously attended other conferences in the GDR. It seemed to me Rose had wandered into a situation he did not understand.¹⁴⁷

As Brock continues, although the majority of psychologists in the world have traditionally been living in liberal democracies it does not necessarily mean that there is a causal connection between liberal democracy and the emergence of psychological discourse,¹⁴⁸ and Hungary is a case in point. Notwithstanding this critique, Rose's arguments provide a useful interpretive framework for this study, especially as he approaches the historical emergence of psychology as a socially and politically conditioned process which takes into account the various dimensions involved, thus treating psychology both as an academic discourse (language) and a particular form of power-related expertise.

1.4 Historical Background

In the new world, psychology feverishly searched for its position and tried to assert its right to exist. The psychoanalysts stepped onto the podium and presented an orientation for the future: what could be 'more materialist than Freudianism'? The disappointment was huge: they were first to be submerged into the depths of 'western decadent bourgeois tendencies'.¹⁴⁹

Just as in other countries that eventually found themselves in the Eastern bloc, social and political changes deeply influenced the character of Hungary's psychological sciences and their discourse in the 20th century. From the early decades of the century, the whole region experienced political upheavals that brought forth the conditions in which a distinctive form of this knowledge and expertise was practiced and articulated.¹⁵⁰ After the First World War, authoritarian or totalitarian regimes and different political ideologies followed one after the other, narrowing the space for autonomous scholarly action, and causing repeated waves of emigration. In Hungary especially, systemic anti-

¹⁴⁷ Brock 2006, 153.

¹⁴⁸ Brock sets forth a counter-argument based on his own research on psychology in Cuba. As he shows, there was no psychology as a separate academic discipline in the country before the 1959 revolution, on the contrary, it was understood as something "esoteric" and separated from common social concerns. While Rose had predicted that the "demise of socialism would lead to the growth of psychology in the former socialist countries", in the Cuban case it was possible to see how Socialism in fact led to the establishment of psychology by founding the institutions needed for its growth. See Brock 2006, 155–158.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Éva P. Bakay's autobiographical narrative. In: Bodor (et.al) 1997, 208.

¹⁵⁰ See, for example: Promitzer, Trubeta, Turda (eds.) (2011); on psychological conceptualisation of the "national character" in Hungary with a comparative edge, see Trencsényi 2013.

semitism influenced the decisions of countless intellectuals at the time.¹⁵¹ In this way, prevailing political conditions have had a significant effect on the psychological sciences in Hungary, not only bringing forward distinctive intellectual roles and orientations, but also seriously isolating its academic community with breaks in academic traditions and continuity.¹⁵² Given the repeated politicisation of knowledge, the social and human sciences in Hungary have been repeatedly invested with various political and ideological meanings and roles.

* * *

After the Second World War, Hungary was economically and politically in ruins. As an ally of National Socialist Germany, the country was one of the losers from the war. One concrete manifestation of this was that Hungary had to pay huge war reparations not only to the Soviet Union, but also to Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.¹⁵³ Furthermore, it had to provide for the thousand members of the Allied Control Commission, as well as those parts of the Red Army that were in Hungarian territory.¹⁵⁴ The often undisciplined soldiers of the occupying army were regularly accused of committing serious crimes (mass rapes, lootings), and soon their presence became a hated fact.¹⁵⁵

The social and economic situation was catastrophic, especially in Budapest where there was no fuel and people were going hungry. As Péter Kenez notes, most Hungarians saw the casual looting by Soviet soldiers and the war reparations that needed to be paid to the USSR as two sides of the same coin. Indeed, in the immediate post-war years the general misery was increased by the fact that Soviet policy seemed to be to squeeze everything they could out of the Hungarians: the deliveries to the Soviet Union placed such a heavy burden on factories that they could not then produce enough for domestic consumption.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵¹ Already in 1919 and 1920, in response to the White Terror that followed the failed Hungarian Commune, such prominent intellectuals as Ede Teller, Leo Szilárd, János Neumann, Károly Mannheim, René A. Spitz, Melanie Klein, and Margaret Mahler left Hungary, to name but a few. The second wave of emigration started after the anti-Jewish laws were passed in 1938, 1939, and 1941. For example, Géza Róheim and the Bálint couple were psychoanalysts who emigrated in the late 1930s. See Mészáros 2010, 604–605. On Hungarian anti-semitism during the interwar period, see Ungváry 2013.

¹⁵² Pléh 2003, 162.

¹⁵³ Kenez 2006, 61–64, 70–80.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.* The British and Americans were mere observers in the ACC, which in practice was an instrument of Soviet domination. In the ACC, the Soviet contingent was the largest (800 men) and also the most expensive, but also the Allies sent all their bills straight to the Hungarian government.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 42–26.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 70–72, 77. The situation was aggravated by the fact that the USSR claimed all German property in Hungarian territory. Germans had been deeply involved in the Hungarian economy before and during the war, as Hungarian industry had supported the German war effort. In addition, heavy industry had particularly suffered as the retreating Germans took ships, trucks, and railroad stock to Germany.

As factories were unable to produce enough goods for domestic consumption, farmers increasingly did not want to sell their foodstuffs to cities, because there was hardly anything to buy in exchange. Thus, the coalition government, increasingly dominated by the communists, had to interfere in every aspect of industrial production, not only because of the war reparations, but also to ensure that the market would somehow normalise and people be provided with basic necessities. In 1946, Hungary also experienced the greatest inflation in the world, which also strongly encouraged the government to intervene in every sphere of the economy.¹⁵⁷

Without overstressing these extra burdens weighing down on Hungary, its political and geographical position, both during and after the war significantly restricted the options that were available. In this respect, György Péteri draws attention to the post-war reconstruction of Eastern Central European institutions of science and higher learning before the Soviet takeover, as a case in point. Because Hungary had fought and lost the war on the side of the Nazis, private support from the west to aid in this work was less forthcoming than it was for counterpart institutions in, for instance, Poland and Czechoslovakia.¹⁵⁸

In the midst of generally miserable conditions, intellectual and political life nevertheless seemed dynamic and optimistic.¹⁵⁹ The psychological profession revived quickly, adopting a clearly progressive and leftist public character; and those representatives of the internationally significant Budapest School of Psychoanalysis, who had not already emigrated or been killed in wartime, assumed the leadership of many public institutions of mental health and education.¹⁶⁰ Psychologists had a stake in reforming educational policy and the school system on the basis of social and cultural equality. Unlike in the 1920s and 1930s, when politicians had formulated the state's educational policy, psychologists and educational scientists were now at the forefront.¹⁶¹ Also the means for conducting research into public opinion was established, largely based on renowned western models but adapted to Hungarian circumstances. With the new political configuration beginning to take shape after the moral and political bankruptcy of the old system psychologists were also asked to

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 121–122.

¹⁵⁸ David-Fox & Péteri (eds.) 2000, 211–214.

¹⁵⁹ Despite the difficulties, reconstruction started in a generally optimistic and future-oriented spirit. In Budapest, rubbles were cleaned of the streets, some of the exploded bridges were built, and public transport resumed quickly.

¹⁶⁰ Mészáros 2010, 608–611; Harmat 1986, 246–259.

¹⁶¹ Sáska 2008c, 6. As Sáska notes, reform-pedagogics was by no means an invention of the postwar period but rather a tradition with its roots back in the early 20th century, that had been promoted across the political spectrum. Thus, after 1945, even those who had just been bandying around racist terms, found themselves writing positively about educational experiments in the Soviet Union or Weimar Germany in the 1920s. Thus, for a short while before the communist takeover in 1947/1948, social democrats, communists, and even nationalist-idealist social psychological thinkers (e.g., Sándor Karácsony) found common ground in socialist, democratic and child-centred education.

help in choosing new public servants to replace those compromised by being part of the former regime.¹⁶²

One eminent figure in this brief period was social psychologist Ferenc Mérei. As described by his wife, special educator Véra Mérei (1916–2007) in an interview for the Oral History Archives, the bleakness of the situation at that time seemed to encourage future-oriented work.¹⁶³ Particularly those leftist-progressive psychologists and other intellectuals whose position in the former regime had been insecure (e.g., due to anti-semitism), saw the general political conditions as promising. Mérei quotes a letter sent by her husband to a friend in Brazil, who seemed to be considering returning to his home country.

Ferenc Mérei wrote that he “worked hard and lived uncomfortably”, as was generally the case with the intellectuals and white-collar workers in a country which had lost the war. But now he believed there were “objective possibilities” for big achievements like never before. He told his friend in Brazil that there was now the chance to “start from scratch” (*semmiből teremtés*). For a Jew who had returned from the labour camp in an armoured Soviet convoy, the sense of freedom and “independence”, and the “safety of the future” compensated for the huge difficulties caused by poverty and general destitution:

[A]fter all the bloodstained experiences, in the midst of this awesome transformation which generates illustrious careers from nothing, I feel that I have stayed loyal to something, to this life-giving air of independence [...] we belong to those who believe and heroically bear the low standard of living. The safety of the future is an enormous compensation. In the old world this did not exist [...]. Those who live here without smuggling or collecting dollars can experience things they have never experienced before. This country is ours, and more exactly ours, too! We feel joy for the good harvest. We count the increase in coal production. The police protect us, and arranges our things in the offices, too. Total equality! [...] I know that there is another side of things, but all that is irrelevant [...].¹⁶⁴

* * *

After 1946, the Hungarian communists adopted the aggressive policy of removing those who resisted their agendas one by one from the political scene. They were led by Mátyás Rákosi - Stalin's best 'pupil'. These 'salami tactics' were both based on the weakness of existing party coalitions, and also motivated by the acknowledgment that, in a genuinely democratic country with open elections, the chances for communist success would quickly diminish. Despite their relatively popular image among those farmers, who had greatly benefited from the historical land reforms that took place in 1945, the power of the Catholic Church in the countryside remained very strong. Furthermore, in a land with a history of large landowners and only a small workers' movement, they genuinely feared the return of 'reactionaries'.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Lénárt 2005; Éva P. Bakay's autobiographical narrative, In: Bodor (et.al) 1998, 208.

¹⁶³ OHA: Véra Mérei (1916–2007). Number of the interview: 306 (1991). Interviewers: Andrásné Havril, Erzsébet Havril, 189–190.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Kenez 2006, 128–129; Ungváry 2003, 293–296.

Public campaigns against psychologists followed the gradually intensifying process of Sovietisation and the communist urge for power. However, the decision to suppress psychology was not immediately foreseen. According to György Péteri, right up until 1948/1949, there seemed to be a technocratic, utopian, and pragmatic vision in the politics surrounding Hungarian science that all research would be subordinated to the needs of the economic reconstruction after the war.¹⁶⁶ At least, this was the policy formulated by the influential Science Council (*Tudományos Tanács*) led by Ernő Gerő, who saw science primarily as a 'force of production', not as an arena of 'class war'. True, it was deemed as necessary to purge the field of science and higher education of reactionary elements as anywhere else; but at the same time there was no master plan to build any kind of science system to replace the old model. Instead it was hoped that the old MTA would slowly wither away if it was ignored completely.¹⁶⁷

Another point to bear in mind is that, at this stage, Hungarian communists did not see psychoanalysis - perhaps the psychological science most liable to attract such criticism - as a bourgeois ideology until 1948. They instead aimed at influencing the expert community from within thanks to the public prestige its members enjoyed.¹⁶⁸ Some psychologists were also eager to show the relevance of their expertise in the new social order. As for many of their colleagues abroad, the painful experience of homegrown fascism had made them sensitive to the social implication that deep psychological processes underlay the causes of the war.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, the experience of war and persecution caused psychoanalysts, the majority of whom were of Jewish descent, to interpret 1945 as a moment of liberation (*felszabadulás*) and to attach their hopes on leftist political and social agendas. Although there were exceptions, the majority of psychoanalysts thus joined the communist party.¹⁷⁰

The general shift to the left also manifested itself in psychological discourse. Some psychologists, for example, tried to wed Freud with Pavlov who would soon become a cultic representative of 'authentically' Russian science in Hungary. For example István Schönberger argued that the theory of conditional reflexes could give valuable biological and experimental support to deep psychology, and Gyula Szűts stressed that Pavlovian and Freudian theories of neurosis could be combined within the common biological framework. So psychoanalysts were not just letting themselves be swept along

¹⁶⁶ One also has to bear in mind that the military priorities of the Cold War affected the funding of science. From the 1947 state budget, science and higher education as a whole received only a half what was given for the military. This was only 53 % of what was given to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1937-1938, during the Horthy period. David-Fox & Péteri 2000, 205-206.

¹⁶⁷ David-Fox & Péteri 2000, 205-206

¹⁶⁸ Harmat 1986, 260.

¹⁶⁹ Maybe the most famous Hungarian psychoanalytic treatise of the time was written by Imre Hermann. *Psychology of Anti-Semitism (Antiszemizmus lélektana, 1945)* was a social psychologically oriented work in which Hermann tried to combine the analysis of human instincts to the role of economic and political factors in giving birth to and preserving the Hungarian race hatred.

¹⁷⁰ Harmat 1986, 260.

by the tide of events, but also seemed to be genuinely excited about the glowing prospects that state-led social planning held out for mental and social health. For example, to use the linguistic apparatus of the emerging socialist conceptual space, some of them argued that the era of 'scientific socialism' would witness the historical culmination of worldwide progress in mental health.¹⁷¹

It was also not uncommon to explain the very real economic insecurity and misery as an important part of the aetiology of neurosis, which in turn justified the significance of psychology for the moral and political regeneration of the Hungarian population in general. Psychoanalyst Pál Gartner, for his part, tried to convince his readers about the real service psychology could offer the national economy. Namely, production was not only threatened by "political sabotage" but, in his opinion was also suffering from "inner sabotage", and because of this it was vital for the national economy to use psychology to alleviate "states of anxiety" among the people.¹⁷²

However, in an intensifying Cold War atmosphere - with the split between Stalin and Tito in 1948, and the establishment of Cominform setting off a power struggle within the Party - the Hungarian communists eagerly followed the Soviet model in the ideological and cultural battlefield.¹⁷³ The transformation of the conservative MTA into a "fortress" of Party-led science, as Péteri puts it, began with the advisory visit of Soviet academicians in February-March 1949, and ended in December that same year when Stalin's 70th birthday was celebrated there. In that time, scientific institutions had completely lost their former autonomy. The prestigious MTA had been turned from an independent public body into a state-financed organisation. Now that universities had lost their role of pursuing scientific research, a quickly growing network of research institutes was established in their place. These were administered by the MTA and controlled by the MDP.¹⁷⁴

Following the Soviet model in eliminating anything that was alien to the socialist hemisphere, psychology was henceforth labelled as a bourgeois pseudo-science. Psychology could no longer be studied, and its publishing forums and other institutions were closed. The Hungarian psychoanalytic movement, which had achieved international renown through the work of Sándor Ferenczi¹⁷⁵ and his followers, was now publicly criticised and

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 248. It was not only "capitalist oppression", but also Freudian psychological dynamics in the family that explained poor mental health to István Kulcsár.

¹⁷² Cf. Harmat 1986, 248. The communists aimed to monopolise the way the war should be explained. As they blamed capitalism and imperialism for WWII, the psychoanalytically oriented explanation for the task of psychoanalysis (soon to publicly vanish) was "to make those leaders responsible understand how there is also another motive for wars, besides the purely economic - the primordial aggressive instinct that lives in each of us."

¹⁷³ David-Fox & Péteri 2000, 205-206; See also: Huszár 1994.

¹⁷⁴ David-Fox & Péteri 2000, 205-206; Valuch 2005, 139-140; Kósa (ed.) 2000, 332-333. In the autumn of 1949, the basic charter of the MTA was reformulated according to the Soviet model, and these changes stayed in force right up until the early 1990s.

¹⁷⁵ The founder of the Budapest School of Psychoanalysis, Sándor Ferenczi (1873-1933), was a close associate of Sigmund Freud. As one of the most important theorists in the psychoanalytic movement, his published correspondence with Freud is considered as a major source of early 20th century thinking. In 1919, Ferenczi was made the first

suppressed. This was in spite of the fact that most of its members, who had either survived the concentrations camps or not emigrated, had in fact joined the Communist Party. The final blow was psychologist Mérei's forced removal from the National Institute of Education in 1950. Again, the history of purges in the Soviet Union had a part to play, as one of the main accusations against Mérei was that he was a Trotskyist sympathiser, because he supported the idea of studying 'pedology' (i.e., child psychology).¹⁷⁶

Psychoanalysts, in turn, seemed to represent not only an ideological but also a political threat. Namely, besides having taken key positions in Hungarian institutions of mental health, they also had considerable international contacts with the citizens of 'imperialist' countries;¹⁷⁷ and these connections were potentially fateful in the eyes of the new elite. Indeed, a special brand of 'political psychiatry' had arisen in the United States after WWII, with the explicit aim of promoting peace and prosperity around the world. This was supported by a holistic understanding of mental health, defined not merely as the "absence of illness, but a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being"¹⁷⁸. Now, in light of the fact that there was a strong Anglo-American presence in the international field of mental health, it is not unreasonable to see why the Hungarian communists thought psychoanalysis might provide the means for 'imperialist' notions to erode their hegemony. And yet, these notions were at the same time being used by some biologically oriented psychiatrists who wanted to safeguard their positions (and their biological explanations of mental illness) by attacking a culturally strong competitor.¹⁷⁹

The suppression of psychology in Hungary also had deeper ideological repercussions. As Csaba Pléh notes, the politics of militant industrialisation did not allow or need a science which claimed that biological and psychological parameters, partly autonomous from social determination, existed in the individual and should be taken account when planning policy.¹⁸⁰ Even if there

Professor of Psychoanalysis in the world. Interestingly, the decision was made by the Peoples' Commissariat of Public Education in April 1919, during the short-lived Hungarian Commune. See Erős 2011, 9.

¹⁷⁶ Knausz 2006, 161–180. For more on Soviet trials against childhood studies and psychological tests at the end of the 1930s, see Joravsky 1989, 345–353.

¹⁷⁷ Mészáros 2010, 608–611.

¹⁷⁸ Dowbiggin 2011, 137. Of course, this is the famous WHO definition of health (1948).

¹⁷⁹ Harmat 1986, 264–265. Regarding the ideological rhetoric that was effective in labelling psychoanalysis in Hungary, one article entitled "Freudism: the Imperialist Psychology", was particularly symptomatic. Written by leading psychiatrist István Tariska, and published in the communist journal *Forum* in 1948, it put an ideological twist on the founding, at the 3rd International Congress on Mental Health in London, of the World Federation of Mental Health in August, 1948. For Tariska, the emphasis on using psychology to educate world citizens in the ways of peace was a manifestation of imperialist politics. This aimed to spread its power not only through "iron, coal, oil, industrial bases and traffic", but also by extending its influence to the field of "intellectual creation". See Tariska 1948, 799–804.

¹⁸⁰ Pléh 2010, 542–543. Contemporary political commentator Robert C. Tucker essentially agreed, noting that the chief aim of Stalinist politics after WWII was to build a 'state-led man' (rather than a 'socialist man') from a population already used to being passively led from years of war. This politicised regime of knowledge did not allow for autonomous inner processes which would make it harder to educate "state-led"

were many psychologists who would have cherished the idea that the human condition could be altered through the careful administration of psychological expertise, the need for a visibly quick socio-economic transformation meant that the *psychologisation* of an issue was deemed as a self-indulgent sign of a bourgeois, reactionary mentality that was actually holding back socialist progress more than helping matters. Furthermore, the dutiful and acquiescent socialist worker should not require the over-indulgence of psychology, when ‘worker-heroism’ was quite enough.¹⁸¹

Before the communist takeover, psychologists had been consulted about various sectors of society by policymakers. However, as policy was increasingly determined by a dictatorial party, expert voices which offered another opinion were inevitably judged to be deviant. Former minister, Pál Avár’s recollections from the early 1980s show that there was a strong political motive for ostracising certain groups of professionals, deemed to be politically too outspoken. For example Pál Santha and Béla Horányi, two psychiatrists who represented the ‘organic school’ and were thus biologically oriented, which meant that they could not be blamed for *psychologisation*, were nevertheless divested of their positions because they were too eager to say their opinions.¹⁸²

According to Avár, Santha’s problem was that he expressed his critical opinions about Stakhanovism¹⁸³. Santha argued that it put the human personality, both physically and mentally under a lot of psychological strain. He even went so far as to say that the competitive spirit (*szellem*) it encouraged was actually unhealthy and wrong. This was because Santha had encountered a Stakhanovite woman in his clinic suffering from a unilateral paralysis. He drew the conclusion that this woman had been exposed to a work situation she could not cope with, and as a result had shown hysteric symptoms because sickness seemed the only possible route of escape. This of course did not sit kindly with the authorities and, as Santha had already talked openly about other issues too, he was forced out of the MTA and his professorship terminated in 1951.¹⁸⁴

Regarding the fate of the social sciences in the wider context of the emerging socialist bloc, the situation was basically the same in every country that became Sovietised.¹⁸⁵ As a consequence of Stalinist science policies, not only psychology, but sociology, Mendelian genetics, and cybernetics were considered false and dangerous western idealist artefacts.¹⁸⁶ The general tendency seems to have been to follow the idea of ‘party-mindedness’, with an

men. It was thus inconceivable under Stalinism that in the depths of man something invisible was at work which, in an uncontrollable way, set the mechanism in motion. See Tucker 1956, 455–483.

¹⁸¹ Szabó 2008, 44–45.

¹⁸² Cf. Bakonyi 1983, 80.

¹⁸³ This was a notorious system in Socialist factories designed to increase productivity in using model workers as public heroes of production. On Stakhanovism in Hungary see, for example: Kürti 2002, 91–93. On resisting Stakhanovism, see Pittaway 2012, 160–161.

¹⁸⁴ Bakonyi 1983, 84–85. Santha was transferred to be a Head Doctor in Balassagyarmat. Horányi, in turn, had taught Mendelian genetics although Lysenko was in fashion.

¹⁸⁵ Aleksandrowicz 2009, 57–66.

¹⁸⁶ Lányi 2001, 61–62.

emphasis on the idea that the natural sciences should be cumulative, not dialectic in character. And because Party dogma had to be defended and protected from fractious influences and deviationists, autonomous personalities at the start of the Cold War were to be avoided.¹⁸⁷

The swiftness of the rise and fall of the People's College' movement (*Nékosz*) was symptomatic of the first years of post-war Hungary. *Nékosz* was peculiar to Hungary: its intellectual background combined the ideas of the so-called third road between socialism and capitalism with the aim of making a new Hungarian intelligentsia out of the rural working class. It had strong roots both in the ideology of the populist (*népi*) writers of the interwar era (who had pledged in their publications to bring attention to the plight of the poor in the "land of a million beggars"), and also in the idea of a Hungarian revival.¹⁸⁸ After WWII, these ideas evolved into an educational movement with a strong leftist political orientation, and some of the leading communists supported it. While Mérei brought modern social psychological ideas to the movement, *Nékosz* also adopted and rearticulated Soviet educator Anton Makarenko's thinking in its collectivist educational practices. In 1949 however, *Nékosz* was merged into the Union of Working Youth (DISZ), which basically meant its elimination as an autonomous civil organisation.¹⁸⁹

While the social psychologist Mérei was being forced into a marginal position, some of the former *Nékosz*-activists decided to adopt the identity of good 'party soldier' and got the chance to travel to the USSR to continue their studies. One of them was Ferenc Pataki, the future head of the Institute for Psychology. In a published interview in 2005, Pataki dealt with his past in a rather sincere way. He confessed how he had experienced the "great fortune" of not having lived in Hungary during the darkest years of Stalinist dictatorship. However, this was not just because the system was bad, but because as a true believer he might have done "foolish, shameful things" for which "he would not have been able to forgive" himself for later.¹⁹⁰ Before leaving for Moscow, Pataki had to go to two preparatory camps. In these he learned the Russian language, and the competition for loyalty was severe due to the continual presence of the Soviet 'big brother'. After a longish wait, the journey to Moscow began.

In Kecskemét, a nervous atmosphere of anticipation prevailed. It wasn't clear why the decision to travel hadn't yet been made. It was already September, and we were still waiting. These were the days when Rajk's trial filled the news on the radio; everybody listened to the broadcast and this affected the mood in the camp. Indeed, it was rather symbolic, that when we finally left, in the autumn of 1949, the Rajk case was echoing in our ears, and as we returned by train in 1953, as we waited in the train at the Russian border of Csap to arrive, a voice of the Russian News Agency announced at dawn on the station loudspeakers, that Beria and his gang had been

¹⁸⁷ Eghigian 2008, 44.

¹⁸⁸ Kontler 1999, 359–360.

¹⁸⁹ On *Nékosz*, see Pataki 2005; Papp 2005, 309–338.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Matern 2005, 393–394.

arrested. Both the journeys there and back were spent listening to news about trials.¹⁹¹

* * *

The death of Stalin in 1953 caused political ferment in the Eastern Bloc. Soviet policy, which became more friendly towards Yugoslavia showed a new kind of willingness to negotiate with the west. It also aimed at maintaining stability within its satellite states in the face of steeply decreasing living standards and rising dissatisfaction among the people there. Thus, the Soviets instructed the communist leaders of their satellites in Europe to soften their stance and allow a degree of self-criticism.

Following the spirit of this 'new course', the Central Committee (KB) of the Hungarian Workers' Party drafted a resolution on 28 June 1953, and produced a detailed condemnation of the policies of forced collectivisation and industrialisation, which had been based solely on a need to build a base for heavy industry.¹⁹² Importantly, the leading quartet of Mátyás Rákosi, Ernő Gerő, Mihály Farkas and József Révai were denounced for their errors. Among other things, they were accused of launching an organised campaign of mass terror against society. As a result, the Prime Minister's post was taken from Rákosi, and awarded to Imre Nagy, who soon set to carry out a wide-ranging set of reforms.¹⁹³

Nagy's new course aimed to end the priority given to industry, raise living standards, stop forced collectivisation and end the excessive policies of coercion and terror. A general amnesty was declared, internment camps were closed and sentences abolished.¹⁹⁴ In another significant step towards de-Stalinization, the issue of legal and moral rehabilitation of the victims of political purges was forcefully raised for the first time.¹⁹⁵

Nagy's policies also influenced the fortunes of the social sciences in significant ways. The most pronounced case was economics, because he actively sought their support. For Nagy, their role was to help provide scientifically based economic and social planning.¹⁹⁶ However, Nagy's reforms also encountered strong resistance, particularly from those who had been stakeholders in the former Stalinist policies - e.g., heavy industry, the secret police, and most importantly Rákosi himself. Ultimately, Nagy's policies were resisted by the Soviets, whose worries were increased when West Germany

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 388.

¹⁹² Borhi 2002, 175. Launching of the first five-year plan was speeded up with a characteristically cold war -slogan about building the "largest Hungarian army ever".

¹⁹³ Békés, Byrne & Rainer 2002, 6-7.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Maybe the most visible instance of rehabilitation, and the inherent political dynamics involved, was the case of hard-line communist László Rajk, executed as a "Titoist" in 1949, but finally rehabilitated and reburied in 1956 in a funeral which turned into a politically symbolic mass event. A unique feature in the process was the relentless action of Rajk's widow, Júlia Rajk who insisted on her husband's unconditional political rehabilitation. See Pető 2015, 46-47, *passim*.

¹⁹⁶ Bockman 2011, 105-133; Péteri, 1998, 3-5.

decided to join NATO in 1954. At this point the hard-liners gained the upper hand, Nagy was removed, and policies of retrenchment followed.

In 1956, at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Khrushchev gave his famous 'secret speech', announced his concept of "peaceful co-existence", and most significantly revealed Stalin's crimes thus causing great confusion in the satellites.¹⁹⁷ In Hungary, the speech put Rákosi into an almost impossible situation: the leading Stalinist was now expected to carry out de-Stalinization.¹⁹⁸ Pro-reform forces both within and outside the Hungarian Workers' Party naturally gained new strength again. Due to increasing popular resentment caused by Nagy's dismissal in 1955, with the toughening of economic policies, rising industrial production norms, and sinking living-standards that ensued; both the legitimacy and inner cohesion of the party quickly eroded away.¹⁹⁹

One example of the alternative centres of power that began to form at this time was the *Petőfi Circle*, which emerged as a forum for open political discussion. It was initially an intellectual discussion group sanctioned by the regime, but soon started to take an openly anti-Stalinist profile. Significantly enough, former *Nékosz*-activists, such as Ferenc Pataki, were immediately involved in its establishment. While grouping around Nagy's 'reform socialism' agenda, they also tried to revive the movement.²⁰⁰ In the summer and autumn of 1956, the Petőfi Circle organised popular discussions on various political topics. While addressing the topic of "pedagogics" in October, the rehabilitation of psychology was also discussed. Several of the speakers at the event (self-) criticised Stalinist dogmatism and its bleak consequences for the professional level of education in Hungary; and in an openly political and future-oriented manner, professionally based reforms were demanded in the name of a 'truly' socialist education. Of course, after 1956 this kind of open politicising was suppressed, but the social ethos remained, and many critical intellectuals actually found meaningful roles and were able to create a professional identity for themselves within sociology and psychology.

A full-scale revolution nevertheless broke out on 23 October 1956, with students and workers leading the way. After several days of street fighting, and Nagy responding with the promise of radical political steps (e.g., to leave the Warsaw Pact), the Soviet military intervened on 4 November, and the uprising was suppressed. A period of massive reprisals, characterised by mass arrests

¹⁹⁷ Gyarmati 2011, 377; Békés, Byrne & Rainer 2002. The speech marked a significant turning point for the international Communist movement as the idea of an inevitable Third World War had been overturned. Although the speech was not published for 30 years, it spread very quickly within Eastern Bloc countries. The new doctrine was tightly related to Khrushchev's main goal of modernisation which was to transform the economic model of extensive growth that the USSR had followed until then into one of intensive growth with technological help from the west. See Autio-Sarasmö 2011, 66.

¹⁹⁸ Békés, Byrne & Rainer 2002, 10.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

²⁰⁰ Pataki 2005, 454-463. The Petőfi Circle was an offshoot from the DISZ; and because Pataki was already the head of Agitation and Propaganda in DISZ, he was in the right position to set it up.

and trials, lasted from April 1957 until the spring of 1959. The last death sentence was carried out in the summer of 1961. Altogether 341 people were hanged, 35,000 people faced legal action for insurrectionist activities, and 22,000 were given prison sentences.²⁰¹ Any references to the events of 1956 were also suppressed, and they were henceforth described as part of a “counter-revolutionary conspiracy”, which had been fomented by the “reactionary forces led by Imre Nagy and his associates”.²⁰²

This being the case, however, the new political leadership under General Secretary János Kádár was careful to introduce policies that might appease the once again freshly disillusioned population, and would still somehow improve the general living standards. The new political culture was thus pragmatic, and did not demand open expressions of ideological and political loyalty. Progressive values and ‘socialist patriotism’ were encouraged rather than forced.²⁰³ In the eyes of Khrushchev, in fact, Hungary soon became a model state among Warsaw Pact countries.²⁰⁴ This status, based on the absence of overt conflicts, and carefully negotiated with the USSR, gave Hungary room for manoeuvre in domestic economic and social policies, especially after 1961 as Khrushchev gave the signal for a second phase of de-Stalinization.²⁰⁵

With the aim of ‘catching up and overtaking’ the west, one of Khrushchev’s basic tenets was to increase living standards and to support a consumerist orientation. The paradigmatic role of consumption in the legitimisation of Hungarian politics was announced at the 8th congress of the MSZMP in 1962. It was even pledged that, in 1980, Hungarian consumption per capita would be higher than in the west.²⁰⁶ Thus, a kind of socialist welfare society was encouraged, to be achieved through a ‘rational’ level of consumption, a reasonably well-off lifestyle, and free healthcare for all. The stress on living standards also aimed at depoliticising the masses after the experiences of 1956.

²⁰¹ Békés, Byrne & Rainer 2002, 374–376. In addition, approximately 13,000 people went to newly established internment camps; while tens of thousands were banned from their homes, dismissed from their jobs or placed under police supervision.

²⁰² Ibid., 375–376; Kőrösi & Molnár (eds.) 2003; Rév 2005, 33–34; Gyáni 2006, 27–28. Gyáni shows that the work of the retaliatory justice system after 1956 marked a particular “death of history”. The machinery of repression not only invented, distorted, and imagined evidence for trials against the political protagonists of 1956, but also produced constructed pasts. A paradigmatic case in point was the evidence published against Nagy himself - the so-called ‘White Book’ - which perfectly demonstrated the party-state’s intention to monopolise all interpretations of past events. Those who had preserved documents of the uprising independently were thus also hunted down, and references to the social background of those who had taken part were removed from investigative documentation. This was because it was understood that too many of them did *not* come from socially ‘alien’ classes.

²⁰³ Nyysönen 2006, 21–22.

²⁰⁴ In fact, after 1956, Hungary was awarded special status and allowed a significantly lower defence budget so that the standard of living could improve and the country could be politically and economically rebuilt (at least until the Wall was built in 1961). See Germuska 2003b.

²⁰⁵ Tökés 1996, 11; Békés 2010, 343–345.

²⁰⁶ Valuch 2008, 51.

In Hungary, the early 1960s in many ways marked a turning point in the field of culture, science and higher learning too. One dimension of this was ideological. Reflecting Soviet developments, the 8th MSZMP congress declared that there were no longer preconditions for the return of capitalism.²⁰⁷ Although the collectivisation of agriculture had been brought to a conclusion, and the Wall had been built in the GDR, one could argue that not only pre-socialist modes of production had been eliminated but that also the ideological foundations of socialism had been theoretically laid.²⁰⁸ Kádárism also allowed scholars more room for intellectual manoeuvre, and the general amnesty in March 1963 also contributed to the somewhat changed atmosphere in Hungary.²⁰⁹

Science and professionalism were high in Khrushchev's modernisation agendas.²¹⁰ This also encouraged overtures towards the west. With such wide, encompassing concepts as 'scientific-technological revolution', social processes and their planning and modelling became relevant issues.²¹¹ Thus, knowledge-based tools to control and predict the complicated processes of modern socialist life were researched and applied from the newly rehabilitated social sciences, such as cybernetics, systems theory, economics, and social psychology. In Hungary it was recognised that the country needed international economic knowledge to improve its economic performance at home.²¹² Furthermore, Hungarian economic reform policies (i.e. the 'New Economic Mechanism') encouraged an orientation towards the professions (and intensive growth). In this context, the role of social and human sciences could also be seen as aiding social progress.

As the 1960s progressed, the Kádár regime tried to recruit the most competent, young university graduates for Party and state positions; but, in practice, one could become a professor or the leader of a prestigious scientific research institute without necessarily being a member of the Party. Although political capital remained the dominant resource for upward mobility, more importance was now attached to the possession of cultural and human capital. This emerging intellectual class tended to think in positive terms of "socialism with a human face", while viewing Stalinist bureaucratism in a more negative light. Although blocked by the conservative counter-offensive in the late 1960s and early 1970s, this new meritocratic orientation ultimately resulted in the state-socialist elite becoming more intellectual.²¹³

²⁰⁷ Kovács 2006, 216-217.

²⁰⁸ Lindenberger 2008, 211-214.

²⁰⁹ During 1962 it became clear for the leaders of the MSZMP that the "Hungarian question" (1956) would remain on the UN agenda unless a general amnesty be carried out. As Gough notes, especially United States was emphatic about the need for general amnesty as a condition for normalising diplomatic relationships. See Gough 2006, 142.

²¹⁰ Nisonen 2012, 34.

²¹¹ The launch of this "revolution" was announced in 1956 by Nikolai Bulganin, the Chair of the Soviet Council of Minister. See Rindzevičiūtė 2011, 123.

²¹² Halmesvirta 2005, 25.

²¹³ Eyal, Szelényi & Townsley 2001, 29-31; Miklóssy 2010, 118.

The emphasis on competence became clearer in higher education too, as the earlier policy of radical affirmative action was given up. As formulated in the Party resolution of 1962, in this new phase of socialism, it was no longer relevant to “categorize the [university] students on the basis of social origin”. Although the loyalty to socialism remained unquestioned, the decisive thing was now “competence and ability” (*hőzjárérés és a rátermettség*). While the education and support of working class children would still be the central premise of cultural politics, it no longer actually involved setting social and political boundaries, but rather in “developing the necessary political, social, and educational conditions” for them. Thereby education could be rationalised and improved, and it was now acceptable to term the children of the working class as ‘socially disadvantaged’ (*hátrányos helyzetű*), and help them.²¹⁴

The policy of investing in living standards was complemented with a kind of paternalist social politics which became known as ‘Goulash socialism’. Horváth claims that this need to rearticulate the concept of social politics after 1956 was motivated both by the need to heal the wounds of the Rákosi period and to increase the political and ideological legitimacy of a regime that had otherwise been violently imposed on the population.²¹⁵ Indeed, a Hungarian variant of the welfare state emerged, but essentially without any kind of mechanism for representing individual or collective interests.

Horváth also refers to the emergence of a new ‘inner enemy’ portrayed by the state, which threatened the integrity of Goulash socialism after 1956. This social deviant, or more precisely “hooligan”, came to represent all that was against the purportedly shared values of hard work and decent living characterised by the Kádárist social pact. This ties in with Thomas Lindenberger’s observations that similar conceptual transformations were happening in the GDR at the same time. In the process of laying the foundations of socialism, the very important ‘binary logic’ of class - which essentially needs a class enemy - had been gradually drained of meaning; and so a new enemy had to be devised to be able to reset the boundary between “those who belonged and those who were alien” (*Das Eigene und Das Fremde*). Following this, a juridical discourse about what constituted “asocial behaviour” was produced.²¹⁶

These wider shifts in political culture, ideology, and style of government coincided with the reinvention of psychology at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s. Not only was a Psychology Committee established within the MTA in 1958; but also from the early 1960s onwards, psychological units were founded in the larger state factories, child guidance clinics were set up, and citizens were educated with the help of newly invented psychological concepts both at home and school. To make the struggle against childhood deviancy more efficient, new psychological expert toolkits were introduced, and it was acknowledged

²¹⁴ Sáska 2006, 594. See also: Vass & Ságvári 1973, 588.

²¹⁵ Horváth 2012.

²¹⁶ Lindenberger 2008, 211.

that state socialist welfare institutions should be professionalised and backed up with psychological know-how.

Indeed, the reinvention of psychological discourse also coincided with the wider reconceptualisation of the concept of deviance, as mentioned above; and yet in the immediate years after 1956, the existence of some worrying social phenomena that were very real - such as alcoholism, the fate of disadvantaged children, and even suicide - became issues that policy makers felt needed addressing via specifically professional, and not just generic state intervention. On a wider scale, however, the present study shows that by focusing on the individual and his/her adaptation to society, psychological discourse after 1956 mediated between the individual's everyday life and a collectivist society. This happened despite the great problems psychologists themselves faced in adapting to the political dictatorship of communist science. Indeed, as also shown here, the ruling elite demanded specific tasks of psychologists while at the same time putting controls and shackles on the free flow of ideas.

* * *

Before moving forward to the next chapter of this study, some special aspects of Hungarian historical culture need to be briefly mentioned. Melinda Kovai draws attention to the apparently strong need in Hungary to “work on” the past (*múltfeldolgozás*).²¹⁷ This means that certain events and episodes seem to carry normative power in themselves, in that they require everyone to have some kind of opinion on them. This has meant that fairly clear moral and political agendas are thus projected into the past, with the corresponding need to have a particular standpoint.²¹⁸

Hungarian history has thus been quite strongly politicised at various times, i.e., narratives of the past have been determined by the historian's present-day social and political needs. As Miklóssy notes, the notions of ‘victim’, ‘guilt’, and ‘crime’ resonate strongly in perceptions of the socialist past. The Revolution of 1956 is perhaps the best known example of this. It not only offers a strong reference point for discourses on (national) heroism but also for notions of crime and guilt.²¹⁹ The question of “who owns the past”, i.e. who is entitled to present it most authoritatively, is particularly crucial in Hungarian history.²²⁰

²¹⁷ Kovai 2010, 14.

²¹⁸ Ibid. See also: Leuenberger 2001. Christine Leuenberger has shown that the views of many former East German psychotherapists on their socialist past have tended to be motivated by the need to construct a professional identity in the post-socialist present. In many cases, for example, it was claimed that the practices and ideas they carried out in their work in the 1990s were a continuation of “underground” endeavours and professional intentions they had pre-1989, hence downplaying the break experienced in 1989.

²¹⁹ Miklóssy 2008, 69. For a pioneering study on the role of 1956 in (history-) political argumentation in Hungary, see Nyysönen 1999.

²²⁰ See also Jordanova 2000, 154–155.

Another standpoint regarding the communist era, repeatedly used by the right wing in Hungary, has been that this was time *outside history*, as if it was some kind of alien civilization. This has led to a peculiar selection regarding those events, moments, or aspects in the 'common' past which can or cannot be considered as belonging to a truly 'national' history. Miklóssy believes that this claim goes back historically to the old Enlightenment idea of East and West, which saw these two poles of Europe as hardly influencing each other.²²¹ Acknowledging these issues is important especially for a scholar who tries to 'eavesdrop' on conversations about the past of a different culture.

Bearing this in mind, the present study is structured in the following way. The next chapter (2) focuses on the political and ideological conditions for the emergence of psychological discourse after the fall of Stalinism. Examples are used to show what the Party expected from psychologists and how these expectations were then explained as being carried out. The chapter also pays attention to the general situation for psychology after 1956, and examines the various tactics that were used to cope with the new political context. Meanwhile, chapter 3 sets out to study the politics of child welfare after 1956. By analysing both published discourses on child psychology as well as classified reports, it is shown how child and youth protection issues were given a new urgency after 1956. In the process, traditional explanations of deviancy took on new meanings as problematic behaviour could now be understood as the consequence of an 'abnormal' development of personality. The field of child welfare also provided a perspective, and even a critical one at that, on the state of socialist society. The fourth chapter examines the rise of social psychology in the 1960s. The discussion focuses on the reformist discourse surrounding work and management, in various contexts and from different institutional and political positions. Using the case of social psychologist Ferenc Mérei, the chapter also shows how collectivist ideology could be used as an intellectual resource for alternative and even counter-discourses.

²²¹ Miklóssy 2008, 71.

2 THE IDEOLOGICAL CONTEXT FOR PSYCHOLOGY

2.1 Anti-Stalinism

Josef Stalin's death in 1953 had far-reaching political consequences for science.²²² As the tide turned, discursive spaces began to open up for psychologists and their supporters, who were now able to criticise Stalinist ideological dogma. Although psychology in Hungary only effectively became established as a profession towards the end of the 1950s, it is shown below how this institutionalisation was already under way well before 1956.

György Péteri suggests that anti-Stalinism had begun to make inroads into Hungarian academia as early as 1953, and actually continued well after 1956, despite the purges and policies of repression. In his opinion, this process signified a partial return to "normal" academic standards which would once more prioritise empirical research over dogmatic ideology and restore professional identities. During 1953-1956 some 'party soldiers' also significantly rebelled against the politicisation of science by demanding the right to academic autonomy and freedom for intellectual and artistic expression. Péteri argues that this was one way for young communist intellectuals to break away from the role of party soldier.²²³

²²² Péteri, 1998, 3-5.

²²³ Ibid. Famous Hungarian economist János Kornai distinguishes five levels to identifying with the communist party. The "first step" was to sympathise from outside the Party, with an affinity towards its political ideas, and readiness to support its campaigns. The second was to be a party member as an eager but invisible functionary within. Communist ideas may have remained alien, but assignments and tasks seemed to offer them clear advantages. The third step was to be a member attending branch meetings regularly, and showing clearly communist convictions. Next was the "true communist", who not only knew the Marxist-Leninist classics by heart, but identified with the Party to the point that family interests were subordinate to the Party's. Here Kornai refers to Stalin saying "we communists are made of special stuff", but notes that these tragic figures remained "tortured by inner doubts" about being good enough. The fifth and final step was to

Péteri suggests that after Stalin, the politics surrounding science was plagued by the coexistence of two “diametrically opposed” institutional cultures and forms of societal organisation. Being a Party soldier required political and ideological loyalty, while being a professional academic required results to be left open to refutation and criticism. As these required two quite different organisational hierarchies, this would eventually cause friction.²²⁴ In other words, the gradually increasing need for expertise caused problems for the Party nomenclature. Science policy within the ‘soft dictatorship’ thus needed to remain quite ambiguous, and it encouraged experts to adopt quite complex identities. In other words, a well-established technocrat-expert could also be a social critic.

Political and ideological control did not just abruptly end after 1956, however. Instead, it was transformed into the more subtle practices of exclusion and inclusion. These were manifested in peculiar *patron-client* relationships, which had a real bearing on the survival and continuity of whole branches of scholarship, psychology included.²²⁵ In practice, party cadres were needed to supervise the research institutes, and loyal people were thus elevated to such positions that for some reason or other were deemed politically ‘complicated’ or educationally ‘demanding’.

The other side of the picture related to intellectuals with politically problematic pasts. Ervin Csizmadia has shown that the way academic institutions were organised after 1956 was also affected by the revolution. Dissident thinkers now had to be brought under control, and one way to do this was to remove those suspected as such from eminent positions, and post them to peripheral research institutes where they would presumably not pose a threat. Interestingly enough though, the atmosphere in these kinds of institutes could also be freer. Another, almost reverse, tactic was to place those with a problematic past into the institutions which provided essential knowledge for the smooth operation of the party-state.²²⁶ These arrangements meant that the field of politically controlled knowledge-production assumed a complicated structure in which not only the favoured elites but also those who had formerly been more marginalised could contribute to the substance of research and discussion.

Péteri shows that the uneasy but still manageable coexistence of the *political-ideological* with the *professional* was particularly characteristic in the field of economics. Although the anti-Stalinist demand for greater academic professionalism was eventually fulfilled, political control over academia did not end, but rather it transformed into a somewhat ‘enlightened’ dictatorship. This manifested itself in the way the needs of the economic policymaking elite took

be a party soldier and full-time Party “employee” (e.g., an official in the secret police), who would follow orders, whatever they were. See: Kornai 2007, 24–25.

²²⁴ For the situation in East Germany, see Eghigian 2008, 44. On the paradox between political control and the need for expertise in Czechoslovakia, see Nisonen-Irnka 2012, 34–36.

²²⁵ Révész 1997, 82–86; Péteri 2006, 186–210. The role of patrons in psychology is discussed in greater detail below.

²²⁶ Csizmadia 1995, 167–172.

precedence over those of academic economics.

This predominance of the enlightened socialist economic elite (itself going through a process of professionalization) had been a price to be paid for the partitioning off of the 'agitprop sector' (the political economy of capitalism and socialism) from the rest of economic thought, securing, for both sectors, a relatively low level of interference across the boundaries between economics as high scholarship and economics as agitation and propaganda.²²⁷

In other words, the space for a more professional orientation within academia was carved out by careful manoeuvres and negotiations.

As well as not only being a result of careful empirical analysis, Péteri's notion also has significant theoretical implications for the study of all science and higher learning that occurred in communist states and societies. Namely, if the dynamics of change in them is studied from the perspective of scholars and experts, the fields of politics, ideology, and academic endeavour should be analytically separated for better analysis. The totalitarian paradigm is clearly not enough if we want to understand the perspective of scholars. Indeed, regarding the psychological field, it is possible to trace a similar struggle for professionalisation to the one that was happening in economics, albeit on a somewhat smaller scale. In the process, the terms and conditions of research were formulated by those most influential in science policy.

2.1.1 Safeguarding scientific autonomy and the Pavlov Committee

During the 1940s, and especially towards the end of that decade, the cult of the Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov²²⁸ had grown to such an extent in the USSR that it eventually developed its own system of language.²²⁹ For example, when the All-Union Agricultural Academy convened for its August session in 1948, all the sciences were warned that they must become authentically Marxist-Leninist and "truly Russian".²³⁰ This was followed by a series of special meetings between 1950 and 1952 to ensure that the sciences of the mind were

²²⁷ Péteri 1998, 5.

²²⁸ Ivan Pavlov (1857–1927) was a Nobel prize-winning physiologist, who originally became famous for his studies on the visceral physiology of digestion in dogs. Later, especially in his famous "Madrid Speech" at the International Medical Congress of 1903, he argued that there was a similarity between visceral physiological mechanisms and mental phenomena, which he saw as "condition-related" physiological reactions. For more on Pavlov, see Kozulin 1987, 41–50; Pléh 2010, 533–535.

²²⁹ Joravsky 1989, 400–414; Kozulin 1987, 25–27; Pléh 2010, 542–543.

²³⁰ Joravsky 1989, 404. After WWII, Stalinist science policies favoured "genuinely Russian" science and aimed at integrating academic research with "scientific marxism". Pavlov's work and personality were heavily invested with cultic features. Thus, it is important to separate Pavlov's science from *Pavlovianism*, as the latter has more to do with the political control of science than science itself. It is also worth noting that in the case of the other infamous representative of Soviet "anti-cosmopolitan" science, the biologist Trofim Lysenko was different to Pavlov in that he was active at the time of the meeting. In fact, during the August session, Lysenko announced that he had the personal support of Stalin for his brand of Michurinist biology.

each brought into line with Pavlovian dogma: first neurophysiology (1950), then psychiatry (1951), then finally psychology (1952). These meetings were also published so that they could serve as a model for other Eastern Bloc countries.²³¹

But by 1952, the post-Stalinist thaw was already starting to set in, and it was clear for all to see in the last Pavlov session. As Joravsky notes, the “sacred doctrine” might still have been alive and well but “almost no one wanted to go that way”. For sure, there were present those philosophically inclined ideologists who wanted psychology replaced with a single materialist “science of nerves”, but their presence at the meeting was hardly felt. Instead, A. A. Smirnov and B.M. Teplov - the main speakers, and eclectic old-timers influenced by the Gestalt school - set out to defend the subject matter of psychology. They showed, for example, how in a system of purely physiological concepts there was little room for psychological concepts of sensation and feeling. The dream of a Pavlovian reconstruction of psychology would be realised some day, they argued, but the time was not yet ripe. Leaning on Pavlov’s concept of the “second signalling system” and on Lenin’s mirror theory, these psychologists tried to convince the establishment of the need to study these issues further.

One could surmise that not only was the Pavlov Session for psychology a manifestation of ideological control in the USSR, but also a platform for creating the conditions that would affect psychological research in the future. In the meeting, Soviet psychologists demanded the establishment of a special “Council of Psychology” to balance the work of the recently created “Science Council on Problems of the Physiological Theory of Academician I. P. Pavlov”. In other words, they wanted a forum for voicing the demands of their particular field of research, so that psychology would once more be on an equal footing to other disciplines. In the same spirit, psychologists also published a resolution they entitled *Problems of Psychology*, and as they wanted the reinstatement of their professional journal, which had been denied them since the mid-1930s, this resolution went on to become the journal’s title when it eventually materialised in 1955.²³²

Meanwhile, similar events were taking place in Hungary when, on 6 November 1952, the General Secretary of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences, Tibor Erdey-Gruz, suggested that a special *Pavlov Committee* should be established for “advancing the enforcement and control of a Pavlovian approach” in biology and related fields.²³³ The committee was established by representatives from the fields of biology, medicine, and psychology, with a clear focus on a medical-biological approach. The line-up was challenging because, although it was led by a regular member (*rendes tag*) of the Academy, Géza Hetényi, the committee brought together the Marxist-Leninist and self-proclaimed ‘manager of Stalinist philosophy’, Béla Fogarasi (an ardent public

²³¹ Kovai 2010, 42–44.

²³² Joravsky 1989, 451.

²³³ Akadémiai Levéltár, Elnökségi határozatok. 6th of November 1952.

opponent of psychology and psychoanalysis), and psychologist Imre Molnár (1909-1996) - head of the Institute for Child Psychology. In contrast to Fogarasi, Molnár was an open-minded and internationally oriented scholar who, for instance, had used psychological tests to diagnose children at the institute's child guidance clinic throughout the Rákosi period, even though these had been officially banned at the time. As we shall see later on, Molnár would also step up as a pragmatic defender of child and developmental psychology in 1956 in one of the open debates organised by the Petőfi Circle.²³⁴

At first, there were six members in the committee, with an additional two joining in 1953. These were Gusztáv Barczy (1890-1964), a renowned special educator from the pre-war era, and Gyula Nyirő, the leading psychiatrist in the country at that time.²³⁵ Just as Nyirő joined the committee, the former representative of the psychiatric establishment, Imre Zádor, left it. Dr. Zádor had been head of the psychiatric department at János Hospital in Budapest, and had established the first Pavlovian department in Hungary there. He was a Jew and a party member, and was ordered to disseminate Pavlov's teachings among Hungarian psychiatrists, which he seemed rather eager to do.²³⁶ Nyirő saw Pavlovianism as a true scientific 'belief system', and clearly did not entertain for a moment the idea of it being just a form of political and ideological phraseology.²³⁷ So why was Zádor replaced by Nyirő? The reason was because Zádor was on his way to prison. He had been chosen as the main culprit in the Hungarian version of the 'Doctor's Plot' happening in the USSR at around the same time, which proved to be equally antisemitic.²³⁸

At the meeting of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences on 20 February 1954, internist Hetényi reported on the achievements of the committee. In the medical, biological and clinical fields especially, the "Pavlovian spirit" (*szellem*) prevailed and was now apparently widely accepted, to the point that in the research institutes of Szeged and Debrecen (outside Budapest) specifically Pavlovian research was now underway. Overall, the situation was thus "satisfying", even if Pavlovian education seemed to be lagging somewhat behind. The philosopher György Lukács, who was also present at the meeting²³⁹, suggested that to remedy this they should invite Soviet psychologists to Hungary to ask their advice. Fogarasi, in turn, suggested that the general focus should now be on psychiatry, adding that

²³⁴ A Petőfi kör vitái..., 116-117.

²³⁵ Nyirő had been Chief Medical Director (1939-1951) in Angyalföld mental hospital in Budapest. In 1951, his status unexpectedly changed, due to the politically motivated relegation of Béla Horányi, a student of famous Hungarian psychiatrist, Károly Schaffer. Despite the prevailing Lysenkoist dogma, Horányi had taught genetics based on Mendelian theories. As (one time high official from the Ministry of Health) Pál Avár recalls, Horányi was "almost automatically" replaced by Nyirő as the leading psychiatrist in the country. Nyirő's psychiatric textbook would become a standard text for Hungarian students in years to come. See Bakonyi 1983, 86.

²³⁶ Bakonyi 1983, 80.

²³⁷ Kovai 2010, 71-72.

²³⁸ Zádor 2000. Zádor was released from prison in 1954.

²³⁹ As Ferenc Pataki pointed out in one interview, the presence of Lukács is also intriguing in that he had a history of being strongly against any kind of psychologisation. Interview with Pataki: 20 May 2012.

meanwhile Hungarian linguists would do well to study the “second signalling system” theory. Finally, István Ruzsnyák as head of the Presidium concluded that Professor, psychologist Tatarenko should be invited to Hungary, as suggested by Brunó F. Straus, to support the progress already made.

From this point on, the attentions of the Pavlov Committee turned more towards psychology, education, and psychiatry, although medical and biological approaches still dominated.²⁴⁰ The committee made setting “concrete scientific [research] tasks” and controlling their implementation its main business. Furthermore, linguists needed to be present at these meetings, and Tatarenko - after his official invitation from the Presidium of the Academy - was invited to join on a regular basis.²⁴¹

Unfortunately, the Pavlov Committee’s discussions cannot be reconstructed in any detail here, since the author has not had access to the committee’s documents themselves. However, we can still draw some conclusions about the institution’s role. Ferenc Pataki, for instance, has argued that even if the committee was a tool for ideological and political control in the Stalinist fight against “cosmopolitanism” in science, it also had some positive consequences for psychology in Hungary. Indeed, by describing it as a biological science²⁴² and so safeguarding the autonomy of psychology as a scientific discipline in its own right, the committee was helping prevent the subject from being subsumed into the wider context of socialist ‘pedagogics’.

Ironically, Imre Molnár also voiced the same argument a few years later in a public speech, but he made sure to not explicitly mention his own role in the Pavlov Committee, arguing that the struggle against the overbearing demands of “socialist education” was one of the aims of this committee. As he declared in a public speech to the Academy of Sciences in 1960, members of the committee had indeed “grouped together” to work out the best way to disseminate Pavlov’s teachings; but at the same time they were concerned about the tendency for pedagogics “to preside over psychology”. According to Molnár, psychology was promoted by stressing the importance of child psychological research as a means for professionalising Hungarian child welfare policies.²⁴³

Pavlov’s ideas on higher nervous activity also seemed to have been *flexible enough* to show the relevance of psychological discourse. One reason given was that his theories on learning could also support the socially important aims of education. This plasticity of Pavlovianism was demonstrated in the Hungarian translation of an article (1952) written by one Georgian professor of psychology, and member of the Soviet Georgian Academy of Science.²⁴⁴ Notwithstanding

²⁴⁰ Akadémiai Levéltár, Elnökségi határozatok. 20th of February 1954, 6.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 7.

²⁴² Cf. Pléh 2003.

²⁴³ A Pszichológia helyzete hazánkban (1960). A jegyzőkönyv a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Pszichológiai Bizottságának üléséről. In: *Magyar Pszichológiai Szemle* XVII (3), 296.

²⁴⁴ Akadémiai levéltár. II. Osztály 210/3. Egy idealista lélektani felfogásról. The article was a Hungarian translation of the paper by the Georgian, Professor D. Gedevanishvili, which had originally been published in *Literaturnaja Gazeta* on 8 March 1952.

its ardent attack against the “set theory” proposed by his Georgian colleague Udnadze, which was the actual focus of the paper, the article also reads as a kind of compromise between ideology and science. Namely, Pavlovian dogma was articulated in psychological terms and could thus be used to stress the significance of the sciences of the mind. Already in the introduction, an explicit reference to Stalin was used to show how it would be total “nonsense” to deny the existence of the “subjective world”. However, Udnadze’s ideas on subjective psychological orientation (*beállítottság*) “driving a wedge” between consciousness and objective reality, were judged as too “idealistic” and abandoned in due course.²⁴⁵

Gusztáv Lányi also brings up this notion of Pavlovianism being used as a kind of “tactical mimicry” to safeguard psychological research, and especially its empirical side.²⁴⁶ Another way to put this, is that certain important freedoms were secured by using and thus ‘buying into’ certain ritualised language forms. A classic example of this kind of marriage between Pavlovian and Wundtian traditions in Hungary was the book published by comparative psychologist Lajos Kardos in 1957/1960.²⁴⁷ Csaba Pléh described it as the beginnings of “a dangerous excursion” by Kardos, which set out to combine the Pavlovian ideas of social conditioning with American theories of learning.²⁴⁸

Partly due to this cleverness in finding common ground between seemingly incompatible psychological discourses, Kardos is remembered and respected in Hungarian narratives as the “mentor and saviour” of Hungarian experimental psychology during the difficult early stages of state socialism.²⁴⁹ Lányi sees the sudden transformation of Kardos from distinctive student of Karl Bühler to “pioneer of Hungarian Pavlovian physiology”, as an attempt to not only protect psychology, but also himself. According to Lányi’s rather stark formulation, this came with the price of compromising his scientific “integrity”.²⁵⁰ However, as Kardos himself testified in an interview later (1985), he had also tried to use his pre-war left wing contacts to persuade his comrades that experimental psychological research was needed to give socialist education a more *scientific* basis.²⁵¹

²⁴⁵ Essentially, Udnadze had claimed that human beings were not the passive creatures depicted in the official Pavlovian interpretation, since the relationship between an “objective” outer world and human consciousness was indirect, i.e., human perception was not simply determined by the influence of objects in the environment. He argued instead that human actions were, in fact, *situated* and rooted in a kind of readiness to purposefully act, and so human behaviour varied on an individual basis.

²⁴⁶ Lányi 1997, 228.

²⁴⁷ A Rockefeller scholar in the US, and a student of 1930s Gestalt psychologist Karl Bühler in Vienna, Kardos’s impressively wide scientific work ranges from mathematical modelling and cybernetics to both Gestalt perceptual psychology and modern cognitive psychology. See Kardos 1957.

²⁴⁸ Pléh 2013, 175–188.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁰ Lányi 1997, 228.

²⁵¹ Kardos was a member of the famous leftist-progressive Galilei Circle. Due to this, his one-time leftist mentor was the abovementioned Béla Fogarasi, an influential advocate of the Communist Party line at the University. In his own words, Kardos asked Fogarasi if some sort of biologically oriented psychology was possible, if they

The role of Pavlovianism in the history of the psychological sciences under state socialism still remains an open question. In the end, Pavlovian physiological reductionism was officially imposed on Soviet psychology for only a short while, as quite soon after Stalin's death the focus shifted to activity theory becoming the defining feature of scientific 'objectivity' in Marxist psychology.²⁵² Benjamin Zajicek points out that Pavlov's name is still all too often mentioned, rather one-sidedly, as a proponent of 'sham' science on a par with Lysenko; when in fact his theories about a "second signalling system" and "higher nervous activity" did also serve positive functions in the field of clinical psychology and psychiatric research. Like Zajicek, Agita Lüse highlights these positive sides too, and she goes on to say that from the early 1950s onwards psychotherapy also benefited from using Pavlovian theory. The second signalling system of mental patients, for example, was indeed seen to be influenced by *verbal stimuli*. According to Zajicek, Pavlov's rigorous experimental ethos also served to pinpoint the need for internationally oriented psychiatric research.²⁵³

In the following subchapters, we look more specifically at Hungary and the early years in which psychology was reinstated as an institution there. Four hypotheses are put forward as to how this precisely came about. Firstly, *political leadership* was essential, seeing as the new discipline was reintroduced to the Academy of Sciences. Secondly, psychologists in the early 1960s had *great expectations* for the practical import of their field in socialist planning, and although it proved a fairly rocky path to get there, these early assertions did eventually pave the way for the development of psychology later in the 1960s. Thirdly, the *ongoing discussion* between pragmatists and ideologists ensured the continuing professionalisation of the psychological sciences. Finally, from the perspective of individual encounters within the regime, *spaces for meaningful action were created via specific 'tactics'*. In the literature to date, socialist ideology has usually been regarded as being a burden on the autonomous development of psychology as a field. However, I argue here that the very same ideology could also be used positively, as a resource for setting research agendas. From these starting points, the aim of the remaining sections of this final subchapter is to study how the given conditions were renegotiated by different players in the field.

agreed it could support the socially crucial task of socialist education (which they did), so Kardos could stay and pursue his studies with his followers. Pléh 2013, 180-181.

²⁵² Rey 2014, 61.

²⁵³ Lüse 2011, 27-28; Zajicek 2009, 62; Zajicek 2015, 50-68. For more on a convinced Marxist's view of Pavlov's reception in Hungary, see Garai 1997, 66-67; Interview with László Garai: 23 April 2012.

2.2 Political leadership in psychology

It is significant that the basic academic institutions for psychology were set up either during or immediately after the political purges related to the revolution of 1956.²⁵⁴ After carefully constructed investigations, certain psychologists were put on trial and convicted in April 1959 for political crimes presumed to have been committed after the Soviet invasion. Ferenc Mérei was perhaps the best known of these. They were deemed dangerous and labelled by the secret police as either “nationalists”, “revisionists”, or “national communists”.²⁵⁵

At the same time as this was going on however, the basic conditions for compromise between the intelligentsia and MSZMP leadership were being agreed upon. In time, this pragmatic compromise would develop into the elaborate “Three Ts” system (*tiltott, tűrt, támogatott*) mentioned in chapter 1, which determined what would be either supported, tolerated, or forbidden. In effect, it meant that slightly unorthodox cultural or scientific events or activities were made public, but only after informal negotiations. Sándor Révész has shown that, in this respect, the main guidelines for controlling culture and science had already been drawn up by 1957-1958. Indeed, those institutions that would control socialist intellectuals and their public in the future (e.g., the KB Department of Science and Culture) were already being established in the late 1950s.²⁵⁶

However, Kádár’s speech during the meeting of the Central Committee on 6 August 1957 offered some conciliation. Instead of insisting on the tradition of obligatory ideological self-criticism - all the time knowing that one’s whole academic life was at stake - Kádár suggested that it would be enough to use certain ‘detours’ to preserve one’s ideological integrity. For example, it would be enough to participate in the Peace Movement at some point, or criticise the imperialists on a suitable occasion, and any charges would be dropped. As Révész notes, this essentially allowed people to show their political loyalty to those in power without confessing failure in any explicit way; and this could be done implicitly in the midst of everyday artistic or scientific work.²⁵⁷

As János Rainer notes, this was a difficult period of consolidation and restoration for the Kádár regime, essentially a crisis with no easy solutions.²⁵⁸ Regarding those fields of scholarship that had recently been rehabilitated (e.g., sociology and psychology), the situation called for careful consideration and control. For the influential players in the reemerging academic field of

²⁵⁴ János M. Rainer notes there were more politically motivated hangings from 1958 to 1959 than in 1957. For example, in October 1959, 12 people were executed for their involvement in the Revolutionary Committee of Újpest in 1956; and even as late as October 1961, people were still being executed for events in 1956. See Rainer 2003, 76, 83.

²⁵⁵ Public newsreel announced the results of the trial in April 1959. See Rainer 2003, 76. There is already extensive literature on Mérei’s trial so it is not covered here. The most detailed description of his case can be found in Gál 2013, 17-127; Gál 2011.

²⁵⁶ Révész 1997, 82-83, 86.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 82-83.

²⁵⁸ Rainer 2003, 73-74.

psychology, the first years of institution building were characterised by ideological control on the one hand, and a search for professional niches on the other. Both of these functions were carried out by the so-called Psychology Committee. It was set up to promote the cultivation of psychological sciences within the Academy of Sciences, and in many ways it represented the revival of psychology in the post-Stalinist era.

2.2.1 The Psychology Committee

Due to the resolution made by the Presidium of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the Pavlov Committee's work ended in 1958.²⁵⁹ The argument given for this was that the committee had "succeeded in its task", with the implication being that the right 'Pavlovian spirit' had now been adopted throughout academia.²⁶⁰ These reasons were purely rhetorical however, as the committee had become quite redundant in the new post-Stalinist setting. Regarding psychology, control of the newly reinstated field was ensured by introducing changes to the existing academic committee structure. For this reason the Psychology Committee, which had since 1955 only operated on the margins of the Academy, was now to become the academic organ endowed with political power over the whole subject.

This was a significant decision insofar as the committee would be functioning *alongside* the Presidium, meaning that it was now endowed with basically the same rights and responsibilities as each respective scientific department within the Academy. Hence, it had its own budget and a separate quota for international study-trips, for example;²⁶¹ and once it was set up, research could be planned and carried out in various areas in the knowledge that there would be relatively steady funding.

The scientific status of psychology also changed considerably as it was now officially introduced as a discipline within the Academy of Sciences. With its nine subcommittees (e.g., work psychology, clinical psychology, and experimental psychology), it ambitiously set to work on mapping out future research fields for psychological research in Hungary.²⁶² In 1961, its status as a "complex scientific committee" was further defined. Psychology was understood to be a discipline which did not actually follow the established structures and definitions laid out by the Academy and its system of scientific

²⁵⁹ Akadémiai Levéltár. Elnökségi határozatok. 7th of February 1958.

²⁶⁰ Akadémiai Levéltár. Elnökségi ülések 1958. Előterjesztés az elnökségi bizottságokból.

²⁶¹ HU-MNL M-KS 288 f. 33/1961/28 ó.e. MSZMP tudományos és kulturális osztálya. MTA/Akadémiai pártcsoport. Észrevételek az elnökségi bizottságok összetételére tett bizottsági javaslatához, 5.

²⁶² HU-MNL MK-S 288. f. 33/1960/25. ó.e. Jelentés Az MTA Társadalomtudományi intézeteinek tudományos és ideológiai munkájáról. Gegesi Kis Pál feljegyzése Szántó Lajos elvtársnak (17.10.1960); Bartha and Nagy 1963, 185. In 1963, the other five subcommittees were for general psychology, the psychology of collective education (*közösségi nevelés*), art psychology, special education psychology, and "methodical questions". Over time, the number of these committees varied. For example, in 1961, there was also a subcommittee for economic psychology for a while, headed by the economist József Bognár.

departments. Indeed, it was now recognised that some psychological sciences could even provide knowledge-based solutions in several areas of society, but this also essentially meant that psychology's status as a branch of socialist education was formally cancelled.²⁶³

In 1958-1960, the committee published the first two volumes of *Pszichológiai Tanulmányok*, the yearbook of psychological research, and established *Magyar Pszichológiai Szemle*, the official academic journal for psychology. These two were soon complemented with a series of books dedicated to applied psychology, entitled "Psychology in Practice" (*Pszichológia Gyakorlatban*). The committee also organised the first psychological scientific congress, started to plan the university education of psychologists, established a quality framework for training future researchers together with the Committee of Scientific Qualifications, and sent its representatives to foreign conferences and on study-trips.²⁶⁴ In hindsight, the struggle for the *autonomous* scientific evaluation of psychological research theses, i.e., keeping them separate from the hegemony of pedagogics, was deemed a crucial achievement in the scientific world.²⁶⁵

The Hungarian Psychological Scientific Association (MPTT) was reestablished in 1962, with added quality inferred by the extra adjective 'scientific'. In a memorandum produced by the Psychology Committee in 1960, the reason given for founding the association was the need to delegate a degree of control, so that the committee - as a "bureaucratic and political organ of science" - would not have sole responsibility for the substance of the profession. In other words, the modern academic institution of peer review and evaluation was being acknowledged here. However, there were still some reservations about those who would qualify as members. All working psychologists in Hungary and members of the Psychology Committee and its subcommittees would be invited to join, on the condition that they were both "scientifically qualified" and endowed with the "political and human behaviour" suitable for cultivating the kind of psychology that would have a practical impact on society.²⁶⁶

²⁶³ Észrevételek az elnökségi bizottságok összetételére tett bizottsági javaslatához..., 5. According to the categorisation in 1961, there were 16 "Presidium Committees" within the Academy, in five different categories. Six committees were administrative in nature, such as the Committee for International Relations, the Book and Periodical Publishing Committee, and the Library Committee. A further three were national-level committees. Their work was related to international organisations, such as the Committee for the History of Sciences, and the academic branch of the Hungarian UNESCO Committee. Notwithstanding the special committee for "scientific qualifications" - a rather crucial one for both the academic and 'political' quality of published dissertations - the rest of them were "complex scientific committees" whose field of research usually involved more than one scientific department. Along with the Committee for Industrial Economics, the *Psychology Committee* belonged to this category with a special status.

²⁶⁴ Gegesi Kis Pál feljegyzése Szántó Lajos elvtársnak..., 2.

²⁶⁵ Akadémiai Levéltár. II. Osztály 210/6/1968. A pszichológus káderfejlesztés problémái, 5.

²⁶⁶ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1960/25 ő.e. MSZMP KB tudományos és kulturális osztálya. Jelentés az MTA Társadalomtudományi intézeteinek tudományos és

So in a relatively brief period of time, the basic institutions of psychology were set up. Keeping the difficult past in mind, this was something to be proud of. Indeed, the psychologists Lajos Bartha and László Nagy mentioned that in the first five years after the committee was set up (1958–63), the number of psychological works published *nearly every year* exceeded the total amount published in the years 1945–1957. This meant that about 300 publications were made each year.²⁶⁷ Also the first signs of opening up to the outside world were felt, as Hungarian psychologists “in relatively large numbers” were now able to take short study trips abroad and participate in “every significant” international conference.²⁶⁸

* * *

As briefly mentioned above, the Psychology Committee worked in some form already before the turbulent days of 1956. Dr. Pál Gegesi Kis, the influential head of the committee, and one of the most important personalities in the revival of the discipline, summarised in 1960 what he saw as the most significant steps in the short history of academic psychology in Hungary under socialism. In a memorandum to comrade Lajos Szántó from the Presidium of the Academy, Gegesi traced the roots of academic psychology in Hungary back to 1954.²⁶⁹ He noted that in this particular year the impact of Pavlov on scientific practices in Hungary was debated in a general discussion organised by the Pavlov Committee. In the same meeting, the Clinical Main Committee (*klinikai főbizottság*), which represented the 5th scientific department of the Academy, suggested that one day should be dedicated to discussing “psychological questions” during the Academy’s spring convention the following year.

What were these questions about? The issue raised was, in fact, educationally ‘difficult’ children (*nehezen nevelhető gyerekek*), and it had several historical layers.²⁷⁰ On the one hand, there were children who were physically or mentally disabled, neurotic, delinquent or ‘deviant’, i.e., they were all difficult to handle for one reason or other (indeed, they may well have been orphaned during WWII). And on the other hand, there was the Party state with an interest in monopolising the education of future socialist citizens; and it was hoped that the knowledge offered by psychologists could be used to somehow ‘rationalise’ the existing situation. It seems that after almost a decade of eking out an existence on the margins of academia and negative political labelling,

ideológiai munkájáról. A Pszichológiai Tudományos Társaság megszervezésének a kérdése.

²⁶⁷ Later it was admitted, however, that at least some of these publications were actually older works which were kept in a drawer during the difficult years and only published after 1956. In this sense, they were not entirely new. See Akadémiai Levéltár. II. Osztály 210/5. A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia pszichológiai intézete 1966 évi beszámolójelentése.

²⁶⁸ Bartha & Nagy 1963, 185.

²⁶⁹ Gegesi Kis Pál feljegyzése Szántó Lajos elvtársnak...

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

finally some common ground was being found between the ideologues, science policymakers, and psychologists.

The Clinical Main Committee's proposal for a seminar dedicated solely to psychological questions was accepted by the Academy, and it was held in 1955. One concrete outcome of the meeting was the instant decision to establish the Psychology Committee. Gegesi noted that at first, as a result of "poor judgment", the committee worked under the auspices of the 2nd scientific department of the Academy, i.e., under the ideologically strict conditions of the social sciences. Without revealing too much of what actually happened during those years, Gegesi went on to note that soon the need was recognised for an academic and applied psychology in "several areas of society", and these needs soon exceeded the scope of the social sciences. There were also plans to put the committee in the 5th department (clinical), but representatives in the field of medicine argued that psychology did not fit into this framework either. Finally, it was recognised that actually the pursuit of psychology "touched upon the work of every scientific department in the Academy". Hence the suggestion to place it alongside the Presidium itself, as a special committee assigned to it proved to be the most suitable solution for communist academia.²⁷¹

The National Institute for Child Psychology (ICP), which had venerable roots stretching all the way back to Pál Ranschburg's psychological laboratory in the early 1900s proved to be a crucial part of the story. In 1955 the ICP was integrated into the organisational framework of the Academy of Sciences as a research unit in its own right.²⁷² And this turned out to be significant ten years later, when the institute was transformed into the central academic research unit for psychology within the Academy of Sciences in 1965.²⁷³ Its reorganisation had been on the planning agenda since the start of the 1960s,²⁷⁴ and indeed it played a key part in the institutionalisation of psychology from 1956 onwards.

Throughout the Rákosi period the ICP was headed by psychologist Imre Molnár, and it struggled for its existence outside the Academy as somewhat of a relic from pre-socialist times, working mainly on tasks related to child guidance. It was also one of the very few places in which psychological testing was continuously practiced. After its integration into the structure of the Academy in 1955, the conditions of its work changed considerably. Although child therapy remained in its focus well until to the 1960s, the organisational change meant that it would be controlled and governed as an integral part of the Academy's research structure. This meant, among other things, that both the scientific and the political quality of its work could be regularly checked.²⁷⁵

As Ferenc Pataki has noted, the fate of the ICP during the 1950s was also

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Pataki & Koncz 1993, 101.

²⁷³ Ibid., 101.

²⁷⁴ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1961/28 ó.e. MSZMP KB Tudományos és kulturális osztálya. Jelentés az MTA Pszichológiai Bizottság munkájáról, 5.

²⁷⁵ See, for example: HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1960/25 ó.e. MSZMP KB tudományos és kulturális osztálya. Jelentés az MTA Társadalomtudományi intézeteinek tudományos és ideológiai munkájáról. Gyermekelektani Intézet 1959 évi munkájáról.

tied to the wider ideological-political struggle over the status of psychology in the context of (socialist) pedagogics. This struggle for the subject's autonomy was concretised in plans to merge the institute with the Institute for Pedagogics within the Academy of Sciences. According to Pataki, the struggle was resolved in the psychologists' favour when the Minister of Education, Tibor Erdey-Gruz, decreed that from 1 February 1955 the institute would be working as a separate unit, but under the auspices of the Academy. Pataki goes on to say that until the Psychology Committee was established as a presidential organ, the institute remained tied to the biologically and medically oriented Clinical Department, which in turn meant it was controlled by the Pavlov Committee. Interestingly, this context seemed to be less ideologically sensitive than in the social and educational sciences at the time.²⁷⁶

* * *

Pál Gegesi Kis, the head of the Psychology Committee within the MTA, was a crucial figure in these early stages. Paradigmatically in the case of Hungary, Gegesi became a prominent figure in psychology although he was *not* a psychologist *per se*, but in fact a pediatrician and a cardiologist, who was also head of the 1st Children's Clinic at the Budapest Medical University. However, he genuinely understood the relevance of psychological knowledge especially in clinical child therapy. Indeed, judging from the methods used in his own clinic, he supported low key psychological and psychoanalytical testing. Psychologist Péter Popper, who worked in Gegesi's clinic at the time, describes him as an "eager dilettante" [of psychology].²⁷⁷ Gegesi was also equally capable of defending psychological approaches from dogmatic ideological positions. As Popper recalls, in one academic discussion, Gegesi answered in simple terms one of the leading ideologues of the Party (Erik Molnár in fact).

If you gave me the Marxist-Leninist method to stop enuresis [bed-wetting], I would introduce it immediately. But until then, I am obliged to keep on curing them.²⁷⁸

Gegesi was not only a full member of the Academy of Sciences from 1954 onwards, but also a member of the Presidium of the Academy (1958-1973), and a one-time head of the Hungarian Red Cross. Besides these high profile positions, he was also editor-in-chief of the main psychological journal *Magyar Pszichológiai Szemle* (1961-1967), and the first self-proclaimed President of the MPTT. With the eminent position in post-Stalinist Hungarian science that

²⁷⁶ Pataki & Koncz 1993, 101.

²⁷⁷ Popper 2005, 122-124.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 122-123. Gegesi's interests in child psychology and psychosomatics are showed in more detail in chapter 4. For now, it is enough to say that, in the 1930s, he had helped his friend and colleague, Lucy M. Liebermann to organise a psychoanalytically oriented child guidance centre as part of the 1st Children's Clinic in Budapest. This was one of the psychological institutions which provided continuity from before the war.

Gegesi held, it is no wonder that he used these powers as a 'patron' for psychology to both open and shut doors of opportunity.

For example, László Halász recalls that Gegesi did a lot to bring the "ragged and shattered" (*lerongyolodott, szétzilált*) back into the fold after the fall of Stalin.²⁷⁹ For Halász, Gegesi's role as a "leader-manager" and a guardian of interests meant opportunities. Gegesi "arranged many things", helped people to get their works published, organised resources, and provided access to laboratory equipment, books, and periodicals which were otherwise difficult to reach. Basically, he was instrumental in reinstating psychology because he sat on several chairs within the organisational hierarchy of the Academy; and as a consequence he could not only appoint researchers to the Academy, but - as Halász notes - also arrange assignments for them which were directly linked to the Psychology Committee and its budget. Halász, for example, had a chance to do research on the psychology of art in the Hungarian National Gallery, and in the gallery he says that he enjoyed "great freedom in research".²⁸⁰ Gegesi, in turn, was also a renowned art collector whose personal networks extended far beyond the narrow confines of the ivory-tower of the Academy.²⁸¹

It is not difficult to imagine that due to his status and networks Gegesi attracted some criticism. Indeed, in the archives of the CC Department of Science and Culture (TKO), there is an unsigned letter of complaint from 1960, in which a psychologist from the ICP attacks Gegesi's "dictatorial" and "anti-democratic" style of leadership.²⁸² In the letter, the writer pays great attention to Gegesi's conspicuous position as an outsider to psychology, which was clearly reflected in his "questionable behaviour" towards workers at the ICP. Indeed, according to this testimony, it seemed that Gegesi was not only convinced of the importance of his own position in leading psychology towards a brighter future, but also of those of his own peers and colleagues he personally deemed worthy (some of whom were, significantly enough, psychologists).²⁸³

The letter started with the heavy accusation that, even though this had been eliminated in the other social sciences, psychology nevertheless suffered from the same kind of dictatorial practices that had existed under Rákosi, and this was all the more regrettable since the dictator responsible was not even a psychologist. But after the "years of neglect" (1949-50), when psychology had been altogether silenced, it was no doubt hard to find able leaders in the field - considering it was now "probably one of the smallest" disciplines in Hungary. But this should not have stopped the new leader from at least seeking

²⁷⁹ Halász's autobiographical note in Bodor (et.al.) 1997, 79-80.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ One consequence of his passionate love for visual culture was that he established a separate subcommittee for the psychology of art, and one interesting personality who was even formally part of the Psychology Committee for a while was the famous avant-garde artist, Lajos Kassák, who was also a significant figure in Hungarian underground culture.

²⁸² HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1960/25. ő.e. MSZMP KB tudományos és kulturális osztálya. Jelentés az MTA Társadalomtudományi intézeteinek tudományos és ideológiai munkájáról. Panaszlevél.

²⁸³ Ibid., 1-2.

legitimacy among the few psychologists there were remaining; and yet those who wanted to do things differently were in danger of losing their positions.

Not only was Gegesi's manner authoritarian, according to the writer, but the way he headed the newly established official publishing forums was unprofessional. He was blamed for effectively not including psychologists in the editorial process because, even though there was formally an editorial committee (for the sake of appearances), Gegesi's decision was final in every case. The anonymous writer then went on to point out "illogicalities" in the first volumes of *Psychological Research* which when they were sent to foreign colleagues were a cause for "laughter" there.

Furthermore, his indiscriminate favouritism was raised as a case in point. Gegesi had, for example, sent colleagues from the 1st children's clinic to an international psychological congress in Bonn without even asking if anyone from the ICP first, when the ICP was the only officially *psychological* research base in Hungary at the time. In addition, the two people he did end up sending had both already been to an international congress in 1959, and one of them - Lucy M. Liebermann - was then sent on a study trip to the USSR later that same year.²⁸⁴ To do this meant leaving out several experienced psychologists, and it smacked of a certain high-handedness. It also reveals something about the prevalent political conditions in science which fostered these kinds of micro-policies. Perhaps Gegesi's actions reveal something about a system in which patrons needed to both to control the process of professionalisation, while at the same time safeguarding it from outside political intervention.

As far as the accusations of authoritarianism went, the letter raised the point that the workers in ICP had not even been consulted by Gegesi's committee in the process of assessing the viability of their institute as part of the process of establishing the Psychology Committee. ICP members were only handed the final draft, which focused almost exclusively "on deficits and mistakes", and mentioned little positive about their past work. The writer went on to indicate that ICP members were thus understandably critical of the report, and yet these criticisms were not addressed at either the meetings of the scientific department or the Presidium.²⁸⁵

The policy of making appointments to the ICP's Science Council was also criticised. The policy was supposed to be that the heads of the institute departments should be present in these councils but in the ICP, as there were no departments *per se* (only 'working groups'), Gegesi did not feel obliged to choose these leaders, and was thus accused of bypassing the opinions of the working groups and choosing the line-up of the institute's council for himself. The end result was that he named only four trusted persons from the institute, but left out both the acting head and leaders of the working groups - replacing them instead with three outsiders.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 2-3.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 3-4.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 4

This line-up was also criticised for its lack of professional qualifications. All those psychologists who had participated in the committee when it was working under the auspices of the MTA Department of Social Sciences were “automatically left out”. Thus, in 1958, only a minority of the 13-14 standing members of the committee were now professional psychologists.²⁸⁷ Furthermore, the writer pointed out the interesting fact that among the subcommittees there was no separate branch for child psychology, a major field with long-standing traditions in Hungary. What the reasons were for this decision are hard to say. However, the writer implied that the decision to leave out many psychologists from the committee was in itself a testimony of the medical establishment’s aim to be in control of the psychological field. The writer believed this was clearly manifest in Gegesi’s seemingly arbitrary intervention in hiring a new physician (*klinikai orvos*) to the institute. The general opinion was that this should be a child psychiatrist since the “majority of children” treated in the institute were “psychopathic or neuropathic”. However, by effectively forcing through his own opinion that this expert should be a pediatrician, Gegesi had “sacrificed” the professional level of psychotherapy in the Institute for Child Psychology.²⁸⁸

In the end, the writer concluded that Gegesi’s ‘feudal’ style had amounted to creating a “patronising atmosphere” (*kegyúri légkör*) in which those who opposed him became “de-moralised”.²⁸⁹ Several comments in the margin testify that the letter was taken seriously by the readers in the higher echelons of the Academy, meaning the critique had to be dealt with by the authorities. Indeed, if these accusations proved to be real, the Psychology Committee would have to be reorganised and Gegesi removed from his position. The letter was presumably also handed over to psychiatrist Pál Juhász for consideration. However, as nothing particular appears in the archives after this incident, it has to be assumed here that Gegesi - who was a member of the Academy’s Presidium himself - was able to nullify its effect.

The decision not to establish a specific Subcommittee for Child Psychology poses an interesting question in itself. Maybe the decision did indeed demonstrate the medical establishment’s drive to gain greater political influence over the strong psychoanalytic tradition of child psychology in the country, as the critical commentator suggests. It is also possible that Gegesi - whose close colleague and friend Liebermann was a psychoanalyst - was protecting the interests of his own clinic at Budapest Medical University. Or perhaps the decision to exclude child psychology at this stage was simply an echo from earlier Stalinist times, which had (after all) been characterised by the trials against so-called ‘pedology’ (the psychological study of children). Indeed, this may also have been the case whether or not the problems regarding “difficult children” were explicitly mentioned as a motive for establishing psychological research in Hungary.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 1-2.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 3-4.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 5.

However, in the Psychology Committee there were subcommittees for “educational psychology” (*nevelési pszichológia*), “criminal psychology”, and “methodology”, and in all these committees there were experts who would study child psychology and child-rearing issues in the 1960s.²⁹⁰ Hence, the fact that child psychology did not have its own committee in no ways meant that child psychological issues were not considered important.²⁹¹ Perhaps it was more the case that Gegesi’s “dictatorial” behaviour against the ICP stemmed more from views related to how psychological research and its relevant research bases should generally develop throughout Hungary.

2.2.2 Political leadership examined

In light of the documents, it seems clear that certain ideological and political preconditions had to be met before academics in the reemergent field of psychology could feel their future was assured. The counter-revolution set the tone in the Academy - the political loyalty of academics had to be checked, and suitable leading personalities needed to be found to keep the Academy and its research institutes on the right track. There was also a need to ‘streamline’ the political and ideological leadership in psychology. In this context, the question of leadership in the ICP became the focus of attention, particularly since its political profile had been criticised.

In August 1958, the MSZMP Political Committee investigated the cadre situation in the Academy and found it “unsatisfactory”. The message from the political decision-makers to the Academy leadership was that they had been too liberal. In their opinion, the removal of unsuitable academics from their positions had “dragged on” for too long, as rather than actually removing them, disloyal staff had instead been transferred from teaching to research positions.²⁹²

In a self-critical report signed by György Szigeti and Barna Gujdi, and addressed to the TKO, the problems were articulated in organisational terms. They accepted the criticism that the Academy lacked “goal-oriented” leadership especially in its cadre policies, and recognised that the Party would have to intervene to stop the current policies of “avoiding necessary action” - only then would improve for the better. The Academy not only had to be politically “stabilised”, but had to take responsibility for the actions of its staff.²⁹³ And these same considerations naturally had to also be taken into account when psychological institutions were reestablished.

Ideological and political control was exerted at both the levels of institute and individual researcher. The institutes were checked according to four basic

²⁹⁰ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1961/28 ó.e. MSZMP KB Tudományos és Kulturális Osztálya. MTA/Akadémiai pártcsoport. Jelentés a MTA Pszichológiai Bizottságának munkájáról. 2. sz. Melléklet: Javaslat a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia elnöksége mellett működő Pszichológiai Bizottság összetételére, 1-5.

²⁹¹ These problems are studied further in chapter 3.

²⁹² HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33 /1960/25. ó.e. MSZMP KB tudományos és kulturális osztálya. Jelentés a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia káderhelyzetéről, 2.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

criteria: political profile, professional standards, the cadre situation and the politics surrounding this (i.e., on what basis were future researchers selected?). Perhaps the most important issue was whether the institute was up-to-date with certain working standards, i.e., was its development *both* professionally *and* ideologically solid. Ideologically, this would have meant in “dialectical materialist” terms, which would have ensured that the cultural policies of the Party and “constructive socialism” were being carried out. Szigeti and Gujdi found that the majority of social science institutes were indeed based on Marxist-Leninist principles, and that their publications were Marxist in style. The Institute for Economics, for instance, was described as showing promising signs, and held up as a model for others.²⁹⁴

Regarding the natural sciences and engineering, however, the situation was more worrying as the dialectical materialist spirit had only filtered through into a minority of the research institutes. This meant that few could work as “professional and ideological centres” in their respective fields of research. It is hard to decipher what the somewhat cryptic expression ‘dialectical materialism’ actually denoted in practice, but in a general meeting of the Academy in 1961, the General Secretary Ferenc Erdei elaborated on this briefly. He referred to the public statement made by Gyula Kállai²⁹⁵, former Minister of Cultural Affairs and now Minister of State, about how a truly “dynamic guard of researchers” would be those who saw “the scientific service of the people as their calling in life”. By recognizing this, they would be walking “in step with the leading force of socialism - the Hungarian working class”.²⁹⁶ This called for responsibility among individual scientists, who were expected to adopt and *internalise* the “world-view” of the working-class. According to Kállai, and as reiterated by Erdei, science was expected to offer *useful* knowledge for socialist industry, for socialist agriculture, and for the overall needs of the socialist cultural revolution.²⁹⁷ But Erdei voiced concern about certain academic fields in this respect. He pointed out, among other things, that less than 10% of the ICP staff were members of the Communist Party.²⁹⁸

Although most of the other social sciences satisfied the necessary political criteria, (along with law, economics, the political and the agrarian sciences), those that were cited as not filling those criteria were linguistics, ethnomusicology (*Népzeneecsopot*), and child psychology.²⁹⁹ However, as

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 6–7.

²⁹⁵ Gyula Kállai (1910–1996) was a long-standing member of the Communist movement. At the turn of the 1960s he was the Chief Editor of *Társadalmi Szemle*, the main ideological mouthpiece of the Party. Kállai was also the President of the National Council of the HNF in 1957–1989. On the top of all, he was also a Prime Minister in 1965–1967.

²⁹⁶ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1961/28 ő.e. MSZMP KB tudományos és kulturális osztálya. Elnökségi beszámoló az 1961. évi közgyűlésre, 8.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 2.

²⁹⁸ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1960/25. ő.e. MSZMP KB tudományos és kulturális osztálya. Jelentés a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia káderhelyzetéről, 12.

²⁹⁹ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1961/28 ő.e. MSZMP KB tudományos és kulturális osztálya. Elnökségi beszámoló az 1961. évi közgyűlésre, 9; HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1960/25. ő.e. MSZMP KB tudományos és kulturális osztálya. Jelentés a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia káderhelyzetéről, 7, 10. At this stage, the

revealed by Szigeti and Gujdi's report, there was a need for personnel changes in basically every institute of the Academy. Leadership and mid-level management were a priority, as political loyalty was considered of the utmost importance. Another concern was that, according to information gathered in 1960, only 32.5% of the 1,860 researchers in all institutes came from the working class, and only 14.5% were members of the MSZMP.³⁰⁰ There were also research institutes without even a single party member (i.e., geodesists, ethnomusicologists, and geophysicists). In fact, there were altogether eight institutes (including the ICP) with less than 10% of its staff who were also members of the Party. An acceptable proportion of *leading cadres* for an institute to be considered politically trustworthy was set at 14.5% to remedy this situation.

Also the fluid situation between the Academy and the University called for political intervention, as there was a confusing group of 441 researchers who were paid by the Academy, but who worked in the University on a part-time basis for certain assignments. According to the report, these people, mostly in the engineering sciences, presented a political threat because the Party organs in the universities did not "care about them", in other words, did not know what they were up to. According to the information available, it also seems that only 31 of them belonged to the Party, and only 60 had a "worker-peasant background".

Meanwhile, the universities considered these positions as a means for containing (*lerakodó*) unwanted persons - i.e., for those politically unreliable elements who had been kicked out of the university and yet still had an Academy position "with the help of professors". The report stated these people had somehow achieved a status "totally separate from political life" (which implied outside political control). Furthermore, as their salary was better than those who were on the university payroll, they caused irritation among the "politically loyal" cadres. Although they helped university statistics in many ways, they posed a threat, especially in those departments which had both a "weak political composition" and "poor work morality". Indeed, from the perspective of ideologically correct university training, this situation needed to be resolved quickly.³⁰¹

After deeming the political makeup of the Academy unsatisfactory, the Political Committee then gave clear orders as to how to resolve matters. The personnel department of the Academy received clear directives about how to make the right decisions. The choice of academic cadres now depended as much on political profile as professional qualifications. The "employment of solid elements" and placing "politically solid, progressive forces" in leading positions was seen to be the key to ensuring the loyalty of the Academy. Even

ethnomusicologists, linguists, and literary scholars were considered to be particularly "wavering" (*ingadozó*) or passive.

³⁰⁰ Jelentés a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia káderhelyzetéről..., 13.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 14-15.

the politically “indifferent” were now deemed unsuitable, but just how these directives would be carried out was another thing altogether.³⁰²

In practice, the political control of scientific departments was formally the responsibility of special communist units (*osztályaktíva*) consisting of those members of the Academy who currently belonged to the Party, and individual researchers chosen for this task by them.³⁰³ The units also worked on long-term research plans, decided on which academics would be sent abroad, oversaw the “political” and professional quality of work, and were responsible for decisions concerning the research personnel. As a kind of semi-department, the Psychology Committee also had its own unit. As defined in 1960, its task was to oversee the selection of members to the committee, to work on reestablishing the Psychological Association, and to deal with the ongoing “problems of the Institute for Child Psychology”.³⁰⁴

As implied in the report for the Presidium, it was not always easy to translate political requirements into practice at the level of individual institutes. The reasons given for failing to do so, included “weaknesses in educational work” among those academics who were not party members, and also by “inconsistent” views among those in the communist units. Equally, the administrative institutions of the Academy were run by non-academic party bureaucrats precisely because the academics proved to be “inconsistent” in their political loyalty at times.³⁰⁵ In comparison, the situation in the Psychology Committee was described as being relatively “easy”. This was perhaps because the committee’s secretary, Jenő Salamon, was also a member of the communist unit.³⁰⁶

2.2.3 Lajos Bartha takes the lead

Political management problems at the ICP seemed to be a real issue for the Psychology Committee. Namely, the report made by Gegesi Kis (1961) to the party branch of the Academy described the situation at the institute as “unbalanced”.³⁰⁷ The very fact that the committee was thinking of intervening gives a very real sense of the conflict between it and the institute here. Besides objecting to the ICP head, Imre Molnár, the committee felt there was a lack of “strong party organisation”. There was no real cooperation, for example, between the ICP party secretary, the institute’s different departments, and Molnár, who anyway seemed to be resisting orders from above. And besides not being trusted by higher authorities, Molnár did not have a scientific degree

³⁰² Ibid., 2. One way was to reward people: 19 candidates received a doctoral degree for their political ‘correctness’.

³⁰³ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1961/28 ő.e. MSZMP KB tudományos és kulturális osztálya. MTA/Akadémiai pártcsoport. Jelentés a tudományos osztályok mellett működő pártaktívák tevékenységéről, 1.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 3.

³⁰⁵ Jelentés a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia káderhelyzetéről..., 3.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 5.

³⁰⁷ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1960/25. ő.e. MSZMP KB tudományos és kulturális osztálya. Jelentés Az MTA Társadalomtudományi intézeteinek tudományos és ideológiai munkájáról. A Pszichológiai Bizottság munkájáról.

that suited communist criteria, so he was forced to retire. The next action was to replace ICP personnel with “young professionals”, who were “primarily members of the party”.³⁰⁸

Lajos Bartha, a politically loyal young docent who had studied educational sciences in Leningrad and Moscow, was one such professional who was hired, and then chosen to lead the ICP.³⁰⁹ As a manifestation of his political usefulness to science, he had already in 1960 been elected as a secretary of the communist unit working alongside the Psychology Committee,³¹⁰ and then he had been a secretary in the Psychology Committee itself. He thus replaced Molnár as part of the new generation, and remained the head of the Institute for Child Psychology until 1970. It is quite possible that the Psychology Committee was forced to construct a case against Molnár, but to what extent? Indeed, what happened at ICP would fit in with the general tendency after 1956, for the committee to replace the heads of the institutes with more trusted, and more politically loyal cadres.³¹¹

Bartha, in turn, had already shown that he was good at “speaking bolshevik” (cf. Stephen Kotkin) in a travel report he had made from East Germany well before having any administrative responsibilities in the psychological field. This report, from 1961, was essentially about the in-house struggle for leadership within the psychological department of the Pedagogical Institute in Berlin³¹², led at that time by the renowned Kurt Gottschaldt, and events were recorded in no uncertain terms as setting a good example of how ideological and political streamlining might also be carried out back in Hungary. During his stay in the GDR, Bartha had also participated in an international symposium organised by the German Academy of Sciences; and in a special meeting³¹³ arranged after it at the Pedagogical Institute of Humboldt University, “confidential information” was shared about the worrying “influence of the west” on the East German “psychological front”.³¹⁴

The East German Institute for Pedagogics had a separate department of psychology (recently established in 1958). Bartha questioned the grounds for its existence, because the GDR’s ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED) had originally

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 3.

³⁰⁹ Bartha’s background is interesting. He had worked as an officer in the military for over ten years, and then in the Ministry of Defence (1956–1957). He also studied pedagogics in Leningrad (Herzen Institute, 1955–1958), and worked as an Assistant Professor of Psychology and Pedagogics at the Moscow Academy for Military Policy. He then moved to the Institute of Pedagogics in Hungary, and was finally was chosen as head of the ICP, which would later become the Institute for Psychology (1962–1970). <http://nevpont.hu/view.php?id=2465>. (16.9.2014).

³¹⁰ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1960/25. ő.e. MSZMP KB tudományos és kulturális osztálya. Jelentés Az MTA Társadalomtudományi intézeteinek tudományos és ideológiai munkájáról. MTA Pszichológiai Bizottság munkájáról, 2.

³¹¹ Jelentés a Magyar tudományos Akadémia káderhelyzetéről..., 1.

³¹² HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1960/25. ő.e. MSZMP KB tudományos és kulturális osztálya. Pszichológiai Bizottság. Bartha Lajos feljegyzése.

³¹³ Besides Bartha, among the invited guests there were also representatives from the USSR (P.A. Shevarieb, A.N. Davidov, and R. Natazde); Czechoslovakia (J. Linhart and A. Jurovszki); and Bulgaria (G.D. Piriov).

³¹⁴ HU-MNL MK-S. 288 f. 33/1960/25. ő.e. MSZMP KB tudományos és kulturális osztálya. Pszichológiai Bizottság. Bartha Lajos feljegyzése, 1–2.

founded it to strengthen the Marxist education system with psychological knowledge, but instead it had launched various projects in *clinical psychology* at the expense of educational psychology. Research had been made on topics that were undoubtedly “of scientific value”, but in Bartha’s opinion they did “not support the aims of the state which ensures the financial and other conditions of research”. Bartha then went on to observe that the political priority had thus been to get rid of Gottschaldt who had been acting too “independently” in his interactions with academics from the west.³¹⁵

Gottschaldt had once been head of the department of ‘hereditary psychology’ in Berlin under the Third Reich, and yet he had somehow been able to safeguard his position under communism in East Germany by not only becoming head of the Institute for Psychology, but also a member of the Academy of Sciences there. As Mitchell G. Ash notes, one of the reasons for Gottschaldt’s success was his ability to sell the idea that psychological science and its human subject could further the social and economic interests of the Party. In this way he maintained that concepts imported from the American school of ‘human relations’, for example, could be safely treated as “neutral and potentially useful instruments for the new dominant class”.³¹⁶

But by 1958, the SED set to work more systematically and aggressively to ensure the ideological integration of scientists and intelligentsia to the Party cause, and his position as a “loyal outsider” became endangered. Adding to the fact that he was increasingly seen as a burden rather than an asset to the socialist cause, was the fact that Gottschaldt still identified himself strongly with gestalt psychology, which was attacked in public because it had become seen as “the last vestiges of bourgeois psychology”. Whether or not these attacks were part of a carefully orchestrated campaign to create a special brand of marxist psychology, they had the effect of toppling Gottschaldt.³¹⁷

Ash makes it quite clear that this was, however, not simply a struggle of ideology against (objective) science. Scientists themselves were evidently far from passive observers of the party line. Indeed, there were comrades in the SED who were convinced of the relevance of psychological knowledge as a relatively ‘objective’ means to further the cause of the Party, even if the same Party wanted to control just how this was done. Hence, the way psychology was politicised was as much about the in-house struggle between Gottschaldt and his eager younger peers at the institute. Interestingly, those who supported Gottschaldt in the Academy of Sciences were in many cases members of the Party, when in fact many of those of his younger staff who stood against him did not belong to the SED. They insisted that Gottschaldt had “held the reins too tight”; in other words, he had too rigidly insisted on using his own methods wherever possible, and as these had already been developed way back in the 1930s, this might work against him. Thus, the politicisation of science here

³¹⁵ Ibid., 2-3.

³¹⁶ Ash 1999, 295-296.

³¹⁷ Ibid., 296.

appeared as a rather complicated process in which different actors used prevalent ideological and political tendencies for their own ends.³¹⁸

In conclusion, Bartha's report on his East German comrades advised that a greater emphasis be put on political leadership in the sciences. Psychology was no exception, since as Ash notes, it was located on the boundary between the natural and social sciences. And as the latter essentially focused on the relationship between the individual and society, which was the very core of socialism, it was problematic to leave it uncontrolled. At the same time, psychological knowledge had real relevance for the fields of education (ideology) and labour policy. In Hungary, however, the conditions clearly differed from those in the GDR, since psychology had been almost totally forbidden for a decade. This meant that 1958 not only signified a 'liberalisation' from Stalinist policies, but also the active *politicisation* of psychology to 'safely' integrate it into the socialist science regime.

Strong intellectual personalities with an independent orientation, such as Gottschaldt, were not needed in Hungary. As György Litván's research implies, this was also the case when, as the newly elected head of the ICP, Bartha actively sought to prevent the appointment of social psychologist Ferenc Mérei to the institute, after Mérei was released from prison in 1963.³¹⁹ According to György Litván, Bartha wrote several letters to influential people, such as the Secretary of the CC (Miklós Óvári), emphasising that Mérei should not be placed in *any* research institute because "he would immediately split the workers and cause in-fighting". In fact, according to Bartha, the best place for Mérei would be a library where he could work by himself. This position was so extreme, that even the state security were lenient in comparison. For example, one police official wanted him satisfactorily employed as the unresolved work situation was causing "bitterness and resentment" for the psychologist, his friends, and his relatives.³²⁰

Litván concludes that the main hindrance for Mérei's employment was thus not so much due to any suspicious activity in the eyes of state security, but because of the now strictly hierarchical state of the psychological profession. Indeed, Mérei is remembered by many of his colleagues as a difficult

³¹⁸ Ibid., 297–300. Gottschaldt tried to improve his position by cultivating contacts with Luria and Leontjev, whom he met at the International Congress for Psychology in Brussels in 1957. He also attended the All Union Congress of Psychology in Moscow in 1960, which is remembered as one of those events which signalled, under Khrushchev, the liberation of Soviet psychology from Pavlovian orthodoxy. At this point, Gottschaldt maintained that there were no real differences between East German psychologists and their Soviet comrades. Indeed, he here argued that his approaches had been approved even in Soviet headquarters. His ultimate failure seemed to be that he accepted his election to the German Society for Psychology as an individual, and not as an official representative of the GDR. Thus, he could be blamed for acting too independently.. Gottschaldt left East Germany illegally in February 1962.

³¹⁹ Litván 2006. Regarding Mérei, the solution was rather soon to be found in Lipotmező psychiatric hospital, in which Mérei would establish a psycho-diagnostics laboratory. As Litván shows, Bartha protested even against this solution.

³²⁰ Cf. Litván 2006.

personality and demanding leader,³²¹ so when Bartha wanted to oust him, it was politically useful to discover that one thing he shared with his new colleagues was a common enemy in Mérei. In short, political pressure was thus also felt at the level of scientific research institutes throughout Hungary. For the psychological field in particular, the one thing its administration did not need was a charismatic Mérei to complicate the politically coordinated and careful building of the psychological institutions of the future.

2.3 Great expectations

2.3.1 Big hopes and visions

In her book *“Inventing the Needy: Gender and the Politics of Welfare in Hungary”*, Lynne A. Haney has described how the revival of psychology at the turn of the 1960s was experienced in Hungary as something “new and exciting”. The *individual mind* was coming back into vogue. Founding her argument on a sample of psychological publications from the early 1960s, Haney argues that psychologists wrote as if they were uncovering new social phenomena with unique analytical methods. Indeed, one prominent child psychologist trained in the 1950s explained this to Haney in an interview in the 1990s.

It was an exciting period. We were doing research that had been forbidden. We were talking about individuals and discussing psychological issues that no one had examined before.³²²

Although Haney does not go on to problematise the revival of psychology from a historical perspective as such, she does pay careful attention to the situation at hand, pointing out that after the historical break of Stalinism (when the field had lain dormant), psychologists now had many opportunities. People could even talk of the difficulties under Stalinism in quite colourful language, as indeed did Imre Molnár in one of the discussions organised by the Petőfi circle just before 1956.

If somebody in Hungary had wanted to conduct a [psychological] laboratory experiment after 1950, he would have found himself in the midst of grave accusations. He would have been held responsible for “locking himself away in an ivory tower”, of “disengaging with life”, of “idealism”, or worse still “pedology” - an accusation more dangerous than *roma esto sacer*. Those who raised such accusations against psychologists and their work, in most cases did not even have to ground their arguments in any way; as everybody was afraid of defending the leper accused, in case they became an even greater suspect in doing so. Only in very exceptional cases of this kind of smear campaign was a real discussion allowed to take place between the author and the institution. The concept of pedology was bandied about in our literature like the Flying Dutchman among sailors: it was talked about by everybody, loathed by some, but nobody actually knew what it was. Nowadays this

³²¹ See, for example, Borgos (et.al.), 2006.

³²² Haney 2002, 95.

is admitted even by those who spent years purging Hungarian pedagogics and psychology of all pedagogy.³²³

It seems apparent from this, among other examples, that the events of 1956 finally gave psychologists and reform-minded pedagogues a much needed outlet to express their dissatisfaction at the lack of professionalism in their field, and the excessive political and ideological controls they faced. So it was that in the “discussion on education” organised by the Petőfi Circle in October 1956, several speeches called for the professional reinstatement of psychology. Alice Hermann, in particular, delivered a severe criticism of the Stalinist methods of running kindergartens.³²⁴ She demanded the reform of policies that had forced women to deliver children due to the enforcement of strict anti-abortion laws, yet which also forced them into the labour market, while at the same time failing to provide appropriate day care for the children. Importantly, Hermann argued that this was both a question of political legitimacy as well as a social problem with a human cost. The question she felt they needed to be asking themselves was not so much to do with their own status, but “what it meant for children of 3-6 years of age living in the streets or at home in unbearable mental and health conditions”.³²⁵

In front of an enthusiastic audience, Hermann delivered a withering critique of the administrative and institutional practices that were hindering the adoption of a scientific approach to children’s education, and one in which psychology could play a major role. Scientific publications had, for years, been “muddled up” with methodical letters, curriculum instructions and “manuals” for the teachers to use as ideological guidelines, she argued; and the pedagogy urged by these instructions did not pay any attention at all to children’s creative abilities.

Nowhere has this brand of pedagogics, practised on impressionable kids, caused so much destruction and caused so much unnecessary tragedy than in kindergarten [...]. By the children’s third year in kindergarten, the teacher loses interest in them [...] and it’s no wonder because it is not really possible to love children that are seen to have only conditional reflexes and no real emotions in any objective sense, and

³²³ A Petőfi kör vitái..., 116–117.

³²⁴ Ibid. Alice Hermann (1895–1975) was one of those who would carry the Hungarian psychoanalytic tradition of the 1930s into the Kádár era of the 1960s. Hermann was originally trained by Géza Révész in Budapest, but was soon assimilated into the Budapest School of Psychoanalysis through her marriage (1922) to Imre Hermann. She was a practising psychoanalyst from the early 1930s until 1945, when she became an inspector of kindergartens for the Democratic Union of Hungarian Women (MNDSZ). Under Stalinism, her training lost its value, so she became first a supervisor and then later a lecturer in matters related to nurseries for the Budapest Party Council. From 1957, she worked as an expert in the Department for Teacher Training at the Ministry of Culture. Her task was to manage the university teacher training of kindergarten teachers. Among Hungarians, she has become renowned as one of the most important characters behind their internationally renowned kindergarten system.

³²⁵ A Petőfi kör vitái..., 123

who instead have only a second signalling system of stimuli and inhibitions without a special world of thought of their own. [*met with cheerful laughter and applause*]³²⁶

For a psychoanalytically trained child psychologist like Hermann, the situation was all the more tragic because the tradition of educationally oriented child psychology was so “rich in facts”, both in Hungary and abroad. Therefore, while acknowledging the ideological pressure of recent years, she encouraged her colleagues to make use of at least some of those facts.

[E]ven if we are to be so humble that we leave out certain theoretical work because we are afraid of the [political] consequences, we can at least use the facts. All those diaries written by psychologists over the years tell about the stories and behaviour of children; and those children were hardly aiming to strengthen capitalism with their doings.

She ended her speech on a hopeful note, by adding that kindergarten, when properly and professionally organised, would provide a good basis for any brand of education, “whether it be socialist or not”.³²⁷

* * *

Gusztáv Lányi has argued that ideological shackles nevertheless remained in place and limited true psychological scholarship until at least the 1970s.³²⁸ However, this does not fully take into account the whole picture. Firstly, there were some repercussions from the anti-Stalinist changes in politics felt in psychology too; as both in public academic forums and in their journals, professional psychologists tried to take advantage of the new opportunities available to them. Secondly, it would be more fruitful to conceptualise *ideology* as less of a monolithic external ‘obstacle’ in the way of psychological progress, and more of an internal ‘resource’ in a discursive *process*, which would mean it was neither static nor unchanging.

This thesis is supported if we take public texts to be, not just instances of rhetoric operating in a controlled environment (which are somehow ‘hiding’ the true intentions of the speaker), but also as active modes of speech, which knowingly use the existing context. Reinhart Koselleck has popularised this notion of the existing context as operating within “the horizon of expectations”.³²⁹ With this in mind, I will next give some examples of discourses which were not only interacting with the prevailing political context in science, but also strike a future-oriented, and even positive note. They come from the general meeting of the Psychology Committee that took place on 13 April 1960, during the spring convention of the Academy of Sciences (*Akadémiai Nagyhat*). The speeches held in the meeting were also reproduced in written

³²⁶ Ibid., 124–125.

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Lányi 1998, 224–225.

³²⁹ Koselleck 2004, 255–275.

form, and published in the autumn issue of *Magyar Pszichológiai Szemle*, which was dedicated to assessing the current state of the affairs in the field.³³⁰

One of the speakers was professor Sándor Szalai (1912-1983), a highly respected sociologist and member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences since 1948, and an active leftist social democrat who had spent six years in prison after being convicted in a show trial in 1950, following the communist takeover. He was responsible for one of the most uplifting speeches of the day.

If somebody in Hungary had told me four or five years ago that psychology would have its own departmental meeting at the Academy's Spring Convention, like all the other seven departments within the Academy; that besides having its own journal and its own yearbook which, incidentally gets thicker and thicker with each passing year - as psychology climbs to such a position that it can suggest a whole raft of research topics for the National Science Plan; if somebody had expressed this dream four or five years ago, the people here - because they are psychologists - would no doubt have considered sending that dreamer to our colleague Imre Hermann for that dream to be duly interpreted, or if it was considered more serious, to our colleague Horányi.³³¹

Szalai, son of a lawyer and a committed social democrat, was trained in German and Swiss universities during the early 1930s. After returning to Budapest in 1935, he worked as a writer of news reports and articles for newspapers and news agencies alike both at home (such as for the social democratic *Népszava*), and abroad (such as the liberal conservative *Pester Lloyd*, *The Times*, and *Reuters*). In 1944, Szalai was transported to the infamous concentration camp in Bor, Serbia. Surviving the camp, he returned in 1945, and was quick to get involved in the newly formed Social Democratic Party, and to establish the Institute of Social Sciences at the Péter Pázmány University of Sciences in Budapest. His short-lived institute, before being closed down by Rákosi's government in 1949, was known for its vast collection of western sociological literature and its open-minded, politically liberal atmosphere.³³²

After his release from prison back in 1956, Szalai had been afforded protection by some top Kádárist politicians for having been badly treated during the Rákosi era since they wanted to distance themselves from those abuses. And this might also explain why there were relatively minor consequences when he immediately began to actively support the revolutionary reform initiatives within the Academy. And yet, as historian Éva Gál has shown in her detailed research, at the same time the police were also using the various machinations of state security to their advantage so that he would look like an informer.³³³

³³⁰ A Pszichológia helyzete hazánkban... The serial number of the first volume of the Hungarian Psychological Review that was published in the Socialist era was 17. This supports the thesis that the journal was seen as a continuation of the older *Magyar Pszichológiai Szemle* (est. 1928), disestablished in 1947/1948, and now revived. Furthermore, a brief source critical remark needs to be made clear. As I did not have access to the original drafts of these speeches, I cannot be totally certain about the possible editing or "policing" processes preceding their publication.

³³¹ A Pszichológia helyzete hazánkban..., 296-297.

³³² Gál 2013, 182-187

³³³ Ibid.

Irrespective of these machinations however, Szalai (who also had a long-time interest in psychoanalysis) was now, in 1960, advocating psychology as a social science which would have a real bearing on the building of socialist society. He talked excitedly about the promising potential of social psychology, especially group psychology, as well as mathematical modelling, cybernetics, and networks. He tried to promote a new understanding of mechanics based on “intelligence” and “adaptability”, referring to works published both in the USSR and US, (on subjects such as a “chess machine”).³³⁴ He also referred to Jean Piaget’s studies on “childish”, or illogical thinking, in which mathematical and logical methods of analysis had also been used. As Szalai pointed out, this research was also valued by Soviet psychologists, and that perhaps one day psychological knowledge might combine with cybernetics to build “intelligent machines”.³³⁵

According to Szalai, the cultivation of social psychology was crucial since it was a field which held great promise for the construction of socialism, and given the fact that it was now greatly “lagging behind” due to the previous mistaken policies, it needed the state’s full support. As Szalai argued, there was now a “real hunger” for experimental methods relating to group psychology in particular, and test methods in general. He therefore advised the Psychology Committee to arrange courses in these subjects, as they were not yet being taught at university.³³⁶

The fact that psychology was now included in the central planning of national science, and even had the status of being an independent branch on a par with the other scientific departments within the Academy, was for Szalai a sign “of its central importance” to the construction of socialism.

It goes without saying that we know much more about [...] how to deal with the material world than we do about [...] how to treat people.

In addition, expressing the view shared by many others in the audience, he pointed out that the technical and engineering sciences were, in general, much more advanced than the “techniques of social organisation”, the main tool of the latter being psychology. In fact, the socialist bloc was generally “lagging behind” in this respect. Szalai then went on to remind everyone that this had also been the most urgent issue in the All-Union Congress for Psychology in Moscow the very same year.³³⁷

Philosopher László Mátrai, in his speech earlier in this same general meeting in 1960, had also voiced similar opinions to Szalai about psychology being a mediating link between the natural and social sciences. Mátrai referred to the Soviet psychologist Rubinstein, who had recently died, and boldly

³³⁴ The reference to chess was especially inviting for Hungarians. Szalai referred to American Claude E. Shannon, an information theorist who had famously described how the computer could be programmed to play chess like a human being.

³³⁵ A Pszichológia helyzete hazánkban..., 299–300.

³³⁶ Ibid., 298.

³³⁷ Ibid., 296–297.

argued that there could be no relevant psychological research “in the twentieth century” if the valuable elements in both materialist and idealist approaches to human existence were not combined. Two steps had to be taken for this to be achieved. Firstly, the excesses of both extremes - “simplified vulgar materialism” on the one hand, and “unscientific pseudo-results of fake idealism” on the other - would have to go. Secondly, it should be generally acknowledged that “human consciousness, subjectivity, and psyche” had an important function. Although they certainly had to be studied in the context of the “material unity of the world”, the *peculiarly human* element in consciousness should not be simply “washed away”; for if the human mind was to be understood as “a concrete” entity that truly existed, then the social and natural sciences should not be artificially separated as conflicting forms of knowledge, but as mutually complementary parts of the same jigsaw.³³⁸

When it was Gegesi’s turn to speak, naturally as one of the main speakers, he went into more detail about the inclusion of psychology in the National Long-Term Research Plan. He announced “with joy” that the 58th assignment of the plan would be to find out the “psychological laws of human beings”, and to apply these “laws” to improve the conditions of industrial work (*termelőmunka*), the productivity of reforming practice in special education, law enforcement, schools, and hospitals. Furthermore, psychologists were to study “philosophical questions” to strengthen psychology’s Marxist orientation.³³⁹ The subject was thus to be both theoretically and practically oriented, with the emphasis on solving social problems. When reporting back to his colleagues on the achievements made by the subcommittee for clinical psychology so far, Gegesi stressed that psychologists now at last had a footing to counteract the prevailing “narrowly understood organic view” which until only recently had pushed psychology to the margins.³⁴⁰

Imre Molnár, still head of the ICP at the time, then spoke about the work of the institute’s Child Guidance Clinic. He underscored how important it had been to integrate the institute with the Psychology Committee a few months earlier (1960) because, now that the clinic belonged to the Academy of Sciences, it meant that the political authorities recognised its relevance for child welfare. Existing under the auspices of the committee also meant that psychology was now assured its place in the future without having to wage the battles it previously had against socialist pedagogics and philosophy. Indeed, as Molnár pointed out, now that psychology had developed its own autonomous institutions, it meant that it would no longer be subject to the same external pressures as before, and be able to determine its own starting points for future research.³⁴¹

Molnár also claimed that work and industrial psychology could help in the construction of socialism. He argued that compared to elsewhere in both the capitalist and socialist world, Hungarian psychology was still in its infancy due

³³⁸ Ibid., 269.

³³⁹ Ibid., 283–284.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 258.

³⁴¹ Ibid., 298–299.

to the fact that initiatives made in the 1930s had been all but forgotten about. As an example, he drew attention to the fact that the Soviet Psychological Association had just a year previously (1959) emphasised the role of “work and engineering psychology”.³⁴²

Indeed, the good news about the rise of work psychology in the USSR did not take long to get to Hungary. Indeed, Jenő Salamon wrote back from Moscow about his impressions of the first major event organised by the Soviet Psychological Association in 1959, noting that the gist of the points made there was that academic research should be brought “closer to life”. Work psychology in particular was flagged up as a priority, Salamon noted, and this would have ramifications for educational psychology too, he argued, since these new workers would also have to be educated. The most essential tasks for Soviet psychology though, related perhaps to the opportunities and challenges brought about by industrial and technological developments. It was hoped that greater psychological knowledge would add to what had previously been purely rational management techniques and improve the efficiency and quality of work.³⁴³

In Hungary, however, this was not yet the case - as Molnár was keen to point out. Work psychology was currently only being employed in the field of traffic safety, so Molnár demanded that the example of the USSR be followed and that the use of psychology be extended to the training of engineers. He supported his thesis by arguing that capitalist and socialist systems differed particularly in the way their systems of work were organised and, because of this, psychological research in Hungary needed to start from its existing reality of developing socialism. Thus, models from the west should not be imported without careful consideration, even if they might seem easy to adopt, as the psychological reality of the Eastern Bloc was quite different to the west's. Molnár was therefore actually appealing to socialism as one reason why psychological research was particularly needed in Hungary, as the work environment produced different social and psychological phenomena than in the school, the family, or among “collectives of friends”.³⁴⁴

Some of the other speakers referred to achievements that had already been made. For example, László Réti mentioned the special institute that had been established earlier that year (1960) for evaluating the suitability of transport workers with psychological tests, and the fact that there were even some work psychologists that had already been trying to improve the working conditions in several factories.³⁴⁵ One factory in particular that he mentioned was located in *Csillaghegy*, Budapest, where hemp and flax was processed. Based on psychological examinations carried out by József Perczel and Imre Molnár, a more humane system of breaks had been introduced, and this had proved effective in increasing productivity. In addition to this, Réti mentioned the concrete improvements in one mining fuse factory. The doctor there had turned

³⁴² Ibid., 293–294.

³⁴³ Salamon 1960, 63.

³⁴⁴ *A Pszichológia helyzete hazánkban...*, 295–296.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 308–309.

to the psychological experts at the Hungarian Railways aptitude-testing centre because there had been several explosions with fatal consequences when mercury had been used. After this consultation the number of accidents in the factory dropped sharply. As Réti pointed out, each explosion caused between 50,000 and 100,000 forints worth of damage, but this was nothing when compared to “the most invaluable cost of human life”.³⁴⁶

Réti also produced a global, and perhaps rather simplified distinction between ‘materialist’ and ‘idealist’ psychology and argued that their differences were irreconcilable. Although he did not go into more explicit detail about these terms, he characterised his own psychological research on alcoholism as essentially materialist. It seems that the term was here being used to describe the scientific focus on *practical problems* which might improve the existing conditions of life. The essential point was that it was not research being carried out in some ivory tower, away from the real issues of everyday life. Réti also wanted to prove wrong those who thought that Hungarian psychology was in some way compromised, as in some areas he thought Hungarian research was actually “pioneering”. With this in mind, he hoped the Psychology Committee would “silence once and for all those misleading press releases which downplay the significance of the psychological sciences in Hungary”. He called instead for “healthy propaganda” that would help psychology lead the way in developing socialist society.³⁴⁷

Finally, Gegesi ended the meeting with a stirring speech on the human condition. While his rhetoric may have been somewhat grandiose, it also had a certain pragmatic edge which suited the occasion rather well.

No matter how high the level of achievements our communist society attains, and even if human consciousness is to change itself in many ways - and like you all I'm convinced that it will - a man, after all, will be a man. The set-up of his nervous system consists of a cerebral cortex with intellectual, conceptual, emotional, motoric, and vegetative spheres; and [within communism, too] these will still form the central nervous system. People will feel happy, they will also have worries, and they will sometimes feel sad. There will still be humans relating to humans; families, and communities - with ties between people. [But] there will also be friction and conflicts, even in that highly developed and mature society which is called socialism or communism. I believe that it is not a matter of coincidence how man produces his happiness and grief, and the ways he accepts his inevitable death without letting his consciousness of this disturb his happiness [...].³⁴⁸

Basically, Gegesi was convinced that psychology would help people face all the challenges of life, even within communism, because these challenges were an essential part of humankind's biological and social nature. His message was that the “science of psychology” would pave the way for a happier human life by pursuing important research in all those fields that had thankfully been reinstated since the Rákosi era.

In this context, the research carried out by the psychiatrist, Pál Juhász at Debrecen Medical University on the psychological impacts of collectivisation

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 309–310.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 315.

must be mentioned, since it produced results which the authorities found difficult to accept. The research took place in the village of Csengersima, on the border of Romania in the county of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg. Juhász eventually studied the phenomena for almost two decades³⁴⁹, but already early on in his research, at the start of the 1960s, he introduced the concept of “collective farm neurosis” (*Tsz-Neurózis*). Juhász presented his paper on how this phenomenon was particularly prevalent among the rural population in the first national conference of the MPTT in 1963. The paper was later published in *Psychological Tanulmányok* in 1965.³⁵⁰

The context in which the paper was presented probably influenced its style. Although the implicit message was critical, it was expressed in reformist tones and highlighted the importance of maintaining a psychological perspective on further developments in the agricultural sector to prevent there being any more of the “countless” cases of “unintentional harm” that had already occurred.

According to a calculation made in 1961, Juhász observed that over 25% of Csengersima’s inhabitants were suffering from neuroses, as a psychiatric disease, and evidenced in visible symptoms of depression and anxiety.³⁵¹ As Csaba Kovács notes, Juhász adopted a wide explanatory framework for his thesis, by showing that behind these neuroses were actually several factors, such as learning problems, alcoholism, family dynamics, and overwork, especially among women. Collectivisation was therefore just one of several reasons for their condition, but it was nevertheless a significant one.³⁵² In his paper, Juhász thus focused especially on those who worked in the collectivised agricultural sector. Among this group, he detected 162 neurosis cases, and of these, he judged 41 to be directly related to collectivisation and having to adapt to it.³⁵³

Juhász and his colleagues had carried out detailed measurements relating to neurosis occurrence and whether or not it corresponded to the standard of living, and they found it did not, as people tended to adapt well enough to the prevailing circumstances. This lack of correspondence thus revealed that low incomes were not the most telling factor in causing the neuroses, and challenged the prevailing notion that to eradicate psychological problems socialism had simply to ensure the right socioeconomic conditions for all.

However, there did seem to be a correspondence between standard of living and what had happened with collectivisation. Namely, there were more cases of neurosis in those families who had lost a larger piece of land in the collectivisation of farming. Juhász’s conclusion was that a downturn in the standard of living facilitated the emergence of different “psychogenic” factors

³⁴⁹ Juhász 1964, 1970 & 1973.

³⁵⁰ Juhász 1965, 245–254.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 245.

³⁵² Kovács 2013, 214–215. By studying the so-called ‘citizen complaints’ from early on in Hungary’s second period of collectivisation, Kovács shows that quite a few related to problems described by Juhász in his research.

³⁵³ Juhász 1965, 246.

that would then lead to neuroses,³⁵⁴ but he reasoned that collective farm neurosis would probably diminish in the future if general living standards did go up. All the same, over 50 % of the cases seemed to have mental problems even if there was no detectable change in their living standards for better or worse, and this required an explanation.

Juhász did this by demonstrating that many villagers felt that they had lost their economic independence. He suggested that the psychological symptoms caused by feelings of subordination would only go away if the idea of common property became sufficiently internalised in their minds to the extent that they could see their future as being financially secure within the framework of collectivised agriculture. Juhász clarified, however, that this was not the prevailing mood in the collective farms.³⁵⁵ Another possible reason for their neuroses was thought to be the introduction of unfamiliar production hierarchies and large socialist production units which many rural people could not seem to cope with. Indeed, Csengersima was a village where people had historically been “destined to a life of serfdom” (*cselédsorsban élt falu*), so the villagers understandably associated the “worst memories of insecurity and humiliation” with big farms.³⁵⁶

Juhász went on to ask the critical question of whether the village had been prepared for the “psychological traumas” that would have come with large scale production, which implied, in turn, that the ideals and practices relating to small scale independent production were still alive and well. These practices had previously allowed for “spontaneous little amusements” and feelings of independence. So essentially, the problems seemed to relate to differing ideas on how time should be used, and Juhász believed it would take years for the rural population “to understand the amount of extra income and free time” that would come with the rational organisation of work in a cooperative; as they were still thinking “I will work whenever I want”. In other words, there was an old task-oriented concept of work and time which was at odds with socialist modernisation.³⁵⁷

Although Juhász thought that former smallholders might be deluding themselves to think that working from “dusk to dawn” on their individual properties was freedom, he had to admit that neither were they free agents in the collective farms. As they saw it, the “will of the community” (i.e., the joint production meeting, the brigade) was, in practice, just another form of hierarchical power relations, with the cooperative manager, the “agronomist”, and the leader of the brigade (i.e., the leaders) seeming to give orders and “arrange” things purely for themselves.³⁵⁸ At this point, Juhász suggested that, unlike the industrial workers who were already used to such power structures, rural workers had to learn the system from scratch. They had lost the feeling of being in charge of their own destiny.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 248–249.

³⁵⁵ Ibid., 250.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 250–251.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 250.

The take-home message of this research, Juhász argued, was that rural workers in Hungary had suffered a long history of feudal subjection; and this must be borne in mind by the political decision-makers, if the government wanted to reduce psychological stress in collectivised agriculture - which, Juhász added, was also experienced by the organisers and even the most eager protagonists of agricultural collectives. Not only this, but centuries of feudal subjection were then followed by a hasty land reform in 1945, which soon broke down into "weeks and months of hardship" which was not helped in the Rákosi years by the "cult of the individual" and the policies of compulsory delivery. In these conditions, Juhász added, the land became "a nuisance" and it was no wonder that the agricultural workforce had not stepped willingly into a collective farm in any genuine and future-oriented way. Instead, there had been complaints against "uncomprehending and self-serving" brigade-leaders. Juhász therefore urged "socialist democracy" as one immediate solution for this, so that everyone had a chance to voice their opinion, to ask questions, and to discuss so they would feel more secure.³⁵⁹

* * *

In a memorandum to Lajos Szántó (of the Presidium) on the "future national tasks" for psychology in 1960, Gegesi noted (on behalf of the Psychology Committee) that the previous "resistance" to psychology now seemed to be melting away. Whereas before it had been an "unwanted science" that had been "confused" with Freudism, psychoanalysis, and "other idealist tendencies" it was now recognised that a range of "communities" in every socialist country could benefit from greater psychological knowledge.³⁶⁰ This was both a reading of the current ideological tendencies in the country, and a rhetorical way of indicating that, if the developmental needs of the discipline were not met, psychologists would not be able to carry out the policies that the government actually wanted. In effect, the priority at this initial stage was to find enough able psychologists for the job at hand.

The academic and professional education of psychologists was therefore high on the agenda, but it would take some years for these young cadres to graduate, and professionally trained psychologists were thin on the ground in Hungary. It was true that within the framework of teacher-training, psychology could be studied as major, but students were not trained specifically in psychology as a profession. In this respect, Hungary "lagged behind" many other European countries; and in all the essential fields where psychology could be applied - medicine, work, and education - the need for properly trained professionals was huge.³⁶¹

Some complementary stop-gap measures therefore needed to be taken;

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 251.

³⁶⁰ Gegesi Kis Pál feljegyzése Szántó Lajos elvtársnak..., 3.

³⁶¹ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1960/25. ó.e. KB tudományos és kulturális osztálya. Jelentés Az MTA Társadalomtudományi intézeteinek tudományos és ideológiai munkájáról. Javaslat a pszichológusképzés megvalósítására Magyarországon, 1.

and so, to train up expert psychologists in Hungary as quickly as possible, Gegesi suggested training those from the older generation who already had some experience. Firstly, there were those who had pursued psychological studies during their teacher-training; secondly, there were other professionals (e.g., doctors, teachers, lawyers, and economists) who had previously carried out psychology-related tasks; and thirdly, there were a few “mature and qualified” psychologists that could also be sought out.³⁶² The only problem with these stop-gap measures was that it could be argued that this old guard represented the intellectual residue of “bourgeois” psychology. Gegesi’s main concern, however, was that there would not be enough potential cadres in the older generation (to fulfil political and professional demands), but he remained mostly optimistic due to the “extraordinarily large interest” in psychology among the younger generation.³⁶³

The question of generations came up in other contexts too. For example, when the Institute of Pedagogics gave its expert opinion on the first two volumes of *Pszichológiai Tanulmányok*, it paid attention to the fact that there were several authors who, due to their age may have been “influenced” by bourgeois tendencies. The first yearbook, especially, was very “uneven” in terms of the “Marxist-Leninist rigour” expected of it. The ‘external reviewers’ clearly expected a bit of ideological streamlining of those from the old guard who wanted to continue with their professional career; and even though the second volume showed a clear improvement in peoples’ willingness to endorse Marxist theories, they still said there were cases where the authors tried to “hide” being bourgeois by referring to suitable (i.e., Soviet) authorities.³⁶⁴

The political and ideological expectations facing the Psychology Committee are perhaps best encapsulated in a report that Gegesi wrote to the Presidium of the Academy in January 1966, in which he reviewed the committee’s achievements over the last five years.³⁶⁵ He reported that the general direction of psychology in Hungary was positive, but there remained some occasional “vulgar Marxist” and “old bourgeois” tendencies still. These formulations reflected the general approach to politically controlling the intelligentsia in the 1960s by describing threats from both leftist and rightist deviationists. However, these “tendencies” were not defined in any more explicit way. This fitted in well with the spirit of the regime led by György Aczél, the foremost science (and cultural) politician in the country. Aczél’s regime both forced and allowed negotiations (e.g., on the conditions of publishing and doing research), but in many ways it provided some much needed flexibility for academics too.³⁶⁶

³⁶² Ibid., 3.

³⁶³ Gegesi Kis Pál feljegyzése Szántó Lajos elvtársnak..., 4.

³⁶⁴ HU-MNL M-KS 288 f. 33/1960/25. ő.e./KB tudományos és kulturális osztálya. Jelentés Az MTA Társadalomtudományi intézeteinek tudományos és ideológiai munkájáról. Pszichológiai Bizottság. Vélemény a Pszichológiai Tanulmányok I-II kötetéről.

³⁶⁵ Akadémiai Levéltár. Elnökségi ülés. Január 25. 1966.

³⁶⁶ Révész 1997, 99–101.

2.3.2 Reality bites

When we look closer at the sporadic political documentation produced during the course of the 1960s, it seems that the psychological sciences only really caught the eye of most MSZMP delegates towards the end of the decade, when the discussion honed in on the clear contradictions between the great expectations mapped out for the field and the constraints of certain practical realities that had become apparent. But one commentator from the older generation, in her early seventies in fact, was already voicing her doubts about these ambitious plans as early as the festive meeting of the Psychology Committee in 1960. Psychologist Erzsébet Severini wondered “how on earth” they were “supposed to do all these things, these monumental tasks” in a matter of only decades.³⁶⁷ Instead of high-flown rhetoric, she wanted psychologists to pay attention to the much humbler tasks of studying the “real” behaviour and psychology of children in their own respective families, so that socialist education could be “harmonised” with practical realities. In fact, a very similar worry was also expressed in the anonymous letter of complaint, mentioned earlier, that was made against Gegesi. Although the writer from the ICP admitted that psychology had made some progress thanks to Gegesi, the writer accused him of encouraging the harmful tendency in the field to “overestimate” and “overorganise”. In reality, psychology was still a very small discipline with very limited resources, and this must be duly taken into account.³⁶⁸

The development of psychology as an academic field from the early 1960s onwards was nevertheless *extensive* though. Basic academic institutions were rather hurriedly established, and the training of psychologists in the University of ELTE began in 1963.³⁶⁹ In addition, psychology was now either studied or applied in a rapidly increasing number of contexts (e.g., psychological laboratories in factories, and child guidance centres). Meanwhile social psychology, in particular, was rehabilitated during the 1960s, as it was throughout the Eastern Bloc. In Hungary, academic research in social psychology started formally in 1966 with the establishment of a special research group within the Institute for Psychology.³⁷⁰ In the same year, at the huge 18th International Psychological Congress in Moscow, four symposia on topics of social psychology were introduced and made the subject visible for the first time in the Eastern bloc.³⁷¹

However, by the end of the '60s this hurried establishment of formal institutions was starting to be seen as a rush job which had neglected certain important factors. The discrepancy between high expectations and “real

³⁶⁷ A Pszichológia helyzete hazánkban..., 310–311.

³⁶⁸ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1960/25. ó.e. MSZMP KB tudományos és kulturális osztálya. Jelentés az MTA Társadalomtudományi intézeteinek tudományos és ideológiai munkájáról. Panaszlevél, 4–5.

³⁶⁹ Training of psychology teachers for high-schools had begun already in 1957.

³⁷⁰ Akadémiai levéltár. II. osztály 210/5. A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia pszichológiai intézete 1966 évi beszámolójelentése, 3.

³⁷¹ Petrovskiy 1971, 383; Pataki 1967, 87.

achievements” put the quality of work under greater scrutiny, as can be seen in the memorandum produced for the CC agitprop Committee (APB) in 1969. According to the memorandum, psychology had developed “substantially” since 1956, but because of the lack of resources and qualified personnel - combined with the general problems in research infrastructure - the field had “failed to meet high expectations”.³⁷²

Interesting contradictions were also revealed in the report from 1974. According to “careful estimates”, there were now between 1,500 and 2,000 psychologists employed in various sectors of society at the time, in ergonomics and psychotechnics in factories, child guidance centres, career planning offices, and clinics. However, as the University of ELTE had been the only institution responsible for training psychologists and had up to this point educated only 250 psychologists, the mismatch in figures needed some explaining.³⁷³ Evidently there was a large number of uneducated or self-trained psychologists in the field. This, in turn, not only told of the great demands that were being made of psychology, but also the problems that were inherent in the Soviet-style, politically controlled system of research and higher education. The result was a report that was eventually made in 1975 by the Science Policy Committee of the Communist Party (est. 1969), which drew very similar conclusions to the memorandum in 1969.

In addition, it was noted that academic standards had suffered in psychology. It was being clearly acknowledged here that sidelining the “modern professional viewpoint” had become a political expedient of socialism, and it was still going on in the mid '70s. As a consequence, what was being produced in psychology was in effect “declarative/programmatic” pseudo-research.

[Our concept of] a reasonable evaluation criterion, appropriate only for science, has faltered (*megbillent*) so that quality, scientific productivity, and contemporary scientific viewpoints have become of secondary importance. They have become obscured behind declarative/programmatic pseudo-studies, and many of these still exist.³⁷⁴

Like the memorandum of 1969, the 1975 report drew attention to the rapid but somewhat “idealistic” and slapdash development of “practically all fields of psychology” in the early '60s, which had meant that in practice there were not the resources these developments required. In fact these grandiose plans often hindered research as much as the lack of educated personnel and basic

³⁷² HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 41/128 ő.e./ MSZMP KB Agitációs és Propaganda Bizottság iratai 1969. December 9. ülése. Jelentés az Agit. Prop. Bizottság számára a hazai pszichológiai kutatások egyes kérdéseiről, 1.

³⁷³ HU-MNL MK-S 288. f. 41/236 ő.e. MSZMP KB Agitációs és Propaganda Bizottság iratai 1974. December 10. ülése. Jelentés az Agitációs és Propaganda Bizottságára. A pszichológia tudományos élet időszzerű kérdéseiről, 4-5. When the 50 people who had received training in the USSR were added to these figures, the total number of trained psychologists was approximately 300.

³⁷⁴ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f.36/1975/8. ő.e. MSZMP KB Tudományos és Kulturális Osztálya. Tudománypolitikai bizottság anyagai: A pszichológia országos kutatóhálózatának közléptávú /1976-1980/ fejlesztési irányelvei, 1-2.

resources. The Institute for Psychology, for example had a lack of simple measuring tools and unrepaired buildings scattered around Budapest.³⁷⁵

This contradiction between the high social expectations and the lack of resources to meet them was also related to the question of applied versus basic research and science policy in a one-party state. The basic communist assertion was that science had to be socially useful and the “ivory-tower” of research avoided at all costs. This meant that applied science was strongly encouraged, and in 1974, the Cold War only helped to get this point across. For example, in an APB report it was claimed that, in its “backwardness”, psychology was adopting only “seemingly neutral” western research methods and techniques, and doing this “in a slavish way”.³⁷⁶

However, these dangerous “foreign” (*idegen*) theories with their non-Marxist presuppositions infiltrating Hungary were used by psychologists as a reason for more resources to be directed to theoretically oriented *basic* research instead. The general drive to hastily apply psychology in practice had, after all, meant that Hungarian psychologists had been obliged to use western techniques without having the time to first properly calculate what their ideological effects might be.³⁷⁷ The problem, they argued, was not so much that they and their fellow colleagues had been unwilling to apply psychology in a socially useful manner, but that there was not enough theoretically solid “Marxist” knowledge to be applied in the first place.

An agitprop report, called “Some Questions on Psychological Research in Hungary” (1969), began by stressing the ‘backwardness’ (*lemaradás*) of the field.³⁷⁸ Reasons given were the inherently “negative inner tendencies in psychological life” and the “idealist subjectivism” which was thought to still exist in Hungarian psychology. For example, due to their lack of “healthy Marxist critique”, psychologists had failed to properly evaluate the (de)merits of psychoanalysis. This had caused personal antagonisms which then made it difficult to resolve “conceptual questions” and move forward, the report claimed.

However, it did not contain only ideological objections. There were also some practical and professional proposals for psychological research within the

³⁷⁵ Ibid., 4. As a side note, the Central Statistical Office (KSH), complained that the state resources for psychology were still being recorded under the general category of educational science, and so were impossible to trace in detail.

³⁷⁶ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 41/236 ó.e./MSZMP Agitáció és Propaganda Bizottság iratai 1974. December 10. ülése. Pszichológia tudományos élet időszzerű kérdései.

³⁷⁷ A similar argument was used in 1977, in a review made for the Social Science Coordination Committee of the MSZMP, when József Kardos from the Ministry of Education demanded for there to be more resources made available for teaching psychology at university level, so that different psychological approaches could be taught to “develop critical instincts towards different currents of thought”. Kardos was worried that in the current situation Marxist tools were not enough to confront the “different schools of thought” alone. See HU-MNL MK-S 288/XIX-A-85-b. 1977. IX. 14. ülés. TKB 13/1977. Jelentés a Társadalomtudományi Koordinációs Bizottságnak a pszichológusképzésről, 5.

³⁷⁸ HU MNL M-KS 128 ó.e./MSZMP KB Agitációs és Propaganda Bizottság iratai/1969. December 9. Jelentés az Agit. Prop. Bizottság számára a hazai pszichológiai kutatások egyes kérdéseiről, 1.

general context of the Hungarian social sciences. As well as pinpointing the existence of “certain currents of thought”, the agitprop report seemed to focus more on existing problems with the research structure. Firstly, the general fragmentation and lack of coordinated research were remarked upon. It was recognised that psychology was a “complex” research field which demanded an interdisciplinary approach and a tight connection between basic and applied research. Conditions in Hungary, however, were characterised by a lack of clear focus and long-term planning. Furthermore, it was not “clear enough” what the research priorities should be. Research across the country was being conducted (in factories, and clinics, etc.) without proper coordination. One consequence of this was that there was no research at any real national level.³⁷⁹

The end result of this high-level assessment was not just to show that the psychological profession had shortcomings, but also that those in control had failed in their task - i.e., the Academy of Sciences had not provided the necessary guidance. Within the Academy, coordination of the subject had now been transferred from the Psychology Committee to the Department of History and Philosophy (II), but this had not helped the situation in any way because there were no real comprehensive or detailed plans for development.³⁸⁰ Meanwhile, in the Institute for Psychology, “sharp personal antagonisms” had interfered with the direction of research. Indeed, the report noted that the institute had been sharply criticised from outside for both its leadership (Lajos Bartha) and the way it structured research. Although Bartha was not wholly to blame, it was obvious that there were not enough party members in the institute. Again, it was thought that due to the lack of strong leadership, scientific and conceptual differences of opinion became politicised so that Marxist science was not as strong as it should have been.³⁸¹ The wording was in fact very similar to the way the ICP had been criticised back in the early '60s.

The document was thus saying that psychology needed to be under greater control. Although it is very difficult to determine who exactly drafted these documents, i.e., who wrote them, they clearly reveal something essential about the conditions of psychological research in Hungary at the time, and this is confirmed in later autobiographical testimonies. Namely, the psychological community in the 1960s had developed in isolated patches around certain “guru” individuals or in various institutions under the patronage of an influential personality. Autobiographical narratives give an insight into how individual academics worked - sometimes quite successfully - in different locations doing research in various locations within the wider research infrastructure of the one-party state or doing therapy in some hospital or clinic. But the fact that research and expert practice was scattered about under the auspices of different ministries, or their branch institutes, made it difficult for psychology to undertake the general social and political role expected of it as a profession.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 2.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 2.

³⁸¹ Ibid., 3-4.

2.4 Ideological and political expectations

2.4.1 Adopting a psychological approach to 'collective education'

The existing literature on the history of psychology in post-1956 Hungary mostly assumes that the field developed *in spite of* difficult prevailing circumstances. A somewhat different view opens up if one does not first automatically assume the socialist context was negative. Instead, by analysing the documents produced by various party organs, and comparing them to the discourses produced by psychologists in different contexts, I examine more closely just what those political expectations were that influenced the orientation of psychology after 1956, and just how psychologists answered this call. Was there now, for example, a particular role reserved for psychological knowledge by the Party to help it face the new challenges of social planning after 1956, which also actually *supported* the development of psychology in Hungary?

It needs to be acknowledged, however, that the angle provided by party documents only reveals one aspect of the general discursive context in which psychologists had to operate. Importantly, this means that these documents - as they are often plans and resolutions - do not reveal so much about the interests and orientations of the psychologists themselves. One general impression arising from the source material is that the politicisation of psychological research tended to want it to solve practical issues related with different social problems. However, what actually crops up the most in the documents produced by the party machinery in the 1960s is the *educational* function of psychology, which was closely connected with socialist ideology.

It has already been noted above how it was crucial for the psychologists to secure an autonomous academic existence in relation to 'socialist education'. For the science to develop effectively, it had to be allowed to work according to its own rules. At the same time it seems that the ideological and political requirements of personal and social education could also be used by psychologists to highlight the social importance of their field, for example, in helping with the newly acknowledged practical problems of social adaptation. Thus, in this chapter I will ask if also the requirements of a specifically *socialist* education contributed to the professionalisation of psychology as an academic discipline.

In 1960, a special committee was set up especially to look at reforming school education. In the report submitted to the TKO, the writers defined what the basic starting points for a modern socialist upbringing should be. In "repressive societies" intellectual and physical work were classed as being intrinsically different, and it had thus been impossible to talk about a truly equal education for everyone, as people only received an education for their 'class of work'. Socialism meant, however, that now for the "first time in history" a general education could be offered that would be useful for *all* people in whatever walk of life. Within socialism, people would be better off constantly

developing themselves intellectually and emotionally, the report stipulated. They were not being educated to be simply “ready” for a predestined task, but to be able to adapt to whatever *level* society required. In fact, socialist citizens were expected to internalize idea of ‘life-long learning’.³⁸²

It was recognised that while socialism should be happening in all sectors of society, it was at school that it would have the most seminal role: it offered knowledge, role models for forming personalities, and tools for human cooperation, that would both help children to socially integrate, by knowing the “norms of socialist coexistence” (*együttélés*), and lead to a more harmonious society. An individual’s world-view had to be scientific in such a way that it broadened constantly. The existing bourgeois tendency to keep school separate from everyday life and practice had to be eliminated. A “culturally modern” person would be one who was able to judge his/her place in society and in nature fairly and reasonably by using systematic knowledge that was available to all.³⁸³

With the ongoing modernisation of industry and agriculture, workers were needed who could handle new technology and quickly assume new knowledge and skills. Thus adaptability was key, but at the same time this should not lead to an exponential increase in educational material which would overburden students. To meet these challenges, the report suggested that developing a positive world-view and providing guidance for personal and social education should be key priorities for the new curriculum, so that there would be some coherence throughout socialist schools.³⁸⁴ With living standards improving as they seemed to be doing, the report acknowledged that the cultural needs of workers would grow. To create mature, modern socialist individuals, schools should not simply provide information but also ensure that the self-governed individuals who had finished their schooling would have a “desire for self-education” for the rest of their life and use their free-time wisely.³⁸⁵

The psychology curriculum in high schools outlined how human beings should “psychologically adapt” to their natural and social environment. Children would be taught about the psychological dimensions of work, personality characteristics, and be helped with getting to know “themselves and their fellow humans” better. Due to its newly rediscovered “materialist” nature, psychology would educate students in the basics of the materialist world-view while disabusing them of any dubious dualist notions of “soul” (*lélek*) or any other wrongly interpreted “psychological phenomena”. For this particular task, psychology would overlap with the subjects of biology and philosophy.³⁸⁶

The committee assigned with creating this psychology curriculum also

³⁸² HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1960/9 ő.e. MSZMP KB tudományos és kulturális osztálya. Korszerű művelődés anyagát vizsgáló albizottság előterjesztése, 1.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

proposed that the mutual relationship between action, behaviour, and personality be emphasised. Hence, psychology would have an important part to play in conveying the dialectical materialist world view. As socialism maintained that humans were “educable”, psychology would be concerned with disabusing people of various “old superstitions”, such as the idea of determination through biological inheritance. Psychology also offered scientific knowledge about “human skills” (*emberismeret*) which would be crucial for building a positive communal orientation.³⁸⁷

Although there was a seemingly wide array of topics to address - from teaching cognitive processes, to the psychology of human action (e.g., in conflict situations) - the ideological control was inferred in the emphasis that was made on building a tight relationship between psychology and materialist philosophy. This was said to be especially crucial when the processes of perception and cognition were taught.³⁸⁸ Indeed, the notions of historical and social determinism in perception might seem to conflict, unless they were taught carefully - especially if the latter was conceptualised as an active process in a human mind which partly escaped social determination. In fact, Csaba Pléh has shown that these contradictions became socially quite relevant as psychologists, especially the younger generation, tended to present perception and cognition as active processes, thus countering ideas of the mind simply being ‘a mirror of the world’.³⁸⁹ In the end, this early curriculum defined psychology more as a science of adaptation than of personal growth.

In 1963, there was a sense of moral urgency in a memorandum from the TKO. The memorandum dealt with the state of “collective education” (*közösségi nevelés*) in Hungary with reference to the resolution published by the MSZMP Political Committee (PB) on the issue in 1960.³⁹⁰ The issue at stake was the behaviour of young people and how it could be channelled in a socially beneficial direction. “There was no time to waste”, the report argued, since some highly worrying opinions (such as “the west is best” and “cynicism”) were spreading like wildfire among the Hungarian youth. For example, in Balatonföldvár,³⁹¹ the police and the Hungarian Young Communist League (KISZ) had been forced to intervene to “prevent a gathering of hooligans”. Furthermore, although the number of religious believers had decreased, the amount of those who now believed in Marxist-Leninism had not, as a consequence, increased as might have been hoped. The sense of moral panic was further heightened by the somewhat puzzling claim that “hundreds of under-aged girls were “vagabondising (*csavarogni*) at bus-stops all over the

³⁸⁷ HU-MNL M-KS 288 f. 33/1960/9 ő.e./MSZMP KB tudományos és kulturális osztálya. Korszerű művelődés anyagát vizsgáló albizottság előterjesztése. A pszichológia tantervi bizottság javaslata a gimnáziumi pszichológiatanítás céljáról, feladatáról és tantárgyi anyagáról.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁸⁹ Pléh 2008, 188.

³⁹⁰ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1963/19 ő.e./TKO/Emlékeztető a közösségi nevelés helyzetének, megvalósulása ütemének néhány kérdéséről.

³⁹¹ Balatonföldvár is a village on the southern shore of Lake Balaton, near Siófok.

country”.³⁹² As the writers of the memorandum concluded, this clearly meant that a “communist morality” had not been sufficiently adopted among the youth. The solution for this, however, was to make socialist education more compelling and not to “close the borders in front of western tourists”.

As collective education was high on the agenda, policymakers had looked to Anton Makarenko’s educational ideas, but one criticism had been that - if they were put into practice at all - they had been carried out in an “authoritarian” (*tekintélyelvű*) and blinkered manner. Teachers were especially blamed for this, as after the PB resolution (1960), progress in collective education had been slow and very sporadic. Namely, only the first half of Makarenko’s dictum “I demand from you, because I respect you” had actually been carried out, and this was seen to be one of the main reasons that “children’s collectives” (i.e., schools) had not really worked. It was advised that the conflict situations that would inevitably arise between teachers and pupils really needed to be handled sensitively, without resorting to the unnecessary authoritarianism.

Funnily enough, the memorandum did not so much think expert psychology was needed in the educational context. However, it nevertheless urged that the “life and work” of Anton Makarenko be studied in greater detail so that his teachings were not simply followed in a rigid almost militaristic fashion as before,³⁹³ but could be applied more effectively (i.e., flexibly and sensitively) by all those involved in education, to better fit modern individuals in a socialist context.³⁹⁴ Although psychological tools were not explicitly mentioned as a solution in the report on collective education, the prevalent educational culture was evidently not doing its job. Not only was it authoritarian in style, but it seemed oblivious to the dynamics of social psychology - i.e., the reality of “different views” inherent in all teacher-pupil relationships.

One educational task that lay ahead in this respect was related to the struggle against the religious “frame of mind”. The question of a “secular education” came up, for example, when the delegation from the Hungarian

³⁹² HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1963/19 ő.e./TKO/Emlékeztető a közösségi nevelés helyzetének, megvalósulása ütemének néhány kérdéséről, 8.

³⁹³ This was a reference to Anton Makarenko’s famous colonies for boys, and the military methods, which were allegedly used there.

³⁹⁴ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1963/19 ő.e./MSZMP KB tudományos és kulturális osztálya. Emlékeztető a közösségi nevelés..., 9–10. This was essentially social psychologist Ferenc Pataki’s message in his magisterial book on Makarenko in 1966. Pataki’s book has also been described as an example of science policy manipulation. This argument is somewhat one-sided, but there is a degree of truth in it. Pataki’s thorough book can be read as a clever rehabilitation of Makarenko as it glosses over the ‘primitive’ ideological interpretations of his work, and instead focuses on the Soviet educator’s implicit social psychology. Ideological rhetoric, socialist tradition-building, and cultic hero-worship were all powerfully present in the text, but at the same time, there were sharp observations relating to social psychology in communities of children. See Pataki 1966.

agitprop Committee (APB) visited the USSR in 1964.³⁹⁵ During the visit, the newly acknowledged role of social psychology was discussed with the representative of the Academy for Social Sciences in Moscow, and it turned out that “ethics” had a significant place in Soviet social research. As well as the question of “moral conscience” (*lelkiismeret*) and its relationship to “work discipline” and the community, the problems of religious ideology were examined in greater detail, and it soon became apparent that “adapting” churches to fit in with a contemporary socialist society would be a complicated issue.

To address this issue, studies on the “psychology of believers” had been launched in the USSR and, as a significant consequence, it was duly noted that social psychology had been sadly neglected under Stalinism, and now was the time for its rehabilitation. The report inferred that social research was also motivated by a new understanding of the relationship between social sciences and ideology. Social scientists and philosophers were now “not only dealing with the explanation of classics”, but also drawing conclusions and generalisations from the “facts of life” in the field. Furthermore, according to the Hungarian agitprop delegation, their Soviet comrades “were not scared to raise new questions”, and even encouraged the researchers to point out when “the implementation of certain party policies were not working”.³⁹⁶

Going back to the complicated question of religious belief in Hungary, the issue was also brought up in reports made by first the Association for the Popularisation of Social and Natural Sciences (TTIT) in 1958, and then the agitprop Department (APO) of Hungarian Radio and Television (MRT) in 1959.³⁹⁷ In these reports, scientific knowledge was seen to be the best tool for convincing people that their religious views were “mystical” and as such untenable for the modern socialist citizen. Although psychology was not given a position any more important than other sciences in these plans, lectures on psychological topics were held, and books on psychological themes were disseminated.³⁹⁸ In a report by László Bence, the scientific secretary of the TTIT, attention was drawn to lectures on psychology (*lélektan*) which talked about the importance of materialism. By showing the basics of “animal psychology”, it was thought possible to dispel dualist misbeliefs relating to ideas of there being a “soul” (*lélek*) as something separate from the body.³⁹⁹ The psychological text

³⁹⁵ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 41/Agitáció és propaganda Bizottság iratai 1964. Január 15. ülése. Szovjetunióban járt delegáció tapasztalatai. Feljegyzés az SZKP Társadalomtudományi Akadémiáján November 28-án folytatott beszélgetésről.

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

³⁹⁷ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 22/1958/1. ő. e./MSZMP KB Agitációs és Propaganda osztályának iratai. Az osztály anyagai. Jelentések, feljegyzések, levelezés. A Társadalom- és Természettudományi Ismeretterjesztő Társulat összefoglalója az ateista és antiklerikális propagandamunkáról; HU-MNL M-KS 288 f. 22/1959/4. ő. e. MSZMP Központi Bizottsága Agitációs és Propaganda osztályának iratai. Az ateista és antiklerikális munkairól szóló párthatározat és a Rádió feladatai.

³⁹⁸ For example, Henri Wallon’s research on children’s psychological development was disseminated by TTIT.

³⁹⁹ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 22/1958/1. ő. e./MSZMP KB Agitációs és Propaganda osztályának iratai. Az osztály anyagai. Jelentések, feljegyzések, levelezés. A

book published by Lajos Kardos should also be mentioned in this context as being one of the newly acquired repertoire of tools that it was hoped would help socialism win over the “backward religious population”.⁴⁰⁰

The struggle against religious attitudes was considered to be one of the most important tasks of the TTIT, and this was all the more true in the aftermath of October 1956, when the churches had, according to Bence, intensified the struggle by benefiting from the confusion. Indeed, he believed that churches had been rather successful in gaining back lost ground in some social groups, i.e., “women and young people”.⁴⁰¹

Bence went on to criticise the propaganda practices of the Rákosi period. From the perspective of an association authorised to disseminate a scientific world-view among the people, the “propaganda” from this era seemed too heavy-handed, as they had then talked about a “fight” (*harc*) with religion. The lectures had been “vulgar”, and “harsh” in style, and psychologically primitive in that they did not differentiate members of the audience in any way.⁴⁰² For the struggle against the religious mindset, this proved to be a real “dead-end”, the report went on, because the credibility of the propaganda was often diminished by those achievements of Soviet science which “could not tolerate criticism”.⁴⁰³

Bence noted that by 1953, the number of popular lectures in atheism dropped significantly, “partly as a reaction to previous policies”. And because both the Party and the scientists were passive, the TTIT had to carry on its work by itself. All the same, around 15% (10,000-12,000) of all the lectures that were being held in factories, cultural houses, and other locations were secular (atheist) in nature, he wrote. Presentations were held on biology, cosmology, and physics (e.g., the birth of life, and the universe). Also psychological questions were touched upon (e.g., “the basics of general psychology”, and the “psychology of mysticism”).⁴⁰⁴

The main criticism in 1958-1959, however, was that religion was not being challenged with up-to-date international science. What is more, is that even the churches had adopted scientific discourse and used scientific “catch phrases” to get their message across. According to Bence, they were used “tactically”, in that the church tried to dress up their position with the trappings of modern natural science, while at the same time keeping their basic position on the

Társadalom- és Természettudományi Ismeretterjesztő Társulat összefoglalója az ateista és antiklerikális propagandamunkáról, 10.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 11.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid, 1.

⁴⁰² Ibid, 1-2. Bence also noted that often the physical presence of the audience was “ensured with administrative means”, i.e., people were forced to attend these lessons.

⁴⁰³ Ibid, 2.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid, 2-3. It seems that a number of subjects could be considered as anti-religious education. For example, the question of “entropy and heat death” was investigated. Discussions were held on topics such as “determinism and indeterminism”, “what we know about meteors and shooting stars?”, “spirits and wandering souls in the world-view of the primitive man”, “cybernetics”, and “the problem of free will”. Myths relating to the inheritance of “acquired characteristics” were duly exploded too. Meanwhile, historical topics varied from the philosophy of the Enlightenment in France, to the “faith of the peasant” (*cselédsors*) in the Horthy Era.

immortality of the soul and creationism.⁴⁰⁵ He concluded that the Party did not yet have the right propaganda to create a robust enough system of “lay ethics”.

We have not sufficiently taken into account that the majority of believers see a positive moral base in religion and insist on it. All our handicaps relate to the backwardness of our scientific research and its dissemination.⁴⁰⁶

For these reasons, it was all the more important to provide convincing, secular knowledge at a high enough level to counter this challenge from the churches; and this had to be done without causing any grievances among the politically loyal priests. One significant outcome of these secular considerations in the cultural-intellectual sphere was the establishment of *Világosság*, a philosophically oriented atheist periodical published by TIT from 1960 onwards.

Another point about these documents is that they show a new *style* of communicating prevailing ideological expectations to the people. Although there could never be any kind of “ideological compromise” between religion and Marxism, the party-line regarding clerical reaction - as expressed in the document produced by the APO of the MRT - encouraged cautiousness and consideration. It was advised that there were two different kinds of “clerical reaction” which should not be confused with each other. The *political* kind should be dealt with using *political* tools, while the other kind related to people’s *world-view* and was a battle of *ideas*.⁴⁰⁷

The APO report also advised against making propaganda that would “stigmatise and humiliate those people who [had] not been able to free themselves from the influence of a religious world-view”. The old Marxist notion about religion was stressed, i.e., it was the manifestation of a self-consciousness (in the individual) which had “not yet found itself”.⁴⁰⁸ As a solution it was suggested that workers’ needed to be distracted by drawing their attention to other kinds of social event to replace it. In other words, socialism should offer positive alternatives instead of simply assuming that introducing socialism would automatically change people’s attitudes.

Broadcasts should also differentiate between people too, the APO report urged. Again, references were made to the crude style of propaganda from the Rákosi era and hinted that it would be a “great advantage” if future propaganda did not “force-feed” (*szájbarágás*) opinions, and instead let the listeners draw their own conclusions.⁴⁰⁹ The report went on to indicate that a very large number of radio programmes were shown to have a more or less immediate secular or atheistic bias. For example, there were broadcasts which disputed religious dogma concerning the Creation (on subjects such as the birth

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid, 2–3, 12–13.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., 13.

⁴⁰⁷ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 22/1959/4. ő. e. MSZMP KB Agitációs és Propaganda Osztályának iratai. A Magyar Rádió Agit-Prop osztálya Propaganda rovatának főbb irányelvei az antiklerikális adás és ateista propagandamunkában.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., 3–4. It was acknowledged that the programmes should be made more appealing and simple in style without forgetting the high-level scientific substance.

of stars and life of the universe); evolution (e.g., the life of ancient reptiles, or “from single-cell organism to man”); and Pavlov. There were also historical, cultural and social science lessons on a large number of different topics. For example, there were ones on materialist psychology, with titles like “The Face: Mirror of the Soul”; “The Psychological Development of Children”; “Friendship and Loyalty”; and “Is it True that Dreaming Ruins Life?”.

The report further stated that the general aim of these psychological programmes was to show the material nature of psychological functions (*tevékenység*), and thus scientifically contest the inherent “mysticism” of the immortality of the soul.⁴¹⁰ Indeed, it would not be unfair to say that if religious “psychology” was truly thought to exist (which it was), then psychology would provide the best tools for influencing the situation, even among “the most regressively religious strata of society” (*legelmaradottabb vallásos rétegek*).⁴¹¹

Before they could educate the masses, however, comrades themselves had to learn more sophisticated methods of persuasion. In a report on this problem, by the local party leaders in the county of Hajdu-Bihar, there were complaints that party rank-and-file were being too passive in going about this; they were either arguing in a manner that was too “subjective” or were just waiting for “intervention” from above; and rather than reacting to “wrong ideas”, they were simply “watching what [was] going on”, when in fact there was a clear need to step up to the plate as “rightist and nationalist views [were] being expressed in the Alföld” (Great Hungarian Plain).⁴¹²

One reason for this problem, it was suggested, was that local party cadres did not have the proper psychological tools for struggling against the “West is best” mentality, existentialism and other “cosmopolitan” views. For example, it was argued that people tended to “exaggerate the economic and scientific results of the imperialist countries”. What was needed was to train party cadres to give them the right kind of psychological sensitivity to do their ideological work of spreading dialectical materialism more effectively.⁴¹³

As mentioned briefly above, propaganda issues were discussed when the delegation from the Hungarian APB visited the USSR in 1964.⁴¹⁴ During the discussions with the General Manager of Soviet Radio and TV, Harlamov, they were informed that the USSR had decided to stop interfering with official western broadcasts that coming summer. This would bring new challenges, Harlamov informed them. Under Stalinism they were required to passively ignore the questions that arose after “hostile” broadcasts, but now, with more liberal policies in place, a more active response would be required - radio

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., 6. The Hungarian titles of some programmes were: “Az arc a lélek tükre”, “Barátság és hűség”, “Igaz-e, hogy az ábrándozás az élet megrontója”.

⁴¹¹ A Társadalom- és Természettudományi Ismeretterjesztő Társulat összefoglalója az ateista és antiklerikális propagandamunkáról..., 13.

⁴¹² HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 22/3 ó.e./MSZMP KB Agitációs és propaganda osztálya iratai. Hajdú-Bihar megyei pártbizottság jelentése a megyében folytatott ideológiai vitákról.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ HU MNL MK-S 288 f. 41. Agitáció és propaganda Bizottság 1964. Január 15. ülése. Szovjetunióban járt delegáció tapasztalatai. Feljegyzés az SZKP Társadalomtudományi Akadémiáján November 28-án folytatott beszélgetésről.

commentators had to have good answers for “any questions” that listeners may ask of them.⁴¹⁵ The report from the Hungarian delegation noted at this point that the positive side of allowing this “open polemic” was that now “commentators had to think with their own brain”, and it would require all involved to improve the quality of propaganda. In other words, with a relatively freer flow of communication, and the dawn of television, what the communists in Hungary now needed was *not* the mechanical repetition of Marxist slogans that were “alien from the real life”,⁴¹⁶ but the ability to hold a rational conversation - and ‘win’ it.⁴¹⁷

Back in Hungary therefore, one of the ways these new challenges were met was to teach the new social sciences to the cadres in MRT. From 1963-1964, “theoretical workshops” (*elméleti munkaközösség*) were set up for the public broadcasting workers to help them maintain the “ideological clear-sightedness” they would need to handle modern bourgeois and anti-Marxist questions in their daily work. The curriculum for these theoretical workshops in 1964 included two thematic courses on “bourgeois psychology”. One concerned its historical development, and the other studied its role in bourgeois society. After this, a third course taught the basics of Marxist psychology, and traced its history; and finally a fourth discussed the psychological tools that could be used in mass communication, and the role of interpersonal relations in disseminating information. When the quality of ideological discussions were examined further, it soon became apparent that they reflected the changes that had been experienced throughout the Eastern Bloc with the end of Stalinism; and when added to the effect of opening up to the west a bit more - which had particularly been the case for Hungary in 1956 - this seemed to cause some trouble among agitprop functionaries. There was a definite need for party cadres to be more civilised, but also sharp in their discussions on propaganda topics.

It was perhaps hardly surprising, therefore, that psychology was called upon to help in this matter when the MSZMP drew up its “ideological guidelines” in a special conference organised on the topic in 1964.⁴¹⁸ After the conference, the KB agitprop Committee produced a follow-up report of the

⁴¹⁵ HU MNL MK-S 288 f. 41. Agitáció és propaganda Bizottság 1964. Január 15. ülése. Szovjetunióban járt delegáció tapasztalatai. Feljegyzés november 28-án Harlamov elvtársnál - a Rádió és Televízió elnökénél - folytatott beszélgetésről.

⁴¹⁶ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 22/24 ó.e./MSZMP KB Agitációs és propaganda osztálya iratai. A Rádió és Televízió Pártbizottságának anyagai. Az oktatási bizottság jelentése az 1963/1964 évi pártoktatás tapasztalatairól. Traditional ideological training for party functionaries was carried out alongside these theoretical workshops too. Thus, the basics of Marxism-Leninism were now taught within the theoretical workshop context. These changes were motivated by the need to build a differentiated system of training for various departments within broadcasting (e.g., the Foreign Press Service, Youth Section).

⁴¹⁷ As an interesting side-note, Harlamov also confessed that the United States was “far ahead” in public, educationally oriented media propaganda.

⁴¹⁸ The Hungarian APB delegation to Moscow had preceded this precisely to get ideas for this conference, and to hear Soviet opinions about several issues felt to be of relevance to cultural politics and to the political harnessing of intellectuals. See Standeisky 2004, 298-300.

event which pinpointed that the struggle against “nationalist” *pszichológia* was, above all, a struggle “in practice”. The use of the concept “psychology” here is rather telling, as it was used negatively to contrast with “internationalist consciousness” which was to be defended in a vigorous (*szívos*) manner. Psychology thus meant the existing mindset among Hungarian people, and this had to be eliminated since it “was still poisoning many people’s thinking”, and hindering the growth of socialism.⁴¹⁹ Furthermore, “psychology” was used to describe the threat of petit bourgeois opinions that would also need to be countered.⁴²⁰

At this point, one could argue that using the concept of psychology like this presented a fundamental problem for psychology *as a subject*. As Graham Richards has put it, the concept has historically been used to refer to both the subject (or discipline), and various aspects of human behaviour and mind.⁴²¹ In these documents, the concept has been used in the latter of these two senses to refer to a “bourgeois mentality”, or a rather hazily defined frame of mind which was presumably poisoned by individualism and nationalist chauvinism. Maybe these negative elements then became associated with the discipline, and this is how it became labelled as bourgeois? This might explain why the discipline of social psychology was initially described as community psychology (*közösségi lélektan*) in order to avoid the bothersome connotations with psychology of the bourgeois individualist kind.⁴²² At the same time, this marrying of problematic frames of mind with bourgeois individualist psychology gave a reason to come up with “Marxist” variants of psychology after 1956.⁴²³

As reported by the Association for the Popularisation of Science (which had now become the TIT) in 1966, the MSZMP ideological guidelines now insisted that the three main methods of waging “class war” were “leadership, organisation, and education.”⁴²⁴ What the new post-Stalinist environment needed now, rather than overt propaganda, was to provide a “patient and persistent psychological and moral influence”. To this end, a special emphasis was laid on studying the fundamentals of “psychological consciousness-raising (*tudatformálás pszichológiai alapjai*) and the techniques of persuasion”. As the TIT pointed out, the big tasks of disseminating psychological and pedagogical knowledge to Hungarian citizens lay ahead. Traditionally, education and psychology had been focused on raising children, but now it was the

⁴¹⁹ HU-MNL MK-S 288-41 26. ő. e /MSZMP KB Agitációs és propaganda bizottság 1964. Június 24. ülése. Az ideológiai konferencia beszámolója, 60.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴²¹ Cf. Brinkmann 2004, 3.

⁴²² Lányi 1997a, 156.

⁴²³ As we shall see more of later, socialist rearticulations of psychology were significant in particular brands of educational psychology which aimed at moulding versatile socialist individuals. Furthermore, as shown in the chapter 4 of this dissertation, there were tendencies in Hungarian social psychology to criticise the western “atomistic” understanding of group dynamics from a socialist perspective rooted in the notion of collective thinking.

⁴²⁴ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 22/1966/19. ő. e./Agitációs és propaganda Osztályának iratai. Jelentések a KB ideológiai irányelveinek feldolgozásáról, valamint az agitációs munkáról szóló határozat végrehajtásáról: Tudományos Ismeretterjesztő Társulat, 119.

sophisticated education of adults that was deemed as being just as important, the report said.⁴²⁵

“Patriotic education” was a challenging task though, which would certainly give psychologists some work. As discussed in the APB meeting of 1968, it needed to promote the socialist citizen’s feelings of “national pride” (*nemzeti büszkeség*) without falling into the trap of breeding chauvinism and “national hostility” (*nacionalista ellenségeskedés*).⁴²⁶ Another consideration was the overhaul of developmental and social psychology with regard to these topics, as Hungary was seen to be “lagging behind” with regard to the prevalent orientation of “Marxist psychology”.⁴²⁷ Indeed, these disciplines could contribute to building “an active and conscious [emotionally laden] relationship” not only with one’s home country but also the “international community”.

Eventually the APB meeting produced a document, signed by György Aczél, which stipulated that it was “totally clear that without a deep understanding of the psychological processes [...involved in forming a socialist, patriotic identity, that] *differentiated* education will not have a safe foundation”.⁴²⁸ Reference was also made to “hostile educational activities” (which evidently also meant psychological ones) carried out by “fascist movements”, the church and “imperialists”. What comes across is the urgent need to show that the effectiveness of these methods (to be adopted in Hungary) would rely on “emotionally influencing” and “differentiating individuals and groups”. Social psychology was *the* knowledge-based vehicle that would enable this, and would keep cadres “informed” about social realities. So although psychology had been used in a negative sense to describe wrong mindsets, it was now quite soon being rehabilitated again as a subject for learning more about individual preferences and attitudes.

The wording of this document also reflects the onset of a general thaw in the cold war during the era of Khrushchev’s “peaceful coexistence”. As Melinda Kovai has noted, Soviet policies had interesting and somewhat infamous repercussions on psychology. In political psychiatry, for example, ‘professional’ standards and descriptions of deviance were now motivated by the decision to silence opposition using psychiatric rather than openly political means, to avoid the similarly shameful political trials that had occurred under Stalin. Here, psychological expertise thus provided the means for politics to turn inwards on society and use this method for eliminating problematic political behaviour.⁴²⁹

Essentially, this change of paradigm meant that expert psychological knowledge was now needed throughout Eastern Europe, for policies of social control. Béla Révész has shown, for example, how psychological knowledge

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

⁴²⁶ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 41/104. ö.e Agitáció és propaganda Bizottság 1968. A hazafias neveléssel és internacionalista neveléssel kapcsolatos társadalomtudományi feladatokról.

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

⁴²⁹ Kovai 2010, 44. He also claims that the emergence of sophisticated political psychiatry in the USSR was a more dangerous form of suppression.

was increasingly used in Hungarian state security from the late 1960s onwards. In the Ministry of Interior, up-to-date psychological knowledge was increasingly used, not only for countering Western techniques of “psychological warfare”, but also for schooling the new generation of state security officials, spies, and infiltrators. Thus, “state security psychology” was interested in modern, professional tools for improving its practices of recruitment, contact-making, and observation. As Révész notes, this reinterpretation of psychological knowledge coincided with the gradual change in policing techniques which gradually moved away from hunting down political enemies, towards using preventive tools.⁴³⁰

Indeed, within the various departments of the Hungarian system of law enforcement, there was now a readiness to adopt the new tools offered by psychology and the new social sciences. For example, the CC APO received a report from a Party Committee within the Ministry of Interior (*II Főcsoportfőnökség*), that was responsible for issues of juvenile delinquency (among other things),⁴³¹ which indicated that important lessons should be drawn from those chapters in the guidelines which dealt with science, culture, and teaching.

The writers of this report loyally followed the prevailing ideological currents and stressed that after the 20th Party congress in the USSR, the majority of the communist parties [in the Socialist bloc] had rejected the “cult of personality”, and were now embarking on the “productive deployment” (*alkotó alkalmazás*) of Marxism-Leninism” against both dogmatic ideas, from one side, and revisionist ideas, from the other. As a consequence, the writers noted, a number of research fields had started to flourish in recent years which would have an immediate relevance for police work. These were sociology, social psychology, political economics, philosophy, criminology, criminal psychology, and the science of leadership and organisation. Although within these research areas there were some degree of “abstract reasoning”, rehashed bourgeois science, and sophistry (*okoskodás*) that was of “doubtful value”, these research fields were generally extremely helpful since they combined science with practice and would lead to a “deeper understanding of social reality”.⁴³²

By 1970, social psychologists laid out in their action plan that (via also the psychology of religion and the psychology of art) they would be studying the “collective determination of individual consciousness” to raise the overall effectiveness of agitprop work, to help young people adapt, and to help

⁴³⁰ Révész 2005. As early as 1960, the Ministry of Interior criminologist and lawyer, Imre Kertész, had thought psychology could help solve crime. He criticised the “dogmatic” claim that crime would somehow eventually disappear by itself under communism. Kertész insisted that like “physics, chemistry, and optics”, psychology would “refine” the work of the criminal investigator and raise it to a higher professional level. He used the “psychology of interrogation” as an example. Kertész saw the interrogation process as an “extremely tense [...] battle of spirits”, in which the “examinee” should be treated as an individual with emotions. See Kertész 1965, 28, 32–34. For more on the psychological tactics of interrogation, see Fekete 1968.

⁴³¹ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 22/1965/25 ó.e./MSZMP KB Agitációs és propaganda Osztályának iratai. BM II. Főcsoportfőnökség.

⁴³² *Ibid.*, 13–14.

reconfigure the “Marxist concept of man” (*emberfelfogás*) - in terms of forming characteristically socialist group-relations. Furthermore, both the state and the Party needed a deeper knowledge of how public opinion worked in order to truly “develop socialist democracy”.⁴³³ They also acknowledged that social psychology was still, at this stage, a very young and “unevenly” developed discipline; but if practised with “theoretical rigour” it showed promising signs.⁴³⁴

In an unsigned comment on the action plan, it was estimated that within the next fifteen years social psychology would become an ever more important tool in politics.⁴³⁵ Indeed, in the two years since launching the New Economic Mechanism (NEM) in 1968, the most important applications of social psychology had been in public opinion research - how the attitudes of people evolved within society and dynamically influenced certain cognitive processes. Social psychology’s new task was thus to seek out ever more subtle ways to learn about individual preferences in society. These ideas did not essentially differ from the classic applications of social psychology in the US during the early decades of the 20th century, yet these knowledge-claims were expressed in such an ambitious, self-assured way, that it was certain they would resonate with the socialist imagination. Only social psychology, for example, could provide an “exhaustive, general theory of [socialist] personality” and a “trustworthy and concrete picture of society”;⁴³⁶ and only social psychology could provide the knowledge for building “new kinds of socialist communities” in all walks of life.

In effect, this meant studying the dynamics of group formation - on the factory-floor, or among youths, for example. “Interest relations” (*érdekviszonyok*) were also a hot topic, i.e., the ways in which attitudes and preferences of individuals and groups related to the formation of social norms, values, and structures; as was the relationship between deviance and socialisation. For instance, why did certain individual personalities clash with certain rules and act in deviant ways? And how could individuals learn and then “regenerate” the rules of cooperation for themselves?⁴³⁷

These were not just rhetorical ways to assure the professional status of social psychology. In the 1970s, research on “social structures and socialist consciousness” would become a high research priority in Hungary. The political decision-makers were truly interested, for example, in what was happening in the unofficial “second economy” outside the party-state sector.⁴³⁸

⁴³³ Akadémiai levéltár. Filozófiai és Történettudományok Osztálya 210/7. A pszichológia kutatások koncepciója és tematikai terve 1970, 1-2.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴³⁵ Akadémiai levéltár. Filozófiai és Történettudományok Osztálya 210/7. A pszichológia kutatások koncepciója és tematikai terve. A szociálpszichológia távlati tervéhez.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴³⁸ In 1972, research into “social structures and socialist consciousness” was made part of the long-term national research plan. A couple of years later, high-priority research led by István R. Gábor on the “second economy” began in earnest at the MSZMP Institute of Social Sciences. As Pál Germuska notes, everybody knew that a

Meanwhile, in the 1960s, ominous incongruities had begun to appear between official policy (encouraging working people to consume), and the socialist rhetoric in media campaigns (criticising a petit bourgeois mentality).⁴³⁹ Social psychological approach had proved important for helping walk the thin line between these two camps and to guide people's consumerist urges towards more "civilised, and rational" channels. In practice however, the distinction between rational and irrational consumer behaviour was proving hard to grasp.⁴⁴⁰

Paulina Bren points out that talk about a "socialist way of life", was a common feature in Eastern European public discussions especially throughout the 1970s. In these discussions, lifestyles were imagined in the west and portrayed as inferior when held up in comparison with the superior lifestyle within socialism. In Czechoslovakia, for instance, the concepts of "self-actualisation" and "self-realisation" were used to place the socialist lifestyle above the capitalist, not because it offered better material products but a better overall *quality* of life. However, an increasing number of Czechoslovak citizens nevertheless sought a certain degree of self-realisation through consumption. This then meant that the original idea then came under criticism for in fact exacerbating what now became seen as already ingrained "petit bourgeois tendencies".⁴⁴¹

In Hungary, it was acknowledged that the "socialist way of life" (*szocialista életmód*) was under threat already in the 1960s, and by 1969 a special expert commission had compiled and published its hypotheses in a report about this.⁴⁴² In the discussion covered by the report, nearly a hundred professionals expressed their opinion on the issue of socialist versus bourgeois welfare,⁴⁴³ and considered what the core values might be for a distinctly socialist way of life. This was a serious question in an era of competing social and economic orders, as can be seen from this Hungarian sociologist's contribution.

flourishing private economy was characteristic of late-socialist political culture, but they were not allowed to use the word because of the wrong associations would be made with capitalism. See Germuska 2008, 71–72; Sík 1996, 707.

⁴³⁹ Horváth 2008, 67–77, 80; Valuch 2008, 51. The Hungarian state started to actively support tourism at the same time as consolidating its power after the 1956 revolution.

⁴⁴⁰ Fehérvári 2009, 431; Dessewffy 2002, 52. According to Dessewffy, it was a built-in paradox of Kádárism that the distinction between 'real' and 'false' needs was considered valid by the regime throughout its tenure. Dessewffy argues that the persistent tendency to insist on this classic differentiation led to the gradual erosion of the regime's legitimacy.

⁴⁴¹ Bren 2008, 834, 844–846. In 1985, the Czechoslovak government produced an assessment of its post-1968 policy of normalisation, entitled "the status and tendencies present in the development of socialist society's consciousness". It attempted to alert the leadership to the "beast" within the state-sponsored programme of "self-realisation" that had been launched in the 1970s.

⁴⁴² Ferge 1979, 306. In 1969, the "Commission for Perspective Planning on Manpower and Standard of Living" published its hypotheses concerning the orientation of social development for the next fifteen years.

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

If we want more than just to create a kind of bourgeois welfare, we have to take into account more seriously the specific nature of the socialist country. We cannot start from a bourgeois way of life and have no idea whatsoever as what will be a socialist way of life based on economic welfare.⁴⁴⁴

Consequently during the 1970s, Hungarian sociologists and social psychologists focused on discovering more about what constituted a specifically socialist way of life.⁴⁴⁵ In doing this, they were also responding to call inherent in the Party's resolution that "in the middle of the improving material circumstances, we must proceed to find out how to live in a socialist way".⁴⁴⁶

2.4.2 Moulding minds

In 1965, educational psychologist Jenő Salamon from the Psychology Department of ELTE University laid out the national long-term plan for psychological research in the *Hungarian Psychological Review*.⁴⁴⁷ As secretary of the 58th Coordination Committee, he had played a key part in drawing it up, and was quick to assure his readers that psychology was now needed in every walk of life and that, "despite the organisational mistakes made in the 1950s",⁴⁴⁸ the plan would ensure that resources were channelled "in a most suitable manner" to socially relevant areas where they were needed the most. In short, Salamon laid high expectations on the rational organisation of research for the "good of society".⁴⁴⁹

As a loyal communist, Salamon began by acknowledging the suggestions that had been made back in 1956 at the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party (see 2.4.1 above); and then he went on to say that this was why the Psychology Committee had been set up under the leadership of Gegesi, and why Hungarian research had been conducted ever since "at [such] amazing speed". Great progress had been made, for example, in educational psychology, where the task had been to create the basis for "the versatile communist"; but also in industrial psychology, where the relevant results had been achieved in factories, agriculture, and traffic management. Psychology was also increasingly featuring in child welfare policies now, he added, especially in the prevention of crime and the reeducation of criminal youths. The forthcoming long-term plan for psychology would rationalise all these results, so that the best would certainly be preserved but any unnecessary overlap between research themes would be removed. In the Hungarian national plan therefore, there would now be educational, clinical and work psychology.⁴⁵⁰

In his discourse, Salamon stressed that education essentially encompassed nearly all the areas that concerned psychologists, as in Marxist terms, education was psychology's most important task; from preparing teenagers for work with

⁴⁴⁴ Cf. Ferge 1979, 306.

⁴⁴⁵ See for example: Pataki 1977, 275-297.

⁴⁴⁶ Cf. Kulcsár 1980.

⁴⁴⁷ Salamon 1965, 14-19.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

psychological counselling, to studying the adaptation of adults, to further training in work environments. And all this was being done with the aim of increasing productivity in the socialist work-place. There was also an educational dimension to the research on neurosis, as the long-term plan incorporated studies on the role of family (and other) conflicts in causing neuroses.

Salamon went on to propose that increasing productivity was a case of “moulding the human mind”. In the long-term plan many topics did, after all, relate to increasing the efficiency of work-groups and work brigades. But, although it was not mentioned explicitly by Salamon in his text, the “educability” of a work brigade did not simply mean that individual workers had to be “moulded”, but that the social environment needed to be rationalised, or even *humanised*. In this sense, it coincided with the comprehensive idea of a socialist education, which encompassed both the spheres of “organised education” (within family, kindergarten, school, and higher education) and the wider context for learning in society (the media, friends, and the “street”), i.e., both the “organised and relatively spontaneous arenas of social consciousness-formation”.

It was this “formation and development” of socialist consciousness that would become one of the highest priorities for psychology in fact. A special committee was established to this end in 1965 by the Academy of Sciences, and in 1967 it summarised its findings on what the suitable grounds for future research would be.⁴⁵¹ Among the other members of this “complex committee” there were renowned academic personalities such as the historian György Ránki, the ethnologist Gyula Ortutay, the sociologist András Hegedüs, and Lajos Bartha representing psychology. As the report shows, psychology’s contribution was particularly related to the “mechanisms” of consciousness-forming. Indeed, it was a topic that concerned “all departments” within the Institute for Psychology, but especially the Department of Educational Psychology (*pedagógiai pszichológia*). In the general research plan of this department, the focus had been on developing “communist education” by scientifically examining how the personalities of students developed in a “multifaceted and harmonious” way.⁴⁵²

School was a place where various interests and ideologies encountered each other on an everyday level and sometimes clashed. Quite naturally, school was considered to be the crucial setting where most of this developmental research into a socialist education would take place. For instance, one such long-term experimental study headed by a psychologist - Ferenc Lénárd (1911-1988) - was looking to find ways to improve teaching methods in mathematics

⁴⁵¹ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 36/1967/6 ő.e. MSZMP Központi Bizottság TKKO. Beszámoló a szocialista tudat kialakítására és kifejlesztésére irányuló kutatások c. kiemelt kutatási terület koordináló akadémiai komplex bizottság tevékenységéről.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*, 4; Tájékoztató a tudatfejlesztés mechanizmusa c. témakört érintő kiemelt kutatások helyzetéről. Appendix II.

and history.⁴⁵³ Lénárd had been authorised to establish a psychological laboratory in one school in János Arany Street in Budapest, which soon became integrated with the Institute for Psychology as an experimental school. At the time, Lénárd's mathematical education project was at the forefront of psychological discussions, and often compared with the alternative innovative methods studied by Tamás Varga (1919-1987) from the National Institute of Pedagogics.⁴⁵⁴ However, his experiment with teaching *history* had met with criticism, both from teachers in the school, and from among parents, as regular teaching methods and daily schoolwork had been interrupted by the psychologists.

Because of these hiccups, Lénárd's experiment has left some traces in the party records; thanks to a special expert committee established in 1968 to clear up the situation and evaluate the scientific and political relevance of his work in a report. This report into the ideologically and socially embedded nature of his research is examined next; but beforehand it should be noted that the committee report is the only source quoted here regarding this experiment; and in this respect it is important to bear in mind that the report was produced as a consequence of criticism against the work of Lénárd and his colleagues.

Another mention to make beforehand is that there is an attachment to the report which goes into greater detail about the general research plan for the educational department within the Institute for Psychology. Thus, although it might present a less than neutral view about Lénárd's research, it nevertheless serves as an authoritative source for finding out more about the currents of thought surrounding socialist education at the time. In the plan, the crucial role of psychology in the field of socialist education is described in clear and concise Marxist terms. Indeed, it can be read as a schoolbook example of an attempt to convince the authorities of the political relevance of psychological research.

In this plan, the basics of personality psychology⁴⁵⁵ rested on two

⁴⁵³ Ferenc Lénárd (Lehner before 1945) was a renowned educational psychologist, especially remembered for his experimental studies on thinking and problem-solving. By the 1960s, Lénárd had academically established himself as one of the founding members of the newly formed MPTT. Lénárd was also a member of the Psychology Committee within the MTA, the Committee for Scientific Qualifications (TMB), and on the pedagogical committee of the Patriotic Peoples' Front. By 1969, Lénárd was also a qualified Doctor of the Academy in psychology and, according to the Hungarian Biographical Dictionary, he was the first to organise a psychological laboratory within a European school.

⁴⁵⁴ I thank Dr. Csaba Pléh for this information.

⁴⁵⁵ In Hungary at the turn of the '70s, especially László Garai and his colleagues explored Marxist personality psychology from a Vygotskian perspective, and this represented an innovative and critical variant of the mainstream position. Their social psychology oriented view of the personality should not be confused with what is described here. However, both these positions stemmed from the general idea that social reality could be changed. As László Garai stated in 1964, psychology, like all other natural applied sciences, ultimately aimed to "rationally" transform nature; but what made psychology different from other natural sciences was that psychological phenomena were "socially determined". Thus, for him, the aim of psychology was to transform "socially determined" natural phenomena, i.e., to not only change social consciousness, but also the conditions of social existence itself - so basically, his was a more radical stance. Garai 1964, 703, 713-714.

theoretical pillars. The first was a theory of consciousness and self-consciousness which was depicted in terms of Lenin's mirror theory. The second was a theory of personality from Soviet psychologist Rubinstein, who was a significant reference point at the time in many psychological publications. These elements were combined in such a way that human personality, the object of research, was clearly predetermined in idealistic and moralistic terms. However, this was balanced out with an element of active human agency.⁴⁵⁶ The plan could thus also be read as representing a post-Stalinist psychological rearticulation of the relationship between the individual and society. We can even go so far as to argue that the plan was proposing that active human properties had to be brought to the centre of discourse first, before psychology could exist in the collectivistic consciousness.

Consciousness was defined as something that only human beings had, i.e., a "higher level function of the brain". It was a manifestation of a distinctly human form of agency which "intentionally mirrored" (*célszerűen visszatükrözik*) the qualities of objects in the outside world, and the relationships between them. Because of this ability, human consciousness could "envision the consequences of action" and was capable of "understanding correctly" how the relationship between human beings and the natural and social reality around them worked, and thus enabled humans to have "self-control". In this respect, consciousness thus not only consisted of the processes of cognition, perception and sensation, but also of "needs and interests".

Here, it is crucially relevant to ask what gave birth to these needs and interests. As formulated in the plan, they arose through "sensible goal-setting" via "appropriate (*helyes*) mirroring of the world". Because of this ability, it was possible to "envision", i.e., make everyday prognoses about people's behaviour in a social setting. It seems clear that here the needs and interests of the individual came to be quite closely identified with other people's needs, although some room was clearly left for relatively autonomous 'agency'.⁴⁵⁷ Clearly, there were strong normative undertones in such words as "appropriate", "correct" and "self-control" - and these, of course, belonged to the repertoire of personality features expected of a socialist.

Following Lenin, consciousness was given "existential importance" - struggling as it was to construct a new world out of the ashes of the "unsatisfying" world that existed before. Consciousness subordinated itself (*alárendel*) to the interests of others and the community, but since it was also described as a "living and developing" concept, this implied that, in turn, the "needs" it envisioned would also be changing. Meanwhile, self-consciousness allowed humans to study the morality of their own deeds, and to ponder their position in the "system of social production". In other words, they were conscious of both themselves as individuals and as part of the world around them, and this ability made him a separate individual personality.

The concepts of consciousness and self-consciousness were intimately tied

⁴⁵⁶ Beszámoló a szocialista tudat kialakítására és kifejlesztésére..., Appendix II.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

up with the Marxist idea of personality. Rubinstein was quoted as saying that human personality - in all its "psychological complexity" - was determined by concrete action in the field of "real life and existence" (*valóságos élet*). Training and education involved "internalising" the material and spiritual culture around. Thus, research on the psychology of personality should actually focus on the complexity of events in the social field - on desires, motives, and aims as these were realised within the concrete social context of "work". The resulting "psychology of action" (*tevékenység pszichológiája*) was then about picking out the personal and individual characteristics that were demonstrated in the midst of this action. In other words, it was not enough to study inner issues alone, such as "temperament" or individual characteristics. The result of this line of thought would be a self-conscious and active human being in the social field, based on the ideal of humans who were conscious of their own actions because they created them.

Because personality, consciousness, and self-consciousness were realised only through concrete action, the problem of the individual now became the focus of research. As there was always the possibility for both "good and deviant deeds", the role of the psychologist was to give lessons in rationally handling those real-life situations in which a socialist personality could be carefully honed, and this was of course fundamental in education too. As the basic task was to create "harmonious and multifaceted" personalities, the psychological laws underpinning this needed to be known, and schools could then be assessed as to whether or not they contributed positively to forming "active personalities"⁴⁵⁸

It was considered especially relevant to mention in the plan that there were already significant pedagogic experiments being conducted in a number of Hungarian schools. Besides the Lénárd experiment mentioned above, there were two more schools outside Budapest where long-term experiments had been launched to improve the methods of teaching history and mathematics. They dealt with issues related to problem-setting and problem-solving, with the ultimate aim to "create a Marxist world-view in students, based on internalised convictions, and suitable for every age"⁴⁵⁹. Another seminal topic was research on how children and teenagers grew independent and began to socialise as "autonomous" members of the community around them. This was studied from the perspective of the inner social dynamics of the school community, focusing on the personalities of both teachers and students. The last experiment described in the plan was the one on the "two pillars" of personality psychology, already mentioned, that was being conducted at János Arany School. If it could be proved that the new techniques could effectively be applied, then they would be extended to "improve mindsets at the national level".⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid.

2.4.3 Experimental teaching raises critical voices

As mentioned above, in the files of the KB Department of Science, Public Education and Culture (TKKO) there was a relatively long report about Lénárd's experiment.⁴⁶¹ The report was made by a special committee set up to address the "letter of complaint" to the Party from the parents and school.⁴⁶² Within the hierarchy of the Academy, the authorisation had come from László Mátrai (1909-1983), the influential Main Secretary of the Department of History and Philosophy at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. In the introduction, almost twenty different pieces of evidence were presented that warranted an in-depth evaluation of the scientific and political relevance of Lénárd's work. The committee was also made aware that there had been complaints and worries related to it since its inception in 1964.⁴⁶³ This shows that the educational experiment had both been valued highly enough to let it continue for so long, but also that the criticism it raised was now finally being taken seriously by the authorities concerned.

From the beginning, complaints had been coming especially from parents and teachers.⁴⁶⁴ One criticism had been that Lénárd had broken up the "traditional order and structure of the lessons" by changing the role of the teacher, and giving more space for "independent learning" (*önálló tanulói tevékenység*). The teacher's task was now limited to organising and leading discussions based on texts and questions given for homework; and criticising or "rewarding" the behaviour of students during the discussion (through approval). The problem, both for the parents and the history teachers concerned, seemed to be that the texts were given out without any explanation about the substance beforehand. Interestingly though, it was the parents who were the most "afraid" that the students would acquire neither a basic knowledge of history (through too much freedom for their own opinions); nor a proper education of the personality - one of the twin pillars of a socialist education.⁴⁶⁵

As a representative example of these criticisms, the committee quoted one Miklós Szabó who in his letter accused Dr. Lénárd of "psychological dilettantism", even claiming that he was a fraud and "scientific impostor" (*tudományos szélhámoság*). Szabó's point was that history was a subject that was especially unsuitable for these kinds of psychological frauds. History was also a topic that the parents seemed to be deeply interested in; they were concerned that historical texts were handed out with attached questions to think about at home, but without any ready-made interpretation to help, meaning the parents

⁴⁶¹ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 36/1968/22 ó.e./MSZMP KB Tudományos, Közoktatási és Kulturális Osztálya. Feljegyzés Mátrai László Akadémikus osztálytitkár elvtársnak.

⁴⁶² The report was signed by Mátyás Unger, Márton Farkas, Szilárd Faludi, and Jenő Salamon on 12 May 1969. Unger (1921-1985) was a historian specialising in the pedagogics of history; Farkas was a military historian; Faludi a renowned Marxist pedagogue; and Salamon (as we have seen) a psychologist from ELTE.

⁴⁶³ Feljegyzés Mátrai László Akadémikus osztálytitkár..., 4-5.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

had to help their offspring give the “right answers” - and this was only the best case-scenario. Most of the time parents did not feel it was their job to do this. In the end, the experiment caused confusion, and its critics felt that “all this would compromise the basic function of the school”⁴⁶⁶.

Neither the parents nor even those representing the teachers in János Arany School seemed to understand that the function of these questions was actually to stimulate discussion, not simply test for the “right answers”. Nevertheless, the committee - in which there were two historians - sympathised with the criticisms. Their expert opinion was that although the experiment was very relevant from the psychological perspective, its tendency to “fetishise” psychology was made at the cost of history. In this respect, the committee stipulated that the experiment should have, from the start, accounted for the need to teach historical “didactics” at the same time.

Based on some first-hand experience in the class room, the committee argued that the first flaw with Lénárd’s work, was that the free flow of discussion tended to lead to some serious problems since the essence of history as a “science of facts” (and outlined directly below) was being quite forgotten, and possibly even disputed.

History is a science of laws (*törvény-tudomány*), and therefore the primary aim of teaching history is to train students in these laws, and to abide by them, i.e., in the history class, we do not teach any other alternative accounts than the historical processes that have truly happened.⁴⁶⁷

Apparently, in student discussions, different opinions were expressed too freely to fit within this rather positivistic definition of history, and not just because of the threat of ‘factual mistakes’. According to the committee, a significant part of history teaching was to morally “form and develop” personalities.⁴⁶⁸ Hence, as the experiment was perhaps too concentrated on “formal and logical argumentation”, it was seen as encouraging “intellectualism” at the expense of ignoring history’s “moral lessons”.

The second flaw, in the committee’s opinion, resided in the unfortunate choice of some of the questions given for homework. In fact, these proved to be the Achilles heel of the whole experiment,⁴⁶⁹ as the questions did not fit with the basic aforementioned idea of teaching “historical laws and connections”.⁴⁷⁰ There were also questions that were totally “out of place” (*kirívó*), and focused on “comparison” and “confrontation” at the expense of historical accuracy. Students were asked, for example, whether “the exploitation of slaves [was] greater under feudalism than the exploitation of workers under capitalism”; and why they thought it was that “the Hungarian Jacobins could not connect with the people and the peasants”. These questions were thought to be *kirívó*, because they were described as being “professionally and pedagogically

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., 4.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 8.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., 4.

mistaken".⁴⁷¹ Indeed, there was the issue of anachronism, and the questions also had clearly normative overtones, which traditionally made historians wary. But perhaps there was also a great temptation to interpret the questions as too overtly political.

Besides these genuine worries related to loose historical opinions, there was also the concern that students' were expressing negative views on Hungarian history. For example, one of the discussions ended with a student arguing that, during the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the 19th century, Hungary had been a "semi-colony", or even a "colony". The astonished committee even professed to witnessing how one pupil stated as a fact that dualist Hungary "subconsciously identified with India". Again the committee drew the conclusion from this that, without adequate historical didactics to complement the one-sidedly psychological view, the result would be "a negative basic approach to historical developments in Hungary".⁴⁷² The student discussion was not the correct forum for actually acquiring knowledge - it should have instead been a way to "organise knowledge that had been taught beforehand".⁴⁷³

And yet, after consulting the evidence at hand (e.g., Lénárd's highly evaluated dissertation) and looking at the experiment from a number of viewpoints, the committee decided to defend the psychologist's experiment. They even argued that the "freedom of scientific experimentation and creation" should be cultivated and safeguarded from outside interference. The committee also believed that Lénárd's psychological tools had encouraged independent thinking in the students, and even "autonomy". In fact, Lénárd's aims were parallel with the aims of socialism. By moulding a socialist man who could "act and think independently", it was necessary to "liberate" students from repetitive and passive "rote learning".⁴⁷⁴

In conclusion, the committee stressed that, from the psychological perspective, the experiment was far from being "dilettante". In fact, the committee was favourably impressed by the "strong psychological orientation" of the experiment, and seemed to be of the opinion that these experimental classes seemed to lift the students to a better place than those taught in regular classes. In addition, the results of the research experiment could be checked in Lénárd's dissertation for his Doctorate from the Academy, which had been approved - and this was a very strong argument in socialist academic terms. In short, the committee ruled against the complaints made by some of the parents and teachers.

These recommendations were also adopted by Mátrai. In a letter to a comrade in the TKKO, Mátrai stated his approval in June 1969, and set to

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., 8. The committee also noted that the basic concepts of history (for example, capitalist production, free wage-worker, finance capital, and inflow of capital) had been left unexplained.

⁴⁷² Ibid., 9.

⁴⁷³ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid., 5.

defend Lénárd's work with minor reservations.⁴⁷⁵ He thought the experiment was basically correct, but in the future the "narrow" psychological approach should be complemented and controlled by a professional historian, who could also contribute to the pedagogical side. After this, Mátrai asked if this was enough to now "close the case", or was it considered necessary to organise a further general discussion within the TKKO to solve the issue.⁴⁷⁶

On the other hand, Lajos Bartha had made it clear in a letter to the TKKO, back in January 1969, that he felt Lénárd's experiment had in fact caused tensions that were not to be dismissed out of hand. In his opinion, it had soured relations between the institute, the school, and the Party council (of the 12th district of Budapest).⁴⁷⁷ He wanted to underline that the level of "professional, pedagogic, and political control" at the Department of Educational Psychology had not been good enough, and added self-deprecatingly that psychologists surely did not want to disturb the work of other professionals. He also noted that the research themes of the department operated at too general a level.⁴⁷⁸ Thus, he had advised Lénárd to write a paper about how the "productive realisation" of the research plan could be ensured.⁴⁷⁹

In the paper attached to Bartha's letter to the TKKO, Lénárd made it clear that the scientific work of the department was based on three basic plans for research: the first was the plan for their department, that had already been accepted for the years 1969-1971; the second was the National Research Plan (*Országos Kutatási Terv*), which included the plans for educational psychology; and the third was the high-level resolution put out by the Academy of Sciences (15360/II./Dm./1966), in which one of the highest priority themes of research was "formation and development of socialist consciousness". Lénárd was keen to indicate that his research particularly fell into the latter category, as he believed it closely correlated with the cultural and political aims of the party, supporting schools in the educational tasks assigned to them in order "to educate socialists".⁴⁸⁰

Lénárd insisted that his research should be understood as a joint project with the corps of educators in János Arany School, and also with other schools which were participating in his research. The long-term perspective it offered (the experiment had been going on for five years) supported the 1966 resolution to "find out pedagogic-psychological laws" and put them into practice to realise the aims of the educational system, which was to introduce "communist education" and ensure the "harmonic and multifaceted development of

⁴⁷⁵ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 36/1968/22 ó.e./MSZMP KB Tudományos, Közoktatási és Kulturális Osztálya. Mátrai László Nagy Miklósnak.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid. The documents used here do not reveal if this kind of meeting was held or not.

⁴⁷⁷ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 36/1968/22 ó.e. MSZMP KB Tudományos, Közoktatási és Kulturális Osztálya. Bartha Lajos Jáнки Kálmánné Elvtársnak, 8.1.1969.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁷⁹ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 36/1968/22 ó.e. MSZMP KB Tudományos, Közoktatási és Kulturális Osztálya. Bartha Lajos Jáнки Kálmánné Elvtársnak, 8.1.1969. Lénárd Ferenc feljegyzése, 1.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., 2.

students' personalities".⁴⁸¹ As Lénárd underlined, educational practices that required quick social changes were not going to work, and needed to be changed. Hence, one of the essential conditions for the productive realisation of the department's research plan, i.e., not only the successful realisation of the experiment, was that the teachers would also do their share. Here, Lénárd referred to the essence of social responsibility in a workers' state. That is, the potentially successful methods introduced in these experimental schools could also be tested in other schools; especially schools with a strong worker-peasant profile and the more socially "disadvantaged" (*hátrányos helyzetű*).⁴⁸²

The Educational Department's research plan was also attached to the letter. As Lénárd's ambitious aim was to introduce these methods in all Hungarian schools, he emphasised the scientific nature of the experiment. This was also because doubts had been raised on "one-sided" intellectualism or 'psychologisation'. On the contrary, the methods would be carefully tested, and verified with various controls.⁴⁸³ He argued that the teaching methods presently in place were in urgent need of modernisation. In a style reminiscent of Anton Makarenko, Lénárd insisted that the all the tasks of a socialist school (teaching, multifaceted education, and productive work) should be part of an inseparable whole, and these should be holistically implicit in all educational content.

The school would cultivate young people who would really "internalise" what they had learned, and who could use their knowledge in a versatile manner to "optimally" combine theory and practice. According to modern developmental psychology, people's life consisted of different stages, so a teacher equipped with psychological tools would know how to optimise each of them, so that students would develop a "strong conviction" in socialism and all the personality features required for this to be necessary.

Indeed, the true focus of attention was the development of personality. This was understood to occur in a Marxist-Leninist dialectic relationship with the psychological development of man. But for this "inner unity" between psychology and personality to be observable in practice, the "system of actions" within a dynamic school environment needed psychological expertise to "maintain and develop the economic and cultural level of [...] society" as formulated in the plan.⁴⁸⁴

It is interesting to see, how the ideal of producing "socialists" from 6-18 year-old children was actually another way of saying 'forming versatile individuals'. There were subthemes, for example, as to how individual expression could be developed by paying attention to unique writing-styles. Namely, psycho-physiological studies had proved that the methods used at the time, of uniform and non-differentiated teaching, were just not working.⁴⁸⁵ Two

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

⁴⁸² Ibid., 3–4. According to Lénárd, the efficiency of learning had increased by 300–400%, especially in mathematics, even though the educational content had been left unchanged.

⁴⁸³ Bartha Lajos Jánki Kálmánné Elvtársnak, 8.1.1969. Az MTA Pszichológiai Intézete Pedagógiai Pszichológiai Osztályának 1969-1971 évekre szóló kutatási terve, 3.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., 4.

other subthemes deserve a brief mention here, with an example from each. Firstly, the educational psychologists wanted to see how socialisation might be influenced by examining the mutual processes of “imitation”, identification, and independence; and how these might also indicate how moral values were born, and what models they followed.⁴⁸⁶ Secondly, they wanted to develop students’ ability to think “flexibly”, i.e., independently.

There seemed to be an interesting paradox here though. On the one hand, these rather up-to-date psychological theories of learning demanded individual flexibility and autonomous thinking - not only for more efficient learning, but also better “internalisation of the Marxist-Leninist world view and materialism”.⁴⁸⁷ On the other hand, the basic education system was insisting that the performance of the group would be more than the sum of its individual parts - a familiar tenet from leftist group psychology. Was there an inherent tension between the ideological aim of moulding ‘collective men’, on the one hand, and encouraging individual autonomy, on the other? It was perhaps this basic tension that was also felt by those people who got to witness the experimental teaching methods in Lénárd’s classes.

* * *

Lénárd had publicly described his theories of educational psychology on several previous occasions. His ideas not only reflected contemporary ideological expectations, but also showed his long-term dedication to a particular brand of psychological research in education which criticised the study of children’s learning processes in the sterile “laboratory” conditions of test situations - quite different from actual practice.⁴⁸⁸ In a speech at the yearly convention of the Psychology Committee in 1960, he set out to define the relationship between psychology and pedagogics in order to carve out a space for educational psychology (*nevelés lélektan*) in proper Marxist terms. In other words, he demonstrated his socialist credentials by articulating his relationship to various schools of thought that were not supported by the state, and stressed the relevance of others. Characteristically, the essential question at this early stage of psychology’s rehabilitation was what kind of support professional psychology could provide education to make it more efficient.⁴⁸⁹

According to Lénárd, it would be wrong to simply “deduce the goals and demands of teaching and education from psychological laws”, as if there was some universal nature for all schoolchildren. This would amount to “psychologism”, he argued, because it would fail to take into account the social needs and aims of education (that were historically determined). Another harmful way to understand the role of psychological knowledge in schools was, as we have already come across, to see it as ‘pedology’. In front of an audience which was perfectly aware of the political connotations related to this term, he

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 10.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., 6.

⁴⁸⁸ See Mátrai (ed.) 1967, 269-271.

⁴⁸⁹ Lénárd 1960.

warned that pedology used methods that were “totally alien” to education, which led to biased and thus flawed conclusions. But Lénárd was quick to point out that “condemning” pedology by no means meant he was condemning the whole of psychology. The importance was to “stigmatise” (*megbélyegez*) those habits that were “harmful both for psychology and education”.⁴⁹⁰

Lénárd then went on to describe just how educational psychology could help. As one of socialist education’s goals was to create a “collective spirit” (*szellem*); and socialist collectives significantly differed from simple “groupings”, such as “gangs”; educational psychologists could dig deeper into the what it was exactly that created the optimal conditions for these “collectives”. And by doing so, it would also become possible to “diagnose” the state of them with “scientific exactness”.⁴⁹¹ Arguing that human properties could be developed only through action, and that action and human properties (such as personality, and human nature) mutually affected one another in a dialectic manner, he called for more research on psychological phenomena in their “concrete forms”. The aim here was to develop socialist personalities from individuals: “we have countless lists of virtues and inventories of personality, but we know only a little about how these could be made conscious.”⁴⁹²

At one big social gathering in 1967 (it was the 50th anniversary of the Great October Revolution), Lénárd repeated his belief in practice-oriented psychological research. Here his presentation was relatively free from ideological overtones. Lénárd simply suggested that “for a long time” research on pedagogic functions, i.e., both the education of students and teachers, had been carried out under the “spell of pseudo-exactness” (*látszat-exaktság bűvöletében*). In other words, students had been studied in laboratory-like conditions out of the more relevant and natural context of school. In order to understand the complex field of social psychology in which everyday educational practice happened, the naturalistic setting of the school would be more pertinent to effective research.⁴⁹³ This argument, of course, vindicated Lénárd’s own research in János Arany School.

In general, the reforms envisioned during socialism were strongly influenced by the idea of school as a rationally organised community in which socialist personalities were being gradually formed.⁴⁹⁴ Although Lénárd was evidently well versed in socialist imagery, his teaching experiment, as described above, seems to have also been informed also by Hungarian “reform pedagogics”. Géza Sáska argues that Hungarian reform pedagogics, while aiming at creating alternative teaching methods, had clear symbolic implications. The vision of an alternative school was not only against the existing socialist schooling system but also the monolithic political system. However, reform pedagogics also encapsulated certain anti-Stalinist ideological positions that were now acceptable; indeed, the notion of socialism with a

⁴⁹⁰ Lénárd 1960, 23.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

⁴⁹² Ibid., 21–23.

⁴⁹³ Matrai (ed.), 1967, 269–271.

⁴⁹⁴ Cf. Kronstein 1998.

“child’s face” (*gyermekarcú*) was perhaps anti-Stalinism translated into pedagogic language.⁴⁹⁵

Lénárd’s emphasis on studying the psychological processes of children in real-life communities was also an important theme in Ferenc Mérei’s social psychology research after WWII. It has been argued that Mérei’s thinking was based on the idea that allowing groups to form “voluntarily”, based on the shared experiences or traditions of individuals was more effective than trying to “engineer souls” in over-organised school communities, of which he was clearly critical. The need to somehow cater for both these somewhat contradictory top-down and bottom-up theories of group formation are looked at more closely in chapter 4.

Social psychologist Ferenc Pataki was also critical of the prevailing educational culture. As a former activist in the Peoples’ College Movement *Nékosz*, he openly criticised the state of Hungarian school system in his publications. Pataki argued that true socialist education was yet to come to Hungary as for him the ideal teacher was open, emphatic, endowed with the gift for making contact, and yet still also demanding of the students; but as far as he could see, Hungarian schools were far from “the real dynamics of society, let alone to the genuine developmental needs of young people living in society”. This was caused by “the authoritarian and rigid Prussian model” which still managed to “keep its bastions intact”.⁴⁹⁶

This criticism not only stemmed from some ideological preconceptions, but reflected genuine experiences shared by many in the psychological community. As child psychologist Katalin Nyerges testified in an interview with me, the culture in Hungarian schools was based for a long time on traditions inherited from the Austro-Hungarian Empire.⁴⁹⁷ This tradition was focused on achievements, discipline, and uniformity of teaching materials. The upshot was that teachers may have felt they had less work, as the planning was mostly done for them, but it also meant they had little autonomy to alter teaching methods in the face of difficult students which was sometimes hard to admit. In this context, psychologists who came into schools often encountered hostile attitudes.

As Nyerges recalls, many teachers felt that psychologists were simply on an “inspection tour”, trying to find out if the children were treated properly or not; while from the psychologists’ perspective, Pataki’s account reveals that many felt the teachers in socialist schools did not have the same idealist expectations of collective education as perhaps they did, and the majority lacked up-to-date knowledge on children’s developmental psychology.

This lack of psychological knowledge in educational practice was also criticised in an account of the 5th National Congress of Education in an issue of *Hungarian Psychological Review* in 1969. In his introductory words, Pál Bakonyi from the National Institute for Pedagogics complained that

⁴⁹⁵ Sáska 2005, 36.

⁴⁹⁶ Pataki 1982, 73–75, 259.

⁴⁹⁷ Interview with Katalin Nyerges: 17 September 2013.

psychologists had not been properly involved in arranging the conference. The pedagogues concluded the conference by acknowledging the need for more psychology in schools, but with hardly any reference to concrete research results. According to Bakonyi, the institute could have got its own research-team which would have focused particularly on psychological issues, but this was not to be, and Bakonyi concluded that the basis for cooperation between psychology and education remained “loose”.⁴⁹⁸

Meanwhile, Dr. Éva Gáspárné Zauner from the Institute of Teacher Education drew attention to the fact that currently the achievements of psychologists had hardly been acknowledged by either teachers or educationalists, even though “forming personalities” was evidently a crucially psychological topic. It seemed they thought it was enough to “know about the existence of the new methods” but they seemed unaware that they should be internalised as a regular routine. Zauner felt that the methods for “moulding character” should be brought up-to-date. She recommended that psychologists not only work with small groups of children in schools, but also make teachers aware of the various personality theories they used (e.g., Pavlovian, Lewinian field-theory, factor-analysis, and social psychology), and to actively introduce them.⁴⁹⁹

It seems apparent that although most of the educational psychologists featured in the present study may well have cherished the Makarenkoan ideal of an ordered pedagogical community, they were particularly sensitive when it came to the subjects of individuality and autonomy. In some texts, a clear line is drawn between Stalinist educational practices, and their contemporary psychology-based techniques. One such example is the book entitled “Collective Education in an Elementary School”, which was an attempt to improve the collective dynamics of school communities using methods from social psychology (such as sociograms) - particularly the chapter about “competition in a school community”, where the difference drawn between the eras either side of 1956 was qualitative.⁵⁰⁰

First the point was made that competition had “an essential role” in the school community, but then this was qualified with warnings of it being “a great danger if the fever of competition blurs the true political and educational substance of various actions”. In other words, if the “achieved score” became the only motivating factor for children at school, then it was possible that the “true” motives based in the social, human, and collective values of socialist education were not being internalised as they should be.⁵⁰¹

On this topic, the educationalists were very self-critical about the recent past of their profession, as competition may have produced results, but these

⁴⁹⁸ Bakonyi 1969, 309–316.

⁴⁹⁹ Zauner was also highlighting the general importance of youth psychology research. Referring to East German and Soviet positivist models, she argued that these initiatives should also be cherished in Hungary as they could well provide solutions for the “morality crisis” that was characteristic of the era of “Scientific and Technological Revolution”. See Gáspárné Zauner 1969, 317–322

⁵⁰⁰ Hunyadyné 1970.

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 87–88.

measured only a very superficial progress in any real terms, and had served more of a political function between schools than anything else.

Let us face the facts: the most essential reason [for the current confusion] is the justified fear, the bad taste of the memory living within us, educators, related to the competitions arranged among children in 1947-1953... well, they may have produced some kind of results but their main import was in the end that they totally sidetracked our educational work.

According to the authors, these various competitions in study, behaviour, and discipline were conducted in a “repulsively formal way” and were narrow, practical, and campaign-like. They involved learning skills by heart, and testing behaviour to ensure, for example, cleanliness, and purity. Hence, they were based on pure quantification and the “pursuit of results” (*hújszolás*). The educationalists saw through this kind of competition for what it was (“an end in itself”) with no internalisation of any deeper values; to be used more as a measure of success for comparing schools. Worse still, they were used to compare the ‘personalities’ of children, teachers, and parents. In these conditions, competition had “developed into a battle for prestige and existence between educators and schools”.

We soon got friendly with these competitions because easy and quick achievements could be reached with them... If we were lagging behind on some issue, we declared a competition... it was like when a severely ill person gets better because of the injection of painkillers for a time and then again after the effect is over returns to the bad general condition (*közérzet*) or even worse⁵⁰²

Other claims were also made by social psychologists in the educational context. For example, in his search for the “indicators” of true community values, István Harsányi combined up-to-date (western) group psychology with Makarenkoan ideas. With an implicit criticism of past practices, Harsányi noted that it was simply not enough to claim that “this is a highly developed collective”, as there were objective criteria and parameters that could be used in defining the difference between a developed community and a “disorganised mass” (*tömeg*) of haphazardly organised individuals.⁵⁰³

Harsányi’s discussion was clearly informed by the contemporary discourse on “collective psychology” (*közösségi lélektan*) that was happening in the Eastern Bloc at the time, particularly the USSR and GDR. Here, the explicit reference was Pataki’s work on Makarenko, which itself was a magisterial effort to wed ideological concepts with insights from social psychology, and in this way focus the discussion on modern psychology-based educational methods.⁵⁰⁴ Harsányi noted, for instance, that *one way* to define the essential characteristics of a “true community” could be found in the “common traditions” cherished by a group; the active presence of organised action; a clearly determined inner structure in which the participants had clear roles within a “hierarchy”; and a

⁵⁰² Ibid., 89.

⁵⁰³ Harsányi 1967, 601.

⁵⁰⁴ The most basic tenet of collective psychology was that humans are naturally social beings (*társas lény*). See, for example, Pataki 1982, 82, 92–95, 216

conscious, common aim.⁵⁰⁵ However, the feature that really distinguished his paper was to show the relevance of western research on small groups in social psychology, especially because of its ability to provide experimentally testable scientific results. Harsányi went on to suggest that if the results of modern social psychology were now combined with the teachings of Makarenko, the parameters of ideally working communities might become more apparent. And this was all the more relevant, since Makarenko's "ingenious intuition" had already produced surprisingly modern insights for social psychology on the inner dynamics of groups, and now these could be tested.⁵⁰⁶

Due to his knowledge of western discussions on group psychology, Harsányi was able to provide a more differentiated picture of group dynamics than was the case with the simplest readings of Makarenko. As a consequence, he described several criteria for measuring the quality of existing communities: (i) the style of leadership; (ii) the level of communication within the group; (iii) the characteristic types of interaction; (iv) the prevalent system of attitudes, values, and norms; and (v) the role of common past experiences. By these criteria, Harsányi was implying that the starting point for everything was communication. Namely, in highly developed school communities there should be "no taboo themes". And "adventures", such as camps and trips were needed to produce a "group experience" (*együtttes élmény*).⁵⁰⁷

The message for the teachers was that time and energy was needed to form these kinds of communities; as none of them would simply replicate themselves (*önmemzés*). This would come close to "the work of Sisyphus" without the help of social psychology.⁵⁰⁸ For this reason, he thought the basic concepts of social psychology should also be taught to the pupils, and not just the teachers. They could learn, for example, about the difference between a simple aggregation of individuals (*halmaz*), a group, and a community; about interaction, conflicts, and cooperation; and about status and various roles in society. Harsányi encouraged teachers to foster a sense of community in the classroom which would allow for differentiation; since without readily determined roles carved in stone, "everyone could be a functionary or deputy officer".⁵⁰⁹ In Harsányi's vision, the ideal of a functioning community was not so much like a well-oiled machine, but more like a newly evolved Makarenkoan organism that now had up-to-date psychological knowledge.

⁵⁰⁵ Harsányi 1963, 601; Pataki 1965, 1096-1097. For this tradition of "community psychology" it was important, for example, to draw a clear line between "strong" and "weak" communities, between randomly assembled groups (or "masses") and genuine groups with common goals. As Pataki noted, groups without a common history lacked "individuality". As Makarenko had argued, every *group formation* should develop according to its own path towards becoming a *community*.

⁵⁰⁶ Harsányi 1963, 602.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 603-604.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 603.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 608.

2.5 An ongoing discussion between pragmatists and ideologists

2.5.1 Carving out niches for meaningful professional discourse

In the previous literature, the slow development of psychology in socialist countries has been generally attributed to political and ideological pressures.⁵¹⁰ And in most cases this applies to Hungary too.⁵¹¹ At the same time, however, the Kádár regime has been variously described as an exception to the rule, as some literature describes it as being pragmatic, and allowing for negotiated 'small freedoms'.

The problem with discussing the ideological setting of psychology has been that the concept of ideology is often simply understood as something static and unchanging. But if, on the other hand, ideology is to be seen as a meaningful cultural resource for action, instead of an obstacle for 'objective' science, then it must be defined in more political terms. Hence, by ideology I mean symbolically charged beliefs and arguments that have the power to shape, direct, organise, and justify certain actions and oppose others.⁵¹²

Halmesvirta notes that, by the 1970s, Marxism-Leninism had become a rather flexible term in Hungary,⁵¹³ whilst Dolores Augustine has added that, in the 1960s it became increasingly intertwined with the beliefs and aims related to technocratic modernisation.⁵¹⁴ Indeed, by the beginning of the 1960s, 'scientific and technological modernisation' was a highly topical issue in the entire socialist bloc, related as it was to Khrushchev's call to 'reach and overtake' the west. In this context, the role of all the human sciences was seen from the perspective of social progress.

Particularly prominent in the autobiographies of psychologists was the issue of safeguarding the professional standards of academic research from 'outside' political pressure. Indeed, in light of the source material used in this research, it is clear that the professional orientation of psychological research had to be negotiated in various contexts - both in public and behind the scenes. One crucial moment in determining the space for social sciences was in 1969, when the MSZMP published their Science Policy Guidelines (see 2.5.3 below). As we shall see, the ideological discussion concerning the proper role of all the social sciences in communist Hungary very much included psychology. Before going deeper into this, however, some personal encounters with the regime are first brought up. This is done in order to give light to some of the tactics which were used to build professional identities in socialist Hungary.

As this present study suggests, the dynamics of what was going on informally in academia should be analytically separated from what was going on officially. Judging from the various autobiographies and interviews cited

⁵¹⁰ Sprung & Sprung 2007, 59-60

⁵¹¹ Bakonyi 1983, 57-58.

⁵¹² Halmesvirta 2006a, 9.

⁵¹³ Halmesvirta 2006b, 267.

⁵¹⁴ Augustine 2007, xii.

here, the development of the psychological community in Hungary depended quite heavily on the active agency of researchers and teachers who, especially in the 1960s and early '70s, were able to work round the bureaucratic obstacles and ideological doubts prevalent at the time, to preserve and build continuity in the field.⁵¹⁵ The conditions for finding satisfactory work assignments or interesting research projects depended on connections with influential personalities, and the negotiations conducted with them.

Another informal strategy to compensate for the perceived dearth of formal training available to psychologists, was to undergo voluntary training in various locations, especially in the fields of psychotherapy and clinical psychology. In the 1960s, the only formal training available was focused on Budapest and nowhere else in the country, which can be seen as a tangible indication that the authorities did not have the psychological sciences high on their list of priorities.

On the other hand, the teaching culture in those official academic institutions was often very open and inclusive. János László, a former psychology student at ELTE in Budapest from the end of the 1960s onwards, for example, found the encouragement received from “genuinely” scientific teachers such as Jenő Putnoky and Ilona Barkóczi very helpful for his professional career. The teachers not only experimented together regularly with their students, but also invited them to dinner and for other occasions.⁵¹⁶ László particularly highlights the significance of work done within the *Scientific Student Circles* (TDK⁵¹⁷), which greatly added to the strongly “collectivistic” orientation of studying and teaching psychology at ELTE. From the end of the '60s onwards the TDK were also seen as a specifically Hungarian innovation since they also encouraged international cooperation; by organising such things as ‘national’ and then ‘international student days’, to which many participants came from all over Europe.⁵¹⁸

Thus, in order to understand the dissemination and diffusion of psychological culture in the country during socialism, it is vitally important to separate analytically different fields of action.⁵¹⁹ If we ask how new ideas were imported into the system, we are looking specifically at how they were put into action, and in what context, considering there was an atmosphere of (self)-censorship which hindered the open expression of politically or scientifically delicate ideas. In this way, the prevailing, hierarchical forms of organisation could be challenged by finding other forms and spaces for autonomous action.

⁵¹⁵ Bodor (et.al.) 2007.

⁵¹⁶ Interview with János László: 19 April 2012.

⁵¹⁷ TDK: Tudományos diákkörök. The birth of this institution closely relates to the reform-minded thinking of experimental psychologist Ilona Barkóczi. In the early 1970s, Barkóczi had a seminal role in the reform of the system of psychology-education at ELTE. Barkóczi’s life narrative can be found in Bodor (et.al.) 1997.

⁵¹⁸ Interview with János László: 19 April 2012.

⁵¹⁹ It would have been interesting to study the role of the Department of Psychology at ELTE in the professionalisation and diffusion of psychology during socialism. But the dynamic, even dramatic changes in university education in general, have been consciously left out as they are beyond the scope of the present study, though still an important part of the general overall story.

2.5.2 Tactics

In his analysis of the rise and fall of pedology in early Soviet Russia during the 1920s and '30s, Alexander Etkind pays attention to the peculiar nature of academia in a totalitarian environment. In an atmosphere of intolerance that accompanied the power struggles under Bolshevik rule, there were endless discussions and struggles about the “lines of demarcation” between subjects, in order to define the permissible fields of endeavour for each discipline. Scientific schools tended to “squeeze out” the competition by trying to gain a monopoly in their field. In these conditions, the political leaders of the scientific community were always concerned about these demarcations and the hierarchy of different disciplines because this not only directly affected how much support they got, but was also seen as an indicator of their personal political weight.⁵²⁰

According to Etkind, these ‘border issues’ between the disciplines were typical of Bolshevik scientific development, especially felt during interdisciplinary discussions, due to them often being the simplest “administrative solution”. The discipline that lost the debate, as pedology eventually did, could be simply closed down as irrelevant (or dangerous), and the winning side, in this case the simplified variant of ‘socialist education’ as defined by Makarenko, would be declared as the only true science. As Etkind astutely points out, one reason for this situation might have been that, with the potential to almost magically transform society and humankind, science was seen as a hugely powerful force.

These border scuffles are also present in many of the Hungarian psychologists’ life narratives I have examined. These peculiarities of the academic field are especially present in Béla Buda’s biography. Buda (1939-2013) graduated as a Doctor of Medicine (GP) from the Budapest Medical University in Budapest at the age of 24, and then went on to become an influential exponent of both social psychology and psychiatry within the contexts of clinical psychology and psychotherapy in Hungary. He was a polyglot who could read and internalise large amounts of text in several languages (German, French and English) in rather a short amount of time. He was thus crucial in popularising foreign scholarship within Hungary in a wide-ranging number of areas, psychoanalysis included.⁵²¹ Buda was also headhunted for work on a number of academic topics, including communication and questions of deviance (e.g., suicide). But as he often tended to touch on politically and/or ideologically sensitive issues in his writings he was also often attacked in public.⁵²²

⁵²⁰ Etkind 2007, 261–262.

⁵²¹ See, for example: Buda 1963, 1964, 1967a & 1967b.

⁵²² Buda was still in conflict with the ideologues right up to the end of the 1970s. For example, one of his ‘crimes’, was to suggest that priests and the Church should work together with therapists to help bring down the high suicide rate in Hungary. This was not only criticised by those in the state’s health care system, but also the psychiatric establishment. In general, Buda argued that analytic ideas for treating

In much the same way as Etkind describes, Buda took the hegemonic tendencies of different schools of thought quite personally. For example, if he adopted a critical stance against biological reductionism in the psychological sciences, or revolted against the “monocracy” of positivism in psychology, then his critics could argue that he was denying these ideas the “right to even exist”.⁵²³ And in this way, a negative variety of rivalry appeared. When a new field was opening up, its positions were quickly filled, and bureaucracy and hierarchies were soon built into it; and so his tactics were to not attach himself to any school of thought, and to remain an outsider, because this increased his opportunities for autonomic self-expression.⁵²⁴ This was a lesson that he had learnt “from life”. For example, in the early 1960s, when he first became famous in Hungary for his tireless reviews of western social psychology, sociology and cultural anthropology, his position as a young medical doctor had been a real advantage.

I soon came to notice that as a young physician my situation was more favourable. I was independent and I did not need to fear the loss of my position. For this was the situation with members of the much smaller psychological profession, who were more immediately bound by ideology.⁵²⁵

Buda’s work in disseminating professional knowledge from abroad was significant because it happened at the same time as the ideological “war” that was being waged in the so-called era of ‘peaceful coexistence’. Indeed, the need to open channels for knowledge to flow from the west had been officially recognised. According to his own testimony, he set out to write “about almost everything” he saw in the international psychological community.⁵²⁶ He even understood this to be an active calling for him, and realised that he should not only inform those interested in Hungary about the latest developments in social science and the humanities, but also try “to loosen ideological constraints and barriers” by introducing new ideas and knowledge from abroad.⁵²⁷

But the politicisation of the academic field required a great variety of tactics for academic survival.⁵²⁸ The prevailing conditions set boundaries but also opened up other opportunities by enforcing different solutions. Buda, for example, had to compensate for his lack of proper working class background at

mental problems, or solutions from social psychology were generally “taken as an insult” by the biological hegemony. See Bodor (et.al.) 1997, 30.

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Ibid., 31.

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For the same reasons, he avoided any political activity and decided not to join the Communist Youth League.

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Ibid., 29. For an interview with Buda later in life, see Bíró 2011a & Bíró 2011b.

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As Buda recalls, Ervin Szabó -library in Budapest in the end of the 1950s was a true “oasis of information” for him. In the library, he could keep on track about the latest literature on medical sociology and western research on deviancy. The library in Pest was responsible for gathering social sciences -literature in Hungary. Thus, they also were able to by large amounts of books in foreign language already in the end of the 1950s. Being convinced that cultural and social factors had a determinative function in human problems, such as alcoholism, the intellectual resources offered by the library proved to be very significant for him. See Bodor (et.al.) 1997, 32.

527

Ibid., 29.

528

Ibid., 27–33.

the turn of the 1960s by reading passionately and publishing a long series of review articles on social psychology, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, medical sociology, and research on deviance.⁵²⁹ This practice of translating and diffusing so much information in Hungarian later proved to be essential, not just for his own success, but for Hungarian intellectual life in general. According to medically trained Buda, one push in the right direction happened after 1963, when the former method of distributing medical posts (*elosztási rendszer*) - which had previously disallowed him a position because of his social background - was relaxed so that meaningful positions could eventually open up for him thanks to his professional credentials.⁵³⁰

Perhaps one of these professional havens of intense activity where such positions were offered was the József Attila hospital in Budapest that was being run by Ernő Szinetár. As Lányi has noted, the psychoanalytically trained Szinetár (1902-1996) was a highly controversial figure. During Stalinism, he had been a psychological advisor for the secret police (ÁVÓ), and he had also 'prepared' people for political trials. But he also contributed significantly to organising Hungarian psychotherapy in the 1960s. He is one of a number of psychologists that, by their seemingly contradictory roles,⁵³¹ perfectly illustrate the problematic coexistence of humanist psychotherapy with authoritarianism - and they demand an explanation.

As Buda recalls, József Attila hospital was one of the few institutions where you could specialise in psychotherapy, since neurotics were treated there with a psychodynamic orientation. Under Szinetár, psychoanalysis was carried out in work practices, but with a Stekelian orientation on active analysis and intensive short therapies. Indeed, Buda even published an article together with Szinetár on active individual therapy, referring to such internationally recognised authors such as Franz Alexander, the pioneer of psychosomatics.⁵³² Buda was aware however that employment in Szinetár's institution, with the

⁵²⁹ Bodor (et.al.) 2007, 29-32. Buda mentions that the main city library (*Szabó Ervin Könyvtár*) in Pest was a "true oasis of information" for him (as a polyglot); the library was the home of social scientific literature in Hungary, and its workers could purchase a relatively large amount of books in foreign languages at the end of the 1950s.

⁵³⁰ In another example of finding professional 'solutions', the psychologist Vera Förster recalls that "[w]hen circumstances made me return to psychology [in 1956], I benefited at least as much from Balzac and Tolstoy, as I ever did from experimental psychology." She decided to emigrate soon after this, and worked for most of the remainder of her career in Britain, where she published her memoirs. See Förster 2009, 176.

⁵³¹ Lányi 1997, 153-168: 154. Another psychoanalytically trained expert who provided psychology-based lessons in the Rákosi era was István Bálint. He was the trusted 'eminence grise' for Péter Gábor, the Hungarian 'Berija', and provided 'scientifically' based psychological techniques for interrogation. During the Kádár era, Bálint was a high profile figure in work psychology and 'work hygiene'. There were other important psychotherapists who also cooperated with the police, either as informers or openly as advisers. See, for example, Bálint & Murányi 1973.

⁵³² Béla & Szinetár 1963. Buda and Szinetár also refer to Karen Horney, Stekel and Harry Stack Sullivan in explaining how the essence of the verbal communication between therapist and patient concerned resolving the actual problems related to immediate human contacts and interpersonal events in the patient's life (the *hic et nunc* principle).

soft therapies practised there, was not a good way to establish a career in Hungary from the perspective of the biologically oriented establishment. However, the atmosphere under Szinetár was very encouraging, Buda added, and the way psychotherapy was carried out there was refreshingly different from elsewhere.⁵³³

Buda's life narrative shows an interesting paradox. Writing about his experiences after the fall of socialism, he approaches his career by focusing on all those difficulties that stemmed from the 'system' as if he had remained an outsider throughout, and yet he was also intrinsically important to it, and in many ways an insider. After all, not only he contributed to the professionalisation of psychology in Hungary, but through his research on deviant behaviour⁵³⁴, he managed to increase political awareness of the field during socialism - and his own role in the process. Nevertheless, his autobiography emphasises his fears related to his socio-economic background, when he voiced concern about his personal situation.

I soon came to notice that there won't be any kind of career for me [...]. I will eternally stay outside of it all, treasuring 1956 like a badge of honour on my chest.

He then went on to rather grandiosely say that this badge of honour symbolised how he wanted to live "from the perspective of the eternal" (*sub specie aeternitatis*), nurturing and carrying his own inner convictions just as the "wise men of the antiquity" had once done.⁵³⁵ Clearly, he was not only an outsider, but also in a sense an *insider* in those circles which mattered.

Tibor Engländer (1932-2012) is another psychologist who approaches professionalism from various angles in his life-narrative. On the one hand, he stresses the seminal role of 'gurus', or charismatic personalities who could help as an encouraging model for research to be done with professional integrity. On the other, he problematises the general role of 'scientificity' within socialism.

Engländer found that the experimental psychologist Lajos Kardos influenced his academic world-view. Kardos is remembered in the field, not only as a "mentor" of generations of psychologists, but also as one of its "saviours". Csaba Pléh, for instance, describes Kardos as a "doyen" of Hungarian experimental psychology;⁵³⁶ pointing out that his intellectual past as a Rockefeller scholar also made him attractively stand out.⁵³⁷ Between 1947 and

⁵³³ Bodor (et.al.) 1997, 28-29. Szinetár supported Wilhelm Stekel's clinical approach. On Stekel, see Makari 2008, 156-158.

⁵³⁴ Towards the end of the 1970s, Buda became increasingly involved in research on deviancy, which ultimately turned into a high-profile research project openly supported by the state, called Problems of Social Adaptation in Hungary. Buda was an active promoter of this research, which was politically delicate and bureaucratically difficult to follow up; but eventually it did thanks, Buda maintains, to the seminal influence of socially oriented psychiatrist Miklós Kún, and social psychologist Ferenc Pataki, who both could use their good working relations with György Aczél. See Bodor (et.al.) 1997, 34.

⁵³⁵ Bodor (et.al.) 1997, 30-31.

⁵³⁶ Pléh 2008, 162.

⁵³⁷ As Pléh notes, Kardos achieved his status in Hungary after a "typical East European exodus". Born in a small bourgeois Jewish family, his choices as a wannabe

1972, he was a Professor of Psychology at ELTE; and for Engländer, Kardos was an authentic scientist with a high level of personal integrity, describing him as “an archetypal great ‘sage’ in an almost mythical sense”.⁵³⁸ This was because Kardos simply embraced the rational scientific world-view in a level-headed manner, without assigning any “utopian” meanings to the cultivation of psychology. However, he still had to negotiate between ideological expectations and professionalism like anyone else in Hungary. In his case, this was by imaginatively wedding Pavlov with Gestalt psychology in some of his published work.

Engländer recounts that Kardos had a regular habit of beginning his lectures for the first-year students by telling them there were no “magic-glasses” for diving into the depths of the human mind in the “manner of Dostoyevsky”. As the wannabe psychologists were looking for quick answers, Kardos wanted to make it clear from the start that “no one knew the answers yet”. But not all of Kardos’s students internalised this call. Engländer was patently aware that following the rules of detachment, objectivity and patient analysis, which a “universal” scientific world-view required, could be a “terrible burden” in conditions in which it was simpler to accept the theories, methods, and schools of thought which abounded and seemed to offer a “quick-fix”. The point that Kardos was making and that Engländer wholly subscribed to, was that psychology was not as colourful and sensational as many people thought.

He had a peculiar way of raising enthusiasm, and it met with a rather mixed response among the students [...] but I was hooked by this introduction [...] because due to its systematic argumentation it became clear in front of me that professionally cultivated psychology delimits itself from those phenomena in the environment which, from my own impressions at the time, I also felt highly worrying. I found myself relieved, experiencing something that future doctors probably feel when they make the Hippocratic Oath. Silently, but permanently, I accepted that I would commit myself to the scientific cultivation of psychology, and be ready to defend the scientific nature of psychology on every occasion.⁵³⁹

Everything about Kardos seemed to go against ‘bestseller-psychology’. For Engländer, this not only meant an inner scientific conviction, but also represented a clever move towards safeguarding the professionalism of the field from those who might accuse psychology of fostering ‘political heresy’. Kardos clearly wanted to neutralise the Stalinist over-politicisation of psychology, which had seen the discipline as merely a manipulative tool (and hence a pseudo-science) in the service of the west. For Engländer, science in socialism had taught him that “authentic” science was based on making an

⁵³⁸ intellectual were heavily impacted by the Hungarian anti-Jewish legislation in the interwar era. Due to *Numerus Clausus* he studied in Vienna under Karl Bühler and was introduced to the Gestalt psychological tradition there. See: Pléh 2013, 175–176.
Bodor (et.al.) 1997, 44. Engländer, who was also a Jew, compared Kardos to an elder rabbi who was regularly visited by travelling Jews, who were there just to “see how he takes of his sandals” rather than learn anything.

⁵³⁹ Ibid., 45–46.

“oath” to oneself to lead the life of a scientist, which would not allow for easy compromises.⁵⁴⁰

Engländer’s own professional interests lay in the field of work psychology, and particularly decision-making and management. He also managed to build a productive relationship with the western academic community. In describing his work, he touches upon an interesting question about the existential position of being marginalised behind the Iron Curtain, and cut off from the “life-blood” of the international academic community. Together with his colleague Mihály Murányi he set out to study the psychology of decision-making in the 1960s and ’70s by focusing on how people evaluated situations in times of uncertainty. According to Engländer, being conservative in these kinds of situations had been very much the vogue in the west, during the 1950s and ’60s, but when he started to explore the topic, its popularity was on the wane. Indeed, it was “discouraging” to realise that the west had an “insurmountable” advantage, he felt. However, there were some positive sides to being in a dialogue with, what seemed to be, a research direction in decline.

Already from the first moment we were dealing with knowledge that was already mature, and had been processed over the course of disputes between different schools [...]. All this was new to me, and I was capable of adopting a layman’s attitude, which allowed me to follow fresh new directions and ideas. I was producing research with questions that were positively surprising to my foreign colleagues, yet self-evident to me.⁵⁴¹

Engländer had spent two years in jail under Rákosi, for having supposedly Zionist sympathies.⁵⁴² Having learnt something from this, Kardos’s message in the early 1960s resonated with him because, to his “great relief”, here was somebody finally talking about doing depoliticised science. Interestingly enough, Kardos also mentioned the “moral courage” of Ferenc Pataki who would later employ Engländer at the Institute for Psychology in 1972. Indeed, Pataki’s relatively powerful position would prove instrumental in helping Engländer overcome his Zionist political label. But there was also the fact that the one-party state increasingly needed high-level professionals, so that by the end of the ’60s even academics who had previously been labelled as “bourgeois” were now being given research positions.⁵⁴³

But it seems that, during socialism, it was the contacts, networks, and informal “movements” that mattered most in the evolution of the Hungarian

⁵⁴⁰ Bodor (et.al.) 1997, 46

⁵⁴¹ Bodor (et.al.) 1997, 52.

⁵⁴² Accused of being part of the “Zionist conspiracy” in a Stalinist show trial, Engländer was sentenced to prison for four years in 1953, but then the sentence was reduced to two, one of which he spent in prison, and the other in a work camp. Because of his background, he could only start his university studies at the turn of the ’60s, taking personal classes during the day, and working at a hotel in the evenings. After graduating, he started to head the work psychology laboratory at the ‘United Incandescence Lamp’ (*Egyesült Izzó*) factory. Besides being on the premises of a long-established factory, the lab was also the Institute of Psychology’s base for training and research.

⁵⁴³ Glatz 2002, 494–506.

psychological community. Pléh points out that informal and rather elaborate networks were, after all, a traditional feature in Hungarian psychology. Not only was the theory and practice of the various nationally or internationally renowned leaders important to everyday professional activity, but also the networks of followers and students around them. These networks meant that professional relationships became personalised, and relatively closed circles were created with certain boundaries between them, although these were not impenetrable. Some people did move to other networks or circles, or inhabited many networks at the same time, but the networks were generally discrete out of professional safety.⁵⁴⁴

Informal networks provided greater professional safety in at least two ways. On one hand, social networks of followers centred around a particular person could provide intellectual continuity during instability and politically motivated purges. The educational and social psychology of Sándor Karácsony and Ferenc Mérei are a case in point.⁵⁴⁵ On the other hand, if psychologists belonged to more than one kind of network at the same time, with different roles and assignments in each, then they could pick and choose their loyalty while keeping their professional integrity intact.

Indeed, in the case of borderline sciences such as social psychology, the “hybridisation of roles” (both political and academic) has historically been very common.⁵⁴⁶ Thus, it can be supposed that in late socialist Hungary, professional psychological discourses were disseminated in various locations which might often have seemed rather isolated, but due to the fact that professionals could inhabit several posts at one time, these would influence the results of ‘official’ scholarship. The case of psychologist Ferenc Mérei was paradigmatic in the sense that he was one such ‘networking’ personality, who managed to create a wide group of followers despite his position on the academic margins. This was especially important regarding the training of future psychologists from the end of the ‘60s onwards.⁵⁴⁷

For example, child psychologist Katalin Nyerges described the seminal role of Mérei in an interview in 2013. Nyerges testifies how she learned her profession not at university but instead in more informal or semi-official locations. One of these was the psychiatric hospital Lipotmező in Budapest, where psychology students specializing in clinical psychology received further training. Nyerges worked there as a trainee in 1972 under Mérei who had

⁵⁴⁴ Pléh 1997, 62; Pléh 2003, 163.

⁵⁴⁵ Pléh 2003, 163. Sándor Karácsony’s theory of “sociality”, for example, apparently lived on in networks of his students and followers. These circles had clear benefits, and were often built on strong emotional identification because people were experiencing their professional identity as full human beings. Within socialism, these kinds of networks could even be small “islands” (as Pléh puts it) of happiness. Interestingly, these closely-knit groups could also have described, by themselves, the idea of a truly “collective” man.

⁵⁴⁶ Erős 2006, 129-130. Kurt Lewin or Theodor Adorno are other paradigmatic examples. In general, the separation of basic and applied science happened relatively late in social psychology, initially in the US and then in Western Europe after WWII.

⁵⁴⁷ Some aspects of Mérei’s work are studied further in chapter 3 and 4.

established a laboratory for psychodiagnostics there in the mid-'60s.⁵⁴⁸ Although Mérei was not allowed to teach in official academia, he was allowed to build a significant base for clinical psychology and psychotherapy in Lipotmező.

In the '80s, Nyerges employed herself in a child guidance centre in Budapest. By then the psychoanalytic view had become generally accepted. However, this had not been a clear process, and needed various informal initiatives first. For instance, one semi-official location which was of great significance for the development of her own professional view was the Faludi Street Clinic for child psychotherapy. "Faludi" was the only place for psychoanalytically oriented training in child psychotherapy in the '60s and '70s. Not only was it possible to read international psychoanalytic literature in its original language (German, French, and English), but former Hungarian authorities in the field (e.g., Alice and Imre Hermann) also lectured there. Faludi's originator was Júlia György, the grand old lady of Hungarian child psychology, and others who contributed to its orientation included György Vikár and Iván Lust.⁵⁴⁹ As Nyerges implies, the "cosy" atmosphere was characterised by a kind of subcultural collectiveness among friends and relatives. "It was like going home", she said.⁵⁵⁰ As shown by numerous later testimonies, informal initiatives at the margins or even completely outside the state-controlled field of science and higher education were very significant for the dissemination and diffusion of new knowledge, particularly in psychotherapy.⁵⁵¹

There are plenty of examples of professionals who held a relatively high policymaking position in science, who used their positions as insiders to open up the intellectual field, and who were able to do this because of their intimate familiarity with the rules of the game. As András Lénárt has shown, the establishment of the Social Science Library (TtK) under the auspices of Gondolat Publishing House in 1971 can be examined from this perspective.⁵⁵² It was set up to disseminate modern international sociological literature in Hungarian, and no doubt contributed to the professionalisation of the field via various negotiated tactics characteristic of the era.

The original leading personalities involved in TtK besides its long-standing editor Gábor Berényi, were sociologist Tibor Huszár, social psychologist Ferenc Pataki, economist Iván Berend, sociologist Kálmán Kulcsár, and the philosopher Ferenc Tőkés - all members of the politically trusted establishment in their respective fields. According to Huszár's later testimony, he was behind the idea, and invited Pataki and others to join in.⁵⁵³ As Lénárt

⁵⁴⁸ Interview with Katalin Nyerges: 17 September 2013.

⁵⁴⁹ Harmat 2001. The role of the Faludi Street Clinic is discussed further in chapter 3.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁵¹ The 'group psychotherapy weekends' organised in the early '70s are one interesting example of a semi-official series of events that aimed to disseminate psychotherapeutic knowledge within Hungary. See: Harmatta 2006a & 2006b.

⁵⁵² Lénárt 2010.

⁵⁵³ From the post-socialist perspective, Huszár presents the series as a kind of logical move after the conscious steps he had personally taken to bring sociology back from

mentions, Huszár and Pataki were close colleagues who had followed rather similar paths in the world of academia. Both had been among the young communist scholars who had been offered the opportunity to study in Moscow with a fellowship in 1949-1953, and both eventually developed a close working relationship with György Aczél. In their respective fields, both Pataki and Huszár thus also became important executors of Aczél's scientific and cultural politics.⁵⁵⁴

Indeed, one interesting feature of TtK was the influential position of its active members. Due to their close connections to those in power they could use their status for "widening the walls". However, because of this paternalist hierarchy, they themselves were also the "walls".⁵⁵⁵ As Lénárt puts it, in inhabiting an intermediate position between power and intellectual society they were like "windows". It was possible to look through them to see what was happening both "inside and out". In this way, their intellectual positions during the Kádár period varied and could be rather fluid and difficult to define, but in every case they facilitated the professionalisation of their fields by gaining acceptance from above; but Lénárt adds that it also meant that their "manoeuvres" were quite invisible for the larger intellectual audience at the time.⁵⁵⁶

TtK's policy was that the editorial board would meet once a year and decide what would be translated and published in the upcoming year. Both western "modern classics" and Soviet books were considered, but quite soon the proportion of western books increased and surpassed the amount of Soviet works.⁵⁵⁷ Furthermore, publishing western books was not only more expensive because of the copyright, but there was more work required. For instance, non-Marxist books needed an appropriate introductory chapter or some kind of epilogue because the wordings of western thinkers needed to be placed in the 'proper' political context for a Hungarian readership. The young editor Berényi repeatedly suggested giving up these "words of guidance" but, according to Lénárt, nothing came of this.⁵⁵⁸

Interestingly enough, this process of authorisation before getting published was also common in other dictatorial regimes. For example, Anne-

the brink in the '60s. As Huszár argues, the first of these steps had been the journal *Valóság*, and the name chosen for the publishing series (*Társadalomtudományi Könyvtár*) was a conscious reference to what was considered to be a significant early 20th century precedent - the work of the *Huszadik Század* circle, a group of western-oriented urban intellectuals considered to be the first significant workshop for sociology and social psychology in Hungary.

⁵⁵⁴ Lénárt 2010, 175.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 174-175.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 164-165, 172-173. For example, it was necessary to explain that Max Weber thought differently about the reasons for the emergence of capitalism than Marx. Also Karl Polanyi's ideas had to be carefully explained as he did not seem to think highly of state socialism at that time. One of the practical positive side effects of having to produce these 'apologetic' forewords, Lénárt notes, was that they often provided much-needed extra opportunities for work (even for those who had been marginalised for political reasons, i.e., the 56'ers).

Cécile Druet has detected similar practices in Franco's Spain. Religious authority was at times needed to support the idea that psychoanalysis (as therapy) was compatible with Catholic values; and this also required the writing of proper explanatory prefaces. The general idea (and rhetoric) also suggested that it could be useful to learn something from Freudianism, if only to better justify its rejection.⁵⁵⁹

Lénárt also highlights the important role of "middle-range theories" for social systems, popularised by Robert Merton, whose book was published in Hungary in 1980, entitled *Társadalomelmélet és társadalmi struktúra*. Reflecting the wider disbelief in grand theories, Merton introduced the idea of middle-range theories which operated on a smaller social scale. Because of this, they were safe to be disseminated within a one-party state as they did not provide immediate tools for a more serious critique of the system at large. Despite, or because of this, middle-range theories were understood to be helpful in the analysis of different kind of "mistakes" in the system at the lower level. For example, they could help explain various deviant phenomena in society.⁵⁶⁰ By introducing Merton's theories to questions of reference groups, relative deprivation, and anomie, Hungarian scholars could also disseminate their own research results since they could be described as an example of these.

Significantly, international social psychology was also published as part of the TtK's remit. The first published book was Kurt Lewin's classic on field theory. Ferenc Mérei, though a notable social psychologist in Hungary and yet politically unwanted, was endowed with the task of writing the foreword for Lewin's book. Although he was already very familiar with Lewin's work because of its great influence on his own work, Mérei had to be careful. As the one-time editor Berényi recalls, this was an issue that had to be carefully weighed so that he did not overstep his mark.

I wanted Mérei to write the foreword [...] but when I expressed my opinion on this, Margit Siklós [the head of the Gondolat Publishing house] had doubts [...]. However, we did not have to struggle for long because Pataki, who also was on the editorial committee, did not say that it must be ruled out.⁵⁶¹

Indeed, these kinds of discussions demonstrate the microdynamics of power that were at play in the regime, and as Berényi's remark on Pataki implies, there were personal considerations to take into account as well, of course.

As Lénárt is at pains to point out, TtK did not so much break taboos as find certain "niches" where it could place western products for the intellectual public in Hungary. In this, it had a surprisingly open publishing policy even when the political atmosphere became more conservative in 1972. The Kossuth Publishing House, in particular, published books on much more politically sensitive topics than Gondolat, but their distribution was very carefully

⁵⁵⁹ Druet 2012, 68–69.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid., 165–166. Towards the 1970s, western sociological theories were used, for example, in the wide-scale ministerial level research project on deviancy, entitled 'Problems of Social Adaptation in Hungary'.

⁵⁶¹ Cf. Lénárt 2010, 167.

controlled and organised. However, as Lénárt notes, this “closed” category of publications was only a nominal one, as in reality these books would spread quickly across the defined boundaries, as friends and relatives also gained access to them.⁵⁶²

While Mérei had been in prison, and was also greatly respected at the time (at least informally), Pataki’s career in science policymaking was steadily taking off. He was elected as Director of the Institute for Psychology in the 1970s and was eventually chosen as a vice-president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1993. He was one of those personalities who gradually ascended to a relatively powerful position and as he went, he used his influence to not only promote professional standards in psychology but also to create the political conditions that were conducive for research. Indeed, Pataki could skilfully balance political expectations with professional aims, and in the science policymaking system of the Kádár era, his position was paradigmatic. As the “most loyal comrade outside the party” it is relevant to spend a while studying his biography more closely to concentrate on his particular encounters with the regime

2.5.3 From red to expert

In our circles it was not usual to approach the situation from the individual perspective, that is, to consider what is good for me and what is not good for me. I was so committed back then, that to enter the social elite was a totally natural aim for me.⁵⁶³

According to his own words, Pataki (born in 1928) had a typical early 20th century Hungarian family background. On both his parents’ sides there was an active drive for upward social mobility from the countryside towards a social existence in the city. His father had become a worker in a printing press, with a feel for learning, and as a consequence of getting wounded as a volunteer in WWI, all three children received discounts on their tuition fees at high school.⁵⁶⁴

Pataki experienced the destruction of WWII in Eastern Central Europe as a teenager.⁵⁶⁵ And much later he found it important to say that, even though the Soviet occupation was quite violent, it was not just Jewish people who welcomed the Soviet army at the end of the war as a “liberation” (*felszabadulás*). As a 16 year-old boy the meaning of it all really depended on one situation.

At the end of 1944, a poster appeared on walls around the city which said that everyone who had turned 16 (which included me) had to sign up to *Levente* [a

⁵⁶² Lénárt 2010, 170–171.

⁵⁶³ Cf. Matern 2005, 389.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid., 385.

⁵⁶⁵ Quite naturally, the war experience is a recurrent theme in autobiographies by Hungarians from this period; and for those who then became psychologists, it’s quite possible that first-hand experiences of the war contributed to their eventual career-decisions. For example, psychologists Jenő Ranschburg, Éva P. Bakay, and Véra Förster all recount thought-provoking experiences of the war in theirs. See Révai 2007, 17–23; Förster 2009; Éva P. Bakay’s autobiographical narrative in Bodor (et.al.) 1997, 205–208.

paramilitary organisation, established in the 1930s]. Over Christmas, when the city was besieged, we split up and hid separately. I was with one of my aunts in her basement, but I was found by the Arrow-Cross men in a round-up and taken to the front at Rózsadomb. Luckily for me, I met a good-willed officer who was also a teacher. He gave me 24 hours leave, apparently with the intention that I should not come back.⁵⁶⁶

After the war, Pataki finished his studies in Szentendre and Budapest and enrolled at Györfly College. This college was a boarding school established to cultivate the 'third way' ideology of the 'populist' movement of the interwar era. As it gradually became an increasingly leftist movement (*Nékosz*) during and after the war, its task became one of educating a new 'Hungarian' intelligentsia from both the urban and rural working class. Pataki recounts that he became quickly involved with the *Nékosz* movement and was soon "up to his neck" not only in the politically active life of the college but also in the Communist Party. Eventually, as a true "believer", Pataki was elected as General Secretary of *Nékosz* in 1949, at the tender age of 21, and just before it was merged into DISZ - which effectively closed it down.⁵⁶⁷

After *Nékosz* was suppressed in this way, the future social psychologist became one of those few who were fortunate enough to be awarded the possibility of studying in the USSR. The choice of candidates was based on political considerations, and on "aspects of the movement", Pataki recalls. Being forced to give up on his former plans to study in France, he was sent to a special preparatory camp (basically to learn Russian and test "loyalty"). The camp was organised in a very "barbaric" way, according to Pataki, in that the MDP cadres had summoned twice as many participants for the training as would ultimately be selected for travel, which meant people were forced into open competition to outdo each other in professing their loyalty.

Everyone was aware that the gaze of 'Big Brother' was constantly on us. It was a startlingly false situation in that everybody wanted to conform, to show only their best side.

However, being a committed communist at the time, and with the clear-cut view of the world that it entailed, Pataki was very happy to go. In an interview he also admitted that he was convinced that political conviction and social scientific research could be combined in the "pedagogics of reality" that *Nékosz* was proposing.⁵⁶⁸

Pataki therefore spent the Rákosi years (1949-1953) in Moscow studying pedagogics and psychology with such personalities as Imre Lakatos, who later became a famous philosopher of science; and Tibor Huszár, who became a sociologist. While Pataki openly confesses that the general conditions in the USSR were a real disappointment, he enjoyed experiencing first-hand the

⁵⁶⁶ Matern 2005, 389. Pataki was implying that there were countless people who were violently forced to take arms by the Arrow-Cross at this point, so they may well have welcomed the Soviet army as a saviour (or at least as the lesser of two evils).

⁵⁶⁷ Autobiographical material on Pataki, see Bodor (et.al.) 1997; See, also: Pataki 2005, 454-509.

⁵⁶⁸ Matern 2005, 386-387.

lectures of famous Soviet psychologists and pedagogues (e.g., Rubinstein). There are some hints that Pataki may have also had a political role in Moscow too. For example, in his research on Lakatos (who was then a hardliner communist), Sándor Bándy suggests that Pataki and Huszár were given the task of informing comrades back home about those students who may have been dangerous for the cause.⁵⁶⁹

After coming back from Moscow, Pataki was assigned to lead the Agitation and Propaganda Department (APO) of Union of Working Youth. His position as a prominent leader of youth politics also drove him on to become one of the founding members of the Petőfi Circle, a discussion club which soon adopted a critical profile. As a former *Nékosz* activist he also got involved in the struggle to rehabilitate the movement, and adopted an active role among those reform-socialist intellectuals who grouped around Imre Nagy. Prime Minister Nagy, in turn, seemed eager to listen to the cause of former *Nékosz* activists.⁵⁷⁰ Thus, adopting a kind of intermediate position, Pataki headed the “Debate on Pedagogics” organised by the Petőfi Circle in early October 1956, and also during the uprising, he participated in the Revolutionary Committee of the Hungarian Intelligentsia⁵⁷¹.

After the failed revolution, Pataki was expelled from the Party, and worked as a teacher in an elementary school in Budapest. However, already by 1961 he was being employed by the National Institute for Pedagogics (OPI). During the 1960s, Pataki became increasingly involved with the emerging discipline of psychology, and became one of the seminal players in the new Institute for Psychology. Among his students in ELTE University, he became known as a gifted and systematic teacher and speaker who gave special seminars in social psychology; not only on western classics (e.g., Lewin), but also on political ‘outlaws’ such as Ferenc Mérei and István Bibó.⁵⁷² At the same time, Pataki also published several works on the socialist pedagogical tradition, especially on Makarenko, perhaps to safeguard psychology via (what Lányi has called) “tactical mimicry” - as already mentioned at the start of this chapter.⁵⁷³ In this way, Pataki was able to increase his political capital to climb higher up the professional ladder.

⁵⁶⁹ Bándy 2003. Some of the Hungarian students in Moscow expressed critical views of the USSR or got caught up in disputes with the Romanians. Therefore Rákosi, and allegedly the state security, had to intervene to recall the students without them being able to finish their studies. One of these was Imre Lakatos, who was later accused and convicted of “treason” in a show trial in 1950.

⁵⁷⁰ Pataki 2005, 457. Partly motivated by the self-critical need to “absolve his sins” relating to his problematic role in the dissolution of *Nékosz*, Pataki also published an article in the leading journal of the party on the significance of the movement for socialist education. See Pataki 1956.

⁵⁷¹ The Revolutionary Committee of the Hungarian Intelligentsia was an umbrella group for several rebel organisations. In 29 October 1956 it announced its own program, demanding that the communist party should be forced to *share* power with the newly forming democratic parties. See: Békés, Byrne & Rainer 2003, 205–207.

⁵⁷² Interview with János László: 19 June 2012; Interview with Ferenc Pataki: 20 May 2012. As Pataki related in his interview with me, he was very impressed by Bibó’s work already in 1945.

⁵⁷³ Lányi 1997, 228–229.

However, like Harsányi, Pataki was actually truly impressed by Makarenko, and he was particularly interested in his personality as an educator of challenging children. In his book, entitled *Life and Pedagogics of Makarenko* (1966), Pataki interpreted Makarenko's ideas on pedagogic practice in terms that would appeal to social psychologists, with the intention of rehabilitating his image so that they could meet the dire need for community education that was the case at the time. He therefore maintained that a truly "scientific" approach should inform all educational practices.⁵⁷⁴ This idealised version of Makarenko in state socialism underlined the notion that the paternalist-authoritarian state genuinely had to take care of children at all phases of their (moral) development, Pléh notes; adding that the promise of Makarenko also lay in the civilisational-ideological mission to overcome educational "double standards".⁵⁷⁵ Although it was certainly good 'tactics' for a social psychologist to be interested in Makarenko, Pataki's background in *Nékosz* also meant he had a genuine interest in Makarenko's social psychological thinking.⁵⁷⁶

The 1970s were a very busy decade for Pataki with his career taking off. As a former party soldier, now turned academic expert, he was not only teaching at ELTE, but also sitting on several boards and committees, and publishing quite a lot. He also became an official representative of Hungarian social psychology abroad. For example, when the 'East-West Meeting' of European social psychologists was being organised in Visegrád, because he was fluent in French, Pataki was asked to mediate between the science policymakers in Hungary and their Western European counterparts.⁵⁷⁷

In 1977, Pataki was elected Director of the Institute for Psychology, a post which had been formerly occupied by György Ádám (1970-1972) and Imre Tomka (1973-1976) who were both neuroscientists and psychophysicists. Soon after this, he assumed the leadership in a high-profile, ministry level research project on deviant behaviour, or "Problems of Social Adaptation" (TBZ), as it was officially called.⁵⁷⁸ By cultivating his good relations with the most powerful cultural and science policymaker in the Party, György Aczél, he also managed to further the possibilities of the project. As Pataki himself testified in an interview with me, while the project unavoidably touched upon some politically rather delicate issues, it was an "extremely useful" fact that Aczél sat on those organs which mattered - most importantly the Coordination Committee for Social Sciences controlled by the Agitation and Propaganda Committee (APB).⁵⁷⁹

TBZ took several years of planning before it could start. This was not only because of the sheer size of the project, but also because it was highly

⁵⁷⁴ Pataki 1966, 28-24, 35-40, 52-64

⁵⁷⁵ Pléh 2008, 191.

⁵⁷⁶ Matern 2005, 393.

⁵⁷⁷ Moscovici & Marková 2006, 167-170. Pataki belonged to the organising committee of the East-West conference which met in Budapest in December 1972. The other members were: Henri Tajfel, Morton Deutch, László Garai, Claude Flament, Colin Fraser, and Jaromir Janoušek.

⁵⁷⁸ Bodor (et.al.) 1997, 198-199.

⁵⁷⁹ Interview with Ferenc Pataki: 20 May 2012.

“politically sensitive” (*rendkívül érzékeny politikailag*).⁵⁸⁰ The point of the research was to study how deviant phenomena were “produced and reproduced” but already in the first draft proposal (1977) the role of socialist conditions in causing these ‘deviant’ phenomena was also raised; and this was understandably a tough question for the political authorities.⁵⁸¹

The critical aspects were acknowledged three years later at a meeting of Aczél’s Coordination Committee for Social Sciences. Thus it was asked, for example, how the Ministry of Defence would react “if the suicides of soldiers became public knowledge”. However, the general consensus seemed to be that “in the long run” these results had to be accepted. At the same time this meant that all possible objections to them would have to be mapped, and the project carefully “harmonised” with the research themes prioritised by the Party.⁵⁸² Politically trusted personalities like Pataki were thus essential to create the appearance of “safety” around these kinds of projects.

By the 1980s, Pataki was now among the closest advisors of Aczél, who was seeking support for his new reforms from trusted top-level social scientists.⁵⁸³ However, it is interesting to know that even Pataki’s position was not self-evident in a political system which needed reassurances even from those cadres who inhabited leading positions. Thus, before he could be appointed as leader of the Institute for Psychology, his political profile had to be thoroughly examined. The organ given the formal powers to carry this out was the Secretariat of the Party’s Central Committee.

As described by the General Secretary of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Ferenc Márta, in a report for the TKKO in 1975, Pataki was a “high quality” academic, and also one of the “most active figures” in the Hungarian psychological community. The size of the Institute now demanded a full-time director, Márta argued (it had been half-time up to this point), and Pataki was in every way a suitable candidate.⁵⁸⁴ However, because of Pataki’s involvement in 1956, the Secretariat decided to examine his case more closely, and his appointment was postponed.

Based on written and personal statements from various authorities and individuals, the chief of the TKKO, Mihály Kornidesz, summarised the relevant “facts” about Pataki’s life.⁵⁸⁵ In general, his actions in 1956 were interpreted in a favourable light or explained away as a kind of youthful lapse. However, there were also clearly positively biased interpretations. For example, it was claimed

⁵⁸⁰ HU-MNL MK-S 288 XIX-A-85-b, 1980, xii.20. ülés. TKB (32-37) 1980 előterjesztés, 8.

⁵⁸¹ Javaslat a TKB részére a tárcaszintű kutatási főirányként indítandó középtávú kutatási főtémára. XIX-A-85-b, 1977.IX.14. ülés, TKB 16/1977, 2.

⁵⁸² XIX-A-85-b, 1980, xii.20. ülés. TKB (32-37) 1980 előterjesztés, 8, 12. Especially alcoholism and high frequency of suicides worried the authorities.

⁵⁸³ Révész 1997, 356.

⁵⁸⁴ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 36/1975/11. ő.e./MSZMP KB Tudományos, Közoktatási és Kulturális Osztálya. Márta Ferenc Kornidesz Mihálynak.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid. Written statements were asked from the Ministry of Interior (political police) as well as from some of those who had been Pataki’s associates at the Central Bureau of DISZ from 1955-1956. Also Zoltán Lantos from the Central Control Commission was questioned about him, as he had been “in contact” with Pataki in 1956. This meant that he could maybe give an opinion of Pataki’s behaviour during the uprising.

that Pataki was not “in any kind of contact” with the “extremist elements” of the Petőfi Circle.⁵⁸⁶ Thus, he was carefully separated from those ‘56ers who would come to play a key role in the official narrative of events.

Although it was revealed that Pataki cooperated with the Revolutionary Committee of the Hungarian Intelligentsia by “monitoring foreign and home press correspondences” and providing information; and that he participated in organising National Help (*Nemzeti Segély*); and that he was active in reorganising *Nékosz*; it was made very clear that he was “one of the first who declared that [it was] a counter-revolution”. A peculiar psychological explanation is given for Pataki’s “behaviour” after 4 November, the day when the Soviet tanks arrived at dawn. Namely, some former members of *Nékosz* had practised “political extortion” by reproaching Pataki for his role in nationalising the Peoples’ College Movement (*Nékosz*). As Kornidesz continued, these feelings of guilt caused a “crisis of conscience” in Pataki, and he was left “defenceless” and unable to protect himself from “bad influences”. Thus, according to several testimonies, he “voiced right-wing views”.⁵⁸⁷ In other words, it was argued that because of an emotional need to compensate for his guilt (which might also have been true), Pataki “lost his mind” and forgot his real “revolutionary” self.

During this reexamination of his past by the Secretariat, the question of Pataki still not being a member of the Communist Party came up. Having being banned from joining the newly established MSZMP after 1956, the possibility of joining was again mooted when he started working for the OPI. Pataki went through the process of public self-critique in front of a general meeting of the Institute in 1963. However, at this moment the Political Committee of the 5th District of Budapest ruled against him joining. The next time it was proposed he join the Party was when Pataki was employed to the Institute for Psychology. However, as revealed in the report made by the Secretariat, he was not willing to go through the same process again. István Dancz, who was Director of the Institute for Careers within the Ministry of Work, noted in it that Pataki had felt that “[in 1963] he had already said everything he wanted to say [...and] from the human standpoint it would be too much for him to do it again”. Besides it had taken so long, that perhaps he had somewhat given up on the idea. As Dancz noted in a letter to TKKO, he saw the time as being ripe to have Pataki join the Party, but it had to be done without the usual lengthy process. Nevertheless, Pataki declined the offer. According to Dancz, military intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968 had meant Pataki “could not see clearly” any more, and it had given him “reservations” about joining the party.⁵⁸⁸

But in the end this did not really matter, since all the politically relevant actors unanimously supported him whether he was in the Party or not. Pataki’s transformation from ‘red to expert’ was made complete by the rise of the

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid., 2.

⁵⁸⁸ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 36/1975/11. ő.e. MSZMP KB Tudományos, Közoktatási és Kulturális Osztálya. Feljegyzés Pataki Ferenc pártfelvételi kérdése ügyében.

technocratic intelligentsia in Hungary towards the end of the '70s.⁵⁸⁹ Professional abilities began to be more valued than political 'merits', or at least 'political' started to have new meanings. This meant that the optimal situation was when high-quality professionalism could be combined with political trust, as it most certainly was with Ferenc Pataki.

2.5.4 Negotiating politically relevant scholarship

As mentioned above, the MSZMP published the Science Policy Guidelines in 1969, and these set out the basic tenets for future research.⁵⁹⁰ The guidelines had important consequences for the role of social sciences in Hungary. As mentioned in a much later comparative study on Finnish and Hungarian science and technology policies (1985), the overall function of socialist science to serve "social needs" was specifically set out in these guidelines as an essential part of science policy. Interestingly, this description from the '80s stressed the crucial role of science in affecting "social consciousness" and pinpointed its achievements as "important factors in shaping politics and international relations". However, it was made clear too that the guidelines rejected the "technocratic approach" and underlined the "relative autonomy" of science and its "internal, cognitive laws".

Earlier in the book, the concept of socialist planning was described in greater detail. It was "rational planning" that helped push the development of society towards objectives based on a "correct recognition" of social realities and citizens' wishes, and to guarantee that resource allocation was decided upon in such a way that the "achievement of clearly defined objectives" was possible. Hence, planning itself was meant to be one of the basic attributes of the socialist system - a "method for managing the development of society". In the field of social relations, planning was recognised to be more complex than "purely economic planning", and so science policy was seen as being just as important as economics for the general policy of the state.⁵⁹¹

Éva Standeisky has analysed the 1969 guidelines as a yet another manifestation of political and ideological control of the intellectual sphere, or as a "typical" Kádárist way to frame the ideological battle as being on "two fronts", i.e., both against rightist revisionism and leftist dogmatism. Studying the guidelines against the revisionist background of 1956, she notes the restrictions that social scientists worked under, effectively controlling the freedom of academic expression. Because of political taboos - the most pressing of which was to remain subordinate to the USSR - the resolutions in the guidelines showed that the Kádár regime did not differ so much from pre-1956, as the "hands of the leading intellectuals" were still tied.⁵⁹²

But this is only one angle from which to approach the guidelines, albeit a

⁵⁸⁹ Halmesvirta 2006b, 267.

⁵⁹⁰ A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt Központi Bizottságának tudománypolitikai irányelvei. In: *Magyar Tudomány* 76 (9), 533-559.

⁵⁹¹ Donner and Lénárd 1985, 217-218, 282-283.

⁵⁹² Standeisky 2004, 272

very important one. To focus purely on them as a means for exerting communist control draws attention away from the other functions they may have served, and perhaps overestimates the actual power of the regime in imposing its will on the academic field. Indeed, looking at the guidelines from a history of science perspective certainly shows that the relationship between political power and knowledge production is somewhat more complicated than this. The guidelines can be seen as a culmination of processes which started back in the early '60s, when the MSZMP leadership realised that it needed greater international connections to stimulate the flow of knowledge. In 1963, following the UN general amnesty concerning the 1956 uprising and its suppression (the "Hungarian case"), Kádár praised expertise and professional ability as crucial factors in opening doors to the west. New, safe policies of "uncomplicated" foreign relations were proposed, and these were to offer opportunities for junior researchers to gather experience, impressions and practical ideas from abroad so that they could import innovation and know-how from the west.⁵⁹³

The new mood in Hungarian politics was quickly picked up on in an article written by Lajos Szántó in *Valóság* in 1962.⁵⁹⁴ Szántó (1928-1983), one of the pioneers of Hungarian futurology, wrote with a strong scientific ethos at the moment when the USSR had just entered the "space age". He began his article by referring to the programme accepted at the 22nd Congress of the Soviet Communist Party. According to Szántó, it was not only a "creative summary of Marxist ideas on social development" but also, in itself, a "huge ideological weapon for communist and workers' parties" to develop socialist policies of science and higher education.⁵⁹⁵

Reflecting on past practices of affirmative action and class-based choices of candidates for powerful academic positions, Szántó suggested that the evaluation of doctoral and candidate theses should henceforth be made according to "primarily" professional criteria; keeping in mind their "usefulness" for the national economy and the progress of science and technology.⁵⁹⁶ Furthermore, he promoted the goal of making socialism truly "scientific" by putting science at the very core of social and technological progress.

Ervin Csizmadia has studied the same guidelines in the context of socialist modernisations of the infrastructure of research, and concludes that the main problem in socialist Hungary was seen to be the imbalance between basic and applied research with a need for more of the latter. One particularly neglected field was the social sciences, for which the guidelines advocated more support, as they "immediately served social and political practice". Practically oriented social scientific research would be ideological in nature and so needed party guidance to put it to the "full advantage of socialism" (*szocializmus érdekében*). With this in mind, the political elite determined the tasks that awaited scientific

⁵⁹³ Halmesvirta 2005, 89-90.

⁵⁹⁴ Szántó 1962.

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

research institutes, by designating the “main directions of research” which would immediately be able to help in political decision-making. Csizmadia goes on to note that the highest priority was given by the Party to the (reform) economics most able to combine theory with practice.⁵⁹⁷

The 1969 guidelines are not analysed in any greater detail here, except for two further aspects. Firstly, it was deemed vital to develop better connections in international science, including countries with different social systems. Although the guidelines unambiguously made it clear that the principle of “peaceful coexistence” (*békés egymás élés*) did not stretch as far as ideology, it was thought that international relations with capitalist countries could nevertheless be useful. The self-imposed isolation from the international flow of academic knowledge in the past had meant that the country had missed some important results from western science that could have been put to the use of socialism in Hungary.⁵⁹⁸

Secondly, the guidelines gave ideological frames and social tasks for the social sciences, including psychology. Anti-Stalinist doors which had first been pushed open over a decade previously were once again tentatively opened, as more dogmatic interpretations of ideology were criticised. “Class determination” should no longer be taken to mean that the social sciences could never be “scientifically exact”. On the contrary, the function of social sciences would now be to “reveal” (*feltárni*) social processes. As the guidelines explained, this role would in fact strengthen their ideological role. In a peculiar way, these notions carried ambiguous as well as more evident meanings for contemporaries who had a stake in the issue. The guidelines were still setting political boundaries, but there were clearly more opportunities for the social sciences which were now deemed to be of the utmost importance for social planning.⁵⁹⁹

György Aczél emphasised the role of social sciences within state planning in his article “Science and politics” (1971), published in *Valóság*. He argued that the new 5-year plan approved by the Political Committee had committed significantly greater resources to investigating the conscious management of social processes. Aczél claimed that the world-view of the “working-class” was inherently scientific in wanting to discover the “objective laws” in the relations between nature and society.⁶⁰⁰ Thus, socialist society should be a “real home for science”, and in the forthcoming reform of the MTA, the goal would be to free top scientists from their more bureaucratic work so that they could concentrate on research.⁶⁰¹

Aczél also pointed out the need to revive Marxism in general with these sciences of ‘social reality’. As he saw it, there were “signs and features in our times which were ingeniously predicted by the classics”, but there were also

⁵⁹⁷ Csizmadia 2001, 112–113.

⁵⁹⁸ A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt Központi Bizottságának Tudománypolitikai Irányelvei (1969). In: *Magyar Tudomány* 14 (9), 533–559.

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 547–548.

⁶⁰⁰ Aczél 1971, 1.

⁶⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

many recent phenomena of modern life that they didn't touch upon at all;⁶⁰² and "fact-finding" had, furthermore, been confused by both dogmatism and revisionism in the recent past. Now the fortunate balance had been found though, as the social sciences had the two separate but mutually inclusive roles of being an "ideological mobiliser" and a "fact-finder". The task of social sciences - with a hazily defined Marxist tool-kit - was therefore to give concrete help for both short and long-term political decisions, as the need for more effective "social control" (*társadalomirányítás*) had increased. To effectively analyse and answer the questions rising from real, living society, the social sciences had to be scientifically solid.

Apart from in policymaking, the social sciences could also be used to improve social relations in various everyday walks of life. Aczél pointed out that the results of sociologists and psychologists should be put to conscious use in the workplace. For instance, modern socialist factories should not "underestimate the value of industrial psychology which studied the most appropriate colour in factory walls, or how one should protect against industrial noise". Aczél, however, expected a lot more from psychology. Indeed, it should henceforth concentrate more on *human relations* in the work environment, and provide knowledge-based suggestions on how to improve the situation.⁶⁰³

Aczél's article can thus be interpreted as advocating a middle-way between scholarship and the politics of social planning. He pointed out that abstract "utopian" models according to which a future humankind should be built were not particularly useful; but neither were social sciences based on narrowly understood "class interest". On the one hand, certain ideologically motivated studies denied the "real existence of social differences", while at the other extreme, those which studied these differences too narrowly produced an unnecessarily "antagonistic, tense relationship" between competing theories. Aczél was proposing that society was not simply an "experimental rabbit"⁶⁰⁴, and that science had clear societal obligations; and yet overly dogmatic interpretations of these obligations would not help matters.

Aczél's arguments show that socialist ideology was itself in a state of flux in the 1960s. In the context of the economic reform policies, the overly dogmatic understanding of ideology could even be seen as a threat for the development of Hungarian society in the modern world. József Bognár, for example, one of the most significant architects of the NEM, stated in his comment to the KB TKKO "On the coordination of science" (1968), that in a world where both reality and the sciences developed at such amazing speeds, it would be truly dangerous if the "dialectics of our concepts lagged behind those of the real world". Furthermore, he reminded them that it was not ideologies, as such, but

⁶⁰² Ibid., 5.

⁶⁰³ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid., 5. Aczél's message can be interpreted that there was, in fact, no need for utopian visions of 'Socialist man'.

“living societies” that fought against each other.⁶⁰⁵ A pragmatic and flexible understanding of ideology was thus advocated, as it would be in the Institute for Psychology that same year too.

2.5.5 The place of Marxist psychology in the system of sciences

In March 1968, the KB TKKO summarised the most important ideological and political debates in Hungarian journals and magazines after the 9th Congress of the MSZMP (1966).⁶⁰⁶ The Congress decided, among other things, to introduce the NEM. In the Congress, Kádár also defined the relationship between ideologically correct private initiative and petit bourgeois “profiteering” (*haszonlesés*) and “selfish materialism” (*önző anyagiasság*). Kádár admitted that the rise in living-standards and opening up to the west had led to forms of individualisation which had “decreased the revolutionary spirit”. At the same time, he stated that allowing private initiatives served the economic interests of the working-class. He noted that the public discourse on economic reform policies also encouraged private material interest, but warned that overt individualisation would carry dangers for the hegemonic position of the Party. This danger had to be confronted.⁶⁰⁷

At least on paper, the TKKO report was based on separate discussions held first in all the different social science institutes within the Academy of Sciences.⁶⁰⁸ These were then discussed in a TKKO meeting headed by the Theoretical Workshop for Culture⁶⁰⁹, after which the report was sent to the APB. Besides people from the various party organs, there were academic cadres from all the social sciences present in the meeting too. Of immediate relevance to psychology was a discussion on the topic of “the place of Marxist psychology in science”, and there were other topics that related more indirectly to psychological discourse at the time (e.g., “social determinism” and “alienation”).⁶¹⁰

The message for the APB was that the discussions had “convincingly” shown that the spirit of “creative Marxism” was advancing in Hungarian academia - in fact it was even described as “bubbling” (*pezsgő*) with initiative. While the public debates had generally stayed “within Marxism”, they had “for the most part” shown how important it was to have a “differentiation of

⁶⁰⁵ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 36/1968/6. ő.e. MSZMP KB Tudományos, Közoktatási és Kulturális Osztálya. Hozzászólás a tudományfejlesztés problémájához, 9.

⁶⁰⁶ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 41/91. ő. e. Agitációs és Propaganda Bizottság iratai 1968. Március 26. ülése. Tájékoztató a jelenleg folyó fontosabb ideológiai vitákról.

⁶⁰⁷ See a Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt IX kongresszusának jegyzőkönyve (1967). Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 55–56.

⁶⁰⁸ Historians, philosophers, political scientists, literary scholars, economists and psychologists were all asked to give an overview of politically and ideologically relevant public debates.

⁶⁰⁹ These theoretical workshops (*elméleti munkaközösség*) were set up by the Party (as we saw earlier in the broadcasting context) to handle modern bourgeois and anti-Marxist questions. One of them was dedicated to cultural, educational and scientific issues.

⁶¹⁰ Tájékoztató a jelenleg folyó fontosabb ideológiai vitákról., 1.

opinions” to find the optimal solutions for some really pertinent and essential questions.⁶¹¹ However, there had also been some participants who had expressed various wrong views about the “plurality of Marxism”. To show public support for this idea (*többféle marxizmus elve*) would mean giving up on the “scientific nature” of Marxism. This, in turn, would put the leading role of the Party as a representative of the working class into jeopardy. “Marxism” should thus remain purely and simply the only ideology, endowed with its own theory and methods, and a “growing body of theoretical and empirical material” to back it up and provided by science. Regarding psychology, this meant that it should not only develop its theoretical approach in purely Marxist terms, but also test this “growing body of theoretical material” in its empirical research on various social and psychological phenomena. At the same time, this would, to some degree, begin a two-way process that would make Marxist theory “richer in substance” by looking at every question from a number of angles. However - and this was especially crucial in the ideologically sensitive social sciences - it should not lead to the creation of deviant political tendencies.⁶¹² These principles with all their ambiguities would also be incorporated to the new Science Policy Guidelines of the Party (1969).⁶¹³

The second basic principle followed logically from the first one, and concerned the question of political responsibility. As the debate on ideology was seen as a potential breeding ground for challenges to the political status quo, the ideological discussions should not develop into overt political ones. The old “unmasking the enemy” card was also thrown on the table as a threat, as in if different angles or opinions went too far they would be held against those who voiced them, as this activity should not be a cover for truly heretical political opinions. Another nuance was that only the issues should be discussed, not the people; and so to avoid the politicisation of delicate topics, expressions such as “anti-Marxist” or “revisionist” should actually be avoided in public.⁶¹⁴ Furthermore, it was stressed that Marxists should, in case of disputes amongst each other as well as with others, be clear in marking the boundaries. As there were instances of Marxist phraseology hiding behind bourgeois opinions it was necessary to remain vigilant, and not get carried away with the “nowadays fashionable” anti-Stalinist demarcation line.⁶¹⁵

There were many reasons for urging ideological debates at this point in history, as this was going on not only in Hungary, but also Poland, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. Particularly with regard to the latter, there were rather far-reaching ideas for political reform being suggested in revisionist debates on bureaucratisation and other phenomena which had stymied the original socialist ideals.⁶¹⁶ This might be what the APB were referring to when talking

⁶¹¹ Ibid., 1-2.

⁶¹² Ibid.

⁶¹³ Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt Központi Bizottságának tudománypolitikai irányelvei..., 549-550.

⁶¹⁴ Tájékoztató a jelenleg folyó fontosabb ideológiai vitákról..., 2.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁶¹⁶ Pollack and Wielgoths (eds.) (2005), 234-236.

about “fashionable” anti-Stalinist discourses in their report. Pollack and Wielgohs have indicated that these tendencies were already being countered within the socialist bloc as early as 1965, the year after Brezhnev ascended to power; when there were Soviet trials against certain writers, and East German propaganda campaigns against “nihilistic” tendencies in literature and art.⁶¹⁷ A similar ideological tightening was also felt in Hungary towards the end of the '60s, as the position of some of the leading revisionist philosophers and sociologists came under attack.

Thus, in this light, these inner discussions about the proper understanding of ideology reflected wider political constellations, and manifested the need for the Party to exert greater control over the social sciences. However, these discussions also say something about the kind of manoeuvres that were required to carve out professional spaces in the field. Because the role of the social sciences was later incorporated with the Science Policy Guidelines of the Party, we can ask if the need for ideological discussions at this point related more to the new found uses for the social sciences. As Csizmadia notes, the basic nature of social research was ideological, and there was a potentially dangerous overlap between taboo questions and topics that needed to be discussed, so in this respect, the social sciences had to be both supported and controlled.⁶¹⁸

Lajos Bartha summarised these “ideological discussions” in a report submitted to the Party in January 1968 in which he clarified that the summaries represented the Institute’s amalgam of opinions, and not simply his own.⁶¹⁹ To this end, he also attached the opinions of the respective heads of each scientific department within the Institute - Ferenc Pataki (social psychology), Mihály Vaszkó (work psychology), Ferenc Lénárd (educational psychology), and Zsolt Tánzos (general psychology and psycho-physiology). The report contained three questions that the Institute thought most pertinent after their ideological discussions.

- (1) What should really be understood by the epithet “Marxist” in psychology, and is it suitable to use the term “contemporary” in front of it?
- (2) What are the most important ideological issues relating to the psychology of personality?
- (3) What are the most important current issues in social psychology?

The basic underlying problem for psychology as a discipline within the communist system throughout the '60s was whether it was part of the natural

⁶¹⁷ Ibid., 237.

⁶¹⁸ Csizmadia 2001, 112-113

⁶¹⁹ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 36/9. ő.e. MSZMP KB Tudományos, Közoktatási és Kulturális Osztálya. Bartha Lajos Óvári Miklósnak, Januári 31. 1968. In a letter to Miklós Óvári attached to the report, Bartha stated that the paper represented a shared view of the Institute of Psychology.

or social sciences.⁶²⁰ According to Bartha, all these questions were crucial as they were “inherent” in the development of Hungarian psychology, and required discussion.⁶²¹

Bartha began by emphasising that there were no “overtly harmful” ideological or political views among psychologists. However, he also felt that the discussions had not been intensive enough, as only a handful of people had participated. According to Bartha, this was due to a kind of “empiricist” bias; the researchers seemed to prefer empirical studies and tended to avoid philosophical speculation on theoretical questions.⁶²² He reported that in the Institute there was already a Science Council in which the problems of ideology were discussed, but the only other place where these issues were deliberated upon further was the Department of Psychology at ELTE. Students were understandably expected to consider the meta-questions of psychology, and Bartha’s duty as head of the Institute for Psychology was to answer this call.⁶²³ The definition of “Marxist psychology” he gave was rather loose.

It is often noted that while there is no Marxist physics or mathematics, we cannot speak of Marxist psychology either. Objectively verified and experimentally tested facts are an organic part of psychology, and because of this, anyone, and in any place, can elaborate on them. In other words, there are Marxist psychologists, but there is no Marxist psychology - only scientific psychology.⁶²⁴

Bartha’s definition was supported by Ferenc Pataki.⁶²⁵ In fact, Pataki went on to criticise the different varieties of scientific reductionism in his comment (biological, psychological, or socio-economic). For Pataki, the “essence” of the whole academic field of psychology in Hungary was that it formed a “harmonious combination of all those achievements [...] which have been deemed objectively correct”. Pataki argued that these achievements could naturally also be found in non-Marxist works. In other words, the achievements of non-Marxist psychology could be integrated into the system of Marxist psychology, as long as they were considered as objective and valid; as everything, including the ideology itself, should be tested according to these criteria.⁶²⁶ The implicit message was that the parameters of objectivity should be defined by the psychological community itself.

Furthermore, Pataki seemed to be indicating that the question of scientific objectivity should be separated from ideological discussions on Marxist positions about the psychological development and behaviour of man in society.⁶²⁷ Indeed, there was a “coherent” view of human nature shared by

⁶²⁰ Interview with Ferenc Pataki: 20 May 2012.

⁶²¹ Tájékoztató a jelenleg folyó fontosabb ideológiai vitákról..., 1

⁶²² Ibid., 1-2.

⁶²³ Ibid.

⁶²⁴ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 41/91. ó. e./MSZMP KB Agitációs és Propaganda Bizottság iratai 1968. Március 26. ülése. A Marxista pszichológia helye a tudományok rendszerében, 2.

⁶²⁵ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 36/1968/9. ó.e. /MSZMP KB Tudományos, Közoktatási és Kulturális Osztálya. Pataki Ferenc feljegyzése.

⁶²⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

Marxists which differentiated them from more individualist variants of western (social) psychology; but this should not prevent the results of these studies, if *relevant*, from being incorporated into socialist psychological knowledge.

On the one hand, Pataki seemed to be reiterating the government's idea of pragmatically interpreting what was either "forbidden", "tolerated" or actively "supported" (the policy of 'three Ts') at the level of science. And in this respect, the *relevance* was paramount, as this had to be carefully negotiated to determine what was acceptable or not, according to the intricate system of inherently hierarchical cultural and political control in Hungary. On the other hand, Pataki seemed to be expressing his genuine belief that scientific progress could only be made by integrating more with the global psychological community. Thus, he was also using the prevalent rhetoric to safeguard and promote the policy of opening up towards the west. Thus, he admitted that there were indeed differences between world-views, but this should not prevent these discrepancies being examined and resolved on a case-by-case basis. Pataki's rhetorical point was that socialism should adopt everything that was useful from the west (and no more).

In my interview with Pataki in 2012, I asked him how he now understood the concept of "Marxist psychology". Pataki answered, after a moment's consideration, that it was a concept of "convention" (*konvencionális*), in that it was a "tool for legitimisation, acceptance and inclusion" (*befogadás*). After nearly 50 years, he recalled the exact time and place where the meaning of the term became clear for him.

In 1966 there was a World Psychology Congress in Moscow. I wrote some notes after the Congress and framed the issue for myself in clear terms.⁶²⁸

These first-hand impressions of the Congress were eventually published in *Valóság* in 1967. He admitted in a travel report that he had felt somewhat "daunted" at the sheer number of people there. Washington had been big enough with 1500 participants, but now amidst all the glamour of a palace in Kremlin, there were some 5000 psychologists from 5 continents and 44 countries. There were 1800 in the Soviet delegation alone, and the US had sent a thousand, so most of the discussions were dominated by the huge presence of both American and Soviet psychology.⁶²⁹

For Pataki, the Soviet presence was "impressive" (*imponáló*), featuring a wide variety of high-level thinkers. But he could not help also recognising the "amazing" results of American psychophysiology and brain research which eventually seemed to win the attention of the day, thus shadowing other dynamic fields, such as social psychology.⁶³⁰ Quoting the American, Prigram, Pataki witnessed a general "humanist turn" away from research on "rats and dogs", and towards more *complex* research on human beings, of which he

⁶²⁸ Interview with Ferenc Pataki: 20 May 2012.

⁶²⁹ Pataki 1967, 83–84.

⁶³⁰ Pataki was also impressed by the dynamic presence of western social psychology, represented by Moscovici, Festinger, and Tajfel, for example.

thoroughly approved. Nothing should be treated as “taboo” question; but here, Pataki somewhat confusingly referred to the controversial psychologist José Delgado who had managed to decrease the aggression of the leader of a troop of monkeys with electrodes planted on its heads.⁶³¹

However, it was Jean Piaget (1896-1980), the big man of developmental psychology “with his inevitable pipe”, who managed to steal the show by celebrating his 70th birthday at the congress. Witnessing the productive exchange of views between Piaget and Leontjev, Pataki was convinced of the possibility of “peaceful coexistence” between two competing cultural and ideological camps, as represented by these two psychologists.⁶³² Pataki felt the congress had proved that behaviourism was “hopelessly obsolete”, and this had now been replaced by the idea of humans as dynamic agents. As he testified, both ideological camps shared a common general goal, that the object of research should be the “active human being” who creates his own “life situations” and “enriches” the objective world around him.⁶³³ Furthermore, the work of western social psychologists seemed to surprise him, in that there were seemingly clear similarities between East and West in understanding the role of culture (or the “collective”) in conditioning the developing personality. Thus, Pataki proposed that these promising *shared* tendencies in Soviet and American psychology may one day form the basis for creating a “unified science of human behaviour”.⁶³⁴

By highlighting that world psychology was increasingly tending more towards academic differentiation, he also threw an earlier Soviet ‘dream’ of creating a single unified psychology into stark relief - this dream seemed now to have become an illusion.⁶³⁵ However, he continued by saying that Marxist psychology was “in an excellent position”, as due to its theoretical starting points it too had its own differentiated contributions for the body of international psychology. This was especially reflected in Leontjev’s opening presentation, as the main representative of the Vygotsky School on reworking the concept of “mirroring” to bring greater methodological unity to research.

⁶³¹ José Delgado (1915-2011) was a Spanish-born psychologist working with animals at Yale in the 1950 and ’60s. Pataki was particularly impressed by his film showing monkeys whose acts of aggression could be controlled by electrodes on their heads. For Pataki, Delgado’s tests related to the question of whether or not there were unconscious processes in the brain that could be scientifically verified. But he did not appear to notice the political implications of Delgado’s presentation on mind control. Not only was Delgado presenting his film in a country led by an authoritarian party, but contemporaries might also have wondered if there were implications related to Franco’s Spain. Indeed, Delgado’s own research was far from free of ethical issues. Later in 1969 he would publish a controversial book entitled *Physical Control of the Mind: Toward a Psychocivilised Society*, in which he envisioned people wearing electrical devices to decrease anxiety, pain and aggression; stimulate pleasure; and strengthen the will. On Delgado see: Baker 2012, 531-532

⁶³² Ibid., 83-85.

⁶³³ Ibid., 85-86. Pataki quoted Piaget as saying “I also believe that the object exists independently of the subject. And in this way I am not an idealist [...] but I am a biologist [...] and I think that the organism not only depends on its environment but actively reacts to it, giving ‘answers’ which are based on its own activity.”

⁶³⁴ Ibid., 87.

⁶³⁵ Ibid., 84-85.

Pataki relates that Leontjev also “polemicalised” against American social psychologist Gordon Allport who had complained about the prevalent anarchy in psychology theory formation. Allport had noted that the researcher was forced to accept the simultaneous existence of a number of theories that were totally at odds with each other. Leontjev countered by comparing the contemporary psychologist - as a good Soviet should - to an “architect” who had plenty of excellent construction materials but was “lacking a comprehensive blueprint”. Leontjev then went on to suggest that this blueprint might be the concept of “mirroring”, rearticulated as an active and constructive process inseparable from human action. Pataki was quick to point out that Leontjev’s elaboration of the concept was now much more “dialectic” and “nuanced” than was the case in the past. Thus, it could also serve well as the basis for creating a “harmonic” system of psychological knowledge among socialist countries.⁶³⁶

Jean Piaget’s work and personality made an impression on Pataki in another sense, too. Pataki dreamt of complex research collectives in which logicians, mathematicians, cybernetics experts, educators, economists, anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists, and philosophers would all cooperate in answering the major challenges of the day. In this, he mentioned Piaget’s research institute in Genf with admiration, but also referred to the interdisciplinary social research that had been conducted at the Leningrad Institute. Here, his message was being pointedly directed at the prevailing state of affairs in Hungarian science. Psychology research, for example, was not only scattered in many locations but suffered from a lack of solid research bases and interdisciplinary cooperation. Pataki noted that a psychologist who worked alone by himself was an “anachronism”. Indeed, this was an “old truth”, even a “banality”, he continued, but worth repeating, as in Hungary there were many who worked on their own or in isolated pockets of research. Hungarians should thus cherish the idea of interdisciplinarity which would mean sharing certain theoretical basic premises. Pataki’s intention was to increase awareness of the prevalent currents in the international psychological epistemic community. However, in doing so, he also downplayed the differences between East and West, and thus aimed at encouraging a professional, depoliticised view of psychological research in Hungary.

So, going back to my question in the interview about his views regarding “Marxist psychology”, Pataki said it meant two things for him after the congress. Firstly, there were those who openly practised it, who were identifying themselves as Marxists in the sense of having that general world-view; and by the mid-1960s, he added, it was not “obligatory” to openly express one’s ideological stance anymore, so this was a genuine stance. Secondly, research results could be endowed with the “added value” of being Marxist⁶³⁷, independently of whoever came up with them, if they were found to be concurrent with this general world-view.

⁶³⁶ Ibid., 85.

⁶³⁷ Interview with Ferenc Pataki: 20 May 2012.

But Pataki's formulations hide some important social realities related to the concept of Marxist psychology in the academic field at the time. Namely, psychologists, in general, tended to be divided over the issue of party membership. While hardly any of the experimental psychologists were party members, nearly all the developmentalists belonged to the Party. As for social psychologists, they were politically divided.⁶³⁸ As social psychologist János László stressed in an interview with me, Marxist social psychology was not the same "as it is today" when someone sets out to develop a particular brand of psychology.⁶³⁹ Namely, "to practise a genuinely Marxist social psychology was dangerous for all the others who did not want to do it". It seems from this that even if there was only the implicit dominance of one theory (or ideology), as it seemed to be with regard to Marxism in mid-'60s Hungary, it could have a very real bearing on the existential position of all academics.

In 1975, social psychologist Ferenc Erős - who at the time was a member of the Party Committee at the Institute for Psychology - criticised the unreflective use of the term Marxist in front of psychology. The context of Erős's critique was in a comment on the APB resolution - "Current questions of psychology" (1974)⁶⁴⁰. Erős cherished the fact that the resolution seemed to show that the party elite now had definite aims to turn psychology into a more modern, scientific and interdisciplinary field but these also seemed somewhat compromised by certain self-contradictory clauses, and some unnecessary references, he thought, to the Stalinist past. Nevertheless, depoliticised empiricism was now "supported", and "dogmatic" ideology-laden research (which was hardly practised anywhere at this point anyway) was out.

Erős noted that Marxism as a "virtual" concept had been used as a weapon in a struggle for resources within the field. Furthermore, it seemed that it was used without any deeper understanding of its substance because, and therein lay the problem, Marx did not actually have any explicit views on psychology. This was a significant cause for the anarchy prevalent in the field at that time, Erős felt. For instance, as materialism claimed that the body and mind should not be treated as separate, the psychological sciences which studied mental processes as processes of the body (e.g., neuropsychology), could declare themselves more Marxist than others;⁶⁴¹ but at the same time, because Marxism was also dialectical, i.e., phenomena were understood to be constantly developing, those psychological sciences which studied processes of development, whether "phylogenic" or "ontogenic", could also claim to be more Marxist than others. Erős ironically concluded that, in the context of these

⁶³⁸ I thank Dr. Csaba Pléh for this information.

⁶³⁹ Interview with János László: 19 April 2012.

⁶⁴⁰ HU-MNL MK-S 288. f. 41/236 ó.e./Agitáció és Propaganda Bizottság iratai 1974. December 12. ülése. A pszichológia tudományos élet időszerű kérdései.

⁶⁴¹ HU-MNL MK-S 288. f. 36/1975/1. ó.e. MSZMP KB Tudományos, Közoktatási és Kulturális osztálya. Az MTA Pszichológiai Intézet Pártalapszervezetének megjegyzései az MSZMP KB Tudományos, Közoktatási és Kulturális osztálya által az Agit. -Prop. Bizottság számára készített "Jelentéssel" kapcsolatban, 4.

discursive struggles that were happening at that time, everything could be virtually described as Marxist psychology.⁶⁴²

Erős, a critically oriented Marxist himself, noted that as long as the representatives of totally opposite research traditions could declare themselves Marxists in struggles for status, then Marxist psychology would never get any real academic attention.⁶⁴³ Only when there was “genuine freedom of speech”, he wrote, would people become aware of the social relevance of Marxist psychology.⁶⁴⁴

Both László and Erős had gone to the heart of the matter in their comments, even though they came from different ends of the psychology spectrum. As Erős’s critique implied, the use of dominant ideological concepts effectively did a poor job of hiding the fact that powerful personalities wanted to push the research in certain directions, and academics saw this as a lack of freedom in research.⁶⁴⁵ Meanwhile, László drew attention to how powerful ideological concepts, even if they were only implicit, could still be seen as threatening because they could be used to dismiss other research directions. But in terms of the evolving professionalism of the field, there were some positive breakthroughs about the proper understanding of ideology in APB reports by the end of the ‘60s. For instance, the ‘style’ of public debates became more important, i.e., whether they were professional enough. In condemning “subjective” ideological outbursts, psychologists were now able to endorse the quality of expert discussion, and thus safeguard their field more easily from outside intervention.

For instance, the book published by László Vincze on psychological tests was criticised for its tone. Neuropsychologist Zsolt Tánczos used Vincze as an example of “acting in bad faith” in his expert opinion, and especially, for example, when compared with Dr. Béla Buda’s article⁶⁴⁶ on contemporary psychoanalysis. In this article Buda, who was one of Vincze’s ‘culprits’, had analysed the current international state of psychoanalysis; and by keeping it free of ideology, and objective in a professional sense, he had shown “professional maturity” Tánczos noted.⁶⁴⁷ Bartha agreed with Tánczos too insofar as, although the discussion about ideology was far from over, this debate should only be continued if the criteria of a proper “professional” discussion were followed. The point was being made that the right balance

⁶⁴² Ibid., 4-5, 8.

⁶⁴³ Erős had personally experienced the in-house struggles at the Institute for Psychology which caused the establishment to effectively abandon László Garai’s promising, innovative new research into a Vygotskian Marxist psychology of the personality.

⁶⁴⁴ Az MTA Pszichológiai Intézet Pártalapszervezetének megjegyzései..., 8.

⁶⁴⁵ As this criticism was expressed by a member of the Party Committee of the Institute, it was also treated as an insult. Indeed, Erős got himself into no small trouble for opening his mouth. It seems that his criticism was treated as a personal opinion, which he had to answer for in front of the District Party Committee. See, for example: HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 36/1975/1. ő.e. MSZMP KB Tudományos, Közoktatási és Kulturális osztálya. Urbán János Feljegyzése.

⁶⁴⁶ Buda 1967, 81-94

⁶⁴⁷ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 36/1968/9. ő.e. MSZMP KB Tudományos, Közoktatási és Kulturális Osztály. Zsolt Tánczos feljegyzése.

should be struck between an ideologically correct tone, and “solid scientific work”. Otherwise the discussion would turn into a quagmire of “speculative theorising” and “subjective impulses”.⁶⁴⁸

Pál Harmat points out that Vincze was effectively trying to hinder the diffusion of certain test methods in Hungary although they were already being used in many areas of life in modern society - both in the west and Hungary.⁶⁴⁹ Harmat goes on to point out that Vincze used the example of the Rorschach test to somehow show that all psychological tests were simply the “sweet bastard children” of psychoanalysis, and because the Freud himself tried to “satisfy the mythical needs of his age”, the tests should be totally abandoned. But this was a crude misnomer, since of course not all such tests were based on psychoanalytic theory.

Harmat argues that the publishing of Buda’s article showed how seemingly small endeavours could be enough to open up the psychological community in the ’60s. At the same time, it showed how much the public sphere had changed, in that it was published in a journal alongside a critical (and rather crude) commentary by a Soviet “authority”, as well as Karl Eysenck’s positivistic critique of psychoanalysis. According to Harmat, this was the first time since 1948 that a non-Marxist western critique of psychoanalysis had been given a public forum in socialist Hungary.⁶⁵⁰ Harmat ironically concludes, that these were the “sweet tactics of the Kádár period”, amounting to a practice of “two steps forwards, and one step back”. However, he also acknowledged that the “real achievement” here was to get Buda’s significant article published. The tactic of publishing a conservative “counter-argument” after this progressive text was the idea of the journal’s editor-in-chief - in the hope that by putting these articles together, it would increase the quality of academic discussion in Hungarian psychology.⁶⁵¹

* * *

In this chapter I have shown how psychologists after 1956 not only accepted the tasks offered by the party-state, but also actively contributed in coming up with these tasks. Due to the establishment of the Psychology Committee within the Academy of Sciences, there were great hopes for new possibilities. However, already by the end of the ’60s it was clear that ‘encouraging development’ did not always materialise into anything more substantial. Quick-fix applications of psychology were required without always paying enough attention to the basic level of research in a field that for a decade under Rákosi had not even existed.

Psychology was also publicly promoted in the ’60s to fit in with the Party’s need to criticise the previous era of Stalinist dogmatism, as this had led to

⁶⁴⁸ HU MNL M-KS 288 f. 41/91. ő. e./Agitációs és Propaganda Bizottság iratai 1968. Március 26. ülése. Tájékoztató a jelenleg folyó fontosabb ideológiai vitákról.

⁶⁴⁹ Harmat 1986, 277.

⁶⁵⁰ Harmat 1986, 282-283. This would have been rather awkward for the ideologues, who placed psychoanalysis as equal to almost all the other variants of psychology.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid., 283-284.

various dead-ends, especially in education. The MSZMP also tried to get rid of the difficult legacy of the Rákosi era by “rationalising” its methods of communication with the people, and to do this it wanted help from the newly rehabilitated social sciences.

Ideological changes accompanied the general turn towards accepting and even supporting private initiatives in society. A socialist variant of rational consumerism was thus supported, with the introduction of the NEM in the late '60s. However, it was soon acknowledged by the political decision-makers that these policies also carried ideological dangers which had to be confronted, and this was one of those contexts in which the need for up-to-date social and psychological sciences was acknowledged.

Various means were also used by psychologists (and other professionals who supported their cause) for carving out professional spaces of research. Not only informal networking and agency was needed for this but also political leadership from those in powerful positions in the political hierarchies of science. Many of those psychologists of the older generation who had experienced the violent paradoxes and existential threats of the Rákosi regime understandably promoted professionalism and aimed at depoliticising the field of psychology. But although many psychologists wanted to stay away from politics, this did not mean that the gradually increasing number of experts in the field were afraid of doing research or producing public discourses with the politics that this implicitly involved. In the following chapter, I will deepen my analysis of the political ramifications of the psychological sciences in Hungary by specifically focusing on the problem of childhood ‘deviance’ after the uprising of 1956.

3 CHILD WELFARE AND DELINQUENCY

3.1 Issues of Social Control

3.1.1 Hooligans and other deviants

It was the summer of 1970 in Budapest. A group of adolescents (of both sexes) were in court because of their bad behaviour the previous summer. *Magyar Ifjúság*, the official journal of the KISZ, met the teenagers before the trial and interviewed them.⁶⁵² This story (about what later became known as the ‘Nagyfák’ gang) was written by Éva Bedecs, a crime reporter specialising in youth cases. As a regular contact person for the police, Bedecs was often called in to witness roundups together with a cameraman.⁶⁵³ According to the story, this is what happened.

On 8 June 1969, a group of teenagers had gathered to listen to a concert by *Sakk-Matt*⁶⁵⁴; but because of bad weather the event was cancelled. Disappointed, the teenagers then decided to organise a “hippy-walk” instead. According to witnesses, the group tore “like a hurricane” over Elisabeth Bridge, the modern symbol of socialism. They demanded “bread without work” at Sándor Petőfi Street, and even tried to get inside the Church of Saint Stephen to organise a “beat mass” to salute Brian Jones, the guitar player from the Rolling Stones who had recently died. Then, as if this was not already enough, the group marched to the US Embassy, apparently chanting “fascist slogans” (*Heil Hitler! Long live Szálasi!*), and “Nazi-marching songs” (*Erika*) along the way.⁶⁵⁵

⁶⁵² *Magyar Ifjúság* 6 February 1970: “A ‘Nagyfák’ sem nőnek éjig.” See also Horváth 2009, 145–169; Horváth (2005b), 176–177.

⁶⁵³ Horváth (2005a), 232.

⁶⁵⁴ The short-lived rock and roll band *Sakk-Matt* was founded by Béla Radics, Albert Harmath, Rezső Hönig, and Lajos Csuha. The first concert of the group, who became known for delivering brilliant shows, was organised on 1 May 1968 in the Buda Youth Park (*Budai Ifjúsági Park*) below the Buda Castle, near the Chain Bridge. Although the concert was not advertised in the press, thousands of young people went to listen to the concert. (<http://www.rockbook.hu/content/rocklexikon-sakk-matt-radics-bela>) (10.11.2015).

⁶⁵⁵ *Magyar Ifjúság* 6 February 1970: “A ‘Nagyfák’ sem nőnek éjig.”

This hippy gathering was clearly spontaneous in nature, yet Bedecs claimed that the participants were united by a “shared philosophy”. This was not only proved by the allegedly fascist slogans that were left echoing in the streets of Pest, but also by the opinions and statements of the teenagers in the interview, who seemed to show a dangerous predisposition to “work avoidance”. Indeed, some of them were already old ‘friends’ of the police. In the end, the main ringleaders were found, accused of ‘hooliganism’, and given short prison sentences.

The case of the *Nagyfa* gang received a lot of publicity; it was even referred to later as the “last fascist demonstration in Hungary”.⁶⁵⁶ But sensational stories such as these, about difficult children and youths, or the moral dangers of urban spaces and other social environments - such as young workers’ hostels or subway tunnels - were a regular feature of the socialist press at the time, and were often accompanied with an educational message.⁶⁵⁷ There were several motives for stirring up a moral panic about deviant teenagers. Not only did it vindicate police actions, as Horváth points out, but it helped sell tabloid newspapers. Furthermore, the politicians understood the publicity offered by modern media to be an efficient way of managing the mechanisms of youth socialisation.⁶⁵⁸

Of course, the concept of gang (*galéri*) simplified reality. The term was used, for instance, when some districts of Budapest were labelled as spaces “controlled” by deviant elements. Here the appearance of a threat posed by a deviant ‘other’ against the decent majority of youth was useful for authorities who wanted to spread notions of socialist morality and citizenship.⁶⁵⁹ It also drew the police in a favourable light, as a community-minded force sending squads into murky areas in the pursuit of gangs, when in fact it often emerged that the instances of mischief and vandalism were just isolated cases of individual crime.

These stories also echoed the values of socialist citizenship that fitted the pragmatic ideology of the era. As publicly expressed by First Secretary János Kádár in one speech, it was not a problem that everyday workers, the decent hard-working majority of people, should have economic concerns. And it was not a problem, he added approvingly, if the “will to make sacrifices” (for the common good) was less important among citizens than “what’s in it for me”,

⁶⁵⁶ The writer of socialist pulp fiction, László L. Lőrinc, pictured the case in these terms. Cf. Horváth 2009, 235.

⁶⁵⁷ *Magyar Ifjúság* 6 February 1970: “Kultúrvárótermek vagy kocsmák?” For more on gangs (the “most notorious hotbed for group criminality”) see *Magyar Ifjúság* 6 February 1970: “Az ifjúsági bűnözés ellen - az ifjúságért”; *Magyar Ifjúság* 29 May 1970: “A Bűn előszobája”; *Magyar Ifjúság* 25 September 1970: “Szabálytalan gyerekek.”

⁶⁵⁸ Horváth 2005b, 165-166.

⁶⁵⁹ Horváth also notes that previous descriptions of violent encounters between the police and workers in the city at the turn of the 20th century were, after 1956, rephrased as being confrontations between youths and the police. This also had the effect that the stereotypes and narrative motifs from earlier such encounters now became associated with this ‘new threat’.

though it was obviously wrong if “some people gathered extra advantages”.⁶⁶⁰ In other words, looking out for one’s own interests was understandable and acceptable if it was modest and ‘rational’, i.e., socialist in style. Kádár wanted people to lead a pragmatic life and focus on increasing their family’s standard of living through hard work. Such ideal hard-working socialist citizens were also thrown into a positive light by the media, when journalists like Bedecs made stark comparisons with the ‘problem youth’ of the *Nagyfa*.

Popular magazines for teenagers (such as *Magyar Ifjúság* and *Ifjúsági Magazin*), were full of such warnings about the psychological dangers of a deviant social environment for young people. In *Magyar Ifjúság*, for instance, there was one article sensationally entitled “The antechamber of crime” which recounted tales of aimless “loitering” (*csavargás*) and discussed the “psychology of vagrancy”. Lieutenant Lajos Farkas, a young police officer with a degree in psychology, was asked to give his expert opinion in the article.⁶⁶¹ Should roaming the streets (which was, after all often combined with truancy) be considered a “dangerous precriminal phase” that foretold of future criminality and so should be avoided? Farkas, whose analysis rested on his own academic research, thought it did and should. In his thesis, he had used questionnaires, and interviewed teenagers, and spoke with a certain self-assurance, as he had recently presented a paper on the topic at a two-day conference at the Academy of Sciences (MTA) dedicated to psychology and child research.

Farkas argued that 62% of the participants in his study ended up joining gangs and committing first minor and then major crimes. His other point was that, even if this criminal ‘career’ was avoided, it would still be difficult for such youths to adapt to society. This was because their behaviour was, as he saw it, a way of “escaping” a distressing social reality in which they were evidently “emotionally broken”. For instance, when they escaped to “the island” (by which Farkas was apparently referring to *Margit* on the Danube), he said they were escaping difficult circumstances at home to create their own social worlds with their own rules there. Farkas then went on to give some more detailed examples of this. One boy named “Laci” had a father, for example, who had “defected” (*disszidálás*) and the boy said “I worshipped my father and wanted to go after him”, but Farkas reasoned there was nothing to worship in Laci’s father. In fact, the police told the boy (somewhat cruelly) that his father had “visited home last summer” to show his new English wife Fisherman’s Bastion and Margit Island, but had “forgotten to meet his two sons”. Farkas deeply sympathised with these children, and saw their problems as very much linked to bad parenting.

They vagabondise because they cannot stand their parents who are drunk, barbaric, negligible, and rhapsodic almost to the extent of being insane (*elmebetegségig rapszodikus*). A broken family has weak bonds. They run away from state institutions because they miss home, and since even the most impenitent mother is still their

⁶⁶⁰ Cf. Szabó 2009, 36.

⁶⁶¹ *Magyar Ifjúság* 29 May 1970: “A Bűn előszobája.” Farkas was contacted because “he was an old friend of ours” added the writer (who was incidentally Éva Bedecs again). This means that Farkas was a regular contact.

mother, and because inside in these vagrant children lives the passion for freedom (*szabadságvágy*)...⁶⁶²

Educational and child psychologists actively contributed to the public discourse on youth deviancy too. Besides voicing their concern over broken social bonds and corrosive family situations as a breeding ground for crime, some psychologists proactively set out to teach the basics of decent socialist citizenship. One such exponent from the early '60s was the educational psychologist István Harsányi (1908-2002), who used the accessible and powerfully evocative term "hooligan" in his *Book for Boys*.⁶⁶³ The book aimed to be self-educational, so it encompassed all the different phases and problems that a teenage boy was presumed to encounter.⁶⁶⁴ In stressing the importance of moderation and mental and physical purity, it is reminiscent of middle-class ideals of self-discipline prevalent at the turn of the 20th century, but with an additional socialist flavour. The book certainly seems to be continuing in the vein of protestant self-education, as Sándor Horváth points out;⁶⁶⁵ but it also testifies to Harsányi's living interest in Makarenko, and not solely for the purposes of ideological rhetoric. Indeed, an idealised version of Makarenko's community education was rather popular among Hungarian psychologists at the time.

In a chapter entitled "Dead Ends" (*zsákutcák*), Harsányi tried to define the difference between the concepts of "snob" (*jampec*), "vagabond" (*vagány*), and "hooligan" (*huligán*), and how these manifested themselves in terms of personality. In this way, he was trying to mirror the changes that had occurred in the general discourse on young people after 1956. Snob or "dandy" (*jampec*) was a popular antisocial figure invented in the fifties, under Stalinism, who followed western fashions and showed it by dressing accordingly. According to Harsányi, a dandy was usually to be found in the city, and was a "vain and frivolous scamp" who imitated (*majmol*) western styles, especially from Paris or the US. However, being a *jampec* was not enough to be "scorned by society" or deserve a "punishment". The most rational thing to do, Harsányi argued, would be to "smile" and "feel pity" on the person, as there was clearly "some kind of handicap (*fogyatékoság*) in his judgment of taste". In other words, his taste had somehow been "dislocated". However, there were far more dangerous paths that a youth might take than *jampec*.⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶² Ibid.

⁶⁶³ Harsányi 1963/1958. At the time of writing the book, Harsányi worked at the ICP.

⁶⁶⁴ As Harsányi himself pointed out in a public meeting of the MTA Psychology Committee in 1960, both the *Book for Boys* and its sister publication *Book for Girls* - written by psychoanalytically trained Blanka K. Dónáth - were obligatory reading in Hungarian secondary schools. See: István Harsányi's speech in: "A Pszichológia helyzete hazánkban...", 291-292.

⁶⁶⁵ Harsányi 1963/1958, 84-88, 171-201, 356-367; Halmesvirta 1998, 14-15; Horváth 2008, 64.

⁶⁶⁶ Harsányi 1963/1958, 104-105. It seems that the "foppish" snobs were also sexually too active. As Harsányi wrote, "conquests" among girls were the most important priority for them. Thus, Harsányi set to warn the boys about the nature of those girls who fell for dandies. They were more "primitive", "less mentally demanding", "empty inside" (*lelkileg üres*), and "sentimental".

A vagabond, for instance, was more of a disturbance for normal people, who was “always scoffing at others”, picking fights, bullying, and looking for trouble either alone or in groups. According to Harsányi, a vagabond was somehow morally “handicapped”; but this was not enough to merit being punished by the law.⁶⁶⁷ Meanwhile, a hooligan was “often a snob, but always a vagabond” and did warrant arrest by the police, as this was someone who “broke the social rules”. Harsányi also used the Hungarian dictionary (1960) to define a hooligan.

A hooligan disregards social rules, shirks work, is a ruffian, and is usually a young person who causes scandals. According to a primarily *political* definition of recent origin, this person is a perverted and brutal reactionary, who is easily tempted to commit political acts of terror.⁶⁶⁸

By defining these concepts in this seemingly objective way, Harsányi was simultaneously trying to show that it was just a matter of degree how these behavioural tendencies differed. Although different, they could nevertheless all be placed at a number of points along the same sliding scale of social deviance. However, by using such terms he also got himself tangled up with the contemporary police discourse on “youth deviance”. Indeed, this alarmist perspective on youth behaviour in the ‘60s, can be seen in the public narratives that spoke at the time of the threat of hippies and ‘hobos’, and these were backed up by expert professional opinions. For example, one American psychiatrist was quoted in *Magyar Ifjúság* (1968) saying that hippies were not only “parasites”, but also “sociopaths” and psychiatric “cases” who might sometimes even have to be treated in an asylum.⁶⁶⁹

But some experts cherished the child-centred views they had learned during the 1940s, and so had other suggestions for improving the situation. Lívia Nemes (1919-2006) was one such expert. A child psychologist, and one of the leading personalities in the Hungarian psychoanalytic movement and its revival under socialism, she received her training from the psychoanalyst Imre Hermann and social psychologist Ferenc Mérei in the 1940s.⁶⁷⁰ Based on these experiences, Nemes developed her thinking during the ‘50s and ‘60s and became one of the first in Hungary to translate post-war Anglo-Saxon child psychology into the Hungarian traditions of social psychology and psychoanalysis.⁶⁷¹

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid., 106.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid., 107.

⁶⁶⁹ Horváth 2009, 177–178.

⁶⁷⁰ Panéth 2007, 119; Nemes 2006, 65. After the war, Mérei held “Saturday seminars” at the short-lived Institute of Psychology in Budapest. Many people who would later become important in Hungarian child psychology and child guidance (CG) attended these seminars, such as Gertrud Hoffmann, Annabella Horányi, and Ágnes Binét. According to Nemes, they were all “enchanted by child psychology”.

⁶⁷¹ Panéth 2007, 119. See also Lívia Nemes (1974), *Pszichogén tünetképződés a kisiskolás korban*. Pszichológia Gyakorlatban 25. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó. The book was also reviewed in *Magyar pszichológiai Szemle* 4/1974. In it, Nemes combined Jean Piaget’s developmental psychology with psychoanalysis and social psychology to show that different theoretical approaches were really all talking about children’s

In her article on “Vagrant children” (1958), she suggested, for example, that disruptive behaviour might be decreased through careful city planning.⁶⁷² In an attempt to increase the involvement of Hungarian parents in educational issues, Nemes went on to write about the shadowy and indefinable city spaces which posed a threat to the healthy development of children. She emphasised that “the desire for adventure” was a natural part of being a child, and a driving force behind play and discovering the world, and so providing a productive and safe environment for this was of paramount importance, otherwise the result could be asocial behaviour.

[I]t would not be an overstatement to say that troubles start when the abandoned tennis courts, unfenced grounds, and soaring dirty plots in the heart and on the outskirts of the city turn into a ‘no man’s land’. [...V]agrancy may start from such streets and surroundings, as they will physically and morally contaminate (*fertőzés*) our children, if we do not safeguard them from this blight.⁶⁷³

Essentially, her message was child-centred; and she was suggesting that abandoned spaces be transformed into parks and playgrounds instead of being misused. Adults should not blame children for being adventurous and playful, but instead this natural tendency should be proactively supported, rather than stymied, by building suitable and safe environments for adventurous play.⁶⁷⁴

When the state education of psychologists began in the '60s, students showed a great interest in the psychoanalytic tradition, which was at that time only practised by a handful of people in informal settings. One such practising psychoanalyst, who thus played a significant role in transmitting the thinking of the Budapest School to the new generation was Nemes. Eventually she was chosen to be the President of the newly established Hungarian Psychoanalytic Association in the '80s, but for a long time her importance was not officially recognised. From 1968, she was unofficially training future psychologists at her “Saturday seminars” that took place at the Clinic for Child Psychiatry (established that same year) on Faludi Street. As we shall see, the clinic proved to be a crucial place in Hungary for disseminating up-to-date information about child psychology in a semi-legal and informal context.⁶⁷⁵

However, due to her alleged role in the uprising of 1956, Nemes also became a *persona non grata* in Hungary, even though she was not exactly politically active. Quite soon after the publication of the book quoted above, she

dynamic psychological development. The Hungarian psychoanalytic tradition (i.e., Imre Hermann’s attachment theory) was behind her insisting upon the “clinging instinct” of the mother-child relationship as a scientific fact. Meanwhile, from Henri Wallon, she adopted the idea of an inevitable emotional conflict with the “other” for each individual, so conflicts between parents and children were thus only natural. If the need for individualisation and independence was suffocated, it would lead to frustration with “pathogenic” consequences.

⁶⁷² Nemes 1958, 203–204.

⁶⁷³ *Ibid.*, 204.

⁶⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 202–210. In her article “Smart kid, stupid kid”, published in the same book, Nemes encouraged adults who felt challenged by their children to try to think “like their children are thinking” and to ask what “their world is”.

⁶⁷⁵ Harmat 2001, 413.

was convicted for her role in a “conspiracy directed at overthrowing the People’s Democracy”, and was sentenced to prison for 5 years. The historian Éva Gál has recently shown, not only how many of the accusations were artificially constructed against Nemes, but also how her case was closely intertwined with the investigation and consequent trial of her one-time mentor and colleague Mérei.⁶⁷⁶

* * *

Psychologists could claim that they provided professional methods for treating asocial behaviour and resolving difficult educational problems. In the socialist context of legitimising the state this meant they unavoidably became political issues. In other words, mediating between the individual and society, psychologists were called to help adapt young people to the system. In doing so they encountered the prevailing everyday social circumstances and also voiced critical views. But as we have already seen, it was not only the opinions of psychologists like Nemes, and Harsányi that mattered. Bedecs approached and defined existing social troubles and possible cures (as an investigative journalist) in a different way, as did Farkas (from the perspective of a police officer trained in psychology). And yet they were all professionally involved in dealing with ‘misbehaviour’.

Chapter 3 will therefore show how the treatment of deviance among children and young adults became one of the principal tasks of applied child psychology during the socialist era in Hungary. By carving out professional spaces related to preventing, healing, and governing ‘problem children’, Hungarian psychologists did not essentially differ from their colleagues in the international community of child psychologists at the time. And in their struggle to establish child guidance centres (*nevelési tanácsadó*) they joined the common course of development in post-war Europe.

The existing political and ideological conditions in science hardly encouraged ‘psychologised’ explanations of social and economic processes; so psychologists also had to devote a lot of their time to simply promoting the rationale of their proposals for social planning to the authorities. Although this was not the easiest of tasks, they did become increasingly able to cast Hungary’s social problems in psychological terms, and benefited from the new sense of political urgency related to child welfare issues after the moral and political crisis of 1956.

⁶⁷⁶ Gál 2009; Gál 2013, 131–133. Nemes was imprisoned in 23 January 1959, and convicted in a trial against “Zoltán Zsámboki and his associates”. The severity of the sentence was a surprise even for the defence attorney as Nemes was a highly respected child psychologist who stayed away from politics. According to the charges she participated together with Ferenc Mérei and his friends in producing, editing, reproducing and disseminating the critical text entitled ‘Hungaricus’, which was a political pamphlet written by Sándor Fekete in 1956. But in reality she only sent a message from Mérei to an emigrant journalist Péter Kende during her stay in Vienna. A third renowned psychologist sentenced to prison in trials during 1958–1959 was Gertrud Hoffmann, who later became an important organiser of Hungarian child psychology.

3.1.2 A change in terminology

In her research on the politics of social control during the Kádár era, Judit Bíró has noted how the concept of deviance changed. In the Stalinist era, a deviant was seen as someone who committed economic or political ‘crimes’ against the system. For instance, they committed acts of “sabotage” (e.g., breaking machines, or hiding a pig under the floor), and were described as being ‘dangerous moles’ that socialist citizens were encouraged to turn over to the authorities.⁶⁷⁷ But under Kádár, these figures of speech became less harsh. The behaviour itself was described in more neutral terms, such as “deviating from the right track”; and instead of focusing so much on *who* was to blame, the emphasis was now more on explaining such behaviour in terms of “negative social phenomena”, “abnormalities”, or “mistakes”.⁶⁷⁸

Social policies were reintroduced to ‘repair the damage’ caused by Stalinist dogmatism and to legitimise the new Kádárist order.⁶⁷⁹ Also the policy of radical affirmative action practised under Rákosi was brought to an end in the early ‘60s; though the central premise of supporting the children of workers and peasants remained. The question was now *how* to support them culturally and socially.⁶⁸⁰ Not surprisingly, these changes were also reflected in the discourse on ‘deviance’. Social classifications began to appear in the public language that reflected the new perceived threat. For example, there was now a new category to describe children “at risk” (*hátrányos helyzetű*).

According to Csaba Pléh, the disadvantaged groups also appeared in psychology research applications. Referring to his own experiences in the ‘70s, in writing a funding application for a psycholinguistic study dealing with speech disorders, he found it was useful to argue that the research would improve the social situation of disadvantaged working class children.⁶⁸¹ As we shall see in my analysis of classified reports from the ‘National Council of Child and Youth Protection’ (OGYIT), the recurring presence of the workers’ offspring among those who ‘misbehaved’ was a big concern for the authorities.

In her research, Bíró has shown that leading politicians in Hungary after 1956 were especially sensitive to two expressions of deviance – the endangered young, and alcoholism.⁶⁸² These two social issues were often interconnected and were a threat to the image of socialism.⁶⁸³ For instance, in the report on alcoholism produced for the Political Committee by the KB Department of Science and Culture (TKO) in 1960, it was estimated that among the 27,000 children who lived in “non-suitable family circumstances” [in Budapest] there

⁶⁷⁷ For more on the class struggle in factories under Stalinism, see Varga 1994, 37–40; Belényi & Varga (eds.) 2000, Document 18, 135–159.

⁶⁷⁸ Bíró 1999, 83. According to Nagy (2002), this also affected the socialist criminal administration after Stalinism, as it now needed to redefine its political and social roles in more traditional terms of law and order.

⁶⁷⁹ Horváth 2002, 21–29.

⁶⁸⁰ Sáska 2006, 593–594.

⁶⁸¹ Interview with Csaba Pléh: 25 September 2013.

⁶⁸² Bíró 1999, 83.

⁶⁸³ Of course, alcoholism and juvenile delinquency were understood as a threat for the future of any social system with a welfare state, whether socialist or not.

were 4,000 whose “dissipation” (*elzüllés*) was an immediate consequence of their parents “immoral drinking” and “brutality” which ruined these children both physically and mentally.⁶⁸⁴

Indeed, alcoholism was one of those problems acknowledged by the Party with a new kind of urgency after 1956. In the same TKO report it was stated that the number of alcohol-related problems (divorce, childhood crime, and others) had grown, despite all the “positive changes” experienced after the “liberation” (*felszabadulás*) of 1945. As the report defined it, alcoholism was a public health problem with “social, political, moral, and economic” implications. The most worrying aspect was that this problem was now affecting “more and more people from the ranks of the working people”.⁶⁸⁵ In this respect the report’s phrasing was acknowledging that alcoholism could no longer be considered as purely an after-effect of Hungary’s years under capitalism, but also a feature of the first decades of socialism.

The emphasis in the report was on morality since peoples’ attitudes were seen to be the root of the problem. Working people saw drunkenness as a good thing, or at least accepted it with a smile. However, this was problematic as it could and did nevertheless cause industrial accidents. The report referred to one study where they measured the amount of alcohol in 200 miners’ blood before they went down the pit, and it found that 60% were over the limit that indicated they were more prone to accidents.⁶⁸⁶ Although the report avoided generalisations, the explicit message was that this was long-term problem for the national economy. Besides all the direct waste of resources that this kind of thing caused, through broken machines and injuries, there would also be the financial burden of taking the children of alcoholics into state custody, not to mention the negative knock-on effects this would have on those children’s futures, after these “physically and mentally abused” beginnings.⁶⁸⁷

Some positive measures were already being taken. In Budapest and Ózd, rehabilitation centres had been established and, as they were full, it was suggested that the state should establish more of them; so that “chronic alcoholics who neglected their families” could receive compulsory treatment there.⁶⁸⁸ As Tibor Valuch shows, the political decision-makers in the Political Committee actually realised quite early on in the post-war decades that alcohol consumption was increasing among Hungarians. Thus it was that in August 1960, that the MSZMP Political Committee passed a resolution that clearly

⁶⁸⁴ HU-MNL M-KS 288. f.33/1960/1. ő.e. MSZMP KB tudományos és kulturális osztálya. Előterjesztés a Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt az alkoholizmus elleni küzdelem feladatairól. The numbers themselves are perhaps not so important here, but the fact that documents from the immediate post-1956 era very often use numbers to state facts about social reality perhaps testifies to a move to use more empirical knowledge claims in ideological discourses on society.

⁶⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 1–2.

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 2–3.

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

defined alcoholism as a severe social and health problem, with compulsion and constraint suggested as the best solutions.⁶⁸⁹

Interestingly the report was not suggesting softer solutions, such as psychological counselling, and as a consequence the committee's resolution was equally black and white - claiming that "excessive drunkenness" was "incompatible with socialist morality".⁶⁹⁰ In this respect, the Hungarian Young Communist League, Patriotic People's Front (HNF⁶⁹¹), and the Association for the Popularisation of Social and Natural Sciences (TTIT) were to be mobilised, and a "campaign" would be launched. A special committee was to be set up for the intensive and systematic study of "all the scientific, economic, social, and moral aspects" of alcoholism, and the supply of alcohol would be limited in various concrete ways.⁶⁹²

The KB Department of Party and Mass Organisations made an interesting comment during the drafting of the resolution. Its point was that, although alcoholism was an issue in capitalist countries too, it was especially harmful for socialists because they prided themselves on fighting "for the physically and mentally (*szellemileg*) healthy, for a pure and clean (*tiszta*) life on an everyday basis".⁶⁹³ The preventative measures were therefore seen as warranted, since alcoholism seemed to ruin "the life of many upstanding, honest men", destroyed the career of "many a gifted man" and tore apart his family-life.⁶⁹⁴

The department also drew attention to the political dimensions of alcoholics, as these "lumpen" elements, being more inclined to become "rabble-rousers [...] dissatisfied with everything", could be easily influenced in the wrong direction by "hostile elements" (*ellenséges elemek*). Even more worrying

⁶⁸⁹ Valuch 2005, 359–360. In 1961 and 1962 several laws were enacted on compulsory treatment. In 1966, a work therapy institute for alcoholics was established in Pomáz. In principle, the law allowed compulsory treatment without trial, and this was in place until 1990. In this context, Valuch mentions the "infamous" institute for forced detoxification in Nagyfa.

⁶⁹⁰ Total abstinence, however, was not demanded, because most of the workers enjoyed their alcohol as a regular part of their daily dinner in a healthy way.

⁶⁹¹ The Patriotic Peoples' Front (*Hazaifias Népfront* or HNF) was originally Prime Minister Nagy's tool for strengthening his reform policies against Rákosi and his associates. He aimed at reforming and revitalising the Communist-led Hungarian Independent People's Front. Nagy presented his ideas in an opening speech at the establishment of the organisation in October 1954. He argued that the building of socialism should no longer deny the active participation and support of the middle-classes, the intelligentsia and others who lacked a working-class background. With this in mind, it would have a wider reach and be more democratic than anything seen before. The idea of the HNF was to draw together different social organisations to create a new mass organisation. Under Kádár, however, HNF was eventually used as a means to communicate party policy to the wider population, and to find supporters in non-party circles. For more, see Romsics 2000, 380, 409–410.

⁶⁹² HU-MNL MK-S 288. f.33/1960/1. ő.e. Előterjesztés a Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt az alkoholizmus elleni küzdelem feladatairól, 5. In the resolution, the economic interests of those firms who sold alcohol were also touched upon. It was suggested that the premiums of those in the catering industry should be checked and controlled to decrease alcohol consumption. Also pubs needed to be checked to see just "how civilised" they were.

⁶⁹³ HU-MNL MK-S 288. f.33/1960/1. ő.e. MSZMP KB tudományos és kulturális osztálya. Feljegyzés az alkohol elleni küzdelem című előterjesztéshez, 1.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid.

was the great number of alcoholics within the Party itself, and not just in society as a whole. Namely, there were party-cadres who were not satisfied with just a “glass or two”, but seemed to “get drunk regularly” and thus “discredit[ed] the Party in front of the people”.⁶⁹⁵ It is worth noting here that the department went so far as to say that this was *not* just because the standards of living had been rising under socialism (the usual state-approved argument); it was also because many people were using alcohol because they wanted “to escape the difficulties of life” and felt unable to cope with the problems they faced. In other words, they acknowledged that alcoholism was about real tragedies and disappointments. One solution suggested by the department was for Hungary to adopt a more civilised, “European” habit of drinking, based on the data they had from France and Italy. Another was on the need for education and “social pressure”, rather than straightforward punishment through administrative measures.⁶⁹⁶ So, even if the report writers were clearly not advising psychological expertise in these matters, at least there was some readiness at the Department of Party and Mass Organisations to employ the newly professionalised social, psychological and educational sciences. And, significantly, everyone was now accepting that alcoholism and its related issues had not miraculously vanished with the introduction of state socialism.

Meanwhile, in the child welfare discourse, attention was drawn to “morally endangered” and “nervous” (*ideges*) children who were left without control. These “emotionally abandoned” (*érzelmileg elhagyatott*) children clearly pointed to a serious problem with socialisation, and wrong interpretations by parents with misguided conceptions of the socialist nuclear family.⁶⁹⁷ So it might not only be because of alcohol, but for other reasons that made the family non-normative, such as divorce, single parenthood, remarriage; if they were too busy and occupied in other tasks; or perhaps simply just too permissive.

Grounding her argument on party documents, Bíró suggests that the concept of emotionally abandoned children crystallised “the true essence” of this paternalist form of welfare socialism.⁶⁹⁸ However, she does not seem to acknowledge that such concepts (e.g., “maternal deprivation” and the like) formed an essential part of the vocabulary in post-war child psychology on both sides of the Iron Curtain.⁶⁹⁹ Furthermore, she neglects the possibility that there was a range of actors with vested interests in deviancy. Policy-makers, police authorities and professionals alike were interested, and not just some monolithic state in the abstract sense - as we shall see below.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid. The department had numbers to prove this. In 1959, 4413 members been kicked out of the Party. Of these, 919 cases (20.8 %) were due to “drunkenness and immorality”; and during the first half of 1960, 1991 members had already been removed (389 (19.5%) of them for alcohol-related reasons).

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid., 2-3.

⁶⁹⁷ Bíró 1999.

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁹ See, for example: Shapira 2013, Introduction; Bretherton 1992; on “psychological Marshall-plan” regarding dislocated children and broken families in post-WWII Europe, see: Zahra 2009, 51-60.

3.1.3 Lajos Bartha's opening gambit

The correct relationship between mother and child is one of the most important factors of the family that, on account of emancipation and the participation of women in productive work, is loosened more and more in every respect. This involves the diminished importance of the role played by family, a danger appearing in the laxity of sexual morals of youth, their deviance, and their irresponsible behavior. This problem has to be resolved by the development of rational, socialist, moral caretaking, in harmony with the establishment of conducive economic conditions.⁷⁰⁰

In 1963, Lajos Bartha (1927-2006), the director of the ICP⁷⁰¹ gave a lecture at the first National Congress of the Hungarian Society of Psychological Sciences. Bartha's opening gambit was to emphasise the significant role that the psychological sciences would play in building a better socialist society. He pointed out that, thanks to socialism, transformations to Hungarian society could now be something "planned and conscious", and that psychology should now be applied as fully as any other science to achieve those ends. Making a difference between subjective and objective idealism, Bartha criticised the latter for forgetting the "living man [...] who makes history". Indeed, although he agreed with the official viewpoint that, in most cases, the [subjective] psychologisation (*elpszichologizálás*) of historical processes was wrong, he suggested that taking this to its overly 'logical' extreme by declaring there was absolutely *no* conscious human agency in creating "social formations" was just as utterly misguided.⁷⁰²

According to Bartha, psychology could help socialism by creating a new "ideal man" (*embereszmény*). Once the objective parameters of this ideal had been determined, the psychological sciences could then go about putting these ideas into practice at every level of society.⁷⁰³ Bartha underscored the importance of childhood and youth in personality formation, and indeed he saw the future tasks of psychology from that perspective. In this speech, socialist education featured alongside problems of adaptation, and political discussions about reproduction - that were prevalent at the time.

The rest of this section covers Bartha's talk in more detail, which centred on the aforementioned 'ideal' for humanity. As we saw in chapter 2, Bartha's intellectual and political status made him a suitable "spokesperson"⁷⁰⁴ for the recently rehabilitated field of psychology. His status as the head of an academic research institute certainly helped command respect among those present, but most of all his target audience was the party leadership. The lecture at the Congress was really a hybrid of science policy and ideological statement combined, designed to show how a psychological approach might solve difficult social situations within a socialist society in flux; so although he did

⁷⁰⁰ Cf. Haney 2002, 97. The original can be found in Bartha 1965, 27.

⁷⁰¹ In 1965 the Institute for Child Psychology was transformed into the Institute for Psychology. Pataki 1993, 101.

⁷⁰² Bartha 1965, 12.

⁷⁰³ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

⁷⁰⁴ Cf. Yurchak 2005, 20.

not quote any particular research in it, he still felt obliged to refer to psychological theory and make certain knowledge claims.

A French psychologist representing the International Union for Psychological Sciences (IUPsyS⁷⁰⁵) was also present, called Paul Fraisse. The union was already a prestigious international scientific society at this point, and Fraisse was its Vice-President, so it was understandable that his celebratory words for the Congress were quoted in the Hungarian Psychological Review. After commenting on the “exceptionally well developed” psychological work in Hungary, Fraisse underlined the significant role of psychology in “consolidating the friendship between nations” and the importance of strengthening ties between French and Hungarian psychologists.⁷⁰⁶ Bartha, in turn, also reached out to both sides of the Iron Curtain, when he suggested that in order to find psychological solutions for the social issues confronting the state, expertise from across the systemic divide should be used to offer solutions.

Bartha’s actual discourse concerning psychology was also a hybrid. While referring to Pavlov he nevertheless discussed learning in terms of voluntary behaviour and human motivation (operant conditioning), rather than simply in terms of classical conditioning with its dogs as passive objects of intervention. This was clearly a juggling act designed to combine behaviourist thinking with socialist educational ideology *and* contemporary child and developmental psychology; for whilst he agreed with Pavlov that “inconsistent” methods of “reward and punishment” made the formation of “behavioural stereotypes” impossible, Bartha was arguing that if those punishments became too severe, the resulting “anxiety and aggressiveness” might well undermine people’s ability to take “self-conscious action”. In the same vein, he stated that educational “rewards” would be pointless unless they were based on what individually motivated people.

By thus turning away, with all due care and attention, from the world of dogs and conditioned reflexes, he could now elaborate further on how the social education of the young should keep in mind the different phases of life and, in particular, the role of emotional attachment to significant adults. If the attachment between teacher and pupil, for example, was motivated by a proactive “interest” (*vonzalom*), and not by learned obedience, this would facilitate the behavioural schemes and “modes of reaction” that were required. In other words, with empathy and emotional bonding, the educator or parent

⁷⁰⁵ The historical roots of the IUPsyS go right back to the International Congress of Psychology (1889), organised in Paris. A permanent committee was established thereafter in France to assure the succession of international congresses in the field of psychology; and the decision to found the IUPsyS was made at the 12th international congress in Edinburgh (1948), at the same time as the plans to found UNESCO. The IUPsyS itself was not founded until 1951 in Stockholm. Paul Fraisse (1911–1996) was eventually made President of the IUPsyS (1966–1969), with Leontjev as the Vice-President during those years.

⁷⁰⁶ Paul Fraisse felszólalása. In: Gegesi (eds.) 1965, 9–11.

could get the child to actually internalise the values and norms expected by (adult) society.⁷⁰⁷

Bartha also went on to point out the invaluable role of a healthy mother-child relationship. Even a “slight lack of emotional security during childhood” could lead to “countless adaptational disorders” among adults later in life, especially at the “emotional and ethical level”. According to Bartha, these disorders manifested themselves as “pessimism”, “inactivity”, “mistrust”, “defensiveness”, and a “fearful turning away from others”⁷⁰⁸. However, he quite soon balanced the inherent determinism of this by saying that, with “positive experiences” and influences (e.g., in school) any deficiencies caused by a harmful early childhood could be rectified. Bartha’s strategy here perhaps, was that he was describing personality features that were the opposite (cynical and fearful) of what a socialist citizen was supposed to be (forward-looking and “industrious”).⁷⁰⁹ Indeed, as Zsuzsa Millei has noted, the “human ideal” required well-rounded and versatile personalities who could “overcome the alienation brought on by the capitalist relations of production”, and serve society as full members of the community. Indeed, this requirement eventually manifested itself in the Educational Program for Kindergartens (*Óvodai Nevelés Programja*, 1971).

To be part of a community should become children’s natural form of life, and they should have the internal need to seek it out.⁷¹⁰

But going back to 1963, Bartha drew attention to his concern that the basic unit of society was having previously unforeseen difficulties. Namely, the socialist nuclear family (and motherhood especially) were in crisis due to the quick social transformations that had occurred after the introduction of socialism. In a statement that hinted at conservative values, he pointed out that there was an incongruity between the way of life ideally cherished by socialism and how much the real-life situation on the ground had actually changed; and this was again where psychological expertise could come in and help the situation, he argued.

The transformation of women’s situation in our society is leading to [...] educational problems. The participation of many women in production, in many cases, is causing the framework of the family to loosen. Because of this, the [positive] emotional influence of the mother-child relationship, which is also a very important educational

⁷⁰⁷ Bartha 1965, 20. Bartha’s references to behavioural ideas on learning seem to support Csaba Pléh’s notion about the peculiar role that Skinner’s brand of behaviourism played during the Cold War. Whereas by the ’60s it had come to represent reductionism and authoritarian ambitions for control in the west, Skinner’s cats in the box actually symbolised “activity and freedom” when compared to Pavlov’s passively obedient dogs. See Pléh 2008, 186–187.

⁷⁰⁸ Bartha 1965, 20

⁷⁰⁹ In 1972, the Vice President of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences (GDR) recited the main characteristics of a “socialist personality” at a major conference. They were: “mental flexibility, adherence to principle, courage, decisiveness, an inexhaustible thirst for knowledge, discipline, industriousness, conscientiousness, considerateness, thoroughness, and dependability.” Cf. Eghigian 2008, 51.

⁷¹⁰ Quoted in Millei 2011, 42. The original can be found in Bakonyi & Szabadi 1971, 10.

factor, is losing its significance. This, in turn, is making it harder for children to form favourable interpersonal relationships. The emancipation of women, which in itself is necessary and correct, has in practice happened more quickly than anticipated [...] with the result that the necessary economic, social, and ethical conditions were not implemented in time. *We stress this because we would like to pay attention to the [question of how we] could rectify this failure.* (Italics in the original.)⁷¹¹

Bartha was clearly indicating that the speed of structural change had resulted in a social and psychological crisis in areas which had been unforeseen by the authorities. For example, the financial, social, and educational conditions of state care facilities were such, that they could not fulfill their task in complementing the family. Bartha argued that the “mental and emotional abilities” of Hungary’s citizens (and its state care institutions) were consequently “lagging behind”. Socialist society would eventually provide material well-being to match “the rest of the world”, but it also needed to serve Hungarian children, and serve them now rather than in the future, and this could not wait. Bartha was thus now framing psychologists’ interests in terms of saving Hungary’s children, and pointing out that helping mothers might be just what socialist society needed to set it back on the right path again.

One of the causes of this crisis in families, this 36 year-old psychologist thought, was the “loosening” of sexual morality; because if citizens were to see sex as merely a “physical” pursuit, it would endanger the family unit so crucial to socialist progress.⁷¹² In this way, Bartha was both allying himself with the popular idea that there were ‘deviants’ who needed to be rationally tamed; and equally saying that academic psychology could help in these matters.

Bartha also paid attention to some of the failures of the existing institutions (such as the family, school, and the workplace), which hardly supported the materialisation of the ‘human ideal’. One example of the workplace he drew attention to was agriculture.

[...] But we must make it quite clear that the machines used in the agricultural sector were not originally built with consideration for the limits of human tolerance in mind. Consequently, the working conditions around [these] machines are such that they damage our physical organism and cause diseases of the nervous system. Among other things, this repels young people from these workplaces.⁷¹³

Essentially, Bartha’s speech rested on three arguments. Firstly, developmental psychology indicated that it would be impossible to form true socialist personalities without first knowing the inner personal dynamics of children, since before they could grasp socialism intellectually they had to experience it via the emotions involved in living and doing.⁷¹⁴ Secondly, there seemed to be a positive correlation between “unhealthy” mother-child relationships and various social problems; and basically, psychologists were in the best

⁷¹¹ Bartha 1965, 15–16.

⁷¹² *Ibid.*, 17.

⁷¹³ *Ibid.*, 24. Although he did not refer to any particular piece of research, Bartha mentioned that within the Institute for Child Psychology, “several important findings” been made concerning the “elimination these harmful effects”.

⁷¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

professional position to be instrumental in preventing the unhealthy social reproduction of these factors, so that a healthy socialist society would prevail instead. Finally, he argued that the state of human relations in the country was not yet ideal. Therefore, the best way to construct socialism would involve repairing the major deficiencies already inherent in the system (in families, schools, and work-communities), as these problems had not vanished with the advent of socialism as the Stalinists had thought would miraculously happen. In this respect, Bartha's expert discourse tied in with the more general revisions of ideology that were occurring at this time throughout the Eastern bloc. This much was clear from the 20th Party Congress, where it was accepted that ideological "errors" had occurred, and this allowed more room for historical contingency.⁷¹⁵ All three arguments pointed to Bartha's proposal that psychologists should be the ones to humanise the otherwise rigid social relations "inherited from our past social system".⁷¹⁶

3.1.4 'Rampage' in Balaton, and other narratives

In 1962, Hungarian child psychologist Péter Popper (1933-2010) presented the results of his study on sixty juvenile delinquents in custody. Popper, employed at Gegesi's clinic at the time, was openly cooperating with the police on this matter. His study was published in *Pszichológiai Tanulmányok*, a psychological yearbook published by the Psychological Committee in tandem with the Presidium of the MTA. In the study, the cases of juvenile delinquents were compared to forty neurotic adolescents assessed with Rorschach tests.⁷¹⁷ The aim of the article was to outline the emotional consequences of damage caused by "family milieu".⁷¹⁸ But the juvenile delinquents in question had not just been stealing cars or motorcycles⁷¹⁹, there were also assaults, a homicide, and arson among the crimes committed. There were also cases of "dangerous work avoidance" (prostitution and alcoholism), and "illegal crossing of state border" (n=4) among them. In addition, there were also some offences immediately related to the aftermath of 1956, such as "concealment of weapons" and "political crime" (n=4). Most of the participants (95 %) in the study were born during or immediately after WWII. Popper did not fail to stress the significance of this fact. These children of the war had thus "spent their early childhood during the most difficult years for our country".⁷²⁰ Not only did this mean they may have suffered terrible shocks and loss of family members at an early age,

⁷¹⁵ Kolář 2012, 408-409.

⁷¹⁶ Bartha 1965, 18.

⁷¹⁷ The Rorschach test was invented by Swiss psychiatrist Herman Rorschach in the 1920s. It was adapted for use in Hungary by Ferenc Mérei in the '70s. The test is nowadays considered as a controversial psychological tool for assessing personality through just a subject's perception of inkblots. As mentioned earlier, such tests had been labelled "bourgeois inventions" in the USSR and Hungary followed suite, but in fact the tests were used discreetly throughout the Rákosi period.

⁷¹⁸ Popper 1962, 533.

⁷¹⁹ There were altogether 23 cases of theft. From these, 20% were car or motorcycle thefts.

⁷²⁰ *Ibid.*, 534.

but they would have experienced societal upheavals with the introduction of socialism which would also have had a number of psychological repercussions.⁷²¹

Firstly, the “inner rhythm” of the family had changed, as traditional gender roles were in a state of flux. At the same time as more women were engaged in “productive work” outside the family, the state was failing to provide adequate institutions of childcare so Popper reasoned that this was why children were often being emotionally and educationally led astray. Secondly, the new socialist world-view had “shaken” the traditional normative base; and yet “due to various subjective reasons” the new morality and world-view had not managed to “fully take root”. The ensuing state of moral insecurity (manifested, for example in a “dual education” where they were being taught one thing at school and another at home) explained why many adolescents “lived in a moral vacuum”. This, in turn, “weakened their immunity” against bad influences and traumas. Thirdly, a sudden change of position on the social ladder had been a shock for some families. Either this change was experienced as a social decline (*deklaszálódás*) or a sudden social advance. Both could cause problems of adaptation because of the need to adopt a new lifestyle in a new environment.⁷²² Popper did not dwell on what the criteria of this social mobility was however. For example, one might wonder what it meant for the sons and daughters of former gentry and bourgeoisie to find their place in the new society; and what it must have been like for children whose father had been stigmatised as a ‘kulak’.

The fourth factor in what had caused this deviancy, was less a repercussion of socialism in general, and was more specifically to do with 1956, as in his opinion, the “counter-revolution” had been a breeding ground for crime. Testifying to his canny ability to use the prevailing political interpretation of the uprising for his own expert purposes, he pointed out that at this time of “manifest counter-revolutionary incitement”, there were not only signs of a “revival of anti-Semitism and nationalism”, but also random acts of terror. The political crisis resulted in a “temporary weakening” of ideology and the prevailing social structure; and most importantly, families were torn apart as many decided to leave the country at this opportune moment.⁷²³

The first three factors mentioned above clearly dealt with large-scale societal processes and their psychological repercussions for individuals. But at this point we should note two things. Firstly, although “social decline” clearly referred to those families who had suffered because of their former privileged social origins, they were no longer being described as the “children of class enemies”. Rather, the discourse implied that there were simply children from certain social strata who had suffered a sudden change in social position, and this was to be acknowledged as a social fact. Secondly, the idea of having received a “dual education” (*kettős nevelés*) not only referred to the assumedly

⁷²¹ Ibid., 534–535.

⁷²² Ibid.

⁷²³ Ibid.

different world-views taught at home and at school or in the KISZ; but also implied that the education of children was the moral responsibility of a socialist state. Child psychologists, for instance, could help by counselling parents whose methods of bringing up children were seen as uncivilised or brutal.⁷²⁴ And often, by trying to support maternal competence, psychologists were actually making use of their expertise to reduce the “state-organised hospitalisation” that would otherwise have happened.⁷²⁵

Being a psychoanalytically trained psychologist deeply interested in patients’ personalities, Popper used two individual cases to support his generalisations. The first was the story of a 15 year-old boy named “P”. His mother (a teacher) and father (an engineer) lived apart for 10 years. Every week on Saturday the father visited the family, and brutalised the boy, while the mother accepted it silently, even encouraging it because she “did not trust the kid”.⁷²⁶ While nothing explicit was said about the father, the mother’s personality was briefly sketched. According to Popper, she was considerably older than her husband, a “woman with ruined nerves” who was “unduly irritated” by the child and was not able to “create a bond with him”.⁷²⁷

To perhaps make up for his parents’ cold indifference, P - who had by then already joined a “hooligan gang” (*galéri*) - had an “abnormally close relationship” with his older sister. According to Popper’s interpretation, a dramatic turn happened when the sister married and moved away. At this point, P felt alone and sought refuge by integrating more deeply into the gang, which involved him “starting a sexual life”.⁷²⁸ This unfortunately coincided with him accidentally witnessing his parents’ frustrated discussion about the child “who should never have been born”. Following the mental shock of these combined events, Popper reasoned, he began stealing car and motorcycle parts. Eventually, P invited some girls to come along with his gang to his father’s cabin on Lake Balaton, where they ended up going on a rampage, breaking into “unoccupied cabins during the night”, to steal food, clothes and other consumer goods, to use in their new household, and occasionally to sell on for cash. Eventually their rampage came to an end when they were arrested and taken into custody.⁷²⁹

It is interesting how this psychological case history of P in many ways resembled a criminal investigation - it was just as crucial to know the train of events leading to the behaviour (or indeed crime). The past could be used to

⁷²⁴ For more on the moral evaluation of physical punishment of children in Hungary, see Nagy 2007, 66–82. The way parents were depicted in psychological discourse was, in itself, often rather “brutal” as we shall see later on.

⁷²⁵ Pléh 2008, 191.

⁷²⁶ The boy to personally give the wire of the flat iron for the father who thereafter beat the boy with the wire.

⁷²⁷ Popper 1962, 543–544.

⁷²⁸ Ibid. By framing P’s maturing sexuality like this, in somewhat pathological terms as a symptom of emotional shock, perhaps says more about Popper’s clearly psychoanalytic orientation.

⁷²⁹ Ibid. Popper also draws the conclusion that the stealing of the car parts was also related to the “motor-mania” of the age, and he also hinted to the possibility of “hidden sexual motivations” behind this mania.

explain the patient's symptoms, which were laid bare by his actions. But of course the psychologist was trying to heal the person he was investigating, unlike the criminal investigator. Nevertheless, in his discourse, Popper used quite similar concepts to law enforcement officials at the time, if we compare his terminology to legislation received by all Hungarian Central Police Departments in 1958 concerning the fight (*harc*) against "gangs and hooligans". According to the historian, Sándor Horváth, this legislation framed the discourse of law enforcement authorities for years to come. In fact, the following phrases from the introduction to this legislation bear a striking resemblance to the style of Popper's discourse.

The moral consequences of the counter-revolution of 1956 were particularly devastating for the young. Many of them participated in street fights; and were also armed. Working in gangs, they robbed, looted, and pillaged.⁷³⁰

It is funny that some of the cases Popper was referring to in a psychological context (e.g., concealing weapons, political crime) were implicitly related to 1956, as only a few years earlier the main protagonists in the "acts of terror" - most often young workers and soldiers - were being targeted by Hungary's main organs of state repression. Now, only 6 years later, it seems that juvenile delinquency (even with political undertones) could be explained in terms of emotionally wounded personalities, and was best resolved with the help of psychological experts rather than heavy-handed police tactics. In practice, however, there was still nevertheless a clear line separating more serious political crimes from minor law and order offences, and psychologists offered soft solutions for the latter.

Popper argued that increased repression would only cause further aggression a bad environment to grow up in. For this vicious circle to be broken, it was essential that these impressionable teenagers adapt themselves instead to a positive environment. Comparison between neurotics and delinquents showed that whereas the former had problems socialising, the latter might actually adapt *too* easily because of their need for emotional acceptance. This was why these teenagers "gave up their individualities and drifted towards gangs", Popper insisted.⁷³¹ Comparing neurotics and criminals like this, he intended to show that both groups of people originated from the same "neurotic soil". Indeed, as victims of broken families, most of these adolescents showed neurotic symptoms well before their "antisocial phase". Hence, the psychological thrust of the article was more on how a deviant personality developed through different phases of emotional conflict⁷³², and how this would eventually led to an "emotional catastrophe" if preventative psychological intervention was not made early enough. In fact, Popper was keen to point out that criminal acts such as burglaries and robberies should not

⁷³⁰ Cf. Horváth 2009, 64.

⁷³¹ Popper 1962, 538.

⁷³² *Ibid.*, 545.

be politically explained away as “historical residues” of capitalism; but be seen as aggressive acts with social and psychological roots in the here and now.

These kinds of published case narratives, often quite emotional and thought-provoking in their tone, were popular among Hungarian child psychologists in the early '60s. Another example was from criminal psychologists György Majláth and Tamás Kolos, who both worked as experts in child protection for the Budapest police. In an article they published in 1964 they noted that they used psychoanalytic methods, or as they called it, “clinical psychology”, in their work with the police.⁷³³ In one case from 1961, Majláth wrote about a young man who “drifted into antisocial (*társadalomellenes*) behaviour” and committed crimes in an emotional state of mind.⁷³⁴ His problems started already in 1952 when, because of “the danger of moral corruption” (*erkölcsi züllés veszélye*), he was removed from his parents and transferred to a state children’s home. According to the 1952 family law, under-18s could be placed into state custody if they were abandoned; if the parents’ “moral depravity” or “deviant behaviour” was a potential threat to them; or if their own behaviour was dangerous to other children.⁷³⁵ As Magda Révész notes, this rather nebulous definition of a ‘potential threat’ was vague enough for the authorities to decide quite arbitrarily what deviant behaviour actually meant. It also meant that these criteria could be politically interpreted and children be taken away because of the political attitude of their parents.⁷³⁶

In Majláth’s opinion, institutionalisation was not the right way forward. In his article he wanted to show how a vicious circle developed in this boy’s life which, because of his “endangered state” (*veszélyeztetettség*) actually got more intense as “step by step he felt himself getting lonelier”.⁷³⁷ In the institution, he was at times isolated from others, put into a seclusion room, and even tied to a bed (*rácsos agyba fektetik*). Finally, after a long session of psychotherapy (the actual methods are not described) the boy was “convinced” that he had to change his behaviour. However, when he got out of the institution, he once more “drifted into antisocial violence” and became accused of violently resisting a police officer.⁷³⁸

Majláth also recounted how the foster-father disciplined his son using various kinds of physical punishment. At that time, physical punishment was widely accepted in schools and homes in Hungary. József Nagy goes so far as to say that it was even considered “deviant” by some people if adults were so weak that they let their children be “too cheeky”.⁷³⁹ It was also noted that the

⁷³³ Kolos & Majláth 1964. According to Majláth and Kolos, full-time psychologist had been working at the Department of Child Protection within the Budapest Police since 1957. Before that, since 1954, professional psychologist had been working there in a voluntary basis. It was also mentioned, that the research methods were developed with the support of Lucy Liebermann and Péter Popper, who worked at the 1st Children’s Clinic in Budapest Medical University.

⁷³⁴ Majláth 1961.

⁷³⁵ Hanák 1978, 27–28.

⁷³⁶ Révész 2007, 9–10.

⁷³⁷ Majláth 1961, 662

⁷³⁸ *Ibid.*, 668.

⁷³⁹ Nagy 2007, 71–72.

foster-father was a touring circus artist by trade, whose life was “hard and austere” and the child soon had to learn a circus trade at a very young age. So in addition to suffering various “concussions and damages”, the boy lived in state of continuous fear. Besides violent punishment, he also feared that he would fail on the circus stage and thus disappoint his father. Here, Majláth made a reference to “primitive human relations” - clearly indicating the social group to which he believed the father belonged. For the father, it seemed that the boy was educable “like an animal to be trained, a horse or a dog”. For the psychologist, the almost total lack of play and the continuous travelling with the circus was reflected in the boy’s current symptoms - a “sudden thirst for play”, for avoiding school, and “vagrancy”.⁷⁴⁰

This was a tragic story that was almost inevitable in nature, and criminal psychologist Majláth wanted to explain it. Here, he referred to a British psychologist and psychiatrist John Bowlby, one of the post-war pioneers of ‘Attachment Theory’ (AT).⁷⁴¹ The most important tenet of AT is that an infant needs to develop a relationship with at least one primary caregiver for social and emotional development to occur normally.⁷⁴² Indeed, Majláth was quick to highlight the boy’s early loss of connection to his mother. The final aggressive act of “assaulting a police officer” was, Majláth argued, a “pay back” to the father.⁷⁴³

Bowlby’s AT theory was however severely criticised by the psychoanalytical community at the time. Bowlby had a background in psychoanalysis. During his training he was supervised by Melanie Klein. However, a disagreement broke out between Bowlby and Klein because of their different views about the role of the mother during the treatment of a three year-old boy. As Klein pointed out the importance of the child’s fantasies about his mother, Bowlby argued that children reacted to real-life events, not unconscious fantasies.⁷⁴⁴ According to Bowlby, children’s psychopathologies were to be understood as consequences of faulty environments. Bowlby also came to argue that psychoanalytic theories should be scientifically tested with the same methods as the natural sciences. In this respect, he was treating the

⁷⁴⁰ Majláth 1961, 669-670. The father’s attitude towards his foster-son was also shown in the court-room. When it was the father’s turn to speak he denied that he treated the boy badly, but at the same time he wanted the boy to “pay back” the financial loss caused by his inability to learn a trade. Finally, the “old artist” brought out a picture of some dogs and said “at least these love me”.

⁷⁴¹ John Bowlby (1902-1990) was Deputy Director of the famous Tavistock Clinic in London after WWII. Immediately after the war, there were many homeless and orphaned children with various difficulties and Bowlby was asked by the United Nations to write a pamphlet on the matter. From 1950 onwards, he also worked as Mental Health Consultant for the World Health Organisation. See Rose 1999, 166-170.

⁷⁴² On Bowlby and the origins of the Attachment Theory, see Bretherton 1992, 759-775.

⁷⁴³ Majláth 1961, 672.

⁷⁴⁴ Kenny 2013, 161; Green 2003, 87; According to Bowlby, Klein would not let him meet the mother of a mentally disturbed boy. Bowlby wrote his first article on family therapy in response to Klein.

question of emotional attachment in the context of evolutionary psychology and biology, and this made him an outsider in the eyes of the mainstream.⁷⁴⁵

As Stalinism had almost completely cut off ties with the international professional community, psychologists were keen to catch up after 1956. Bowlby and other famous researchers of 'hospitalism' - James and Joyce Robertson, René Spitz, and Harry Harlow - were important western reference points for Hungarian psychologists involved in child and youth protection at the time,⁷⁴⁶ and Kolos and Majláth were no exception. In their study entitled "Emotional Trauma and Childhood Criminality" (1964) they showed how family and especially a problematic mother-child relationship could explain juvenile delinquency, and many of their ideas were influenced by the presentation that Bowlby made at the World Congress of Mental Health in 1948.⁷⁴⁷

Perhaps, precisely because of his position as a heretic in the eyes of the psychoanalytic mainstream at this time, Bowlby was a safe bet for Hungarian psychologists to focus on, working as they were within a socialist ideological framework. But also appealing in Bowlby's theory, was his emphasis on the role of social circumstances and procuring the right conditions for adaptation. This not only fitted in nicely with socialist needs, but also Hungary's existing psychoanalytic tradition. Another point to bear in mind was the important role of Hungarian and Central European psychologists living abroad, for example in the Tavistock Institute itself; so it was understandable that Hungarian psychologists had little difficulty adopting to western fashions that they had actually participated in creating.

* * *

In published case narratives such as these, the authorities were being encouraged to see the young protagonists as psychologically underdeveloped victims of inhuman circumstances. Although they were old enough for a prison sentence, it was argued that they should not yet be treated quite as adults. Again, comparisons can be drawn between these psychological cases and court investigations into those accused of participating in the 1956 uprising. Because

⁷⁴⁵ According to Bowlby, peoples' survival as a species depended on their ability to establish and maintain emotional ties. For example, the "instincts" of crying, reaching out, and holding, were "in-built" abilities in the infant, operational already from the time of birth; and these were also functional in adults across their whole life-span due to their biological, evolutionary origin. For more, see Green 2003, 87.

⁷⁴⁶ In one textbook, 'hospitalism' is described as a "state of apathy and depression noted among institutionalised infants deprived of close contact with a caregiver". See Hogg & Vaughan 2008, 507. In a movie entitled "Grief: a Peril in Infancy" (1947), René Spitz, a psychoanalyst originally from Hungary, looked at the case of babies left in an overcrowded institution where they were fed, but rarely handled. They were found to be less advanced mentally and socially than other institutionalised children who had been given an adequate amount of care. Moreover, the mortality rate was higher among the deprived babies. These ideas were also presented in the classic Hungarian book on child psychology (*Gyermeklélektan*), co-authored by Ferenc Mérei and Agnes V. Binét. See: Mérei & Binét 1981/1970, 24-31.

⁷⁴⁷ Kolos & Majláth 1964, 546; Bowlby 1949.

proof from the 'counter-revolution' itself was often elusive, 'evidence' needed to be found instead from the earlier life of defendants, much as in the same way it was looked for in psychological case narratives. Only, in the court context, they were looking out for when they may have spoken out or acted against socialism,⁷⁴⁸ while in the psychological context, it was to look for evidence of abuse or symptoms. In subchapters 3.3 and 3.4, we will thus look more deeply into some more published psychological case-studies that carried implicit criticism of socialist society, since if the general conditions of upbringing were often found to be lacking, then this was usually because of the wider socioeconomic and political context.

But before we go into that, I want to first examine the wider context of 'reinventing' child welfare in Hungary after 1956, by focusing on the aforementioned National Council of Child and Youth Protection (OGYIT). This organisation was a peculiar product of the post-crisis era, as it produced rather intriguing reports which illustrate the politicised nature of child welfare at the time. In addition, the reports shed light on the politics involved with the early years of psychology's reinstatement as an officially recognised discipline - especially with regard to local child welfare.

3.2 The ghost of 1956 and the politics of child welfare

3.2.1 The National Council of Child and Youth Protection

Many people had something to say in the public discourse on the problematic behaviour of the young. Most psychologists realised pretty soon that it was in their interests to underline their professional status as experts of education and child-rearing; and to emphasise the importance of early intervention and soft methods of social integration such as therapy. Although the dominant socialist discourse tended to avoid psychological themes and concentrate more on collectivist values and adapting socially through work, a number of psychological voices did gradually come to complement these after 1956. Child welfare, as discussed by the National Council (OGYIT) that was set up to address the issue, seemed to be a politically fresh topic, and the OGYIT provided a channel other than a professional journal or academic meeting through which social problems could be articulated via a psychological discourse.

The OGYIT, officially established in September 1957 by the Revolutionary Workers'-Peasants' Government of Hungary (62/1957. IX.24), shows just how much political interest there nevertheless was in child welfare.⁷⁴⁹ This important but short-lived organisation was watched over by 70 year-old Ferenc Münnich

⁷⁴⁸ Halmesvirta & Nyysönen 2006, 136.

⁷⁴⁹ Horváth 2009, 65. According to Sándor Horváth, this was made with a reference to the report of the Executive Committee (VB) of the Budapest City Council in July 1957 on the poor state of child protection in Budapest

(1886-1967), a hard-line communist and the “second man” in the Party after János Kádár.⁷⁵⁰ This gave a certain political weight to the institution which wanted to bring the relatively new topic of child welfare onto the political agenda.

In a celebratory speech made at the end of a meeting of the Psychological Committee in the MTA on 13 April 1960, Pál Gegesi Kis wanted to refer to the “achievements” of a discipline that was well on its way to recovery. “It is maybe right once again to refer to the [O]GYIT”, he said in an enthusiastic tone, “[as] almost all of the things planned [...] have materialised”.⁷⁵¹ Referring to the OGYIT, which was still going at this time, was a good way to raise hopes for a promising future for the field, as it was an institutional actor in promoting professionally based forms of social control; but otherwise, references to it are rare in the literature. Sándor Horváth places it in the context of the “youth question” after 1956 and the moral panic surrounding the discourse on “hooliganism”.⁷⁵² He notes that one of its most important tasks was to gather statistical information on juvenile delinquency which was thereafter used by the police, the KISZ, and city councils to help them stamp out asocial behaviour; and so the “protection of children and youth” (*gyermek- és ifjúságvédelem*) was often caught up with the interests of the law enforcement authorities.⁷⁵³ During the '60s, therefore, Hungarian social politics regarding the young was largely concerned with “protection” from juvenile delinquents, and concerned mainly those individuals within state institutions (such as children’s homes and reform schools).⁷⁵⁴ The question was though, who was being protected, and from what precisely?

According to Mária Herczog, the National Council for Child and Youth Protection was established to evaluate the situation in the field of child welfare, to find out about social realities, and to seek solutions for modernising and professionalising the institutions involved. Within its four years of existence, the OGYIT was also concerned with coordinating activities in institutions across the whole country, but it was eventually dissolved in 1962 because “it raised too many good questions and gave too many uncomfortable answers”.⁷⁵⁵ Although Herczog does not develop this further, it is possible that the OGYIT’s insistence on expert intervention from outside the existing power structure became a delicate matter for the Party, and the Council was not discreet enough in dealing with the social and political taboos of the system.

⁷⁵⁰ Horváth 2009, 65; Gyarmati 2011, 440, 443–444. During and after the Revolution, Münnich belonged to the inner core of the newly established MSZMP. As Minister of the Interior Münnich was responsible for re-establishing the Workers’ Militia. He was also Nikita Khrushchev’s favourite choice for leading the restoration after 1956, but ultimately János Kádár was selected.

⁷⁵¹ A Pszichológia helyzete hazánkban..., 316.

⁷⁵² Horváth 2009, 53–69.

⁷⁵³ With the founding of the OGYIT by government decree in September 1957, the overall increase in child welfare expenditure also meant that the Child Protection Department of the Budapest Police could also double its workforce from 28 to 55. Horváth 2009, 65–66.

⁷⁵⁴ Ibid., 78–79.

⁷⁵⁵ Herczog 1997, 78.

Zsuzsa Schriffert also mentions the Council as being a significant early initiative in the professionalisation of socialist child welfare, and how it was clearly addressing the political and ideological dimensions of “child and youth protection” in the immediate post-1956 context. She suggests that the aim of establishing the OGYIT was to present the “moral corruption of youth” as a direct consequence of the “counter-revolution”. From the professional angle, Schriffert suggests that the basic principle behind the OGYIT was *prevention*. During its existence it did a lot of fact-finding work, proposed institutional and social reforms, drew attention to the importance of increasing professional standards and demanded that current practices (i.e., in children’s homes) should be modernised and humanised.⁷⁵⁶ Indeed, these functions are clearly expressed in the original documents.

For example, the working plan⁷⁵⁷ to develop a nationwide network of local child welfare centres (drawn up by the OGYIT’s secretariat in 1958) specified that local centres should give expert advice, raise social awareness, encourage positive initiatives (such as building playgrounds for children), and supervise the professional quality of child welfare in the region. The tasks of youth protection on the national and local-levels were thus not so different. Local centres had to study the prevalent situation among their youth; to “eliminate harmful moral phenomena”; to improve the education of parents and adults; and to prevent moral “debauchery” and crime. They also provided help for larger families with many children; supervised the work of different institutions (e.g., workers’ hostels for young people); and arranged work with local employers for otherwise unemployed and “drifting” teenagers. Interestingly, these local centres were also encouraged to listen to peoples’ complaints, and in situations which they could not solve within their local remit, encouraged to communicate these matters to the Party in Budapest. In these situations, they were also expected to accompany the complaints with suggestions that were based on the opinion of a wide array of different actors.⁷⁵⁸

The OGYIT also encouraged academic research. Indeed, as Schriffert notes, from the end of the ’50s to the early ’60s, child welfare was the most extensively researched field of criminal and social politics in Hungary. This research also brought opportunities for the newly reestablished fields of sociology, criminology, and psychology. However, the OGYIT’s proposals for reform were not ever really put into practice. The proposed reforms would have been expensive; and besides, the existing system of rehabilitation and

⁷⁵⁶ Schriffert, 42–43.

⁷⁵⁷ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1958/4 ó.e. MSZMP KB Tudományos és Kulturális Osztálya. Előterjesztés az Országos Gyermekek- és Ifjúságvédelmi Tanács vidéki szerveinek létrehozásáról. In fact, child welfare centres had already been founded in several cities and towns (Kecskemét, Kaposvár, Pécs, and Szombathely) after the establishment of the national organ. The secretariat wanted to coordinate child welfare on a national level.

⁷⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 2. According to the plan, local-level child protection centres were to comprise of 15–21 members, and include various experts (e.g., CG worker and child psychiatrist); and representatives of various party organs, court, police, and other local authorities (such as the guardianship inspector).

resocialisation put the emphasis on work and public safety rather than education and child-centredness so that the socialist criminal system tended to treat young criminals as adults.⁷⁵⁹ Some of these reports that were produced by OGYIT are studied in more detail in the next two sections, with a focus on the implications for psychologists.

3.2.2 The Mihály Táncsics Circle

The *Mihály Táncsics Circle* wrote a report to the Council of Ministers about setting up the OGYIT.⁷⁶⁰ This report strongly supports the thesis about the political and ideological motivations behind the new organisation. Established in January 1957 by Ferenc Münnich and Gyula Hevesi, the Circle wanted to present itself as a ‘think tank’ which could offer “practical and ideological” expertise for the newly established MSZMP, “especially in its fight against the ideological influence of counter-revolution”.⁷⁶¹ However, the group soon turned out to be problematic for the Party’s leadership, as they feared it would form a leftist splinter faction.⁷⁶² Hence, together with its newspaper *Magyarország*, it was with the Hungarian Partisan Association by the end of the same year.

The authors of the report started by painting a bleak picture of the current situation and proposed the founding of a new child welfare organ. The language of the report was a mixture of ideology, conservative moral panic, and a call for professionalism. The Circle seemed to see the “political education” of young people to be one of its most urgent tasks after the traumas of 1956.⁷⁶³ At the same time, it pointed to a general professional consensus of opinion among child welfare experts, both within and “outside the Party”.⁷⁶⁴

The lack of existing controls and planned policy in child and youth protection was the chief argument for founding a new coordinating body⁷⁶⁵ -

⁷⁵⁹ Schriffert 2008, 40–42, passim.

⁷⁶⁰ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1957/1. ő.e. MSZMP KB Tudományos és Kulturális Osztálya. Országos Gyermek- és Ifjúságvédelmi Tanács állításáról, 9. The report is signed on behalf of the Mihály Táncsics Circle of the Hungarian Association of Freedom Fighters.

⁷⁶¹ MSZMP Központi Bizottsága Agitációs és Propaganda Osztályának iratai. 1957. 1. ő.e. Jelentés a Táncsics Mihály Kör megalakulásáról és eddigi tevékenységéről, 2. <http://www.archivportal.arcanum.hu/mszmp/opt/a130523.htm?v=pdf&a=start>. The Circle was founded at a meeting on 20 January. At the meeting, there were 600 invited guests, and over 20 speeches were given. Ferenc Münnich was a main speaker.

⁷⁶² See, also: Pór & Cseh Bendegúz (eds.) 1994, 84–94. For more on the fears of political in-fighting after 1956, see MSZMP Központi Bizottsága Agitációs és Propaganda Osztályának iratai. 1957. 1. ő.e. Javaslat a Táncsics Mihály kör átszervezésére, 7. <http://www.archivportal.arcanum.hu/mszmp/opt/a130523.htm?v=pdf&a=start>.

⁷⁶³ MSZMP Központi Bizottsága Agitációs és Propaganda Osztályának (APO) iratai. 1957. 1. ő. e. Táncsics Mihály Kör jövőbeni tevékenységének irányairól, 2. <http://www.archivportal.arcanum.hu/mszmp/opt/a130523.htm?v=pdf&a=start>.

⁷⁶⁴ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1957/1. ő.e./KB Tudomány és Kulturális Osztály. Országos Gyermek- és Ifjúságvédelmi tanács állításáról, 9.

⁷⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

which should involve a number of principal state actors,⁷⁶⁶ because it was a common responsibility of the whole of society. As the ideal was prevention, it needed to be carried out by social organisations such as the KISZ, trade unions, Pioneers, Red Cross, Patriotic Peoples' Front, Women's Movement and committees of local parents.⁷⁶⁷ It also found its way into legislation as a law on the "Educational System of a Peoples' Democracy" (1961).⁷⁶⁸

According to the report, the presence of so many actors in this field made it very fragmented and meant it lacked a common purpose. Different authorities followed their own institutional rules and solutions, some of which were unprofessional and sometimes just plain wrong. To take an example, the decision (in 1955) to set up so-called Child Protection Committees in several county capitals (*megyei székhely város*)⁷⁶⁹ had meant that young criminal offenders could be placed in approved reform-schools (*Javító-Nevelő Intézet*) in a rather arbitrary manner, and without the usual court proceedings.⁷⁷⁰

According to the Táncsics report, a professional approach in child welfare was also hindered by organisational problems in local government. For instance, the local guardianship office in Budapest had been moved (in 1954) from the administrative to educational department. This was seen as a right decision in itself, but it also meant that some of the older custody decisions made under the original set-up had been made by administrators, rather than by the child welfare professionals involved in the case.⁷⁷¹ A complaint in 1959 argued that some of these decisions had thus been taken in a very arbitrary and random manner, which in some cases worked against the best interests of all concerned.⁷⁷² Yet the writers of the report did find some basis for optimism. If the issues involved could instead be seen in terms of the globally desired outcome (i.e., the prevention of problems) then perhaps solutions would be easier to find. In other words, the proponents of the OGYIT in the *Mihály*

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid. For example, the Ministry of Culture supervised the care of 3–18 year-old children and teenagers who were physically healthy, or mentally disabled, yet nevertheless "trainable". The Ministry of Health, in turn, was in charge of the care of infants, and protection of mothers, but also of the care of those children and teenagers who had chronic mental diseases, i.e., deemed "incurable". The Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice, and the Prosecutor's General Office, for their part were concerned with juvenile delinquency. Other actors included the Ministry of Work and various children's clinics.

⁷⁶⁷ Lukács 1966, 853; 855–856. Besides these actors, child guidance centres (*Nevelési Tanácsadó*) were mentioned as a new institution involved in child welfare.

⁷⁶⁸ 1961. évi III. törvény a Magyar Népköztársaság oktatási rendszeréről. <http://www.1000ev.hu/index.php?a=3¶m=8436>.

⁷⁶⁹ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1958/4 ő.e./MSZMP KB Tudományos és Kulturális Osztálya. Előterjesztés az Országos Gyermekek- és Ifjúságvédelmi Tanács vidéki szerveinek létrehozásáról, 1.

⁷⁷⁰ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1958/4 ő.e./ Tudományos és Kulturális Osztály. AZ OGYIT titkársága. Jelentes a fiatalok bűnözés és erkölcsi züllés néhány égető kérdéséről (a határozati javaslat indoklása), 7–8.

⁷⁷¹ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1958/4 ő.e./ Tudományos és Kulturális Osztály. Jelentes a fővárosi ifjúság- és gyermekvédelmi helyzetéről; Fővárosi gyermek és ifjúságvédelmi munkaértekezlet 1968. OPKM, 5.

⁷⁷² HU-MNL M-KS 288 f. 33/1959/7. ő.e./Tudományos és Kulturális Osztály "OGYIT" operatív bizottsága jelentése. A "veszélyeztetett" gyermekekkel kapcsolatos problémák és intézmények, 6–7.

Táncsics Circle wanted to synthesise all the issues of the organisations involved and take an overall perspective of these (with the global aim of child protection in mind); and only then rationalise the field of child welfare.⁷⁷³

3.2.3 Young people looking elsewhere

Nevertheless, the overall rhetoric of the *Táncsics* report conveys the impression of genuine concern and consternation at the bleakness of the situation. It started with a puzzling paradox for committed communists, as in spite of the fact that young people were enjoying “more moral and financial support than ever before”, the statistics proved that criminality and “moral debauchery” (*züllés*) among youths “during the last decades” was rising exponentially.⁷⁷⁴ What was more, the report continued, was that this had already been the case before the “counter-revolution”; not that 1956 had helped matters though. The violent crimes, sexual morality, and the apparent orientation of young people to the world showed worrying tendencies. It seemed clear to the authors that teenagers had turned “cynical and indifferent” and lost their faith in the future.

[T]his kind of attitude is a natural breeding ground for a living only for today, for the birth of distorted moral norms, for the penetration of hostile bourgeois ideologies, and as a consequence, for the growth of moral debauchery and crime.⁷⁷⁵

The authors made two points they thought to be convincing. Firstly, they used 1956 as a lens by which to “sharply illuminate” the bigger issue of child welfare. It had been young people especially, even under-16s, who had been accused and convicted for “acts of terror”, for “hiding weapons”, or for “looting and pillaging”. Furthermore, it was recognised that many of those who had left the country in 1956 had also been rather young. Secondly, the writers noted that child welfare had been flagged up in Moscow in 1956 (at the 20th Congress of the CPSU)⁷⁷⁶ and had significantly been included as a specific policy area in the Soviet five year-plan. For this reason, the authors argued, “it was all the more regrettable” that the Hungarian five year-plan “did not even mention” child welfare in its guidelines.⁷⁷⁷

To fill this gap, the report drew up six interrelated topics to address: (i) problems of education in the family; (ii) problems at school; (iii) the issue of children living outside families; (iv) the professionalisation of child welfare institutions; (v) questions of law enforcement and aftercare; and (vi) adopting a “planned and scientific” approach to child and youth protection. At the same time, the report would gather information about the current state of education and care in Hungary. Unsurprisingly, both state institutions and Hungarian

⁷⁷³ Országos Gyermek- és Ifjúságvédelmi tanács állításáról..., 8.

⁷⁷⁴ To claim that young people enjoyed moral and financial support “more than ever before”, is a clear piece of ideological rhetoric which refers to the communist policies of affirmative action that were in place at the time.

⁷⁷⁵ Országos Gyermek- és Ifjúságvédelmi tanács állításáról..., 1.

⁷⁷⁶ For more about the 20th Congress, refer back to section 1.4 of this book

⁷⁷⁷ Országos Gyermek- és Ifjúságvédelmi tanács állításáról..., 2.

families faced heavy criticism, with the latter found to be rife with alcoholism, criminality and other forms of immoral behaviour. It was a task for experts and authorities to spot these people, to find out about their situation, and to intervene with suitable pedagogical “propaganda”.⁷⁷⁸

A couple of years later, the Executive Committee (VB) of the Budapest City Council resolved that the Prosecutor General should systematically investigate whether the child protection organs responsible had really acted with “all due vigour” to punish those parents who put their children at risk.⁷⁷⁹ It was also demanded that the City Council put questions of child psychology on the agenda since, as one speaker in the meeting noted, there were parents who “ruined their children to the point that they became ineducable [...and only] after that they rush to us and ask what they should do.”⁷⁸⁰

A modern psychology-based discourse on children’s rights was effectively used to support the idea that the local organs of the state should intervene more systematically in such families. As the Party was sometimes approached by parents looking for help, the writers argued that there was a need for more professional institutions that could help in this respect, i.e., CG Centres.⁷⁸¹ One child welfare expert, Dóra Járo, warned that the lack of systematic attention paid to educational issues could have dire repercussions. At a VB meeting of the Budapest City Council, she proposed that children be given a balanced combination of care, respect, discipline, and control. In doing so, she employed the popular discourse on hooliganism, claiming that young people would “usually commit crimes in groups”. Although the young members of these groups were often decent factory workers, she suggested they were lured into criminality by “hooligan” leaders of the gangs,⁷⁸² and that there was a connection with the “counter-revolution” of 1956.

In addition to this, there is a bunch of young people who during the counter-revolution acquired weapons. Some of them still have these weapons hidden away, and 54% of those hiding weapons are teenagers. There are lots of teenagers who therefore have guns; and they create counter-revolutionary societies etc.⁷⁸³

This seems like quite a grave accusation, but it is possible that the language was used more to add a rhetorical emphasis to the urgency of the situation.

As already mentioned in the Táncsics report, the institutional side of child welfare (e.g., children’s homes and reform schools) was seen to be lacking in every respect. Besides the simple request for there to be “more beds” made

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid., 3.

⁷⁷⁹ MSZMP Budapesti Végrehajtó Bizottságának ülései (XXXV.1.a.4.). 1960. április 25/75. ó.e. Egyes fiatalok által elkövetett bűncselekmények tapasztalatairól és a fontosabb feladatokról. A Budapesti Párt Végrehajtó bizottság határozata, 37. <http://www.archivportal.arcanum.hu/mszmp/opt/a130523.htm?v=pdf&a=start>.

⁷⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁸¹ MSZMP Budapesti Végrehajtó Bizottságának ülései (XXXV.1.a.4.). 1960. április 25/75. ó.e. A fiatalok bűnözés tapasztalatai és az ellene folyó harc helyzete Budapesten, 11-13. <http://www.archivportal.arcanum.hu/mszmp/opt/a130523.htm?v=pdf&a=start>.

⁷⁸² Ibid., 13

⁷⁸³ Ibid., 9.

available, it underlined the pressing need to improve the quality of existing children's carehomes as they could not satisfy legitimate needs "at any level".⁷⁸⁴ The temporary institutions for small children were so crowded that in some places three children slept in one bed.⁷⁸⁵ The overcrowding meant that an "intimate and homely atmosphere" was impossible, which in turn made educational and correctional work (*javító-nevelő munka*) nigh on impossible.⁷⁸⁶ Particularly problematic was the group of "morally disabled" children (*erkölcsi fogyatékos*) who were prone to criminality, and the children of those parents who were "low-paid" or "very occupied" (because of their work). The pressing need for state care was a common experience as on the local level there were "more than 10,000 applications", the majority of which had to be turned down.⁷⁸⁷ The fact that both groups were put into the same basket implied that they both produced similar problems of adaptation.

Essentially the same concerns were attached to the "loosening of morals" and "brutal" methods of education "inherited from the Horthy era", as to children abandoned by women who had gone to work. The terrible conditions in some Budapest children's homes also featured in a report produced for the VB of Budapest City Council.⁷⁸⁸ The local urgency of the situation was underlined with a preface in the report which noted that the number of inhabitants in Budapest had doubled after 1945; and that a number of complaints had been received from people who had come in person to the central government to make their voices heard.⁷⁸⁹ Interestingly, the report also acknowledged some of the negative side-effects of the second wave of collectivisation (1959-1961) as some foster parents "gave back their children because of the big increase [in the number] of cooperatives."⁷⁹⁰

One solution proposed, especially for the educational problems, was to demand that a more extensive network of child psychology and education centres be developed. There were only four psychological counselling centres in the whole of Budapest, the report noted, and these were supposed to serve the whole country. The notion of early prevention was also discussed too,⁷⁹¹ but the overall picture painted was black.

⁷⁸⁴ Országos Gyermek - és Ifjúságvédelmi Tanács állításáról..., 5. According to authors, the Department of Child Welfare at the Ministry of Culture stated in report that the policy of previous years been to increase the capacity of institutions (the beds available) "at any cost". As a consequence, the institutes were "maximally crowded". With some examples they also implied that savings were made in the state bureaucracy at direct cost to the child.

⁷⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁶ Ibid., 4.

⁷⁸⁷ Ibid., 6.

⁷⁸⁸ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1959/7. ó.e. MSZMP KB Tudományos és kulturális osztálya/Oktatás/Jelentés a Budapesti Végrehajtó Bizottságának a főváros veszélyeztetett gyermekeinek helyzetéről, 1-6. Whereas the number of beds had been 6617 in 1946, it was 3767 in 1959. This led to drastic measures and potentially tragic situations, as over 1400 city children had to be transferred to children's homes in the countryside. One institute in "Éva Kállai Street" was mentioned as an example. This was not the kind of situation you should find in a 'People's Democracy'.

⁷⁸⁹ Ibid., 5.

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid., 1-2

⁷⁹¹ Ibid., 7.

[I]t is our feeling that deeper and complicated analysis would show the reality as even more serious [...and] it is our conviction that special actions should be undertaken to deal with the situation.⁷⁹²

Besides drawing attention to the problems in education, the *Táncsics Circle* also raised the issue of inadequate accommodation as a factor that was contributing to social problems. In cramped apartments, where “practically everything happened in front of the children”, it was easy for tensions and intergenerational hostility to boil over, and the young people would react by heading out into the streets, the authors of the report reasoned. And as there were not enough centres for daycare, kindergartens, or boarding schools for workers’ children, the pressures on everyday domestic life were now greater than ever.

It is generally known from everyday experience, that the number of children under 12 years of age who wander around (*csavarog*) either by themselves or in gangs is now increasingly significant.

According to an earlier report, these children, too young to be legally held accountable, carried out “pickpocketing and burglaries with an amazing level of skill”.⁷⁹³

Using these kinds of arguments, the authors claimed that improving child welfare should be a “common cause” for society; and therefore popularised and propagated at every level. To rationalise and professionalise the field, the proper training and further training of experts would need to be organised in a carefully planned manner. Finally, child welfare should be based on “scientific knowledge”; and this would be helped by a greater “exchange of experiences” between researchers both home and abroad.⁷⁹⁴

* * *

In line with the rhetoric of that time, these problems were described as a “burden of the past”. But to claim the problems were inherited from the past did not in itself make them go away.⁷⁹⁵ Although socialist development was not to blame, there were areas of society where the lumpenproletariat were evidently not ready for the ‘great leap forward’, and this needed to be dealt with. Then again, the burden of the past also made it legitimate to do further academic research on these problems. This is borne out by the fieldwork carried out by sociologists and sociographers in the ‘60s into the phenomenon of deviance in the new housing districts.

Sándor Horváth and Pál Germuska have shown that housing was an issue that was of vital ideological importance to the social policy aims of the regime. Horváth, in particular, has shown how the discourse about new housing

⁷⁹² Ibid.

⁷⁹³ HU MNL M-KS 288 f.33/1957/1. ő.e./KB Tudományos és Kulturális Osztály. Országos Gyermek - és Ifjúságvédelmi Tanács állításáról. Appendix 164/97.

⁷⁹⁴ Ibid., 7.

⁷⁹⁵ Ibid, 2.

districts in Budapest varied greatly depending on the interests of the speaker.⁷⁹⁶ In this respect, the OGYIT documents are rather hard to interpret because they tend to mix up ideological and political concepts, not only when discussing the social consequences of living in small apartments, but social problems in general. In other words, it is hard to determine what the real situation was when one is aware of the constructed nature of many social problems (from an ideological or political perspective). The new housing districts were supposed to emancipate the former “poor” and embody the promise of socialism. For the police in turn, the discourse surrounding these housing areas (*József Attila -telep, Lagymányos*, etc.) tended to give the impression that all was quiet and peaceful - in other words the police were doing their job. Horváth points out that there was also an equally strong urge (especially after 1956) to describe the problems in terms of an official socialist morality; so terms like “lumpen elements” were used to describe those that did not fit in to this morality, and “decent worker citizens” were used for those that did.⁷⁹⁷

The picture becomes a bit more complicated though, when we look at the research by sociologists of the period though. For instance, Iván Szélényi and György Konrád partly used the aforementioned problem-based sociological discourse⁷⁹⁸, but they also managed to prove that many of these districts did, in fact, include people from middle income groups too.⁷⁹⁹ Although this did not mean that they were exactly well-off, their findings did nevertheless go against the official discourse which stated that the inhabitants of these districts all came from the formerly “suppressed” classes. The socialist discourse, in turn, also spread these problem-based stories because it was trying to legitimise itself in the eyes of middle income groups.

It was in psychologists interests too to show that these social issues were not only a symptom of mental problems in the population, but also a cause of them too. So by the end of the '50s, they were also beginning to construct their specific discourse on deviance. During its relatively short period of existence, OGYIT produced a series of classified (and often dramatic) reports which clearly aimed at convincing the authorities that psychology was in the best interests of the socialist state.⁸⁰⁰ Thus the emphasis was on how the most “endangered” young people, in many cases, seemed to come from the “decent” working classes. Indeed, the executive committee of Budapest Party Council reported (in 1959) the “sad fact” that over 80% of young people convicted of some crime or other were from working-class families (*munkásszármazású*).

⁷⁹⁶ Germuska 2003a, 239-259; Horváth 2012, 92-107; Horváth 2009, 145-150.

⁷⁹⁷ Horváth 2009, 145-150.

⁷⁹⁸ Zsuzsa Ferge has paid attention to the fact that sociology in the '60s also supported the paternalist policies of the social political regime by providing social scientific knowledge. See: Ferge 1998, 108.

⁷⁹⁹ Germuska 2003a, 240. In fact, as proved by the later comparative study by Szélényi, the situation was generally the same in other East European countries at the time.

⁸⁰⁰ One should emphasise that these reports were strictly classified for “internal use only”. Hence, the writers could more openly discuss issues not meant for the general public. One of these delicate topics was the poor situation among the working class.

Meanwhile, almost 50% of those children referred to the Department of Child Welfare in Budapest were from working-class families too.⁸⁰¹

This puzzling fact had to be explained though, and in socialist-friendly terms that were not too confrontational; so there was talk of petit-bourgeois ring-leaders and (once again) “lumpen” elements in these “gangs of children” (*gyermekcsapatok*). These “nests of moral depravity” were seen to be ensnaring the “children of honest workers’ families, and comrades, too.”⁸⁰² By referring to “studies” already made in the field, the report claimed that these gangs were highly organised, with sometimes “hundreds” of teenagers involved. Thus, the “elimination” of such gangs would clearly not be a straightforward process, especially since there was a “conscious, organised corrupting force (*züllesztő erő*)” behind them, and so this would require the full backing of the police.⁸⁰³ Horváth notes that it was organisations such as the police and the KISZ who were expected to be at the forefront of tackling hooliganism. Horváth refers to one KISZ activist who patrolled Margit Island and would then report back to the police. In one of these reports, the activist indicated that among those who “took to the road of hooliganism” were a lot of children whose parents were civil servants and high-level bureaucrats of the state.⁸⁰⁴

Eventually, this initial panic about the behaviour of teenagers led to a more concrete gathering of knowledge about the behaviour of young people in society. It was hoped that a more differentiated picture of society would place education on a more realistic basis than older ideological models which seemed to be failing. One sociological study by Ferenc Gázsó, Pataki and Várhegyi was published in 1971 on students “lifestyle” in Budapest with these ends in mind. In their study, the authors used empirical evidence to prove that young people were relatively autonomous in how they related to and identified with the models and values offered by the social environment. Furthermore, teenagers had multiple social identities and ties, with school being just one of those contexts in which social relationships were formed. The latter finding especially seemed to prove that Makarenko’s “community ideal” was not relevant in the light of empirical evidence on modern teenage life.⁸⁰⁵

3.2.4 Dickensian prospects

In another report by the OGYIT secretariat from 1958 presented “cold facts” about what it saw as the moral degradation of youths in existing institutions. The secretariat began by looking into the activities of the authorities and

⁸⁰¹ HU MNL MK-S 288 f.33/1959/7. ó.e. MSZMP KB Tudományos és kulturális osztálya/oktatás/Jelentés a Budapesti Végrehajtó Bizottságának a főváros veszélyeztetett gyermekeinek helyzetéről, 2-3.

⁸⁰² *Ibid.* The police and the KISZ encountered these gangs in several non-working class districts and areas of Budapest too, such as around the Castle, Városmajor, Városliget, MOM, and Németvölgyi - hanging around “in front of schools and movie theatres, in streets, parks, apartments, and spas”.

⁸⁰³ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁸⁰⁴ Horváth 2009, 69.

⁸⁰⁵ Gázsó, Pataki & Várhegyi 1971, 9-18, 250-251, 269-271.

institutions (such as the police, reform schools, youth prisons, and children's homes) who were in close contact with children and teenagers in their everyday work. It was argued, for example, that prostitution was running wild as there was a greater incidence of young girls calling into gynaecological clinics in Budapest.⁸⁰⁶ Statistics gave the impression that the number of endangered children was on the increase, with the inevitable conclusion that this was "not least because of the demoralising effects of 1956". In the larger cities especially (Budapest, Miskolc, Pécs, and Sztálinváros), the situation was thought to be serious.

Perhaps the most critical institutions in dealing with child welfare problems were the state children's homes and reform schools. The 1958 OGYIT report invited the readers to step through the gates of a reform school, and sense the "cold and dreary" (*sivár*) environment. Not was the atmosphere cold, with strict punishments such as beatings administered, but the physical spaces in these institutions were themselves very depressing. They were described as being like "barracks", with rows of unpainted iron-beds in large dormitories bereft of any carpets on the floor, pictures on the wall, or even curtains in the window. There were few opportunities for cultural pursuits, as there was no library, and no space or equipment to play games or do sports. These conditions seemed quite at odds with socialism's cherished belief in self-education and self-cultivation.⁸⁰⁷

One visit by the report's authors to a temporary children's home was met with "startling scenes that could have come straight out of a Dickens novel"⁸⁰⁸. Although the inspectors were only able to visit the boy's section of this anonymous institution (access to the girls' side had been denied because of an outbreak of scarlet fever), they had evidently seen enough.

[I]n such an congested environment - not to mention all the other barbarous circumstances which have nothing to do with overcrowding - we should call this a storage facility rather than a children's home as it is even worse than the original orphanages (*lelencház*) [of the Horthy era] that these homes were supposed to replace.⁸⁰⁹

The child welfare unit of the police also noted (at this point in the report) that boys were often found escaping these homes because of the hellish environment and mistreatment there. Even the director of one home was reported as saying that sometimes there were three boys to a bed and, because of these shameful conditions, they could sometimes "not let foreign visitors in".⁸¹⁰

⁸⁰⁶ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f.33/1958/4 ő.e./MSZMP KB Tudományos és Kulturális Osztálya. AZ OGYIT titkársága. Jelentes a fiataalkori bűnözés és erkölcsi züllés néhány égető kérdéséről (a határozati javaslat indoklása), 3.

⁸⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

⁸⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁸⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸¹⁰ *Ibid.* In this home there were 69 beds for 100 boys. What's more, it was clear that over half of these boys had mental health issues or special needs. There was no special educational needs expert in the institution, but the children could go to the special school just across the street. The beatings were used for disciplinary reasons.

The OGYIT Operative Committee made a particularly telling analysis in their report from 1959, when they noted that there were 14 main children centres (*központi gyermekvédelem intézet*) in the country, from which the children were then distributed to various permanent children's homes. But this was done in an alarmingly arbitrary and slapdash manner. The time spent waiting for transfer to a home would "either succeed or not"⁸¹¹ depending on the availability of places. When children arrived at a new location, they did not have any documentation with them besides the initial decision of referral. According to the report, there was usually no kind of description about the physical, not to mention psychological condition of the child. There was not even a brief "environmental study", i.e., a basic run down of the child's socioeconomic and personal background.

If children then ran into problems and escaped, "which was often the case in the prevailing conditions" or, after being sent to some step-parents, "set the haystack on fire" through lack of supervision, they would usually be returned to the main children centre. Then, without further investigation into what had happened (either from the children or the homes where they had been) they would simply be transferred again to the next available location. And this process would be repeated indefinitely. Finally, as the personnel in some children's homes could not stand the behaviour of the most difficult children, as a last resort they would remain staying indefinitely in the main children's centre (that was only supposed to be temporary).

[T]here they are kept without getting any proper treatment for their physical and mental condition [...] furthermore, because no selection is made in these homes, they are there with 5 year-old deaf-mutes, 17 year-old prostitutes, and 16 year-old thieves who are placed there for quite simple social reasons. Both the mentally unwell and normal children are thus living and loitering in the same setting.⁸¹²

The "simple social" reasons were not just because the institutions that were not functioning properly, but also because there was a lack of professionally trained adults there. Indeed, it was only in 1958 that it was announced educational experts *could* be employed in these homes.⁸¹³

The educational dead ends caused by this impoverished situation also certainly featured in the secretariat's report on "child protection committees" (mentioned briefly above).⁸¹⁴ The committees were made up of representatives from a local guardianship authority (*gyámügyi előadó*), the KISZ, and the Teachers' Union; and they decided on the placement of "morally perverted"

In one account, it was mentioned that when the disabled came back from school, all the children were put to bed (3 boys to 2 beds), and those who did not stay still and go to sleep were made to sleep on the floor close to the wall.

⁸¹¹ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f.33/1959/7. ő.e./ MSZMP KB Tudományos és Kulturális Osztály. "OGYIT" operatív bizottsága jelentése. A "veszélyeztetett" gyermekekkel kapcsolatos problémák és intézmények, 12

⁸¹² Ibid.

⁸¹³ Ibid., 12-13.

⁸¹⁴ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1958/4 ő.e./MSZMP KB Tudományos és Kulturális Osztály. AZ OGYIT titkársága. Jelentes a fiatalok bűnözés és erkölcsi züllés néhány égető kérdéséről (a határozati javaslat indoklása), 8.

teenagers in closed state institutes, which were then supervised by the police.⁸¹⁵ The secretariat noted that this procedure resembled how the court placed young offenders in the state's reform schools; in that it was based on rather "subjective" considerations. When the OGYIT checked how this was carried out in practice, it deemed the procedure not only "contradictory to existing laws", but also generally incorrect in terms of straightforward "legality". The cases were very often arranged with very superficial and inadequate knowledge about the "individuality" of the teenagers involved, their background, and even sometimes the actual behaviour in question. In short, the actions of the committee were judged "irresponsible".

One reason for setting up child welfare committees may have been that they offered the possibility of a less time-consuming solution for rehousing juvenile delinquents than going through the courts. Indeed, on a practical level, the secretariat also mentioned the irony that there was nonetheless unused space in some reform schools which could otherwise be filled. The OGYIT also suspected that some homes used the committee as a tool for "punishing" youngsters who raised problems, so they could get them off their hands; a chief reason being because they did not employ staff with sufficient expert knowledge for dealing with the more "difficult children" (*nehézen nevelhető*).⁸¹⁶

As noted by the secretariat, the lack of court proceedings meant that there was no thorough examination and weighing up of evidence. The potentially quite arbitrary decisions also meant that children and teenagers with very different backgrounds, problems, and symptoms were lumped together in the same reform schools, which made it both harder for the staff to cope and for their charges to receive the kind of care that would have best suited their needs. The many complaints coming from the various reform schools described the institution as an "educational dead-end". The report then went on to describe how individual 'inmates' in these schools felt "that the measures are detrimental and unjust and they protest against this kind of 'internment' (*leinternálás*)". In fact, according to the secretariat, they were under the impression that they might have even received a fairer treatment from the court if they had actually committed crimes. And from the perspective of education this unjust start made it hard for adults and teacher-educators to influence them in any positive way, with the result that very often they did not adapt to the reform school, and would try to escape.⁸¹⁷

Clearly, this was not the place to put those minors who were "severely morally perverted", i.e., from broken families, the secretariat concluded. A better system was needed than the one currently in place to accommodate the teenagers who would otherwise form a "sad and unlucky reserve"

⁸¹⁵ According to the report, approximately 220 young people were placed in reform schools throughout the country by these committees in just the first six months after they were introduced. About half as many had been placed in the same period of time by traditional courts before this; e.g., for the whole of 1957 there was a total of 285 placements made.

⁸¹⁶ Jelentes a fiatalkori bűnözés és erkölcsi züllés..., 7-8.

⁸¹⁷ Ibid., 8.

(*tartalékhadserég*) for the criminals of the future.⁸¹⁸ But this would not be an easy task, as the law enforcement authorities apparently devoted more of their time to solving adult crime, while leaving juvenile crime to the less able police officers. The report also pointed out that, for many years, the law enforcement authorities did not receive any kind of training outside their own immediate field; so they were lacking the necessary educational, medical, and psychological knowledge to carry out the job with juveniles effectively. This kind of child-centred training, beloved of child psychologists and educators, would encourage the “change of perception” that the secretariat felt was needed so that young offenders would be treated as more than just ‘small adults’.⁸¹⁹

It was not so much that the institutions themselves needed to be got rid of and replaced (in fact, some of the Hungarian state institutions for children were still seen in many ways as progressive), but it was the simplistic and impolitic way in which they were being run that was the problem; and this was to do with the low status of child welfare professionals, which meant that institutions were underdeveloped and lacking resources to properly achieve the community-based ideals of socialism.

From 1962, a special committee for reforming child welfare had been meeting on a yearly basis. The Party was now admitting that the ideological horizons of the 1950s had been distorted; the claim that socialism would liquidate all “the nests of misery” by simply denying their existence had actually contributed to current problems. In effect, it actually meant that the existing institutions of child welfare had been gradually run down after the Communist takeover, as they were no longer seen to be ideologically necessary, even though this was patently not the case.⁸²⁰ By 1968, it was clear that this simple denial was not working and it was explicitly criticised in a workshop organised by the Budapest Party Council.

The ‘diplomatic’ stance of the working group was that “at the current stage in the process of building socialism”, there are “contradictions” which are putting the healthy development of our children at risk. Deeper structural and political issues were thus left untouched as yet, as they were seeing the problems as part of a current “transitional period”. Now, at least, the problems could be discussed in a more open manner, and it was admitted that there were “abandoned children” and other kinds of distorted methods of child-rearing that could occur in a socialist society.⁸²¹

⁸¹⁸ Ibid., 7.

⁸¹⁹ Ibid., 6. According to the writers the same lack of differentiation was also present in prisons for juveniles where violent criminals were routinely put in the same cell as petty thieves. It was added that the conditions in these prisons led to the situation where “masturbation, homosexuality and worse” were taking place; the conclusion being that “there is no excuse for the fact that the conditions in prisons for young offenders are so much worse than in prisons for adults”.

⁸²⁰ Fővárosi gyermek és ifjúságvédelmi munkaértekezlet 1968. OPKM, 1. In 1947, there were 471 child welfare workers in Budapest working full-time. Ten years later the number was a third of that.

⁸²¹ Ibid., 1-2.

The workshop drew attention to “mistaken views” about the omnipotent role of “community education”, as it was clear that it was not enough to simply pluck “endangered children” out from their dangerous (family) environments and drop them into this far from welcoming community. It was by no means certain that positive development would “automatically ensue”. Perhaps this is why, even in the original document, the term ‘community’ was put in quotation marks, as if it barely deserved the name.

Into these kinds of homes - even into the same groups - totally without selection have ended up orphans, half-orphans, endangered and damaged children (due to poor physical or mental health, impoverished living conditions, parental work responsibilities, uncivilised educational methods), demoralised children and juvenile delinquents, ineducable children, neurotics, epileptics, and those with a heart disease [...]⁸²²

Although Makarenkoan community ideals were not altogether completely abandoned, the evident lack in these homes of any differentiation according to psychological needs was heavily criticised.⁸²³ By 1965, even Ferenc Pataki (who, as we saw earlier, had always championed Makarenko) was writing that there was all too often a “pessimistic” and “depressive” atmosphere. With an emphasis on how important the “emotional tone” of a children’s community was, he argued that the “apathetic indifference” caused by the dull daily routine chipped away at each child’s self-esteem. Like a bad driver who accelerates and brakes too much when less of both would lead to a smoother ride, the “restrictive excesses” of harsh discipline meant there was no room for even organised, let alone spontaneous activities (*mozgás*) among the children.⁸²⁴

In spite of the widespread criticism, however, no visible changes came into immediate effect. In Budapest, the overcrowding in state foster homes “increased in tandem with the public visibility of hooligan gangs”.⁸²⁵ According to Horváth, the Hungarian child welfare system was still not really differentiating between individual children throughout the ‘60s in fact. In other words, it was often the case that nobody really specifically concerned themselves as to why each child had been assigned to a particular institution.⁸²⁶ From 1963-1968 however, the Budapest City Council’s VB wanted to be seen

⁸²² Ibid., 8-9.

⁸²³ As Ferenc Pataki wrote in 1965, Makarenko regarded overall happiness as the most important criterion for judging whether a children’s community was good or not. Compulsion and constraints deprived from children the feelings of self-dignity. Their natural need for freedom (*szabadságszükséglet*) needed to be cultivated for the good of community, and to create a positive “emotional tone”. As Pataki notes, the Makarenkoan community was both an ethical and an aesthetic construction. For more, see Pataki 1965, 1090-1094.

⁸²⁴ Pataki 1965, 1098.

⁸²⁵ Horváth 2009, 83-84. Although the capacity of state foster homes in Budapest rose during the ‘60s by 33% (n = 1300), the number of those children and teenagers who were put into state care rose by 50% (n = 2400). So in 1967 there were 7247 kids for 5039 beds.

⁸²⁶ Ibid., 77.

doing something to resolve matters; so in this time, it addressed 11 cases of child protection which resulted in 44 resolutions.⁸²⁷

In 1965, the Central Peoples' Control Committee of the MSZMP also investigated the state of child welfare, and expressed its concern over the increasing numbers of children placed into state custody by the guardianship authorities, when (according to the directives) only those who were in "immediate danger" should have been placed there. Furthermore, statistics were used to show that there had been an alarming increase in suicides and suicide attempts in the homes. In the whole of 1963, there had been 1420 reported cases in Budapest, and in the first six months of 1964 this number was 894. It was acknowledged that it was especially high in those areas of Budapest where there was a high proportion of people who had recently moved to the city from the countryside. It was here that "crimes against children" (*ifjúság elleni bűntett*) were the highest.⁸²⁸

* * *

The suggestions and recommendations in OGYIT reports ranged from more effective police work to institutional reforms and better practices that would help the young better adapt to socialist society. If we now look at the rehabilitation of the psychological sciences against this background, we can see how the problem of deviancy among the young was a major push in the right direction for the evolution of psychological sciences as a whole in Hungary. Human engineering and social planning was what the OGYIT recommended to resocialise young people once again, and yet the emphasis was not so much on using psychological tools, simply because both academic and applied psychology was still in its infancy. This was not just because of its former status as a bourgeois pseudo-science, but also because the hegemonic discourse in state socialism was centred on work. For instance, in the report on youth unemployment, the problem was thought to be caused by socialist modernisation and related population movements. In the '50s and '60s it was thought this could best be resolved through rational planning of the sphere of work, and the development of specifically 'psychological' services (e.g., career counselling) was given only a relatively minor role.

Nevertheless, a special committee was established within the OGYIT to study the possibilities of social adaptation of teenagers who for some reason were having difficulty finding work.⁸²⁹ This committee found that the situation was particularly bad for girls, and especially those that had moved to Budapest from the countryside for work or commuted between the countryside and city. Indeed, with the introduction of socialism straight after the war, enforced

⁸²⁷ Ibid.

⁸²⁸ MSZMP Budapest Végrehajtó Bizottságának ülései (XXXV.1.a.4.) 1965. június 4/98. óe. Budapesti Fővárosi tanácsa végrehajtó bizottságának X. oktatási osztálya, 1-3.

⁸²⁹ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1958/4 ó.e./MSZMP KB Tudományos és Kulturális osztálya. 14-18 éves fiatalok elhelyezési problémáit vizsgáló bizottság jelentése az 1956/1957 végzett fiatalok helyzetéről.

industrialisation and collectivisation caused an immense movement of people within the country.⁸³⁰ But besides the implicit concern that girls were moving to the city and being exposed to its various ‘vices’, the problem was thought to lie with those working families already living in the city. When both adults were at work, the girls had to assume responsibility for the whole household. Hence, there was a group of girls who were forced to stay at home, to stop their studies after turning fourteen, and who without adequate “control” (*ellenőrzés*) would be exposed to the “dangers of debauchery”.⁸³¹

It was with these groups of girls in mind that the special committee referred to a resolution made by the KB Economic Department about educationally oriented “useful employment” (*hasznos foglalkoztatása*). The resolution organised local city councils in Greater Budapest to organise industrial work for the young (“mainly girls”), in such a way that they were working “under the supervision of a teacher”. Although the nature of this work was not made explicit, we can assume the intervention was a mixture of paternalist guidance and forced labour.⁸³² In a modern sense, this was a kind of ‘rehabilitation’ organised in conjunction with the Ministry of Work. The places offered would have “educational objectives” and ensure both training and/or a decent wage for the teenagers.⁸³³

During collectivisation between 1949 and 1961, almost 600,000 people left agriculture to work in industry, transport or services. Sometimes this meant combining work outside agriculture with commuting between the city and village.⁸³⁴ As Zsuzsanna Varga notes, during the Rákosi period this was a phenomenon pejoratively known as *kétlakiság*, as it meant the separation of work (in the city) from home (in the countryside). These people were not ideologically suitable members of the working class because they “clung to private property” and kept their farms within the framework of the family.⁸³⁵ In fact, when collectivisation came to an end in 1961, 4200 cooperatives had replaced over 1½ million individual farms.⁸³⁶ Although people were no longer being labelled pejoratively for doing more than one job, thanks to the economic reform policies of the early ‘60s, it became very common that some members of the family worked in the cooperative, and the others found jobs from the city - much to the authorities’ surprise.

Varga notes that in the years 1959-1961 the number of those who earned their living in the state agricultural sector dropped substantially by 350,000. This mass exodus was most likely for rational economic considerations, as the

⁸³⁰ See, for example: Valuch 2005, 70-75; Germuska 2003a, 256.

⁸³¹ *Ibid.*, 2. This was also ‘proved’ by referring to first-hand experience of the police who noticed that staying home alone “greatly exposed” boys and girls to the “attraction of [...] adventure and bad company”.

⁸³² *Ibid.*, 5. According to the report, the kinds of factories that employed problematic teenagers as a form of social support already existed in Budapest, but they did not fulfill their expected aim.

⁸³³ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁸³⁴ Varga 2012, 37.

⁸³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸³⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

way income was divided in the cooperative did not offer a safe and secure living, and most often the younger family members left to look for work in the city.⁸³⁷ This practice actually became a permanent structural feature of Hungarian socialism by the early '70s, and it presented quite a challenge for the Communist Party as this lifestyle helped nurture what became known as a "second economy", and this had social repercussions too, as commuting was seen to encourage various forms of "deviance" such as alcoholism, prostitution, and domestic violence.⁸³⁸

Against this background, it is easy to see the implicit meanings present in the OGYIT report regarding the social threat caused by the teenagers "flowing in" from the countryside (*falusi fiatalok*). For example, in one Budapest textile factory there were 640 teenager applicants from the countryside (*vidéki*), and they were mostly girls. Out of these, 518 were "totally without a previous job",⁸³⁹ and it was both an economic and moral problem that they were "reluctant" to employ themselves in the agricultural sector. Evidently they did not find the work in agriculture attractive enough; after all, it was poorly paid, the work-conditions were bad, and the tasks were dull and unappealing.⁸⁴⁰ These *vidéki* not only hindered the job-opportunities of city-dwellers,⁸⁴¹ but they were often forced by the circumstances to rent a small flat or bed for "extortionate price" - sometimes even ending up "in the hands of pimps".⁸⁴² This only exacerbated the existing problems with the lumpenproletariat in the cities.

To fight against this youth unemployment, the OGYIT suggested that the practices of existing institutions be better coordinated so they could push young people to more relevant work assignments or training positions. Reading between the lines, the real issue may have been that the relevant parties concerned (schools, employers, and the Ministry of Work) had not actually thought about these issues so much before. The committee report in fact gave the impression that those involved did not have any information at all on relevant work or training opportunities. It pointed out, for example, that "the teachers do not know enough about the way in which our industry is developing".⁸⁴³

One tool the OGYIT suggested for this (in 1959) was a network of career planning offices which would use psychological methods in the fight against unemployment. These were to be established in all the major Hungarian cities

⁸³⁷ Ibid., 44-45.

⁸³⁸ Ibid., 37-38.

⁸³⁹ HU-MNL M-KS 288 f. 33/1958/4 ő.e/ MSZMP KB Tudományos és Kulturális osztály. 14-18 éves fiatalok elhelyezési problémáit vizsgáló bizottság jelentése az 1956/1957 végzett fiatalok helyzetéről, 5.

⁸⁴⁰ Ibid., 5-6.

⁸⁴¹ It seems that one of the problems was that some factories tended to hire those coming from the countryside because they would more readily take a lower wage. For example, among the 900 young workers in the Orion factory, 500 travelled 80 km to work each day, and 200 hundred lived in rented rooms. In other words, 700 were probably from the countryside.

⁸⁴² Ibid., 4.

⁸⁴³ Ibid.

under the auspices of the Ministry of Work;⁸⁴⁴ and indeed, by the following year, the Council of Ministers had made a resolution to establish a national network of career counsellors.⁸⁴⁵ The significance of this for the psychological sciences was not lost on psychologist János Csirszka, when he noted at the meeting of the Psychological Committee in 1960 that the “theoretical foundations” of the network were currently being drawn up by psychologists in the work psychology unit at the Ministry of Work.⁸⁴⁶

Eventually child welfare also began to use the professional expertise of psychologists more routinely, as we can see from the conclusive report of the 1968 Child Welfare Conference, which touched on the basic ideology behind these concerns. Not only was it dangerous to “leave children alone” if the Party really wanted everyone to turn into a good socialist, but also families needed to be “fit for the children”.⁸⁴⁷ Child Guidance (CG) centres were thus now officially sanctioned as effective institutions for dealing with the issues of education and adaptation that were now clearly seen to be psychological. The existing laws gave ample opportunities, the report argued, for the authorities to eliminate any “demoralisation of children”. CG in particular, with its therapeutic ideas combined with a rational education, would provide softer methods to help with (re)socialisation.⁸⁴⁸ This strong mandate to change matters was also highlighted by Dr. Lajos Székely at the Budapest Pedagogic Conference in 1967.⁸⁴⁹ Emphasising the role of CG Centres, Székely noted that CG had already been part of the system of child protection since 1963, when the Ministry of Culture had decreed that the guardianship authorities could force parents to contact a child psychologist. Clearly this needed to be implemented more often.⁸⁵⁰

3.3 Therapy for children and education for families

3.3.1 Burden of the past

Child welfare had also been assessed back in 1959 by the Operative Committee of the OGYIT. This report on the “problems and institutions related to

⁸⁴⁴ Ibid., 7.

⁸⁴⁵ A Pszichológia helyzete hazánkban..., 306–307.

⁸⁴⁶ Ibid, 261–261, 306–307; see also: Bodor (et.al.) 1997, 39. Applied work psychology was one of those rare fields that enjoyed some institutional continuity over the break caused by Stalinism. Also scientific work psychological studies on the nature of factory and workshop “milieu”, work movements (munkamozgások), and adaptation problems started rather early, in 1953. However, the conditions of research were harsh, and the early initiatives were realised only because there were some influential people who could notice the possible value of psychological research - despite the general disinterest. According to Csirszka, one of these was László Csillag, the acting head of the Methodical Institute at the Office for Labour Reserves (*Munkaerő-Tartalékok Hivatal*).

⁸⁴⁷ Fővárosi gyermek és ifjúságvédelmi munkaértekezlet 1968, 1–2.

⁸⁴⁸ Ibid., 6.

⁸⁴⁹ Organised by the educational department of the Budapest Party Council.

⁸⁵⁰ Székely 1967, 197–198.

endangered children” is interesting, because it would pave the way for the institutional role of psychology in future child and family policies, and it seems to reflect some of the transformations that occurred after 1956.⁸⁵¹ The report began by saying that after “liberation” (*felszabadulás*) in 1945, the state gradually took over the tasks of child welfare from other “social bodies” (i.e., the Church, for example), to “show just how important child protection was in building a just socialist society”, and it did this in the adversity of post-war economic and social deprivations.

The [experience of] two world-wars, especially of the latter one which we lived as an immediate theatre of war, destroyed the nerves and weakened the morals of so many people, that in its footsteps there was an endemic level of addiction, perversity, mental illness, and pathological criminality.⁸⁵²

This self-criticism, which was careful to blame the war for any failures of the ruling elite, was still an implicit appeal to the authorities. Before the communist dictatorship, there had been active state and civil society initiatives in the fields of child welfare and mental health - e.g., the *Nemzeti Segélyakció* (National Help).⁸⁵³ From 1945-1947, a national network of “centres for child psychology” (*Gyermeklélektani állomás*) began to be set up by the state, but already by 1949 this initiative came up against the more important concerns of a dictatorial command economy.⁸⁵⁴

But by the end of the '50s it was about time to revive those plans for child welfare. The immediate postwar years had been hard times for mental health services because there were other more pressing concerns like tuberculosis. Just to secure the physical well-being of the infants and children was a challenging task in itself. As Pál Avár (a former official from the Ministry of Health) recalled in an interview in the early '80s, even if these priorities were fulfilled and there

⁸⁵¹ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1959/7. ő.e./MSZMP KB Tudományos és Kulturális Osztály. "OGYIT" operatív bizottsága jelentése. A "veszélyeztetett" gyermekekkel kapcsolatos problémák és intézmények.

⁸⁵² *Ibid.*, 1.

⁸⁵³ Founded on 9 January 1945, "National Help" helped organise basic food and shelter for children and played a key role in establishing "social political committees" in municipalities. These were considered the basic unit for "democratic social politics". Psychologists and educational experts, such as Júlia György and Emmi Pikler, also contributed to National Help. See Révész 2007, 10-11.

⁸⁵⁴ Centres for child psychology were seen as very promising by experts in the field at the time - as evidenced in the first issue of the journal "Man of the Future" (*A Jövő Embere*). This was to be published in 1948, but was at the last minute censored. Luckily, the manuscripts were preserved, and published in 1995. See "Egy meg nem jelent folyóirat - a Jövő Embere." *Thalassa* 6 (1995), 1-2; 222-277: 233-234, 248. The journal was going to be a forum for the Association of Mental Health Protection (LESZ), which grouped together progressive professionals from a number of fields. The project also had the support of top politicians and those in charge of science policy (such as László Rajk, Gyula Ortutay, Albert Szent-Györgyi, and István Rusnyák). Of these, the politician László Rajk was infamously hanged after a show trial in 1949. Meanwhile, another former proponent of LESZ, psychiatrist István Bálint, started working for the secret police (ÁVO), and even participated in the Rajk trial.

was something left over for mental health, it would get “used for something else” anyway (by the planning bureaucrats).⁸⁵⁵

Indeed, a report produced by the Ministry of Health shows that the difficulties with fighting tuberculosis were still a grave concern for the authorities even in 1960. Hungary had certainly “inherited” this problem (*igen súlyos örökség*), but this was not going to make it go away. The main problem was that, unlike in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria, Hungary had no long-term plan for fighting the disease. In Bulgaria, for example, the mortality figures had been worse than in Hungary in 1951, but by 1960 Bulgaria had fewer deaths from the disease than Hungary. Medical technologies had greatly improved, the vaccination was obligatory, and the death-rate had gone down, and yet tuberculosis was still thought of as a national disease.⁸⁵⁶

The situation for mental health was further aggravated by the prevailing cultural and moral attitudes towards the mentally ill. For instance, during the early '50s, managers of general hospitals were eager to establish mental health departments because their state-determined budgets were based on the number of beds. Hence, they established big departments for the “insane”, but just to get the funding, so that the resources thus received were then transferred to departments for ‘normal’ patients. In other words, money was gained at the expense of treating the mentally ill, who were sometimes literally ripped off so they did not have even the basic necessities (like clothes).⁸⁵⁷

This systemic underfunding of mental health care was compounded by a general disregard for the importance of psychological factors in the social well-being of people. This mindset needed to be changed. This was done in the OGYIT report by referring to the ideological distortions of the Stalinist past with regard to childcare and family policies, and acknowledging that socialism had, as yet, failed to eliminate the “nests of misery” where prostitution, alcoholism, and criminality prevailed. They had not *automatically* disappeared in the course of Marxist-Leninist historical progress.

According to the report, the gravity of the situation at the end of the '50s was not only caused by overcrowding in the hospitals, but also the “borderline mentally ill” (*elmebaj-határesetek*), chronic alcoholics, and others who suffered from “serious psycho-neuroses” who were not being treated in institutions. This needed to be rectified as these groups were still living in “families and

⁸⁵⁵ Bakonyi 1983, 99.

⁸⁵⁶ HU-MNL MKS 288 f. 33/1960/28 ő.e./MSZMP KB Tudományos és Kulturális Osztálya. Egészségügy. Előterjesztés a Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt Központi Bizottsága titkárságához. A tbc. elleni küzdelem továbbfejlesztése, 1-3. Apparently 130,000 people fell sick yearly, which was a severe burden for the national economy. Long-term plans to combat TB were introduced in 1960 by the Hungarian government, following the lead of Bulgaria (1951), Czechoslovakia (1955), and Poland (1959).

⁸⁵⁷ Bakonyi 1983, 88. As Avár recalls, while inspecting the situation in one hospital in Szombathely, he witnessed crazy women “running around” with bare breasts. It was explained, that this was allowed to happen because they would tear off their lingerie anyway. It was found out, however, that in the storage there were plenty of lingerie. Because of the low status of mental health, the general doctor explained, he not dared to ask for these, thinking that they should be preserved for the “more elegant fields”.

workplaces”,⁸⁵⁸ and because of their “high degree of irritability (*ingerlélenység*) and [often] paranoid personalities they poisoned the atmosphere around them”.⁸⁵⁹ In light of the source material used in this research, it is impossible to verify the actual number of such borderline cases or alcoholics, and it is worth asking what kind of everyday situations were being possibly hidden behind these conceptualisations. For instance, had these people who were “poisoning” the atmosphere been labelled as such because of something they had done, or for genuine medical reasons?

Be that as it may, the report warned that these people were endangering the mental health of whole families (e.g., “let us only consider the educational atmosphere caused by these parents”); not to mention causing accidents in the workplace, with their “carelessness and unruliness”. Indeed, these people were seen to be one reason for the apparently high divorce rate - it was noted that 80% of the “psychologically damaged” children receiving psychotherapy in the country had experienced parental divorce or “family conflict”.⁸⁶⁰ Following this cue, the report then homed in on the subject of violence in families. Brutal methods of upbringing were explained as being partly due to adults’ own mental traumas, and partly due to conservative educational ideas leftover from the past. These old-fashioned ideas could be found both in these families and among teachers who were poorly educated, and it was stressed that the practice of corporal punishment had consequently “spread at an alarming rate”. The authors urged that this be fought against in every possible way, via both pedagogical and “political” education, as well as “administrative means” to intervene in family life when necessary.⁸⁶¹

In essence, the report coalesced around two ideas. The first was that children “should not be simply kept alive, but in good physical and mental health too”. The second was that it was the duty of the paternalist state to “monitor” possible dangers for children thought to be “in every way defenceless” against the environment and to intervene when necessary.⁸⁶² The report recommended that trained psychologists be used to look deeper into such families, because the “wounds” were not always visible “on the surface”; and although there were a lot of untrained “social activists” in the field, the institutions which employed them were urged to support them with up-to-date expertise. Most importantly, the system of child welfare supervisors was to make use of and be controlled by CG experts.⁸⁶³

Basically, child welfare supervisors were ‘social workers’ at a time when the title itself was a taboo for political reasons. The system was established in

⁸⁵⁸ That these mental cases were in fact living among the normal people (*bent élnek*) was underlined by the authors of the report as a threatening fact.

⁸⁵⁹ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1959/7. ő.e./MSZMP KB Tudományos és Kulturális Osztálya. “OGYIT” operatív bizottsága jelentése. A “veszélyeztetett” gyermekekkel kapcsolatos problémák és intézmények, 1.

⁸⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁸⁶² *Ibid.*

⁸⁶³ *Ibid.*, 2–3.

1957 basically to control deviant families and fight against youth crime.⁸⁶⁴ In practice, as Horváth notes, the usual task of these social workers was to visit and assess families, to produce “environmental statements”, and to take children out of contexts deemed to be dangerous (because of alcoholism or mental illness, for example), and to place them in children’s homes under custody of the state.⁸⁶⁵ The report stated that there were 55 child welfare supervisors in Budapest at the time; and that from the autumn of 1957 to the end of 1958, a total of 21,369 families had been checked, and 5436 children (age 6-14) deemed in need of placing elsewhere. Of these, 2563 were placed under state custody, but the report went on to estimate that there were about 10,000 children (in Budapest) who - for “reasons partly economic and partly related to morality and health” - should also have been taken out of their parents care.

But there were both qualitative and quantitative obstacles to doing this. The OGYIT report recommended that the number of welfare supervisors be doubled and looked more closely at how local guardianship authorities (*gyámügy*) were working with them. Its conclusion was that it had been a “mistaken decision” for guardianship offices to be working under the auspices of the administrative department of local councils, as the workers in *gyámügy* treated children’s cases in a very bureaucratic (*gépies*) and “inhuman” manner. The reason for this, it was argued, was because their work morality was low since they were poorly paid, and that often they did not even know the relevant law. The result was that children’s social and economic backgrounds were often not checked thoroughly enough. The result was that phenomena such as alcoholism, broken families, or developmental issues in the child’s character were not taken into account. Naturally, this resulted in children being placed in unsuitable environments, and could have been one of the reasons why children’s homes were in such a poor state.

One solution proposed to resolve this was to carefully categorise children under state custody according to their individual life-situations. The decision to take children out of their families was often done too quickly as well. For instance, why was it when it was the father who was alcoholic, that the child had to be removed and suffer? The state could perhaps take the father into custody instead and cure him of his alcoholism by rehabilitating him with work and proper medication in “human conditions”, and support the mother left alone with the children.⁸⁶⁶ In short, from the psychologists’ perspective, the guardianship authority in their daily practice manifested a blatant disregard of the child-centred ideas that they advocated.

More child psychotherapists were also needed, as the few existing clinics were severely overburdened. Forward-thinking preventive care for mental health was also advocated, so that as early as possible, the expert group of psychologists and psychiatrists could evaluate cases before it was too late. However, in the current situation this would have been impossible as there

⁸⁶⁴ Horváth 2012, 60.

⁸⁶⁵ The socialist solution had been to gradually let the network of foster parents atrophy and to build up the system of state care on the basis of children’s homes.

⁸⁶⁶ A “veszélyeztetett” gyermekekkel kapcsolatos problémák..., 7-11.

were only four CG centres in the whole of Budapest, so this needed to be fixed.⁸⁶⁷ To support this, the OGYIT defined child psychotherapy and CG work as “one of the most important institutions” to support in special care. The first-hand experience of child supervisors would be vital in this task, because they would have experienced the life situations of the children in question firsthand. Interestingly, the writers of the report found it necessary to buttress their argument for establishing child therapy institutions with reference to the USSR where, it was noted for example, that there were 2-3 children’s ‘polyclinics’ in every district of Moscow. These operated independently from the school system, and specifically addressed issues of child psychiatry and child psychology.⁸⁶⁸

3.3.2 Child guidance centres

In March 1968, the popular Hungarian women’s magazine *Nők lapja* informed its readers about the CG centre that had been running in the 15th district of Budapest for the past 10 years. According to Lajos Székely, the psychologist writing the article, the aim of the centre was to prevent the “corruption” of otherwise healthy, but socially maladjusted children.⁸⁶⁹ Székely also used this opportunity to point out how the general level of psychological civilisation in the country had suffered under Stalinism, as there was still a hostile attitude to it among Hungarian teachers. Not only had psychology been “taboo” in the ’50s, but “even mentioning the term was forbidden” he wrote, and this basically meant a whole generation of teachers had missed out. It seemed odd to Székely that training was needed “to know how to drive a lorry, but not to know how to best mould people’s minds”.⁸⁷⁰

The article recounted how in 1967-1968 the network of CG centres had been incorporated into the official state socialist system of paternalist control and care,⁸⁷¹ and how in 1968 professional guidelines for CG work had been drawn up under the leadership of Péter Popper (see 3.1.4). At the same time the Budapest Party Council ordered obligatory psychological school maturity tests be carried out in these centres,⁸⁷² and for the relationship between those

⁸⁶⁷ CG clinics were functioning in a number of places: the ICP; the 1st Children’s Clinic at the Budapest University of Medicine; and on Nyár and Tréfort Streets in Budapest. According to Annabella Horányi, the psychoanalysts Péter Popper, Gábor Paneth, and Zsuzsa Gerő held weekly psychotherapeutic surgeries (of 2-4 hours each) on the premises of the HNF towards the end of the ’50s. Interview with Annabella Horányi: 17th September 2013.

⁸⁶⁸ A “veszélyeztetett” gyermekekkel kapcsolatos problémák..., 5.

⁸⁶⁹ *Nők Lapja* 30.3.1968.

⁸⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷¹ Horányi & Kósáné Ormai 1988; Haney 2002, 119-130.

⁸⁷² According to the 1968 guidelines, the basic building blocks of CG work were seen to be (i) teamwork; (ii) combining therapy with diagnostics; and (iii) combining psychology with education. As Lynne A. Haney notes, the significance of CG centres was demonstrated by the fact that every child was obliged to go through a psychology maturity test straight after preschool or kindergarten. Thus all families got involved, at least in principle, and often those children who would need more attention were detected earlier thanks to the test. See: Haney 2002, 120.

working in child protection and the experts giving these tests be more clearly defined. In 1967, the child welfare supervisors (*ifjúságvédelmi felügyelők*) had been asked to check that psychologists' recommendations were actually being followed by adults. In the working session for child and youth protection organised by the educational department of Budapest Party Council, it was stressed that CG centres were essential institutions for the task of preventive child protection.⁸⁷³

Székely was a founding psychologist of the CG centre that was already running in the 15th district of Budapest. Based on his own experience, he emphasised the voluntary, unpaid nature of the work at this early phase in the rehabilitation of psychology. One of the central organisers of Hungarian CG, Annabella Horányi, has also drawn attention to the role of informal networking based on the agency of voluntary experts. Trained in psychoanalysis, Horányi became active in the field of CG at the end of the '60s, and contributed her own specialist knowledge to the network in the '70s. Horányi claims the roots of the modern Hungarian CG movement go back to the end of the '50s, when the need to professionalise child welfare was recognised at the local level.⁸⁷⁴ Her claim is supported by the archival documents - two child welfare supervisors wrote to the educational department at the 15th district of Budapest in 1960, to ask for the establishment of half or full-time CG posts. They did this because they were aware that in their own work with "difficult children" (*nehezen nevelhető gyermekek*) and their families, their judgements were largely "instinctual" and not based on any scientific or psychological facts.⁸⁷⁵ And indeed psychologists (and psychologically informed educators and doctors) were responding to this on the local level by voluntarily organising CG clinics in several districts of Budapest.⁸⁷⁶

By 1960, establishing child guidance was now high on the Ministry of Health's agenda. There was an urgent need to develop the "perspectives of psychology" in the country, and to educate cadres so that they could quickly become qualified. In this context it was mentioned that the Ministry was currently in the process of planning for the national network of "educational centres" (*gyermeknevelési tanácsadó*) to be integrated with the country's national health system.⁸⁷⁷ This is not to say, however, that these official plans conflict with Horányi's claim about local initiatives playing a part in the birth of modern Hungarian CG. Rather, her point about the significance of informal

⁸⁷³ Fővárosi Gyermekek és Ifjúságvédelmi munkaértekezlet, 1967.

⁸⁷⁴ Interview with Annabella Horányi: 17 September 2013.

⁸⁷⁵ Horányi & Hoffmann 1999, 59–60.

⁸⁷⁶ Interview with Annabella Horányi: 17 September 2013. It is important to note that psychology taught at university level in socialist Hungary only really began in the early '60s. Thus it is somewhat problematic to talk about psychologists from earlier as being educated professionals in the modern sense. Their training mostly consisted of CG work they had done back in the '30s and '40s. In my research, I have not had the scope, however, to focus on the social and intellectual background of those who were active in these institutions.

⁸⁷⁷ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 33/1961/28 ő.e. MSZMP KB Tudományos és Kulturális Osztálya. MTA/Akadémiai pártcsoport. Jelentés az MTA Pszichológiai Bizottság munkájáról, 5.

local agency could be complemented with Greg Eghigian's notion, based on research in the context of the GDR, about deviance being "a set of concerns, investigations and remedies co-produced at the same time as politics and policies".⁸⁷⁸ The point he makes is that the field should not be construed simply as a direct response to party-political directives. Besides home-grown professional and political interests in the country, there was also a deeply human concern about children being mistreated, abused, and displaced.

In fact, child welfare was the first field of social care to adopt professional psychology in socialist Hungary after 1956; and it was in child psychology that the methods of modern clinical psychotherapy were introduced for the first time. Horváth has shown in his research on the reinvention of social politics under Kádár that this might be because child and youth protection issues were seen as an urgent priority after the catastrophe of 1956. However, there is an interesting paradox here, as Horváth also notes that the psychology profession - at least in the beginning - had "such a low status, if any at all", that "even some former 56-ers" could find a job in the sector.⁸⁷⁹

For the more critical intellectuals, child guidance also offered the chance to find out more about the social realities of life in Hungary at this time. For example, György Konrád based his first novel, *The Case-Worker*, on his seven year-experience as a child welfare supervisor in the 7th district of Budapest.⁸⁸⁰ Others started their careers in CG centres and went on to become active in unofficial (and illegal) social care organisations in the '70s and '80s. Many of those who raised their voice politically in 1956, later channelled their political desires into depoliticised professionalism under the Kádár regime. It thus seems reasonable to suppose that during the '60s many critical intellectuals found meaningful roles and possibilities for "reconstructing" their identities as experts in those fields which resonated with them politically and yet could also be expressed in terms of being needed by the socialist state. Perhaps it was precisely because child welfare had such a low status early on under Kádár, that CG centres were places where psychoanalytic views on therapy could be promoted more freely within the socialist framework (but only at the local

⁸⁷⁸ Eghigian 2008, 43–46.

⁸⁷⁹ Horváth 2012, 61–62. Gertrud Hoffmann, for instance, had a seminal role in setting up the network of CG centres. In an autobiographical note, she describes how her motives for helping children were rooted in her own experiences of being traumatised by Nazism. Hoffmann's parents were sent to concentration camp and in the Jewish ghetto she was obliged to work in a factory as a teenager. During the Szálasi putsch she ran away and went hiding to a boathouse at Duna, then with friends and acquaintances. Her mother and sister died in Auschwitz, and only her father survived. Kőrösi & Molnár 2003, 27–28.

⁸⁸⁰ Konrád 1976/1969. Basically the book is a pessimistic story about a child welfare worker who becomes disillusioned with a system that categorises and controls its "clients" but tragically fails to improve their situation. The book somewhat resembles Chekhov's story "Ward No. 6", about a psychiatric hospital in imperial Russia. In that story, provincial physician Andrei Ėfimych Ragin shows too much empathy with a mentally ill patient and this leads the people in the town to question his sanity. For Ragin, it was better to adapt to the "deviant's role", because the diagnosis (label) given by society was static. See: Reich 2010, 278–280. Konrád's main character shares Ragin's pessimism: as soon as the individual gets entangled with and enters into the (psychiatric) system, he is "as good as diagnosed".

level). After all, neurosis was still not considered a mental illness by the biologically oriented psychiatric and neurological science policymakers in Hungary at this time.⁸⁸¹

In this chapter, the CG (child guidance) discourse and its various functions within Hungarian socialism will be studied in the light of the public documents on child psychology produced for the purposes of CG. The texts are approached from first an educational perspective, and secondly a social one. I think the educational meaning of these documents lie not so much in how they were 'moulding' socialist citizens, but at how they were raising the overall awareness of psychology in Hungary; while the social aspect looks at what these documents say about the effects of the rapid post-war transformation to socialism. In this respect, we are looking at how the psychological consequences of difficult life-situations provided one outlet for criticising socialism without mentioning the forbidden word of "poverty".

The texts also reflect the wider changes in official ideology. By drawing attention to the incompleteness of socialist society, psychologists were indirectly shedding light on the flaws inherent in a dogmatic Marxist-Leninist view of historical process. Last but not least, the authors of these documents framed the discussions about the problems of child welfare in educational-psychological terms to enhance their status as *experts*. By making these knowledge-claims they were showing that they could use their diagnostic 'gaze' to solve important problems that were present in society, and that socialist society should be changed.⁸⁸²

* * *

Although the aim of this work is not to analyse conceptual or logical connections between socialist CG and its western counterparts, some issues related to the general discussion around the history of the CG movement should be briefly raised. Child guidance emerged in the US during the first decades of the 20th century, and came to serve as an important model globally. In the '20s it embodied the optimism related to the wider mental health movement, with an aim of spotting the behavioural and emotional problems in children as early as possible to prevent delinquency and mental illness.⁸⁸³ As Kathleen Jones notes, the emergence of CG in the US coincided with the flowering of child psychology research that was looking to find the physical and mental attributes of 'normality'. CG differed from developmental psychology in that it prioritised preventative psychological intervention at an early stage.⁸⁸⁴ In its early stages, American CG was mostly related to preventing

⁸⁸¹ Szőnyi & Tomcsányi 1985, 618; Buda (et.al.) 2009, See also: Bodor (et.al.) 1997, 27. As Buda notes, in all Eastern Europe neuropathological, biologically oriented psychiatry was in a hegemonic position during the Socialist period.

⁸⁸² For a critical view on expertise and professionalisation as explanative factors behind the emergence of psychological discourse in modern liberal states, see: Rose 1998, 84–87.

⁸⁸³ On the CG movement in the US, see: Jones 1999; Horn 1989.

⁸⁸⁴ Jones 1999, 4; see also: Rose 1999, 110.

delinquency, thus focusing especially on immigrants and poor children, with an added sensitivity to socioeconomic conditions. To this end, the clinics also actively networked with other institutions of child-help. As Jones notes, this “early stage” also allowed for rather eclectic interpretations and explanations of behaviour.

By the 1930s and '40s, American CG became more narrowly focused on psychodynamic theories for explaining the misconduct of basically “normal” children, which eventually resulted in a treatment program for both the parent and child. The experts successfully argued that every child was potentially threatened by psychological and emotional problems. Thus, mental health professionals were required to act as specialists in preventing these problems from arising. The problems were now conceptualised in terms of “maladjusted personalities”, or developmental patterns that might be able to explain behaviour later in life. As Nikolas Rose notes, this made the line between safety and danger quite narrow, since major problems could now arise from seemingly minor upsets if they were not handled early enough with due care by the expert.⁸⁸⁵

By the 1940s, the focus of intervention had thus moved away from the child and onto the adults in families (but within a therapeutic setting). In fact, as Kathleen Jones argues, it had got to such a point, that CG in the US had become synonymous with “mother-blaming”. Due to influential psychological theories, mothers were accused of either suffocating or rejecting their children by either being over-protective, or too cold respectively. Thus, CG was seen as a means to help mothers as much as their children, and as a “prerequisite for changing the troublesome behaviour of their sons and daughters”.⁸⁸⁶ As Rose notes, the idea of natural “biological unity” between mother and child became newly relevant in the 1940s after the uprooting and violence caused by WWII in Europe.⁸⁸⁷ Children were thus always seen to be potentially at risk from either flaws in mothering, or the coldness of institutions. The argument for there existing an “instinctual” bond between infants and mothers (promoted by such visible intellectuals as Bowlby, Spitz and Konrad Lorenz) was further informed by the rise of the “nuclear family” as the Cold War took shape.⁸⁸⁸

Jones also pays attention to the early precursors of the CG movement, such as the first juvenile court in the US. In 1899, this court applied medical and reformist thinking to its rulings concerning poor immigrant children. Indeed, even for the superintendents of late 19th century mental asylums, a “spoiled

⁸⁸⁵ Jones 1999, 3–4; Rose 1999, 159.

⁸⁸⁶ Jones 1999, 8–9. On the constitution of psychological expertise based on maternal bond, see Rose 1999, 155–181.

⁸⁸⁷ Rose 1999, 163.

⁸⁸⁸ As Marga Vicedo shows, the maternal bond - especially in the US - was also “nurtured” by the Cold War. To win the war was not only a matter of bombs but also about increasing the scientific understanding of human nature to control it. In this context, maternal emotions became politicised since parental roles were needed, it was argued, to stabilise democratic order. The background to this was that there were about three million men rejected from military service because they were considered emotionally unstable. See Vicedo 2012, 233–234.

child” implied an insane adult at home. In the eyes of the reform-minded lay people, it was rapid modernisation, urbanisation, and industrial stress that were to blame for otherwise “innocent” children breaking the law.⁸⁸⁹ Here, Jones shows that sociologists in the early 20th century realised that immigrant families (especially) experienced problems of cohesion, since traditional family values and community norms did not apply in the new American environment. Children were thus acting in confusing ways for the parents who saw the behaviour of their offspring as threatening.⁸⁹⁰

Referring to Jones, Greek historian Despo Kritsotaki has written that after WWII, modernisation in Greece paved the way for the introduction and dissemination of psychotherapy and CG ideas during the ‘50s and ‘60s, because children and teenagers seemed to be defying traditional community-based moral values by demanding more entertainment, consuming more material goods, and seeking new forms of sociality. The parents, however, had been socialised into another kind of family culture, and so they became confused.⁸⁹¹

In some ways, the case of Greece may bear some resemblance to the situation in Hungary. For a start, many of the phenomena facing family psychologists there also seemed to stem from social and cultural changes related to modernisation after the war. Secondly, Kritsotaki shows that the Greek state was for a long time not interested in policies based on mental hygiene and CG (as was the case in Hungary). Kritsotaki’s conclusion was also similar, in that Greek child welfare proved to be one arena where the psychological sciences could take precedence over “the pathological and the hospital”, working especially at the micro-level of the family.⁸⁹² Indeed, after WWII, CG centres were established all over Europe in different national and political contexts.⁸⁹³ What made Hungarian CG special (within this European context), was the central role that was given to psychological counselling. Within the framework of this counselling, psychotherapy was offered and efforts were made to maintain contact with the families and children local to each CG centre. The aim was to intervene with psychological diagnoses and treatments as early as possible to prevent future marginalisation from society. The basic premises for treatment were to combine diagnostics with therapy, and psychology with education.⁸⁹⁴

For example, child therapist Lucy P. Liebermann argued in several publications that Hungarian CG was an “applied form of therapy”, in which psychological diagnosis and therapy could rationally inform educational practice to find the best ways of intervening socially and economically in problematic family environments. For instance, in the article she published in *Hungarian Psychological Review* (1964), her aim was clearly to rearticulate the

⁸⁸⁹ Jones 1999, 15–17. On the “normalisation” of childhood sexuality, and on the body of the child as a vehicle for rational control and management of the future health of the population, see Egan & Hawkes 2009.

⁸⁹⁰ Jones 1999, 120–121.

⁸⁹¹ Kritsotaki 2014, 763.

⁸⁹² *Ibid.*, 758–759.

⁸⁹³ See, for example: Feeney 2012; Kritsotaki 2014

⁸⁹⁴ Kende 2008, 347; Horányi & Kósané Ormai 1988.

concept of CG so that it would both correspond to the holistic nature of psychological practice it was meant to denote, and be a weapon in the fight to rehabilitate the professional reputation of therapy and modernise conservative (biologically based) views of it. At this time, Liebermann was working at the 1st Children's Clinic in the hospital of the Budapest Medical University, and according to her, individual personality was a complex result of biological, social, and psychological developments. It was thus not conceivable to think of therapy as a form of persuasion or some kind of counselling that could be done by "any dilettante".⁸⁹⁵

With this in mind, she redefined the concept of *nevelési tanácsadás* (educational counselling on raising children) so that it would come closer to the Anglo-American concept of child guidance - i.e., encompassing the professional expertise provided by medicine, psychiatry, psychology, and social work together - rather than continue following the 'dilettante' German model of *erziehungsberatung*. In the same vein, she underlined that therapy should actually provide a wider perspective on society and indicate what was needed for adequate care. Indeed, these needs were acute with society changing in structure, and the traditional Hungarian family in "crisis" due to the emancipation of women and their integration into the workforce. This transformation had not been "without pain", and marriages and children would suffer, Liebermann professed.⁸⁹⁶

Meanwhile, Lynne Haney has a similar approach to Jones who effectively historicises child guidance by prioritising the social context of its historical development. Jones suggests that the psychological understanding of problem children eventually happened when all those people who participated in defining and forming the day-to-day clinical practice shared their ideas. This not only meant the experts (psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers), but also the parents, and the children themselves whatever the social class. Jones' approach, which Haney supports, is that most historical studies simply focus on the "intrusive power" of the experts, and tend to forget that CG should be seen as the intersection where all the different actors and social forces involved with the emotional life of the child were able to interact.⁸⁹⁷ In the case of 1960s Hungary, these would have included socialist welfare paternalism, child welfare supervisors, newly rehabilitated psychologists, and families, mothers, and children.

Indeed Haney recounts that during the '60s, Hungarian population policies followed the pronatalist path common in Eastern Europe, but the policies differed from others in two major respects. First, instead of focusing primarily on large families, Hungarian demographers proposed policies based on incentives for all mothers. Second, while the general policy in Eastern

⁸⁹⁵ Liebermann 1964, 583.

⁸⁹⁶ Ibid, 582-584.

⁸⁹⁷ Jones 1999, 4-7.

Europe was to simply encourage childbearing (i.e., introducing birth grants and subsidies), Hungarian policymakers centred more on child-rearing.⁸⁹⁸

In her research, Haney introduced the term “maternalist welfare state” to describe the policy-changes brought about in the '60s via the agency of, and productive encounter between, the expert discourses of demographers, economists, and psychologists.⁸⁹⁹ The demographers were worried about low birth rates, alcoholism, and suicide; and they criticised Stalinism for the overemphasis on ‘production at the price of reproduction’. Meanwhile, the economists were anxious, on the eve of the New Economic Mechanism, about how the reforms would affect unemployment in what was supposed to be a ‘workers’ state’; since the NEM would give companies more autonomy to hire and fire workforce.

In this maternalist welfare context, Haney suggests the Hungarian child guidance centres created an institution of support and control, which basically focused on mothers. It seems this aspect of CG was officially acknowledged too, judging from the fact that the state introduced significant child-rearing redistribution mechanisms for mothers by the end of the '60s. The first of these was the “child care grant” (*gyermekgondozási segély*, GYES), followed later by the discretionary “special child-rearing relief” (*rendkívüli nevelési segély*, RNS); and in both cases, expertise was needed to ensure the proper allocation of these resources. According to Haney, the discretionary nature of RNS produced “good mother” and “bad mother” labels among family workers, guardianship authorities, and psychologists, as they focused their attention on the rationality of mothers’ housekeeping and educational skills.⁹⁰⁰

Meanwhile, in Sándor Horváth’s opinion, the initial need for CG centres was primarily part of the struggle against “hooliganism”. Indeed, already by the end of 1961, when CG was still a voluntary organisation, one of the members on the Budapest City Council’s VB expressed his enthusiasm for these centres.

Partly because of these institutions we do not have to talk about hooliganism or gangs [...] new gangs are not formed anymore because of the well-organised preventive work.⁹⁰¹

3.3.3 Reinventing psychoanalysis in East Central Europe

In Hungary, there has been a long tradition of child psychology and psychoanalysis, often with a close connection to practical social applications. In the first decades of the 20th century, Hungarian child research, most visibly

⁸⁹⁸ In most cases, population policies in post-1956 Hungary targeted families, and emphasised the reproductive role of women. Hence, although the strict anti-abortion law (1953) was repealed in 1956, there was still a “conservative” emphasis to socialist ideology at this time with regards to the family. Romania was the strictest in its anti-abortion policies, but in Hungary, too, a rather strict anti-abortion law was introduced in 1973. See: Haney 2002, 93; Bicskei 2006, 160–161; Valuch 2005, 35.

⁸⁹⁹ Haney 2002, 94.

⁹⁰⁰ Haney 2002, 99–112.

⁹⁰¹ Cf. Horváth 2012, 61.

represented by László Nagy, went on to develop in a larger continental context and was influenced by French (and Swiss) functionalist psychology with its educational and future-oriented emphases. Along the way, it also picked up some influences from American child research at this time. By the 1940s, child psychologists such as Ferenc Mérei strongly believed that scientific knowledge on children could be used to positively influence their development and ultimately the development of society.⁹⁰²

In Hungary, child psychology counselling (*Nevelési tanácsadás*) dates back to 1902, when the Hungarian Royal Psychological Laboratory was established by experimental psychologist Pál Ranschburg (with private funds) for the research and treatment of both “normal” children and those with “weak talents”. The work in Ranschburg’s laboratory was oriented towards practical applications, and from 1908 onwards, it was managed by the state - thus becoming the direct predecessor of the Institute for Psychology within the MTA.⁹⁰³ In 1929, an educational career counselling centre (*Állami Gyógypedagógiai Nevelési és Pályaválasztási Tanácsadó*) was established there by special educator János Schnell. The centre also provided consultation for mothers, and focused on children with special needs. In 1934, the Ministry of Religion and Public Education reorganised the counselling centre, and changed its name to the Hungarian Royal Institute for Child Psychology. This change of name acknowledged a widening of scope to include not only “psychopathic” children but also those with behavioural or speech disorders who were otherwise biologically healthy.⁹⁰⁴ One special feature of the Institute - the only one of its kind in Hungary at the time - was that diagnosis and treatment was free for poorer parents and their children. Now that it was organised into separate departments, the institute cooperated with schools, practised therapy, and gave lessons to parents (*Szülők iskolája*). Significantly, many of those who later set out to revolutionise the field of child psychology in the socialist period were working in this Institute (e.g., Imre Molnár, Margit Hirsch, Blanka S. Lóránd, and Ferenc Mérei).

From the end of the '20s, CG centres were founded in Hungary within various children’s clinics and hospitals by different actors with different intellectual and political agendas, such as the League of Child Protection (*Gyermekvédeő Liga*, est. 1906), the Hungarian Association of Individual Psychology, and the Hungarian Psychoanalytic Association in Budapest.⁹⁰⁵

⁹⁰² Mérei’s work was paradigmatic, because in his research with children he aimed at showing that there was no such thing as an abstract child who somehow becomes ‘knowable’ in laboratory conditions. As Pléh writes, for Mérei the communist, ‘pedology’ was the mediating link between empirical knowledge on children, and educational policy and practice. Thus, it was not simply a case of offering ready-made educational ‘directives’ for the school or kindergarten. Instead, psychologists should endorse the rich diversity of educational practice among children and avoid the distortions which would inevitably happen if the experimental situation was extended to real-life situations. See Pléh 2010, 272–273, 463.

⁹⁰³ Pataki & Koncz 1993, 99–100.

⁹⁰⁴ Horányi & Kósáné Ormai 1988.

⁹⁰⁵ Marius Turda points out that the League of Child Protection was established to protect orphans in 1906, and was influenced by the nationalist-hereditary discourse

Several of those who appear in this research began their careers in CG: Pál Gegesi Kis and Lucy P. Liebermann cooperated from 1938 onwards in the CG centre of the 1st Children's Clinic at the Budapest Medical University; and Júlia György (1898-1977), one of the most important personalities in the Hungarian mental health movement, led an institute for "morally abused" children at the Apponyi Clinic in Budapest in the '30s. As a Jew, she was forced to resign from her job in 1939, but soon got herself involved in child welfare institutions financed by the National Hebrew Patronage Association (*Országos Izraelita Patronázs Egyesület*). It was an institution for orphaned, poor and "ill-mannered" children, for which she organised a children's clinic and a career counselling service.

As already mentioned, Central European theories of psychoanalysis prevailed in Hungary, in spite of years of anti-semitism, deportations, war, and the marginalisation of psychoanalysis under a one-party dictatorship. However, Pál Harmat has convincingly shown that the official discourse of communist ideologues, often supported by a biologically oriented psychiatric establishment,⁹⁰⁶ would label psychoanalysis in sometimes very crude and uninformed terms right up to the '70s. There were many who doubted the validity of psychoanalysis, and campaigns against it were launched regularly. Some Marxist intellectuals criticised the psychologisation (or making into a "myth") of what should have been, in their opinion, essentially understood as modern capitalist alienation - and nothing more.⁹⁰⁷

If we now turn towards the discourse at the local level however, it becomes easier to see how the psychoanalytic movement found plenty of room for manoeuvre in post-Stalinist Hungary. It should be clear by now that relying on the 'obligatory' public ideological discourse as the only source for historical

popular at that time, which was concerned about the future of the Hungarian "race". For more on the combination of health and nationalism in wartime, see Turda 2009, 238-264. It is tempting to draw connections between the early Hungarian CG movement and this concern that the future Hungarian "race" would "degenerate"; yet there is little research on this, even though notions of eugenics and mental hygiene were circulating around Europe and post-Trianon Hungary in the early 20th century.

⁹⁰⁶ This is a very under-researched topic, and as such it is not possible to state here with any certainty how scientific, political, and intellectual thinking among Hungarian psychiatrists developed during the transition to socialism, and then during it.

⁹⁰⁷ See, for example: Hermann 1967 & 1968; Farkas 1968. István Herrmann was a follower of György Lukács, who was traditionally known for his anti-psychological views. For Hermann, the first problem of Freud was that the sick human being seemed to be the key to his understanding of human beings in general. As this clinical practice grew to be a "world-explanation", reality became "mythologized". In fact, Hermann argued, a sick nervous system was "the opposite of the human psyche". His reading of Freudianism - which seemed to apply to all other psychoanalysis which emerged afterwards too - was that it made society the enemy of "certain areas of the human mind". Furthermore, he argued that Freud was wrongly separating the subconscious from the processes of history and society; which was false universalism. Hermann believed humans could intentionally "change their instincts" to meet the necessary "historical level of development", but for the bourgeois world (as Freudianism clearly seemed to indicate) they did not know seem to know how to cope with any "antisocial tendencies. See Hermann 1968, 41-44.

discussion would seem rather naïve, to say the least, since in reality it is quite possible that psychoanalysis (or at least “dynamic psychology”) was tolerated and perhaps even silently supported. Furthermore, the huge popularity of alternative, semi-official therapeutic initiatives, such as the so-called ‘group psychotherapy weekends’ mentioned earlier (see 2.5.1 above), should alert historians to take a firmly circumspect approach to the official discourse of the Hungarian one-party state. Another example of semi-official initiatives, briefly mentioned earlier (see 2.5.1 again) is the Budapest children’s clinic on Faludi Street, run by Júlia György, where it was made possible for CG workers to receive informal psychoanalytic training.⁹⁰⁸ This was clearly because of informal connections that she had with György Aczél (the foremost science politician in the country, see 2.3.1) - who had himself been an orphan - and had been György’s protégé before and during the war in the Jewish children’s home. They had in fact been close friends ever since then.⁹⁰⁹ This also reveals something perhaps about the productive role of informal negotiations and the somewhat ‘feudal’ ties in Hungarian socialism.

Haney herself noticed, when she was working on patient records from the Socialist era, that psychoanalytic ideas did get used in local child welfare practice. Classic Freudian concepts about childhood sexuality were included in the eclectic mix of therapeutic and diagnostic approaches used in CG centres. For example, in interpretations of some psychological tests, there were small children diagnosed with phallus-centred issues, such as “castration anxiety for boys and penis envy for girls”.⁹¹⁰ Furthermore, problems were often treated with a gendered bias. For example, boys who demonstrated inappropriate behaviour for males, i.e., having “bouts of crying” or “mood swings”, were sometimes diagnosed as being unable to view women sexually, or as suffering from “unbroken female identification” because of “over-protective mothers”. Indeed, this was almost a classic instance of “mother blame”.⁹¹¹ The task laid on psychologists was to further the social adaptation of children so they would follow the desired behavioural models - both cultural and social. It was hoped that the psychologist could put his expertise to use in this respect. For instance, in the case of a girl who happened to be “big, aggressive, and fearless”, she might have been consequently taught by the psychologist to tone down her behaviour; or, if a 14 year-old girl dressed improperly, she might be advised to dress in a more “socially desirable” way.⁹¹²

⁹⁰⁸ Harmat 2001, 413.

⁹⁰⁹ As revealed by psychiatrist Miklós Kun in an interview, the children’s home for poor, orphaned and “ill-mannered” boys was also the place where he first met Aczél. He would later become his friend and also his personal doctor; and Mérei worked there too. According to Kun, Mérei encouraged him to organise cultural seminars for the young, and to search for gifted young Jews and guide them to KISZ. One of these talented young Jews was Aczél. OHA, Dr. Kun Miklós (1908-2005) - Interjú 188, 53-54, 183-184.

⁹¹⁰ Haney 2002, 123.

⁹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 123-125.

⁹¹² *Ibid.*, 125.

There was only a handful of practising psychoanalysts in Hungary at the time. However, many of those who published papers on child psychology and came to work in CG centres were also analytically oriented and, as time went on, psychoanalytic ideas began to filter into local practices. For example, in 1971 the Budapest Party Council published a series of articles to be used in CG centres. And in one of them, Júlia György went as far as to define the development of personality in psychoanalytic terms.

The contemporary psychological standpoint is that the development of personality happens, on the one hand, by living through the inescapable conflict between the outer environment (*külvilág*) and instinctual forces (*ösztönerők*), and on the other hand, through the maturing process which inevitably (*törvényszerűen*) happens within the Self (*Én*), [as a consequence of which the Self] becomes stronger and more capable of reconciling the demands of the outer world with the inner.⁹¹³

György described the “higher layers” of the self as a dynamic and continuously evolving. In “normal” cases of development this could result in the harnessing and socialising of “instinctual impulses” (*ösztönimpulzusok*). She also noted that there were “brakes” in the self, that allowed one to be able to “study” both the “reality” of society, as well as its “morals”. Her emphasis was on how personalities adapted, and on trying to build a harmonious relationship between the self and society, so that if children took account of the demands and expectations of society, they were “adaptive”. If not, they were disobedient (*engedetlen*), and only a “bad kid” in this respect, not in any other.⁹¹⁴ This emphasis on adaptation was not just a basic premise of CG centres, it was also related to a particular human ideal about children. They should be able to live a successful life without “any kind of derailments”. This meant they would be psychologically “fit for life” (*életképes*) and thus prepared for the struggles to come in life (*harcképes*). Above all, they would hopefully become a “humane” personality (*emberséges ember*). For these ambitious aims to become reality, it was necessary that children be able to truly accept and emotionally internalise the norms of the environment.⁹¹⁵ This was not possible if the parents and adult world in general failed to create a safe environment.

Júlia György was an experienced authority on questions related to childhood deviance. The ideal personality features she listed seemed to resonate with the ideological imagery of socialist education, but they also carried a kind of universal truth concerning the rights of children. For György too, it was not a problem to cherish Makarenkoan community values at the same time as certain aspects of psychoanalysis. In her influential book entitled “Difficult Children” she thus not only discussed the importance of “collective education”, but also made it clear that a community (*közösség*) did not take shape without a conscious degree of “struggle” (*harc*). It needed to be built and refined, “step by step”. In her explanations, she also borrowed concepts from biology, and argued in a Makarenkoan manner that a true community was an

⁹¹³ György 1971, 15.

⁹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 15–16.

⁹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

“organic unit” which consisted of cells and organs. Of course, this involved describing the children as having strong emotional ties to their “fellow cells” (*sejttárs*) and, most importantly, to the “central governing organ”, the head of a school, a family, or a children’s home.⁹¹⁶ Thus it was not only about creating a safe atmosphere where the leader of the institution simply acted as a replacement for the missing mother or father, but it was also about actively promoting the feeling of togetherness and a sense of common aim among children. This, in her opinion, was essentially what Makarenko’s “proud community” was all about,⁹¹⁷ and she did not hesitate to point out his important legacy when she wrote “we cannot expect every educator to be a Pestalozzi, Aichhorn, Zulliger or Makarenko”, since their educational work were close to being “ingenious”, a real “work of art”. Like “artists”, however, they combined their “inborn intuition” with a systemised study of methods, and showed that education should be a conscious process guided by psychology. The gaze of the psychologist was therefore to be complemented with true empathy and a gift for making a contact.⁹¹⁸

As Csaba Pléh has noted, psychoanalytic ideas in Hungary were thus being articulated in the immediate context of child’s real social ties and connections, and this made it different from mainstream Freudianism.⁹¹⁹ Whereas Freud’s pessimistic message was that education would always have to rely on the use of force since antisocial urges were an inherent part of human nature, the Hungarian psychoanalytic tradition differed from the classical Freudian school in its educational optimism.⁹²⁰ Already in 1913, Sándor Ferenczi claimed that having a “sense of reality” and adapting to the social environment were not always in conflict with the “pleasure principle” (*élvezeti elv*).⁹²¹ This, in turn, encouraged the idea that education (seen as the “strengthening of morality”) should be based on “rational discretion” (*belátás*). In his text, Ferenczi took issue with the responsibilities of society. Being less hierarchical and aware of individual points of view, Ferenczi’s ideal was a society that would be “individualist-socialist”.⁹²² In educational interpretations

⁹¹⁶ György 1978/ 1965, 137. The primary aim of the book was to teach adults and educators on children’s mental hygiene.

⁹¹⁷ Ibid., 137–138.

⁹¹⁸ Ibid., 139–144, 147–152. György elaborated on Makarenko’s teachings further in her book. She criticised those who used Makarenko’s example in an ahistorical manner. For example, she stressed that although the early days of Makarenko’s commune were characterised by impoverished surroundings, this did not mean that modern socialist children would not benefit from beautiful, well-equipped children’s homes. She also wanted to correct the image of Makarenko as a proponent of military and physical discipline. For example, the famous incident of Makarenko slapping one badly behaving boy in the face had been wrongly taken out of context. According to György, physical punishment was plainly wrong and caused “frozen hate” in children. Makarenko, in turn, confessed that he been totally helpless in front of the boy, and had lost his temper.

⁹¹⁹ Pléh 2010, 463.

⁹²⁰ Vajda 1995.

⁹²¹ Cf. Vajda 1995.

⁹²² Ibid. In another article of Ferenczi, entitled “Psychoanalysis and Social Politics” (1922) (*Pszichoanalízis és a társadalompolitika*), the psychoanalyst presented himself as a proponent of a scientific world-view and argued for the relevance of psychology in

of Ferenczi's later works, the positive role of the social environment was given even more emphasis.

According to Vajda, the idea that society and human instinct are not necessarily at odds with each other was best exemplified in the works of Imre Hermann (who, as we saw earlier, theorised about the "clinging instinct"), and the Bálint-couple, Alíz and Mihály, who were followers of Ferenczi. For them, the child and the environment often formed a positive unity. Alíz even claimed that "nature" sometimes set limits for the instincts.⁹²³ Clearly, this implied a rather different stance than that proposed by the other Hungarian emigrant psychoanalyst, Melanie Klein.⁹²⁴ Although both Klein and other Budapest psychoanalysts underlined the role of the mother in child's personality development - again deviating from Freud's stress on Oedipus-complex and the father⁹²⁵ - the main difference lay in how the orientation of the child itself was conceptualised. For Klein infants were naturally greedy and aggressive, while according to Bálints they were not narcissistic, as from the first minutes of their existence they lived in a social environment and were oriented towards objects in the environment, albeit passively at first.

Indeed, it seems Bálints' approach to childhood psychology had more of an influence on the socialist CG practices of Liebermann and Alice Hermann than, for example, Klein's. Furthermore, the notion of children being inherently social (and thus educable and changeable) was to be a crucial ingredient in the socialist era child psychology of Lívia Nemes, Ágnes V. Binét, and particularly Ferenc Mérei, who all combined a psychoanalytic perspective with Henri Wallon's ideas on the development of the individual. In his influential book entitled "The Network of Hidden Communities", Mérei presented his ideas on "genetic social psychology". Arguing in the context of the dispute between Henri Wallon and Jean Piaget on the socialisation process of children, he wrote that the starting point of human development was not based on "egocentrism", with a system of gradually evolving social relations, but rather "unfolded" and crystallised from the "fog-cloud" (*gödgomoly*) of relationships, linkages, and

social politics. However, he explicitly denied that psychoanalysis could/should be used to support political fashions. If psychoanalysis was interested in politics, this was only because it saw political tendencies as a "manifestation of the psychological geography of man". According to Ferenczi, psychoanalysis appreciated neither individualist nor collectivist parties as being "representative of the true nature of man". Thus, he hoped that in the future an "individual-socialist" politics would emerge. This politics would put as great a value on individual happiness as on the happiness produced by social harmony. See Ferenczi 1922.

⁹²³ Vajda 1995, 8.

⁹²⁴ Melanie Klein moved to Britain because of anti-semitist legislation. Her influence was particularly felt in Britain and Latin America. Unlike Anna Freud, she supported the idea that psychoanalysis should be a universally used tool in child education. Theoretically, Klein's main position was to underline the role of the mother during the personality development of a small child. Klein also argued that mental illness can be detected and prevented during childhood. Doing this, she went further than Freud in theorising about early childhood experiences complicating psychological mechanisms, and distorting representations (of the mother), possibly even leading to schizophrenia. See Harmat 1986, 219-220.

⁹²⁵ Harmat 1986, 220.

orientations that were already nascent in a child's mind.⁹²⁶ In other words, children would gradually evolve to be (mature) individuals as long as they were surrounded by a network of (healthy) social relationships.

Regarding the theoretical basis of child welfare practices in the '60s and '70s, the situation in Hungary differed somewhat from the west. In the latter, the idea of a *natural* mother-child bond (that had been in vogue in the '40s and '50s) was increasingly coming under feminist attack, as it could also be used as a tool for legitimising the socially inferior position of women.⁹²⁷ Meanwhile, in Hungary the "maternalist welfare state" seemed to, on the contrary, crystallise the mother-child link in various CG practices. The focus was on the family as a functional unit, with the mother playing a crucial role; as we can see from a popular Hungarian child psychology guidebook of the period - *Gyermeklélektan* (1970). Perhaps the most significant message in this guidebook (written by Ferenc Mérei and Ágnes V. Binét) was the idea that each child had a "naïve" (*gyermeki*) world-view which was not determined by society or economics. In another context, in his introduction to the Hungarian translation of a book by Jean Piaget, Mérei expounded further on this concept of *gyermeki* by equating it with an aesthetic experience.

Our century discovered the child. As an object of education and a prefiguration of adults, the child has been the source of speculation for centuries, maybe even millennia. But it was only in our age when we discovered the *naïve* as a way of experiencing the world without ready-made templates. We have learned to love and understand the paintings of Chagall and Picasso. We have learned to know the nostalgic, lyrical atmosphere of the children's room of Proust and Cocteau. We feel happiness when we follow the development of our children - at times we also carry them on our backs like Indian mothers. We have tried to understand their traumas and shocks, and the manifestations of their strange cleverness. By this we have also recognised that the children's life-world (*élményvilág*) is a valid way of working on reality. We have also accepted that the childish way of being (*gyermeki lét*) is guided by its own laws [...]⁹²⁸

In *Gyermeklélektan*, the notion of the naïve could live side by side with the determinative role of the mother-child bond. Consequently, the importance of a "good mother" was accepted without question. "[A]mong the antisocial teenagers and criminal adults, the number of those who were raised without a mother or without a mother's love is conspicuous", Mérei and Binét both argued.⁹²⁹ Zsuzsa Schriffert notes also that, in spite of this cherishing the naïve, Mérei's and Binét's book stresses the problem of childhood deviance in almost every chapter, and looks for clues as to what leads to antisocial and criminal behaviour. In this respect, it is reasonable to suppose that 'bad behaviour' was

⁹²⁶ Mérei 1988/1971, 12-13. According to Mérei's genetic social psychology, human beings evolve to be an individual through the mediation of others. He then lays emphasis on Wallon's theory about the seminal role of the social environment which, from birth, makes man a social (*társas*) being. This was a tacit reference to Marx, who in the first part of *Das Kapital* writes about a man who "in the beginning sees himself in other men like in a mirror".

⁹²⁷ Rose 1999/1989, 180-181.

⁹²⁸ Cf. Lívía Nemes 2006, 69.

⁹²⁹ Mérei & V. Binét 1970, 17.

the context in which child psychology was invariably discussed in Hungary, and it may have even guided the ways in which psychological insights were expressed in the first place.

3.3.4 Educational missions and tragic encounters

Child guidance also provides a critical vantage point for looking at how certain aspects of social psychology were affecting society on the local level. Working with (and mediating between) parents, children, and different governmental and welfare authorities, provided reasons for critical discourse. This is visible in the case histories of individual children, where psychologists often described in emotional tones how the children had been abandoned by dysfunctional administrative institutions or cold and uncivilised parents. For psychologists, their treatment not only spoke volumes about the need for therapeutic intervention but also about the state of socialist society. The style of these narratives is at times very 'emotional', and they have a clear moralist tone.

In this respect, the writings of the analytically trained psychotherapist Nóra Németh are particularly pertinent.⁹³⁰ Németh worked in Liebermann's CG centre at the 1st Children's Clinic. In her texts, she presented highly tragic, emotionally loaded individual life-stories to promote her message about dysfunctional institutions and uncivilised methods of parental upbringing. In one of her case studies (from 1960), Németh told the story of a 6½ year-old girl ('Piroska') whose weight was under 9 kg when she was brought to the clinic. The small child eventually "withered away" both physically and psychologically, which according to her diagnosis was a consequence of severe "childhood depression".

Piroska lived in the countryside with two different foster families, and throughout her life she was supposed to have been monitored by the child protection authorities, yet somehow she nevertheless ended up being neglected. According to Németh, she was a "frightened" child who avoided human contact, and who had severe "psychosomatic" symptoms. In effect, she developed an eating disorder, and when she got into a stressful situation, she started to vomit.⁹³¹ In a rather detailed manner, the psychologist proceeded to narrate the story of Piroska's short life. The girl was born out of wedlock in 1953. Her biological mother was "a working-woman who led an immoral and decadent life" and already during her pregnancy had been "nervous". After the child was born, the mother was not able to breastfeed her and because of this, the daughter at only ten days of age was taken into state custody.⁹³² Both foster

⁹³⁰ Németh 1960, 1961 & 1962.

⁹³¹ Németh 1960, 653.

⁹³² *Ibid.*, 660. Towards the end of the story, the faith and moral character of the biological mother was revealed to the reader. After the girl's death, the mother - "to everyone's surprise" - showed up at the clinic to ask for help in covering the daughter's funeral expenses. During the visit, she seemed to be rather open about her background. She told to the psychologists how in one early morning in 1953, during her daily walk to the local cement factory, a drunken man raped her in a roadside ditch. As a consequence of this violent event, Piroska was born. According to

families were however insecure places. In the first family, the father who worked as a guard in a graveyard, beat the 3 year-old girl with a whip (*ostor*) because she did not eat. Piroska was therefore transferred to a children's home, but was then soon transferred again to a new family because the place was jam-packed. The new parents were "simple people from the countryside", elderly people who wanted to "give the girl all that she needed" because she reminded them of their earlier foster-daughter who died of bone cancer.⁹³³

However, the new family also proved to be a bad environment for the girl. It turned out that the new mother⁹³⁴ also brutalised the girl because of her unwillingness to eat, and this only reinforced her "emotional defence-mechanism" of vomiting. Furthermore, during the therapy a new traumatic series of events unfolded. One day, during the girl's treatment at the hospital, the foster-mother stopped by to see her while Piroska was doing some water-colour painting. According to Piroska, the mother told her that she had "buried the [family's] kittens alive", because they "ate too much"; and after that the little girl did not want to go to that home any more. Németh's conclusion was that in a fear-ridden atmosphere the girl "withdrew into herself", and turned into a complete "emotional orphan".

Nevertheless she was sent back, and one day the child welfare officer who treated the girl's case stopped by the clinic for a visit. Németh's attitude towards the official was highly disparaging. In a moralising tone, she criticised the officer who apparently arrived "only to make sure that the responsibility for P.'s situation was someone else's". At this point it is reasonable to ask if the criticism was levelled more at the system of child welfare in general or at the moral deficiencies of the officer in question. In any event, Németh accused the official of transferring the girl away from the foster-parents for "fear of being denounced by the doctor". And that was not all; "in saying goodbye, the welfare officer made a sudden move, as if she was going to stroke P.'s head, but P. jumped aside unexpectedly and escaped into the arms of the therapist".⁹³⁵

The case was difficult, and the prospects for healing slim, yet eventually she received extensive therapy and with physical rehabilitation too, she started to improve. The severe psychosomatic symptoms decreased and the girl even became "cheerful and relaxed". According to Németh, the change for the better, however, could not compensate for the corrupting influence of her early social environment which had lacked a "primary emotional bond". Indeed, there had been several "mother-candidates", but despite all the positive initiatives the

Németh, the mother - "who only seemed to be interested in the funeral costs" - showed strong signs of being "a schizophrenic".

⁹³³ Ibid., 654-655.

⁹³⁴ According to psychologist, the new foster-mother was a 50 year-old woman whose outward appearance signalled a state of relative well-being. Her "hair was coloured and her face and hands well-cared". Despite of this, he was "very primitive, volatile peasant-woman". It was also revealed that as her earlier husband been a "brutal drunkard and a sickly person", the current in contrast was a decent man in every sense. The man worked at the head-quarters of the local party council, besides this working as a firefighter.

⁹³⁵ Németh 1960, 657-661.

child herself made, they all failed in compensating for the loss. Nevertheless, because Piroska's physical and mental state improved, she was transferred to kindergarten. Although it succeeded in creating a "caring environment" for her, the girl then unfortunately ended up dying of a normal seasonal influenza.

Németh believed there were two main factors to explain why it took 9 months of being shuttled from one place to another, only to die of flu. Although there may have been the possibility of "inherited disease" or "biological trauma already in womb", the primary reasons for Piroska's lack of trust in others stemmed from the harmful social environments she had found herself in. There was no healthy mother-child relationship at the most vulnerable period of her life, and this was considered to be crucial for her psychological and physical development. In her paper, Németh expressed moral consternation at the behaviour of the adults involved from the socialist institutions of care. Not only the foster parents, but the child welfare system, and the doctors had all failed badly.

In a case narrative from 1962, Németh showed that with proper educational interventions a pubescent teenager's lack of trust in fellow humans could be overcome.⁹³⁶ Here, the main culprit was seen to be an emotionally cold grandmother, who "wielded executive powers" in a family with a "weak" mother. She brought the "crazy girl" to the CG centre and left her there "like a package" in spite of the girl's protests.⁹³⁷ The 'civilisational role' adopted by the psychologist is clear in this text. The grandmother was described as carrying "strictly religious prejudices", which revealed themselves in the "primitive ways" she advised the girl after her first menstruation. As the girl herself told the therapist, this was the beginning of her problems. The grandmother - who the psychologist saw as a victim of a religious mind-set inherited from the past - was clearly at a loss with the girl who acted in ways she could not understand.

Tragic details colour this narrative, too. For example, in the four months she spent in the psychiatric department of the hospital, she experienced severe attacks of self-guilt, and even went about organising a "praying-campaign" at the ward with some other "neuropathic" girls there. She was reported as saying she wanted to "absolve her sins in front of God" and when this did not work she wanted to go home, to also "beg for forgiveness" for her mother "because God had forgotten her too".⁹³⁸ The child also resisted eating, and the psychologist's opinion was that this was also caused by the grandmother, since the girl had been made to believe that fasting was "only way out of the situation".

The narrative included long, touching quotes from the pubescent child. Here, the voice of the child was out in the open and recounted by the psychologist. She was reported as saying that she missed her father, and was in need of "love not coldness". After therapy, the girl understood that her family environment was "unnatural", and the psychologist explained to the girl that

⁹³⁶ Németh 1962, 632-641.

⁹³⁷ Ibid., 630.

⁹³⁸ Ibid., 627.

her family was matriarchal and characterised by the more traditional ideas of hierarchy, whereby older adults took precedence over the young in terms of respect. "That was the moment when it became clear to her how her grandmother had only exacerbated the situation when she had refused to eat."⁹³⁹ The unnatural state of the family was then further explained in terms of sexuality. Németh diagnosed the relationship between the four generations of women in the same family (!) as being "unconsciously homosexual". Added with the deeply religious (rural) background, these factors caused psychosomatic symptoms and feelings of guilt and sin.⁹⁴⁰ But after a course of psychotherapy which lasted for years the girl's situation had improved. The therapist believed she had now adapted to socialist society, although the therapeutic process was not completely over.

The level of her social adaptation will be measured when she passes the "Kilián-exams" and takes part in KISZ activities. One of the positive results of all this is that, in the future, after passing the exams she can, together with her classmates travel to the USSR. She is earning the money she needs for this trip together with her classmates by doing summer work. We just hope that her current condition of health - which is a result of psychotherapy and consistent organic treatment [medication] - will allow her to earn more through working in a young peoples' forestry brigade.⁹⁴¹

The educational failures confronted by these CG workers also say something about the dual education (see 3.1.4) that people were receiving - where they were being taught one thing at school and another at home. The importance attached to 'moulding' parents can be seen simply from the lists of books that were published to inform them about the importance of education. For example, 25,000 copies of "The Dictionary for Parents" (*Szülők Lexikonja*) were published in 1964, and this gathered together all the most important psychological advice needed for child-rearing in one volume. This was followed by 8000 copies of a book entitled "Who Should I Believe?" (*Kinek Higgyek?*), which dealt with issue of dual educations at home and school, and taught more about the socialist ideal man (*Embereszmény*).⁹⁴²

However, for psychologists it was not so much the ideological moulding of Hungarian citizens that was at stake, but it was more about how to change the behaviour and educational views of the parents, whilst relieving patients from their feelings of worthlessness and self-blame. This was because they had first-hand experience of victims of mental and physical violence. This emphasising a rational scientific approach over traditional educational views "inherited from the past" was also made clear in the article written by Margit Hirsch from the ICP at the MTA. Hirsch's background was in the individual psychology of William Stern. In her text, which was a published version of a paper she presented in an international psychological congress in Bonn (1960),

⁹³⁹ Ibid., 635.

⁹⁴⁰ Ibid., 638.

⁹⁴¹ Ibid., 637.

⁹⁴² MSZMP Központi Bizottsága Agitációs és Propaganda Bizottságának iratai. 1965, Október 20. 49 ő.e.
(<http://www.archivportal.arcanum.hu/mszmp/opt/a130523.htm?v=pdf&a=start.>)

she went deeper into the methods of healing the scars left by early environmental traumas, and for rehabilitating children's personality development.⁹⁴³ While presenting one particular case of a neurotic boy, she observed that "the most painful thing [in the mother's behaviour] was the assumption that the boy inherited his weak character from his father". For her, the most tragic thing about this case was that the boy eventually came to believe and internalise what his mother thought too. For Hirsch, intervention was necessary to "eliminate the misapprehensions related to the questions of inheritance from both the family's and the child's consciousness". In her article, she presented a strongly argued case for rehabilitation, as in her opinion, the boy's emotional life could only be put back in order with a right kind of intervention.⁹⁴⁴

In other publications, parents were informed about the kind of world their children lived in so that they might better understand their behaviour; in other words, a social environment characterised by large population movements and urbanisation. Another topic in the publications addressed the difficulties modern socialist families faced, with not being able to control their offspring in the same way as before. However, psychologists expected a lot from the parents since they believed in the emotional significance of the family. In effect, they were trying to show that flawed methods of upbringing would lead straight to juvenile delinquency, and other forms of deviance. In the book for instance, entitled *Öröm és Gond a Gyermek* (1958),⁹⁴⁵ some renowned psychologists – many of them from the older generation trained in the '30s and '40s – offered insights into how to "get more joy out of the difficult task of raising children". While they were trying to make the task seem attractive they were at the same time emphasising the importance of "the small, everyday acts" that shape small human beings and "shape socialist man". All too often this still amounted to disciplinary methods, however.⁹⁴⁶

The function of psychology was starting to reflect the changes in ideology of the socialist regime. Although these changes were not yet explicitly stated, socialism was seemingly less intrusive, and possibly heading in a more individualist direction. In post-1956 communist party jargon, this was due to the new position of "peaceful co-existence" adopted in the Cold War, which meant the focus of politics would turn inwards and focus more on the healthy

⁹⁴³ Hirsch 1962.

⁹⁴⁴ Ibid., 572-573. In one of her earlier texts, Hirsch also adopts Pavlovian concepts but uses them to show how the individual mind should be seen as an active function in the world of reflexes and responses. In "The significance of personality theory in child guidance practice" Hirsch shows how the child's past experiences were "wedged" between the actual "stimulus" and the "reaction", thus giving birth to neural connections. Indeed, it was not enough to study these past learning experiences and "the recurring modes of reaction caused by them", but to also learn how children understood and lived through the influences received from the outside environment. As a critique of the behaviourist world-view of personality formation, she went on to say that it was essential that the "intentions", "future orientations" and "prospective tendencies" be studied in this context. In other words, the implication for therapy was that the child was actively capable of making initiatives.

⁹⁴⁵ Radnai (et.al) 1958.

⁹⁴⁶ Ibid., 3.

development of socialist society. Psychology would be called upon to help in this 'struggle'.

In the chapter "Let us guide our children properly and have less to complain about", the psychologist Béla Radnai spoke favourably of those parents who raise their children "not only with love and care but also with competence". At the same time, he criticised those who were content with less scientific and simply intuitive traditional methods of raising children.

I'm not arguing that every parent should be a teacher or a psychologist. But instead I argue that every parent needs some basic knowledge. Nobody should claim, for instance that "my grandfather didn't understand anything about pedagogy and didn't know a single word of psychology, yet he still raised normal children ok". To this we must counter that it was all very well for our grandfathers that they knew about science, honesty and their social responsibilities, but this would be too little for the children of today. Children today have to learn a lot of things so as not to feel estranged from society, or feel like drop-outs in the future.⁹⁴⁷

In other books, the children were also asked to educate their parents too. For example, István Harsányi in his *Book for Boys* went to great lengths about explaining to the boys the true worth of harmonious family relations within socialism. To make his message clear, Harsányi first painted an idyllic portrait of a very middle-class nuclear family, which although "not a perfect social formation", still represented the "best human society has been able to offer up to now". He shared the peaceful and harmonious family scene he witnessed once on a boat-trip along the Danube one summer. This joyful and highly civilised family of two children, a mother and a father, and even a grandmother, was a "pleasure to behold". The family was in every way balanced, the conversations were "so nice and human", and the tone of their voices was "gentle". Even a dog that was "pleasantly jumping" around them seemed to be feeling itself safe with this family. Everything in this picture worked "like some well-oiled machinery", he wrote.⁹⁴⁸

But he also showed empathy to the young lads who "could not stand their parents" because they regularly interfered in their daily business, and did not seem to understand the attractions of modern life. Harsányi encouraged the boys to nevertheless be "diplomatic", rational, and to negotiate, and he even offered a reasonable approach for dealing with the unavoidable clashes which he presumed would arise because of their differences in world-view. By this he was implicitly taking a stand on the issue of being taught one thing at school and another at home. He explained that this was inevitable, and there was no point being "arrogant" when dealing with parents who still had had a different upbringing. While the things taught in school were clearly more politically correct, to adopt an attitude of schoolteacher with one's parents would only worsen matters, turning into a false confrontation with "all that which has been absorbed through the tradition of generations".⁹⁴⁹ Instead, he suggested leading by example, so that the "attraction" (*varázs*) of a progressive view would

⁹⁴⁷ Ibid., 19-20.

⁹⁴⁸ Harsányi 1963/1958, 289.

⁹⁴⁹ Ibid., 294.

“eventually thrill them too”.⁹⁵⁰ Harsányi reassured his readers that the old beliefs of their parents would eventually pass, and so advised patience.

Those superstitions which are still keeping them in a state of dread will gradually lose their magical power. The explanations offered by the natural sciences have the power to enlighten, and in the end, what a great feeling it is to free oneself of the shackles of fear, dread, and anxiety!⁹⁵¹

Harsányi offered a clever strategy of reverse psychology for these presumably “progressive” boy readers: they should not openly express their indignation in front of their parents’ false superstitions, but rather say nothing about them until the parents would see the folly of their ways and understand in due course that their old, worn-out phrases would not work.

In its extreme form, the potentially fatal role of a harmful family environment was described in texts dealing specifically with deviant parents⁹⁵² - such as “The Role of the Criminal Mother in the Crimes of the Youth Gang” (1962) by psychologists György Majláth and Imre Pick. In this psychological case narrative, a delinquent family clearly represented the antithesis of the middle-class family ideal that was being promoted within Kádárist socialism. Although the focus was on four brothers diagnosed with “antisocial personality disorder” (*disszocializmus*), the educational message seemed to focus, yet again, more on the personality of the mother than the brothers.⁹⁵³ In psychologists’ opinion, the mother had been emotionally “severely wounded” early on in life and, as a consequence, was now “quarrelsome by nature”, neglected her motherly duties, and “did not treat her husband properly” (or so the husband’s sister thought). It was also revealed that she had an earlier conviction for not just having received stolen goods, but also for actively taking part in the crimes themselves with her sons. This latter point especially brought psychologists to the conclusion that the relationship between the mother and her two sons was “mutually infantile and pathological”.⁹⁵⁴ The “psychological structure” of the case was clear for the experts - the deviant brothers had no positive role model of a father to follow, and society had also failed to set the proper examples, since the family had long since slipped through the net of school and the local KISZ. With regard to the mother, the psychologists came to the unanimous verdict that she was both a cultural and social outcast because of her past traumas.⁹⁵⁵

Sometimes, politically sensitive topics could be publicly described by referring to psychological cases that dealt with children and teenagers. One such topic was suicide. As psychiatrist and therapist Béla Buda has noted, it was normally a taboo subject under socialism. Referring to his own experience of being forced to give up his job in a hospital at the turn of the ’70s because of

⁹⁵⁰ Ibid., 294, 290–295.

⁹⁵¹ Ibid., 294.

⁹⁵² Majláth & Pick 1962, See also: Hódosi 1964. Hódosi’s article presents a group psychotherapy practice with teenagers whose father and/or mother is an alcoholic.

⁹⁵³ Majláth & Pick 1962, 524.

⁹⁵⁴ Ibid., 529.

⁹⁵⁵ Ibid., 527, 532.

being too outspoken, Buda pointed out that if people gave their professional opinion about a widely acknowledged problem, even if they went so far as to suggest a way to improve the situation, they risked being accused of “stirring up trouble” because they were drawing too much attention to themselves (and the institution in which they worked).⁹⁵⁶ And yet, from the mid-sixties onwards, there had been official inquiries⁹⁵⁷ into the suicide rate, as it was comparatively higher than elsewhere in Europe;⁹⁵⁸ even if overall the socialist government’s hush-hush attitude to the issue hindered wide-scale research and publicity. Buda thinks that they were particularly concerned that it might provide a weapon for western propagandists wanting to show how the socialist system was failing its citizens; but by the mid-seventies the authorities began treating suicide as a more dire threat to Hungarian society than western propaganda. This materialised in the form of a wide-scale state-funded research programme on the “Problems of Social Integration” which managed to finally break old taboos.⁹⁵⁹

In an article from 1963, P. Liebermann (et.al.) presented several cases of attempted suicide.⁹⁶⁰ The majority of patients in these cases brought to CG centres by the various authorities were 12-20 years of age, and some of them even younger; but the majority of them were born during the war. What is interesting about these case descriptions is how CG teams⁹⁶¹ were also sensitive to how the social institutions themselves and socioeconomic situations of many families also exacerbated deviant personality characteristics. It was not always just the brutal behaviour of parents and teachers or their traditional methods of education which were to blame. Consequently, the following discussion focuses less on the various medical and psychological therapies used, and more on the social situations themselves.

In the case of one teenage girl who tried to poison herself in front of her former best friend’s house, for instance, the experts rather heavily-handedly accused the school for being “extraordinarily insincere” and unable to address the emotional and sexual issues for a girl of that age. She had, in a natural teenage reaction, reacted to her ex-boyfriend by writing a letter to him calling

⁹⁵⁶ Buda 2001, 11; Bodor (et.al.) 1997, 34–35.

⁹⁵⁷ In 1971, Buda published three articles on suicide in a medical journal. See Buda 1971a, Buda 1971b, & Buda 1971c.

⁹⁵⁸ From the mid-1950s onwards the suicide figures started to rise steadily. Towards the end of the ’80s, the numbers had doubled. See Andorka (ed.) 1986, 13; Valuch 2005, 357–359; Buda 2001, 120.

⁹⁵⁹ Buda 2001, 119–122. A significant catalyst in the Hungarian discussion of suicide was the *Pamphlet on Suicide* published in 1972 by Mihály Gergély. In it, Gergély showed the gravity of the situation in many workplaces. He also wrote that there was “a lack of self-knowledge in our society”, and the lack of publicity on this issue was exacerbating matters. When things were left unsaid, due to the lack of public deliberation on difficult issues, people were left to dwell on it themselves and hid the problems inside. Gergély warned that this would cause stress and manifest itself in social tension. See Gergély 1972, 91.

⁹⁶⁰ P. Liebermann (et.al.) 1963.

⁹⁶¹ It should be noted here that there was only one member of the “clinical team” (whose experiences were shared in the text) who was an official psychologist. The others were a child psychiatrist, a paediatrician, a special educator (*gyógyypedagógus*), and a social worker (*szociális gondozónő*).

his new girlfriend a whore, and this was turned against her by the school, who accused her of “raising a scandal”, rather than making any attempt to look beyond the letter and understand her position.⁹⁶² Something similar happened in another school, too. Namely, a “suicide epidemic” broken out in one school, which was thought to relate to “homosexual” relationships between three girls, and the negative social dynamic caused by this deviant behaviour, both at home and in school. The main protagonist of the case, “B.M”, was described as being an “emotionally primitive” child, and a weak student. Her sexual behaviour, however, was explained as a normal phenomenon and part of puberty. The parents did not prove helpful in this situation either, but the main culprit was, again, the school community. This was because after all three girls attempted suicide, the decision of the school was to simply “ostracise” them, so they were sent to the CG centre and accused of “immoral behaviour”.⁹⁶³

In many of the other cases described in the article, family-members were living in the countryside, in a newly-built industrial centre, or on the outskirts of Budapest (*peremkerület*), as first-generation urban-dwellers. The culturally unstimulating and superstitious atmosphere in one “extremely primitive proletarian village family”, for instance, was considered to be a major cause for a boy’s suicide attempt. The other culprit, interestingly, was thought to be the bad work environment in the factory where he had been an apprentice. No other methods of therapy were mentioned here than needing to “fix the situation in school and in the factory”. A change of lifestyle and culture from the countryside to the factory district had caused adaptation problems, the advocates of CG explained. According to the psychologist, the “change to other social strata” was too sudden, and the boy had been totally unprepared for it.⁹⁶⁴ In another family which had recently moved to a newly-built industrial centre, the main protagonist was a 15 year-old (“D.P.”) who was studying to be a waiter and then tried to commit suicide together with his three friends. One detail, which also came up in some of the other stories here, was that the four boys had received poison from the “old homosexual dentist” at the school. However, 1956 intervened, and the boys were “swept along” by the train of events. Indeed, the boys joined practically the whole class in trying to “defect to Yugoslavia”, but they failed to get across the border. After that, they tried to get into the USSR via the Ukraine, again without a success. D.P. ended up taking some Sevenal pills alone in his apartment, and then after waking up in a very confused state he jumped out of the 3rd floor window, but he survived.⁹⁶⁵

Here, again, the main conclusion was that it had been the traumatising social environment that had caused the suicide attempt - the “difficult social and cultural atmosphere” of this newly-built urban settlement only served to aggravate any existing “local social problems”. Furthermore, the mother, too, experienced difficulties. She had a white-collar background (*igen jónívójú asszony*), but failed to find a fulfilling role in the new town which lacked any

⁹⁶² P. Liebermann (et.al.) 1963, 664.

⁹⁶³ Ibid., 667–668.

⁹⁶⁴ Ibid., 668–669.

⁹⁶⁵ Ibid., 669.

kind of intellectual life. While the medical (somatic) diagnosis did not show any pathologies in the boy, the psychological diagnosis found that he was “emotionally distracted”, and this was aggravated by the “homosexual seduction” (the dentist). Ultimately reason for their actions was put down to political events and being “socially rootless”. Here, the attempts to both commit suicide and to cross the border was psychologised. The former was seen as the result of recurring disappointments and feelings of hopelessness, and the latter seen as an attempt to escape from it all.⁹⁶⁶

The final example described here shows how wide-ranging CG work could be in the early stages of its professionalisation straight after 1956. At the focus of attention was “a formerly genteel family” that had “declined socially” (*lecsúszott úri család*). The 15 year-old boy was “an unwanted child” who had been born in a military camp hospital somewhere in the west of Hungary. Other details considered significant by the writers were that the mother, while pregnant, had experienced severe traumas caused by air raids; that the father left soon after the birth of his sons, emigrating further west with his new fiancée; and that the early months were fraught as the baby caught typhoid.⁹⁶⁷ Now alone and a single parent in Hungary, the mother did not adapt to the new socialist environment. According to the writers, this was because of her genteel past (*úri*) on both sides of the family.⁹⁶⁸ The situation started to get worse as the father who had emigrated was replaced by his brother, a police officer, who both beat the boy brutally, and at times even forced him to drink alcohol. The mother decided to place the boy in a children’s home run by the Church as a precaution. The writers maintain, however, that this proved to be a bad decision, since both the “inner and outer support” (for feeling security) were thus deprived from him. Furthermore, the children’s home proved to be the immediate cause for the suicide attempt. Firstly, the institution did not make any attempt to treat the boy’s “real” problems. Secondly, a “scandal” broke out in the institution, again related to “sexual seduction”, but this time by another inmate.⁹⁶⁹ This scandal went beyond the walls of the institution, and the boy was thought to have reacted by being suicidal.

The course of the therapy prescribed was mainly based on concrete measures to ensure social integration. The therapist arranged for the boy to get a place at high-school in Budapest. Being severely depressed, the boy continued to regularly visit the CG centre, and they tried to improve the relationship between the boy and his mother. The course of his life was therefore closely monitored. However, the therapy did not seem to work out quite as planned, since the boy became “entangled” with gangs, and did not acclimatise himself to any of the workplaces they found for him. The writers concluded that their

⁹⁶⁶ Ibid., 670–671.

⁹⁶⁷ Ibid., 671.

⁹⁶⁸ It is possible that the “genteel background” also caused psychological stress for the child who was perhaps ashamed of it and encouraged to “erase” it.

⁹⁶⁹ Ibid.

efforts were unsuccessful because the social environments totally lacked “positive support”.⁹⁷⁰

In all of the above cases, the advocates of CG believed the main reason for suicidal behaviour among the children involved came down to the feeling that they were “separated from everyone and everything”, i.e., total loneliness and anxiety. The CG staff based their scientific knowledge-claims on a range of psychophysiological, intelligence, and personality tests (e.g., *Rorschach*), and on approaches that involved neurological-psychiatric examination and evaluation, and psychotherapy. With these tools it was most often revealed that the patient was a biologically and mentally healthy child who was surrounded by “primitive” adults. The children’s behaviour was not explained in terms of hereditary causes, and although their psychological states were always described (e.g., obsessive-compulsive disorder), the main reasons were found to be the lack of civilised human community.

The main thrust of the article was that “there was not any” kind of aftercare and rehabilitation, and that this was a “question of responsibility” which nobody had taken upon themselves. In addition, therapy ideally needed an environment in which there could be a “human relationship” for the child to build upon and in which they could unburden themselves, and this was precisely what was lacking in the child’s original situation. The other important point was that all this had to be done in an order determined by children and their respective needs. One tentative conclusion that can be drawn from these texts is that the authors were indicating the existing lack of community in a society which officially believed in collective ideals.⁹⁷¹

Indeed, based on this evidence, Haney’s arguments can be complemented by showing that the focus on motherhood in these psychological discourses was not just a case of gendered bias. They were also informed by first-hand knowledge on the socioeconomic state of families and on the emotional problems which burdened the life of children. Although in their publications, psychologists may not have gone specifically into the roots of social problems, it is clear that many of their therapeutic subjects came from those families that experienced upheavals and been forced into alien environments by first the war and then socialist modernisation. As shown by OGYIT reports, psychologists and local “social workers” readily saw the bleak situations in children’s homes, and for most of them a naturally functioning, healthy family was clearly a better solution.

The discourses clearly tried to appeal to emotions. In this they were at times rather similar to the OGYIT reports in over-representing the threatening aspects of juvenile delinquency. Psychological discourses clearly helped construct a picture of past misdeeds caused by old ideas. Both these ideas and institutions had to be humanised and rationalised. But the human ideal present in this psychological discourse was not just about socialist rhetoric, and the problems of modernisation and urbanisation at the local level. It was also about

⁹⁷⁰ Ibid., 673.

⁹⁷¹ Ibid., 681.

those children who had been orphaned and displaced by WWII and were now producing symptoms. What is more, the therapeutic solutions the Hungarians suggested did not only stem from western sources - as Haney seems to suggest. They also represented a reinvention of their own psychological heritage.

Finally, the role of socialist ideology and ideals should not be underestimated as a resource in child and educational psychology. Many influential child psychologists had leftist-progressive backgrounds which dated back to the pre-war era. Hence, Anton Makarenko's work was still relevant as a critical resource for pinpointing the failure of existing practices and institutions that were not human enough. Implicitly, and at times explicitly, the criticisms from psychologists contributed to the general 'revisionist' trends of the '60s, which saw socialism in need of repair, i.e., not being socialist enough.

3.4 Deviant cases

3.4.1 Thinking in cases

In their academic publications, Hungarian psychologists quite often used the method of generalising outwards from individual life-histories. As John Forrester has shown, long case histories have an important role in the history of psychoanalysis and related psychological disciplines as a way to stress the professional credibility of the emerging field.⁹⁷² What Forrester calls "thinking in cases" is, in scientific terms, inductive reasoning from individual instances to the general (albeit from a small sample here). According to Forrester this method was "self-authenticating" and used by professionals who adopted psychological explanations instead of classic biological, physician-driven ones.⁹⁷³ Significantly, those who advocated psychological rather than physical explanations of mental disease needed the case-method to not only justify, but also *popularise* the treatments they suggested. In this light, it may be possible to see the case narratives as one way of drawing general conclusions from individual cases which was also meant to enhance the professional profile of

⁹⁷² The most famous ones are, of course, the Freudian case histories, such as the "Rat-Man", "Little Hans", "Dora", and the "Wolf-Man". There were also classic psychiatric case histories related to use of hypnosis by, for example, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, and Károly Laufenauer in Hungary.

⁹⁷³ Forrester 1996, 2-10, *passim*; Sealey 2011, 24, 38. Forrester elaborates on Ian Hacking's 'six styles of scientific reasoning', and adds psychoanalytical 'thinking in cases' as a seventh. Forrester shows how psychoanalysis resisted the rise of statistical thinking in the 19th century, because it was a field of research where scientific laws modelled on the natural sciences did not easily apply. In this respect it was quite different to its "sister discipline", experimental psychology, which was already basing its scientificity on statistical methods. For Forrester, the history of epistemology is fundamentally a continuous critique of Aristotle's position on the universality of knowledge. In this sense, psychology is an interesting case in point since, although classic Freudian psychoanalysis tends to imply that the erotic life within every individual conforms to the oedipal model, the focus of psychology has always been on accounting for individual "idiosyncrasies", divergences and detours.

those who promoted psychological “pathologies” over physiological explanations.

The majority of psychoanalytic articles published in the US in the '60s were written along these lines. First, the patient was introduced to the readers, and thereafter his behaviour, personality, family-life, and personal history were presented in detail. Finally, the writers described the course of therapy to show how they had succeeded in finding out the reasons for the individual neurosis.⁹⁷⁴ In this sense, the small Hungarian publishing community of child-psychologists worked along similar lines. Their cases provide examples of clearly defined theories. They also proposed that these theories should be used to make educated judgments about other similar instances. Matthew Smith readily notes that emphasising the uniqueness of individual cases was, in the American psychoanalytical community at least, also a way to criticise the prevailing discourse in social psychiatry.⁹⁷⁵ This does not necessarily apply to Hungary however. Namely, in light of the case narratives studied in this research, there seems to be a very strong social orientation in Hungarian psychological discourse. Furthermore, as these case studies were not particularly long, and although they were informed by psychoanalytic knowledge, on the surface they could appear to be something quite different altogether.

Of course, the comparison of psychological cultures in contemporary Hungary and in the US is highly questionable due to the huge differences in scale and political and professional context.⁹⁷⁶ However, the reference to dominant (global) forms of public psychological representations is one way to stress the particular nature of Hungarian case narratives, which were embedded in the political, linguistic and professional context of socialism. Furthermore, many articles were accused of being latently psychoanalytical without showing their true face, or *non expressis verbis*, as Pál Harmat has noted.⁹⁷⁷ Anne Sealey has also noted that the “ritualistic” dimensions of Freudianism tended to underline the heroic role of the doctor-therapist. However, it also provided the means for emphasising the role of individuals and their experiences.⁹⁷⁸ In the context of early '60s Hungary, it meant that psychologists started to promote and diffuse a psychological discourse around individuals and personalities, even if they often conceptualised their cases in terms of a *pathology*.

⁹⁷⁴ Smith 2008, 549; Sealey 2011, 36–50: 38.

⁹⁷⁵ Smith 2008, 549.

⁹⁷⁶ As the US was the wonderland of psychoanalysis at the time, political suppression meant there were just a few who could informally practice psychoanalysis in Hungary.

⁹⁷⁷ See for example: Huszár 1961. Huszár's main targets were child psychologists György Majláth and Nóra Németh.

⁹⁷⁸ Sealey 2011, 38.

The case history method was dramatically used by Pál Gegesi Kis and Lucy P. Liebermann in 1963.⁹⁷⁹ In the text, they used 18 case narratives to illustrate the most generalisable forms of “abnormal behaviour” among children and adolescents in Hungary at that time. First, the relevant history accompanying the deviance was summarised, and thereafter the diagnosis (*kórisme*) was made. In this article, the therapy was not presented in any great detail, as the general aim was again to show the need for rational preventative social planning by pointing out the different kinds of individual deviance in society. Because their concept of personality was holistic - encompassing the social, psychological, and biological - they argued that only by harmonising all the different relevant spheres of life, could a “distorted” personality development be prevented. They also showed just how limited their expert authority was, because proper economic conditions, a functioning institutional network, and a “change in social outlook” were really needed before the “achievements of science” could be integrated into the field of social practice.⁹⁸⁰

Gegesi and Liebermann both worked in the 1st Children’s Clinic at the Budapest University Hospital. According to them, the 18 cases were chosen from “tens of thousands of individual files” (*kórrajz*), preserved in the archives of the clinic’s CG centre (est. 1937). Although selected from a huge mass of files produced over a period of 20 years, the ones that were chosen were used as the best exemplars of the current state of affairs.⁹⁸¹ The children in these cases had been born during or after WWII and had grown up during the ‘50s. Some of them were still in elementary school, but most of them were teenagers when they got involved with the therapist. The cases were presented in an “ascending” order, progressing from relatively small problems in the family (the “naughty child syndrome”), via undisciplined behaviour in school, petty thievery and truancy (*csavargás*), to stealing from public property and burglary, and finally ending with “gang criminality”, sexual violence, homicide attempts, homosexuality, and suicide attempts.⁹⁸² In some cases, several behavioural disorders combined to form a kind of “career” in personality deviance. The message from the experts for the authorities was that all these childhood behavioural disorders could be explained and treated with rational, scientific methods; and there was nothing particularly “mystical” in them, as reasons could be found. In other words, by generalising from these individual cases, the *process* of deviance could in future be tracked, followed and prevented.

Before entering into the case narratives in detail, something must be said about the writers and their approach to therapy. Due to the fact that the text was published by two writers with very different professional backgrounds, we may assume some degree of polyphony in the discourse. Pál Gegesi Kis is already familiar from the previous chapter. According to Péter Popper, Gegesi’s big contribution to the psychological field was not so much his theoretical

⁹⁷⁹ Gegesi Kis & P. Liebermann 1963.

⁹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁹⁸² Gegesi Kis & P. Liebermann 1963, 26.

ambitions but rather his organisational skills in science policymaking.⁹⁸³ Gegesi was not a professional psychologist but a physician, a paediatrician, and an eminent figure in Hungarian cardiology. As he was a politically influential and powerful personality who saw the relevance of psychological knowledge in medicine, not only could he support the general revival of psychology in Hungary, but due to his position as head of the 1st Children's Clinic he recognised the psychological factor in curing diseases. While working in the same clinic, Popper noticed that Gegesi managed to incorporate clinical psychology on an "equal" basis with medical intervention by working in cooperation with his colleague and friend Liebermann. At the time, this was a very rare combination in Hungary.⁹⁸⁴

Already in her seventies when the article was published, Lucy P. Liebermann (1899-1967) was the grand old lady of Hungarian psychoanalysis.⁹⁸⁵ A follower of the Ferenczi School and a student of Mihály Bálint, she was one of those rare personalities in the field of psychology who had made it intact from one end of the Stalinist period to the other, and thus she embodied continuity from before WWII.⁹⁸⁶ In addition to this, she was the only Hungarian psychologist during the Rákosi period who managed to remain a member of the International Psychological Association. Liebermann was fluent in English, French, English, and Polish; and she even sometimes practised psychoanalysis in a foreign language. Hence, for example Jan Malewsky, the pioneer of Polish psychoanalytic movement during the socialist period was analysed by Liebermann in the '60s. She was also a regular visitor at the Tavistock Institute in London, where she travelled to meet the Bálint couple. According to Popper, she was "always up-to-date".⁹⁸⁷ Liebermann's relationship to Gegesi went back to the pre-war years.⁹⁸⁸ Gegesi supported Liebermann in establishing the Children's Clinic in 1937, thereby also introducing psychology to it. He also defended her during Stalinism from ideological and political attacks regarding psychology and psychological tests. In the clinic, analytically oriented therapy was practised but it was kept very low-key, and certainly not bandied about.⁹⁸⁹

In socialist Hungary, neurosis was not considered a mental illness by the biologically oriented psychiatric establishment, so to begin with psychotherapy and group-psychotherapy methods were practised only among children and alcoholics, and it was not really until the '70s that soft psychotherapy gradually

⁹⁸³ Popper 2005, 123-124. As an aside comment about Gegesi, Popper mentioned that "unfortunately he also the ambition to create a new psychological theory of personality. In his books you could always sense the intellectual atmosphere of an eager dilettante."

⁹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁹⁸⁵ Popper also added that Liebermann was a professional rival of Júlia György (see above).

⁹⁸⁶ Popper 2005, 105; Szőnyi & Tomcsányi 1985, 618.

⁹⁸⁷ Popper 2005, 114-115.

⁹⁸⁸ They also found common ground in art circles, as they were both members of the European School Circle of Friends (Liebermann's husband was the famous sculptor Pál Pátzay).

⁹⁸⁹ Popper 2005, 122-123.

spread outside these fields as the concept of neurosis became gradually more accepted.⁹⁹⁰ Within the framework of Gegesi's clinic, Liebermann was one of the pioneers of group psychotherapy in Hungary after the war. She managed to combine pre-war Hungarian psychoanalytic heritage with English post-war notions about psychotherapy and adapt these to contemporary Hungarian concerns.⁹⁹¹ She also went to witness Soviet child psychology and child psychiatry in Leningrad and Moscow, and wrote about it in a travel report published in 1961.

Liebermann reported that Soviet psychiatrists used similar methods for diagnosing and treating both children and adults. In Moscow and Leningrad, the most common treatments were medication, "persuasion", change of environment, work therapy, suggestion, hypnosis, and (in serious cases) insulin shock-therapy. But there was a peculiar kind of "child-centredness" too - in the garden of the Moscow Institute, there were "many kinds of animals" (donkeys, dogs, geese, cats, squirrels, and even monkeys). According to "Professor Szuhareva", animals were present to help autistic children build an initial connection more easily. Liebermann also visited places in which very up-to-date developmental psychology was being used; and she seemed genuinely interested in what the USSR had to offer. They also managed to show that in many places they were well-informed about western standards, although Soviet methods often deviated from these. For example, psychological tests were being used but they were different from those used in the west, as they seemed impossible to standardise (being that their aim was to offer a comprehensive picture of the whole personality). In the end, Liebermann's message for the Hungarian authorities was that in the USSR, the Party had published a resolution which granted a "very wide scope for theoretical and applied psychology".⁹⁹²

In her article, "Csoportherápia a nevelési tanácsadásban" (*Group therapy in child guidance*, 1956), Liebermann promoted her brand of therapy which actively involved the whole family in the therapeutic process. According to Liebermann, the atmosphere in an ideal working therapy group was dynamic and very intensive, and it should unsettle the positions of the participants a bit. The positive significance of this was that "the distance between the parent and child was washed away", and the idea was that this would make the emotional issues easier to handle.⁹⁹³ As well as Balint, the British psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion was also a major influence on Liebermann's therapeutic thinking as it evolved during the '60s. Bion argued that every group situation was more affectively charged than any individual psychotherapeutic situation. In therapy groups, the personality structure of the participants experienced shifts, and emotions and activity increased at the expense of rational consciousness and

⁹⁹⁰ Szőnyi & Tomcsányi 1985, 618. However, by the early '60s, György Hidas and his group of internationally oriented psychoanalysts (also known as "deep psychologists") started to study the treatment of neurosis.

⁹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 617.

⁹⁹² P. Liebermann 1961.

⁹⁹³ P. Liebermann 1956, 289.

consideration. Liebermann called this a “regressive tendency”, and she believed it could be used to further the therapeutic process.⁹⁹⁴

The primary focus of group therapy, for Liebermann, was the behaviour and actions of group members there and then in the session. This could then be interpreted, discussed, and everyone could be made conscious of it together. She argued that the whole group “behaves as a single individual”, claiming that in every case, the behaviour of the people changed if there were more than two participants.⁹⁹⁵ As she argued in her presentation at the International Congress of Psychologists in Bonn (1960), the general tendency in the west was to call mothers and children in separately to the session (or groups of mothers who were experiencing similar problems with their offspring). In Hungarian practice, however, even the extended family could be involved. Decades of clinical experience had proved to her that this method worked well.

In fact, Liebermann’s methods, carried out in the clinic, closely resembled Bowlby’s method of marriage counselling, with the difference that in Hungary these related directly to CG, and were invented earlier anyway. From her social practice, Liebermann had discovered the “hard-learned” lesson that without the active presence of parents, it was practically impossible to make any difference in a child’s life. She also emphasised the essential role of the mother-child bond. The quality of this bond not only influenced children’s role in their family group, but also significantly coloured their relationship to other people in society.⁹⁹⁶ For Gegesi and Liebermann, therapy was thus not about “becoming aware of some allegedly suppressed unconscious”, it was more about dealing with psychological violence happening in a very real social environment, in other words dealing with those incidents in children’s life-histories that were “very well, if not excessively well known” by the child in question.⁹⁹⁷ This postulate carried a critical relationship to Freudian psychoanalysis. One could also refer to the mainstream psychoanalytic discourse that was happening in the US at the time. As Matthew Smith argues, psychoanalysis was sometimes at odds with the social psychiatry view of healing, as this was seen as a threat by the more individual-oriented analytical community. According to Smith, many analysts in the US shared the view that “it was the vicissitudes of human development that led to unresolved psychic conflict, not the inequities of a Dickensian social structure”⁹⁹⁸.

Hungarian psychological discourse, in turn, seemed to be well aware of the “vicissitudes” of the social environment, and they were clearly used as an explanation for pathological psychological conditions. The individual psyche would open towards society in group therapy, and this had consequences for the therapeutic process. Liebermann defined personality in dynamic ways: as a combination of methods by which individuals “work on” inner and outer

⁹⁹⁴ P. Liebermann 1962, 588–589, 602–603. The article was a reworked version of a presentation held at the XVI Congress of Psychologists in Bonn (1960).

⁹⁹⁵ *Ibid.* She compared the situation in the group to drama therapy with children.

⁹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 597–599.

⁹⁹⁷ Gegesi Kis & P. Liebermann 1963, 43–44, 45.

⁹⁹⁸ Smith 2008, 549.

“stimuli” during their life, and try to build unity between the intellectual and emotional spheres in their minds. In the process, “functional schemas” are born. In her opinion, psychotherapy’s job was to disentangle these (potentially deviant) schemas in cooperation with the patient. Thus therapy would have a double-role of emancipating (healing) and resocialising.⁹⁹⁹

This social ‘ethos’ was present in the way the ideal outcome of therapy was articulated by Gegesi and Liebermann. The “essence” of their psychotherapy, the authors wrote, was to create order in the child’s mind between “what has happened and what is currently happening”; that is, between the “memory” and the “present day”. In other words, psychotherapy aimed at harmonising the “inner milieu” of the psychologically damaged (*neurotised*) individual with the outer environment. This was to be done by “directed conversation”, through understanding the dynamics of one’s inner life and discovering the individual (learned) ways of reacting to environmental “stimuli”.¹⁰⁰⁰

The ideal was that the children would be capable - in their “own ways” appropriate to their emotional and intellectual capabilities - of producing order between these two spheres of reality. During the therapy process, while in conversation with a therapist in whom they really trusted, the substance of children’s anxieties was “objectivised”, and they learned why they might be reacting to social environments in the way they were. However, the ideal aim of harmonising the “inner” and the “outer” worlds was not successful unless the social environment was also engaged in the process. “[I]n a good and decent present, with an ordered social environment, the forgetting of an unwanted past may begin.”¹⁰⁰¹ Because of their long experience with children who most often had experienced a difficult life history, their style of therapy was aptly described as “directed conversation”. Ideally, this meant that the children were not “persuaded by suggestion” to behave otherwise, but rather as a result of successful therapy, they would willingly understand their situation and internalise the desired behaviour.

Although the therapeutic gaze was turned towards healing the mentally wounded individual, the published case narratives were also intertwined with the dominant, problem-based discourse on deviance and ideals related to the (socialist) personality. The writers began their article by stating as a basic fact that “behaviour is a manifestation of personality”. Building on this, they went on to say that a “behavioural disorder” was a reflection of an “abnormal personality” (*rendellenes személyiség*). This is a key concept, as *rendellenes* not only refers to abnormality in the medical sense, but also in the social sense of acting *against* the natural “order” of things (*rend*). The situation was further complicated by the fact that a childhood personality disorder was not always easy to recognise. Seemingly without any clear signs, the psychological disorder could be latent and produce somatic symptoms.¹⁰⁰² By discussing juvenile

⁹⁹⁹ P. Liebermann 1962, 599–600.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Gegesi Kis & P. Liebermann 1963, 43–44, 45

¹⁰⁰¹ *Ibid*, 45.

¹⁰⁰² Gegesi Kis & P. Liebermann 1963, 1.

delinquency as instances of pathological personality, psychologists actually medicalised individual behaviour. At the same time, their three-fold definition of the problem in medical (*vegetatív status praesens*), psychological (*pszichológiai status praesens*), and social terms (*környezeti status praesens*) tried to diagnose the social situation as whole.

Psychological and environmental explanations were present in the story of a 15 year-boy, who was a “gang member” accused of burglary, stealing, and homosexuality. In other words, these were the “complaints” (*panaszok*) against him, and were effectively the reasons why he was brought to the clinic. There were no sign of somatic disorder however, according to the authors, but in the social environment there were many. The father, they wrote, was a “rigid, emotionally cold and lonely misanthrope”, himself a victim of a poor early years environment. Indeed, it turned out in the conversations with the family, that the father’s mother had, in turn, been “a very eccentric and weird personality”. Apparently she had been in a relationship with the boy’s grandfather for 28 years without ever marrying him. Hence, the father’s relationship to his own father, who never adopted him, was quite bad. The boy’s father thus came from a family in which all the members were “loners” in one way or another. At first he loved his son, but very “soon started to hate him”.

The mother, in turn, was “a nervous and very capricious personality”. Before WWII she owned a beauty parlour for actresses. After the war, however, she lost her footing somewhat and began to act “frivolously without being able to take a grip on her life, and threw the money away”.¹⁰⁰³ According to the experts, the parents’ marriage had been a “love marriage” until the man turned “stingy” and the wife “light-headed” (*könnyelmű*). Hence, soon after the war the parents divorced, and the mother travelled to the west with the boy, but she soon returned to Hungary and remarried. At the time of the therapy she was living with this new husband and working as a seamstress in a cooperative. Their socioeconomic situation was described as rather poor.¹⁰⁰⁴ When the boy was a toddler, during the siege of Budapest at the end of the war, he experienced severe psychological shocks. Panic attacks during the air raids caused him to have night terrors (*pavor nocturnus*) from the age of 5 onwards; and at that age he also started “lying, cheating, and stealing”. After his mother got remarried, they decided to put the boy into an institution, from which he regularly escaped, and continued his bad habits. His elder sister, living in reasonably well-off circumstances with the father, was clearly his “father’s favourite” too, so before long the boy started to feel that he did not have a real home. Not only did he feel himself abandoned, but it seemed he also totally lacked the proper “emotional education”.¹⁰⁰⁵

Gradually the situation turned more tragic. The mother became more aggressive towards the son (who had been stealing from her) and sent the boy

¹⁰⁰³ It was also noted that one of the mother’s great aunts been diagnosed as schizophrenic.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Gegesi Kis & P. Liebermann 1963, 22.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Ibid.

to live with his great uncle. The uncle, in turn, was a “homosexual”, who did not take the boy in out of any great “family love” but instead to use him in his “sexual business”. Soon the boy therefore got involved with a “horde of more or less perverted young homosexuals”, who introduced him to the deviant world of the “Körtér Gang”. According to psychologists, the gang (*galéri*) was the first “community” in which the boy felt himself emotionally accepted. At the same time, it was a trap, as the boy’s role in the gang was to “court older homosexuals” so that the gang could extort money from them. It was after committing one burglary with this gang that he was caught by the police.¹⁰⁰⁶

Psychological tests revealed that the boy was not only intelligent, but also mentally and physically precocious. However, he got tired easily, was “short-tempered and volatile”, and without emotional support for his identity, was severely “embittered, traumatised and lonely”. The diagnosis he was given was relatively straightforward. The authors believed his abnormal behaviour (*magatartási rendellenesség*) was due to “serious damage” caused by the social environment, and the accompanying personality disorder. He had been living through the difficult time of puberty without “emotional, social, and ethical brakes”. Finally, his situation had been also aggravated by the “severe sexual abnormality” (homosexuality). The course of therapy was not described in any detail, but for the moment the overall situation seemed surprisingly balanced. The psychologists managed to find vocational training for him in the countryside and the boy was now training to become a tractor-driver.¹⁰⁰⁷ There was another relatively positive result, in that the relationship between the boy and his father was said to be improving; and this showed how important it had been to intervene in what had been a problematic social situation.

As these were children and teenagers who were brought to psychologists because of their problematic behaviour by either concerned parents or various authorities and institutions, the experts’ role was as a kind of mediator between the system of crime and punishment and the system of treatment and care. As mentioned earlier (3.1.4), this could be distinguished in a certain resemblance between the formula of these case narratives and criminal investigations. In other words, those acts of deviance (crimes) which in the court investigation would be “revealed” and used as incriminating facts against the perpetrator, were in the psychological context used as proofs or “moments” of behavioural disorder which indicated abnormal personality development. Hence, in several cases, the “illegal crossing of the state border” was presented as a kind of recurring model or schema - teenagers were escaping the emotionally unbearable conditions of home. In addition to this, rather severe violent acts were presented as an almost unavoidable outcome of unbearable emotional stress. As already mentioned, joining the company of other like-minded youths in the “gang” was considered by psychologists to be an understandable consequence of lacking an emotionally safe home.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Ibid., 22–23.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Ibid., 23.

These issues were illustrated in the highly problematic case of another 15 year-old boy (b. 1946), who was also a “gang-member” but in this case was accused of burglary, sexual violence, and a homicide attempt. The cold and violent family background, “although both of the parents were teachers” seemed to come as some surprise to the psychologists. It seems the boy was regularly treated badly and that the parents’ marriage was “loveless”, as it was frustrated by the wife’s unwillingness “to fulfil her husband’s excessive sexual demands”.¹⁰⁰⁸ At times the boy had even been forced to defend his mother against his father’s violent attacks. Once, after an incident of family violence (during which the boy also got beaten) the son jumped out of the window and returned home only after two weeks. After the second violent incident, the boy tried to cross the state-border with his friends but got caught. Another “illegal crossing of state-border” was then attempted, but again he was returned to his parents. After this he continued “to drift” and one time, after two weeks missing, he was found living in a cave in the mountains above Budapest (*Hűvösvölgy*) together with an 18 year-old girl and a 19 year-old boy.¹⁰⁰⁹ According to psychological tests, the boy was “very intelligent” and generally in good shape. However, because of his traumas, he had become emotionally empty and cold (*sivár*) even towards his friends in the gang; and so the boy was diagnosed as “emotionally disabled” (*érzelmi fogyatékos*).

It was always considered important to characterise the nature of the parents’ marriage. This was because the family was clearly seen as the basic functional unit of society. Gegesi and Liebermann argued that the family “concretised society” for the children.¹⁰¹⁰ In some ways the psychologists were following a contemporary mainstream western understanding of the social functions of the nuclear family; but at the same time, they were emphasising the “subjective” determinants of children’s personality development. From the point of view of effective prevention, it was not enough to focus on purely “objective” (economic) criteria. For these youths to grow up to be good socialists, the different determinants of personality development needed to be fully acknowledged and rationally controlled.

The subjective factors which were influencing children’s personality development were exposed in the case of yet another gang-member (this time 14 years-old). Interestingly, the mother was a politically active party-functionary, but she was blamed for being so occupied with her work that she had hardly any time left for her son. Even when breastfeeding, “she was so occupied in her organisational work” that the boy was often brought to her work later by car so she could breastfeed him there.¹⁰¹¹ Again, this reinforces just how important motherhood was seen to be; the role of the mother outweighed that of party functionary. In fact, Haney has shown that the new

¹⁰⁰⁸ It was also revealed that the mother had a history of psychiatric institutionalisation and shock therapy treatment, while the grandfather had committed suicide (after several failed attempts).

¹⁰⁰⁹ Gegesi Kis & P. Liebermann 1963, 23–24.

¹⁰¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 29, 37–38.

¹⁰¹¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

family and population policies of the '60s (and the various laws related to the protection of women) had become gender-segregated in the name of protecting women's reproductive capabilities.¹⁰¹²

Hence, the most tangible "subjective" factor was the parents' behaviour and personality. One implicitly political dimension for this was the motif of "defection", which appeared in several cases. For example, in the 14th case it was mentioned twice that the father defected (*disszidált*) and by this it showed that he did not "care for his family".¹⁰¹³ The parent's decision to leave the country illegally was seen as an instance of abandoning his child. Similarly, in the case of a 13 year-old boy (b. 1948) his mother was seen to have abandoned him when she left the country in 1956. The occasional postcards that she would send him were his "most precious treasure".¹⁰¹⁴ This was the case of a boy who was suffering from "naughty child syndrome", which the psychologists were at pains to show made his life a "vicious circle", or a continuum of serious mistreatment.

Again, the case was unravelled by starting with a psychological analysis of the parents. The mother was revealed to be a "severely nervous, mean, insincere, and pitiless soul" who suffered from "headaches and struma". In addition to this, she had "not taken marital loyalty seriously". The father, in turn, was described as "a drunkard and a spendthrift", with a history of mental illness on his side of the family.¹⁰¹⁵ There had been frequent fights in front of the child, and eventually a divorce as a consequence. The father left and took the older child with him while the unfortunate boy stayed with the mother. According to the psychologists, he was clearly an unwanted child, and was possibly even "hated" by his mother. For instance, at the age of six, the boy was transferred from kindergarten to a children's home in the countryside at his father's insistence. In the kindergarten, he was declared "ineducable in the community" (these were the psychologists' quotation marks), and often excluded from the company of others. This behaviour carried on in the children's home, and before long, the staff wrote a letter to the mother asking her to take the boy home. She did so, but during the trip home by train the

¹⁰¹² Haney 2002, 103-105. Nevertheless, single women were not necessarily as highly valued as mothers, either, according to CG psychologist Éva Hoffer in 1972. As Hoffer stated, writing about the role of the CG centre in organising adoptions: "we do not consider single women as proper adopters. Namely, when a woman has not succeeded in finding a partner - i.e., she has failed as a woman (*mint nő kudarcot vállott*) - she will put enormous emotional pressure on the child, who will become bound to her to such an extent that it will be harmful to the child." She continued by pinpointing the crucial importance of the family: "in addition to this, we know that for a child's normal psychological development to occur, a whole family consisting of both a father and a mother, is needed." Hoffer was an exponent of contemporary functional family theories wedded with the psychoanalytic. Hoffer 1972, 115.

¹⁰¹³ Gegesi Kis & P. Liebermann 1963, 18.

¹⁰¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 3. According to the psychologists, through treasuring the postcards, the boy produced a highly idealised picture of his mother. This was all the more tragic since the mother mistreated her "difficult child" already before the defection, and now she seemed to abandon him for good.

¹⁰¹⁵ *Ibid.*

mother met an older couple to whom she “sold the child for 500 forint”.¹⁰¹⁶ However, the foster-parents also treated the boy badly and finally, because he was missing his mother, he escaped, only to experience more hardship.

The foster parents went after him, found him and took him back to his mother. It was winter, but the mother did not let him in the house and did not give him food to eat. The child spent his days in the garden or lurking in the basement. He spent weeks this way during the cold of the winter-time.¹⁰¹⁷

The neighbours informed the local council about this situation and the boy was put into state care.

Because of his behaviour, the boy was judged “handicapped” in the provisional children’s home, and he was transferred to an institute of special education (*gyógypedagógiai iskola*). In the institute, the boy’s behaviour actually got worse and the special educators turned to the psychologists for help. In the article, Gegesi and Liebermann quote at length the special educators’ description of the boy’s personality. They reported that he was intellectually well-developed, but he was “cunning (*ravasz*), two-faced, vengeful (*bosszúálló*), sadistic, and a bully”, who “tortured and terrorised” other children. Furthermore, he was a manipulative wannabe leader who stole his classmates’ school equipment and always wanted to be the centre of attention. Hence, he disturbed work in class and did exactly the opposite of what was expected of him. Furthermore, he was unpunishable as he always made a scene, “swore revenge”, and turned “hysterical”. In short, the boy was totally undisciplined and impossible to tame.

For the psychologists, the case was clear, but their diagnosis differed from the one made by special educators. The boy was not so much intellectually “incapacitated”, as emotionally so. His condition was a consequence of a life history in which he had been “severely upset, emotionally wounded, and abandoned”.¹⁰¹⁸ After this diagnosis, the case continued with years of unsuccessful institutionalisation and treatment in the CG centre, and in the meantime, the mother used the opportunity offered by 1956 and left for Austria and remarried. The psychologists’ message was that both the state institutions and family had failed to stop the “vicious circle” earlier enough on. It was only through several years of therapy that the boy was beginning to trust in adults. In fact, the therapists at the clinic were described as the only adults with whom the boy had been able to “build an emotional bond”. This was demonstrated by the fact that, although he now lived in a boy’s home in Budapest, the boy still visited the clinic once a week to actively seek help with his problems from the therapists there.¹⁰¹⁹

¹⁰¹⁶ Ibid. This was revealed in a discussion between the boy and therapist, who thought that it was not just the fact of “selling” the boy to be raised with foster parents that was the issue, but also that the “bargaining” had happened in front of the boy.

¹⁰¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰¹⁸ Ibid., 2.

¹⁰¹⁹ Ibid., 3.

In their long article, Gegesi and Liebermann aimed at proving the importance of early psychological and social intervention by referring to several cases that seemed to show educational and institutional failings. Their cases represented a cross-section of society in psychological terms. In this respect, their discourse aimed at making new dimensions of social reality visible. On this point, Nikolas Rose notes that historically this new role significantly helped psychology establish itself once more as a respectable profession.¹⁰²⁰ The message was that “prophylaxis”, or prevention, should be “inseparable” from ensuring the normal healthy development of personalities. At the bottom of all, there was indeed a biological and physiological foundation (*alap*) for these issues, but the social, psychological, and economic conditions (*feltételek*) dominated and were in many ways the most important. Their conviction was that the social-psychological and biological should be “organised together in a harmonious manner”. Hence, there was a strong belief in rational education and control. The child was compared to “soft wax” (*puha viasz*), and as something easy to mould, and therefore the quality of social influence was of paramount importance. In the language of behaviourism, the “environmental stimuli” could either be made to optimise the innate abilities and potentials of the child, or damage them irreparably.¹⁰²¹

Gegesi and Liebermann underlined the need for psychology to be society’s safety net for the future. In making this point, they justified it by using a somewhat curious notion about the “inherent dangers” in the uniqueness of every individual (perhaps because of the state socialist context). It was an unfortunate fact of nature that human development could easily become distorted and “derailed”.

Human diversity (*egyedi sokféleség*), and the richness of all those factors influencing human development, combined with the relative autonomy of personality from biology, also cause dangers for the individual.¹⁰²²

Another point they made in relation to this was that the interplay between society, biology, and individual psychology was “impossible to forecast”. Here their message resonated with the wider problematic of social planning. They made an analogy, for instance, between the professional efforts to “optimise” the efficiency of industry with the inherent potential of doing the same in schools across the land.¹⁰²³ The psychologists were quick to acknowledge, of course, that the school-system had experienced a thoroughly positive change with the “liberation” (*felszabadulás*) after the war; but the formal institutions needed up-to-date psychological knowledge to live up to their full potential and help the young with socially adapting. The expected future benefits of achieving a perfect “harmony” between the social-psychological and biological in “teaching and educating”, would surely cover the initial costs.

¹⁰²⁰ Rose 1998, 84–87.

¹⁰²¹ Gegesi Kis & P. Liebermann 1963, 29–30.

¹⁰²² *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁰²³ *Ibid.*, 34.

But the psychologists were not claiming that their work would simply clear the field of all potential dangers; the “general social environment” needed to be taken into account and altered.¹⁰²⁴ Ultimately, they were calling for society to be recalibrated accordingly, but at the same time they were being careful to show the limits of their agency. What they were implying was that if “the sciences” could show what needs to be done, then society could do the rest.¹⁰²⁵ This was effectively social psychiatric discourse brought into the context of socialist planning. The agency of the psychologists was also made clear when the limits of therapy were discussed. No form of therapy would in itself bring changes to the life of those citizens who were “emotionally disabled” if the social problems which exacerbated their condition were not addressed. These problems were, for Gegesi and Liebermann, both subjective and objective - ranging from socioeconomic hardship to inhuman practices in institutions and in the family.¹⁰²⁶

Above all, the writers promoted their role as experts in modern, scientifically premised child-rearing, and they were highlighting the fact that “the parent has to be taught - and I repeat - *she has to be taught* in such a way that she will truly internalise the lesson in all its totality.” They believed parents needed to be taught about the importance of a reasonable amount of play, exercise, spare time and socialising with friends. Furthermore, they should learn by heart the skill of forming a rational balance between respect, encouragement, and punishment. To do their children justice, the parent-educator should learn what children were capable of at a given age, and what was reasonable to expect from them. This was to prevent socialist children from developing pathological personality features, and to encourage parents to treat their children as individuals with capabilities and needs that were based on their developmental psychology.¹⁰²⁷

Gegesi’s and Liebermann’s article used several voices to get their points across to different members of the establishment. The medical discourse (probably stemming from Gegesi) was communicated with the use of pathological metaphors; to describe, for instance, the most serious behavioural (and personality) disorders - which were the outcomes of neglect and abuse. Where there was a “highly distorted personality structure”, not even complicated therapy was enough. This was a situation comparable to a “tumour that cannot be operated on” - “the pathological behavioural dynamics” had almost completely crowded out and smothered the young developing personality. Sometimes it was described in terms of his whole “organism” being infected. The only option in such situations was to “go through the complete process of renewal” in the institute of correction (*Javító-nevelő intézet*).¹⁰²⁸

¹⁰²⁴ Ibid., 35.

¹⁰²⁵ Ibid., 35.

¹⁰²⁶ Ibid., 45.

¹⁰²⁷ Gegesi Kis & P. Liebermann 1963, 43.

¹⁰²⁸ Ibid., 26.

The psychological voice, meanwhile, was used to argue that there were individual tragedies behind every problematic child, and these were to be resolved by keeping in mind the emotional experience of the subject. The essential message here was that there was more than the objective *outcomes* and manifestations of deviant behaviour seen by the institutions of correction and some parents. The gaze should thus be turned away so much from the “outer” behaviour (*magatartás*) to examine more closely the “inner” psychological disorder. This meant seeing bad behaviour as a “distorted search for help”¹⁰²⁹. For the psychologists, there was a clear bias towards advocating the point of view of the troubled child. Hence, the parents, most often the mothers, were the objects of blame, and this we have clearly seen in the recurring references to the failure of mothers and wives. One wife, for example, was characterised only by the rather one-dimensional fact that “until this day she not been able to resolve the problematic relationship with her husband”¹⁰³⁰.

Finally, it should be noted that the psychologists tended to distinguish between “reason” and “emotion”. The medicalised claim that the young criminals were suffering from an “emotional disorder” at times gave a strong impression that their acts were judged as childish outbursts, not as conscious acts. And as the task of socialist education was to raise strong, autonomous, and self-conscious personalities, these youngsters posed a threat to socialist ideals of citizenship. Among other things, this justified the intervention of psychologists.

3.4.2 The flipside of obedience

One of the chapters in *Child Psychology* (1970), by Ferenc Mérei and Ágnes Binét, dealt with the “atmosphere” in educational establishments, and it was called “The flipside of obedience” (*engedelmesség fonákja*).¹⁰³¹ In it they discussed the social conditions in which children learnt the art of communication with the others in society. According to the authors, the basic psychological condition for this learning to effectively occur was “decentration”, which allowed children to understand different viewpoints, and was expected to happen when they approached 10 years of age.¹⁰³² Furthermore, one outcome of undisturbed development was that the need for conversation and a change of opinions was naturally generated in the child. But it often happened that this in-built need would conflict with the social environment if the latter “did not accept open discussion about questions that mattered for children” and instead expected

¹⁰²⁹ Ibid., 19. The psychosomatic approach was also powerfully present. For example physical ill-health or some accident causing biological damage could lead to psychological and emotional crises, and vice versa. One idea related to this was the idea that the young might sometimes “escape into illness”.

¹⁰³⁰ Ibid., 10.

¹⁰³¹ Mérei & Binét 1981/1970 (5th edition), 221–225.

¹⁰³² Ibid., 218–220. As Mérei and Binét note, small children understand, for example, that the aim of a board game is to win it. However, they most often do not recognise that the game is still a game if the other one wins. Thus, in the latter case, they will tend to claim that the other one cheated.

obedience. Therefore, the psychologists wanted to teach readers about the inherent dynamics of social psychology in various educational situations.¹⁰³³

Their argument was based on the already classic social psychology experiments conducted by Lewin, Lippitt and White at the end of the '30s in the University of Iowa. The study measured the impact of different styles of leadership (autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire) on children's abilities to take an initiative in their work, and to get on with one another. The experiment was carried out with 10 year-old boys who met after school in small organised groups for several months.¹⁰³⁴ Of these results, Mérei and Binét were mostly interested in the outcomes of democratic and autocratic leadership. In the autocratic atmosphere, the efficiency of work was the highest. But this was only when the leader was present, as it dropped to being the lowest otherwise. Furthermore, in this atmosphere, the orders often seemed to be arbitrary, and so the psychological frustrations of this were transferred from the leader and projected onto the work. In one case this meant the "clay masks" they had been working on were tossed around, trampled and broken by some of the boys. In comparison, the democratically led group was the most efficient and capable of self-guided initiatives and working well when left alone.¹⁰³⁵

The essential message was related to the social quality of community. Whereas in the group with the authoritarian atmosphere inter-group hostilities and aggressiveness rose, in a discreet, deliberative environment a well-functioning small community was born. In the latter, children's need for "common decisions" and self-activity was fulfilled, and also their personalities developed normally. The educational message was that to expect total obedience, without free discussion and joint deliberation, would give birth to "defiance, aggression, and rebellion".¹⁰³⁶

The topic of obedience, and the asymmetric power relations it implied, was also the focus of an article written by Gegesi and Liebermann in 1964.¹⁰³⁷ The text dealt specifically with the psychological impact of criminal investigations and court proceedings on young minds. Again, they were looking mainly at children and adolescents with behavioural and personality disorders so severe that they had committed several crimes and ended up in the hands of law enforcement authorities. Again the causal link between "abnormal personality" (*rendellenes személyiség*) and disruptive behaviour was emphasised. The most difficult teenagers - those whose fate had traditionally been juvenile prison - were described as pathologically "fixed" to a behavioural mechanism due to a combination of psychological, environmental and biological factors in such a way that their acts were characterised by a "closed chain of reflexes". In this way, criminality was seen as the culmination of a *process* of deviant

¹⁰³³ Ibid., 221.

¹⁰³⁴ Kruglanski & Stroebe (eds.) 2012, 389-390. The choice of these leadership styles were influenced by the rise of authoritarianism in Europe, especially fascism in Germany - Kurt Lewin's country of origin.

¹⁰³⁵ Ibid., 223-224.

¹⁰³⁶ Ibid., 224-225.

¹⁰³⁷ Gegesi Kis & P. Liebermann 1964.

personality development.¹⁰³⁸ Gegesi and Liebermann went on to criticise the lack of professionalism in existing institutions that were meant to help juveniles adapt socially, arguing that they were acting blindly without any psychological guidelines. Their focus was the recently renewed socialist Criminal Code (1962), which prescribed “beautiful tasks” for young offenders to help them readapt to society by focusing on the “educative nature” of punishment.¹⁰³⁹ According to the psychologists, these good ideas were compromised by psychologically insensitive institutional practices. Not only were the institutions of crime and punishment contradictory to the letter of the new law, but they were also inefficient. The authors wanted to prove this by showing how the prevailing judicial proceedings and methods of investigation were psychologically damaging for such teenagers whose emotional life had been wounded from the start.

According to Gegesi and Liebermann, when the crime was discussed by the authorities (*hatalmak*) during the interrogation, the difficult life history of the accused became achingly present. The formalities of the hearing, however, caused the emotionally vulnerable teenager to live through all those feelings of insecurity from childhood once again, and what’s more in a harsh judgemental environment.¹⁰⁴⁰ Indeed, during the interrogation the authorities would generally take advantage of the juvenile’s battered emotional state to resolve the crime. This was evidently problematic and cruel for children. Basically, the situation involved particular power mechanisms which exacerbated the already existing “inferiority complex”, that had been caused by the experience of past subjection.

Starting from the fact that the “prosecuted was forced to watch the members of the court from below”, the teenager - already at odds with the adult world because of puberty - felt himself totally defenceless (*kiszolgáltatott*). This was also at odds with the socialist ideals of education. Namely, the unnecessary acting out of adult-child opposition would release what might previously have been forgotten monsters from the past. In other words, it could happen that the “earlier, archaic state of personality” reared its ugly head again. This, in turn, would cause severe psychological stress.

Investigation and interrogation are fraught with psychological dangers. In unfavourable cases they can give birth to long or even permanent neurotic reaction modes.¹⁰⁴¹

Just as the human body could not cope with extreme stress without getting physically sick, a young personality could not stand “extreme emotional pressure without decompensation [...or] aggravation of the personality disorder.”¹⁰⁴² The experts claimed that the law enforcement authorities usually

¹⁰³⁸ Ibid., 499-500, 514-414.

¹⁰³⁹ Ibid., 501-502, 507, 517. The new Criminal Code decreed that children could not be held responsible unless they had turned fourteen.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Ibid., 509.

¹⁰⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴² Ibid., 505.

based their practices solely on the needs of the investigation without any further interest to help the juveniles “reorganise” themselves, and they were often left without access to rehabilitation.

Although Gegesi and Liebermann were explicitly dealing with problematic child welfare cases, they were also raising their voices against the more general failure to recognise the existing power mechanisms in society from the perspective of social psychology. They claimed that this failure only increased the tensions between generations. As an example, they referred to the everyday practice of calling the adolescent in to the Child Protection Unit of the Police with his mother. From the perspective of the adolescent with problems it would appear that the adults were only “preaching”, the psychologists argued. Besides that the power relations in these ‘discussions’ were inherently asymmetrical, the children already knew by heart how to produce an appearance of conformity. Several years of clinical and counselling experience had shown Gegesi and Liebermann that only a few such children “dared” to be - or even “wanted” to be - honest in front of adults. Their expert opinion was that these methods, basically, did not encourage children to adapt or stop their antisocial behaviour. Instead it encouraged distrust, suspicion and “defensive behaviour”, turning children and adults against each other.¹⁰⁴³

The message for the authorities was that, if socialist society wanted to heal its children, it should adopt the rational attitude of the surgeon. It was true that from time to time both the surgeon and society should use “radical procedures”, but both of them should also be aware of the inherent dangers involved. Psychological insights and methods were really needed, the experts stressed; but it was also necessary to confront the “common misunderstanding” that psychological problems could be fixed by any “dilettante”.¹⁰⁴⁴ Wisely however, they used materialist arguments to defend their position and at the same time criticise one-sided biological/behaviourist approaches to mental illness.

If we really accept that the human psyche [...] really exists and manifests itself in a material form, or a form of energy, then it is also clear that it can be studied and known, and the ways of treating both healthy and pathological conditions can thus be learned.¹⁰⁴⁵

To conclude this chapter then, a discourse that used both a medical voice and one from social psychology was used to rearticulate deviant behaviour in psychological terms as an issue of mental health, and to move it away from the moralist discourse of blame. Significantly, the concept of an “abnormal personality” now referred both to behaviour against the social ‘order’ (*rendellenes*), and to a pathological personality (*személyiség*) structure. Following Quentin Skinner’s terminology, we can say that the concept was both representational and normative, and herein also lay its political nature. In fact, in light of the psychological discourse on problematic children presented here,

¹⁰⁴³ Ibid., 499–502, 503.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Ibid., 505, 510–511, 516.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Ibid., 517.

it is possible to see now how the behaviour that was earlier constructed as politically dangerous was now being reconceptualised as stemming from a deviant personality in need of rational treatment and care.

4 THE RISE OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

4.1 Social psychology and social transformations

4.1.1 Psychology and reform socialism

Towards the end of the 1960s, psychology was actively brought to the attention of the Party by experts of the field working in a number of different places. In this chapter, we will thus be looking at the Hungarian reform socialist context in the '60s which led to this. I ask how psychological expertise and reformist ideas mutually reinforced each other. In this particular subchapter (4.1), I aim to link the rise of a social psychology discourse in socialist Europe of the '60s to some of the reformist discourses of the time, and to the ideological transformations of post-Stalinism. I also argue that social psychologists could make a strong case for their brand of scholarship by claiming that they could offer special expertise to decision-makers and managers at various levels of society. They could, for example, advise ways to analyse individual and social attitudes and help these people find the 'laws' of group formation.

In subchapters 4.2 and 4.3, the focus will be more specifically on social psychology discourses in the workplace. While some of them were alternative voices, others were closer to the mainstream. My starting point is the hypothesis that the workplace was one particular context in which a post-Stalinist reassessment of the government's ideology was acted out. Perhaps psychologists could help in building social cohesion at the local level (e.g., on the factory floor), which would stop the feared atomisation of the socialist citizen? Psychologists who studied topics related to the workplace, claimed that it needed to be 'rationalised', or at least humanised. Could psychology help in this, and thus prevent any further physical and mental ailments arising from modern (socialist) working conditions?

In chapter 3, I analysed case studies published by psychologists, and particularly child psychologists, during the early '60s, with an eye to interpreting them politically. I claimed that in their discourse, one suggestion they made was that prevalent social structures were causing problems, manifest

in psychological symptoms among children. Hungarian psychologists had also studied the phenomenon of workplace neurosis from the early '60s onwards, and one critical message they were trying to convey hinged on how vitally important the workplace should be in a state that was purportedly owned by the 'workers'. Márton Szabó has argued that, after the communist takeover, the public discourse on work often portrayed it as a distinctive form of service and loyalty, manifest as a kind of "chivalrous feudal morality" within socialism.¹⁰⁴⁶ Ideal workers were pictured (in newspapers and magazines) as having special characteristics which were thought to guide their everyday choices in life, and that would eventually permeate every moral aspect of their lives. The behaviour of these "ideal socialists" in life and work soon came to embody the spirit (*szellem*) of socialism. Perhaps the most well-known manifestation of this was the 'Stakhanovist' movement. As Oleg Kharkhordin suggests, it was established to target the individual and promote a new class identity by introducing a cult of the model worker. Most importantly however, these policies brought severe discipline to the factory-floor.¹⁰⁴⁷

But the focus of this research is not so much on the changes and continuities in the socioeconomic conditions of the workplace under state socialism.¹⁰⁴⁸ It is more on how Hungarian psychologists in various institutions discussed how the workplace and work could be rationalised and humanised for the benefit of society and the individuals in it. These issues were topical in neighbouring socialist countries too at the time, perhaps most notably in Czechoslovakia, which was historically one of the earliest to industrialise in the region.¹⁰⁴⁹ Indeed, the psychological problems associated with poor conditions at work had been studied by Czechoslovakian psychiatrists and clinical psychologists in the 1950s. As Sarah Marks has shown, while these psychiatrists often followed Pavlovian models in their work, they also promoted prevention as a solution. In the '60s, as attention was turned to the possible side-effects of (socialist) modernisation in the era of 'scientific-technological revolution', these solutions took on a more humanist tone.¹⁰⁵⁰

The story to be told in this chapter is also linked to the rehabilitation and establishment of social psychology as an academic discipline in Hungary. For the Soviets, social psychology was one of the most problematic cases for Marxist-Leninist ideology. This was underlined by Soviet social psychologist A.V. Petrovsky during the USSR's Congress for Social Psychology in December 1969. He noted that the reason for stagnation in this particular field of research

¹⁰⁴⁶ Szabó 1998, 44–45.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Kharkhordin 1999, 3.

¹⁰⁴⁸ For more on the history of the working class in Hungary in the late Kádár era, see Bartha 2013. Probably the singlemost famous study of Hungarian factories at the turn of the '70s is Miklós Haraszti's critical sociography *Darabér*, published in Vienna in 1975, and in English in 1977, as *A Worker in a Worker's State*. It was a sharp analysis of the experience of doing piecework in a factory (and covered various ways to 'cheat' the production targets). The manuscript was confiscated by the police in 1973 and Haraszti was sued.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Marks 2015, 138.

¹⁰⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 134–152. Neurasthenia and pseudoneurasthenia were particularly pertinent to advanced industrial societies.

in the Eastern Bloc had been a “fear” of studying social phenomena from the vantage point of the individual, in case social psychology proved itself to be a more effective historical tool than dialectic materialism.¹⁰⁵¹

The fact was, that social psychology had been rehabilitated in almost all the countries of the Eastern Bloc by the end of the '60s. Communist science policy had gradually given up highlighting the 'individualist' (bourgeois) bias in social psychology, and started to stress its usefulness instead. This testified to the wider transformations that were going on in political culture at the same time. In Hungary, academic research in social psychology formally kicked off in 1966, when a special research group¹⁰⁵² was established at the Institute for Psychology in the MTA. Within a few years, the research group evolved into a separate scientific department within the institute, headed by Ferenc Pataki, who was not only someone with political clout, but also genuinely interested in questions of social psychology - not least because of his first-hand experiences in *Nékosz* after WWII. Thus, Pataki was endowed with a fair amount of political and cultural capital, which he did not hesitate to use in carving out spaces for social psychologists to influence the science policymakers.

In many ways, 1966 was a big year for psychology in the whole of Eastern Europe too. The huge 18th International Psychological Congress was held that year in Moscow, and there were four symposia for just social psychology. This was the first time the subject had commanded attention on such a grand scale in the Eastern Bloc.¹⁰⁵³ Ferenc Pataki, who was present, noted that, although it was globally a small discipline in comparison to others (e.g., neuropsychology and brain research), it was very well represented at the congress. One indication of the rehabilitation of social psychology in the Eastern Bloc, was that out of 81 presentations on the subject, a third came from socialist countries. Most of these were from the Soviets, the East Germans, and the Poles, with just one paper presented by a Hungarian. Nevertheless, the event was judged a success, and in Pataki's opinion, there would be no more futile debates about whether social psychology was relevant or not.¹⁰⁵⁴

György Csepeli has argued in a relatively recent book that social psychology became an “ally of reform socialism” in Hungary. Reformist thinking after 1956, in his opinion, was mainly driven by economics. And yet the drive towards softening the strictures of a planned economy - whilst still leaving Soviet hegemony and the one-party system intact - also gave birth to new approaches to organising work, production, and consumption. Research in

¹⁰⁵¹ Petrovsky 1971, 385–386

¹⁰⁵² Akadémiai levéltár. II. osztály 210/5. A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia pszichológiai intézete 1966 évi beszámolójelentése, 3; Bodor (et.al.), 81; Váriné Szilágyi 2012, 579–581. This research group included György Hunyady (of whom we will hear more of later) and László Halász.

¹⁰⁵³ Petrovskiy 1971, 383; Pataki 1967a, 87. The titles of the Symposia, with their organisers, were: 1) theoretical and methodological problems in social psychology (Festinger); 2) Development of Personality in Community (Bozsovcics, Bronfenbrenner); 3) Personality Development in different cultures (Tajfel, Klineberg); 4) Psychology of Human Relations in Small Groups (Hiebsch).

¹⁰⁵⁴ Pataki 1967, 87.

empirical sociology and social psychology was thus launched at roughly the same time in the contexts of lifestyle, living conditions, production, and work organisation. In this climate of reform, a lot of social psychology literature was produced, and research projects followed one after the other within the framework of the five-year plan, with a correspondingly generous amount of state funding to go with it.¹⁰⁵⁵

Csepeli suggests that connections with the international science community, although limited, nevertheless had some positive consequences. Bureaucracy clearly hindered the free traffic of peoples and ideas, but eventually the theoretical cultivation of social psychology did overcome these boundaries. Popular slogans such as “Marxist scientificity”, he argues, were used as a passport to get things done, some of which was high-level research, for instance on public opinion. Social psychologists were thus in this way able to readapt modern (western) academic standards in the socialist context to further the cause of reform.¹⁰⁵⁶ However, has Csepeli considered that social psychology might have had to compromise itself to the regime to facilitate research in this way? And was he acknowledging that being an “ally” of the regime in this way may have genuinely meant that social psychologists actually wanted communist policymakers to make use of their knowledge?

By analysing some selected examples in this chapter I hope to elaborate on these questions. I show how psychologists (both in official and semi-official fields) were not only informed and motivated by different needs and expectations, but also managing to create relatively autonomous modes of agency. I also further develop my thesis that, in some cases, psychologists in academic, political and cultural positions actually used socialist ideology as a positive resource in their discourse. Hence, I also discuss the ways in which psychologists negotiated their agency within the existing political and ideological conditions.

4.1.2 Post-Stalinist ideological changes

The revival of the psychological sciences in the socialist bloc after 1956 reflected wider ideological transformations that were also occurring at the time. One of the first of these was to gradually abandon the more dogmatic approaches dictated by Josef Stalin’s theoretical model of the social classes. In this model, society was seen to consist of “two allied classes” (workers and peasants) and one “intellectual stratum”. This united working class was organised on the basis of state-owned property, with the peasants working in state-owned collective farms and cooperatives, and their “interests” presumably fully catered for by cooperatively owned property. Finally, there was the intelligentsia, which was ‘welded’ to the working class. As Majtényi notes, this “holy trinity” was used to frame most descriptions of society in the 1950s;¹⁰⁵⁷ and this enforced vision of society had significant consequences on researchers’

¹⁰⁵⁵ Csepeli 2006, 61.

¹⁰⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 69–76.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Majtényi 2005, 38–39.

positions and identities. Because any discourse on social stratification had implications for the ideological legitimacy of the regime, those who studied society were obliged to be more like “propagandists” than actual researchers.¹⁰⁵⁸

Finally with the passing of Stalinism, more objective sociological research began to emerge in Hungary.¹⁰⁵⁹ To begin with, the priority was to revise Stalinist ideological models by looking at social stratification in a new manner.¹⁰⁶⁰ In this sense, the sociological innovation of the early '60s - the idea of differentiating social groups or “strata” according to their position within the division of labour (*munka-jelleg csoportok*) - was also a careful critique of Marxist theory.¹⁰⁶¹ The next phase was to gradually make the science less about ideological criticism and more about exploring and understanding “actual” social conditions. The ideological and economic changes reinforced each other. As Zsuzsanna Varga notes, the agricultural reforms carried out during the early 1960s (e.g., allowing private house-hold plots, small businesses to exist) began to reflect the idea that social groups with different interests could exist together within socialist society after all. While the earlier axiom had been that a company, for instance, had to subordinate itself to the interests of the “whole of society” (*össztársadalmi érdek*), it became possible to have different economic interests during the reform process. Varga even argues that self-interest and group-interests could sometimes even be accepted as natural personality traits.

A similar kind of drive towards perceiving and monitoring social differences was also happening in the media and mass communication. Social scientists started promoting the idea that the target of mass communication (the people) should not be understood as simply a “mouldable” mass, but rather as an audience consisting of living individuals whose preferences and attitudes had to be monitored.¹⁰⁶² These ideas came up, for example, in the resolution published by the MSZMP Political Committee in 1965 on mass communication

¹⁰⁵⁸ As György Péteri has shown, objective social research went into “hiding” for a long time in various research institutes under state socialism. In the '50s, one of the most respected of these was the Hungarian Statistical Office (KSH). See Péteri 1993.

¹⁰⁵⁹ It reemerged in the form of institutions such as the MTA Sociological Committee (1961), the Sociological Research Group (1963), the MSZMP Social Science Institute (1967), and the Department of Sociology at ELTE University (1970). For more on the reemergence of Hungarian sociology in the '60s, see Szántó 1998.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Kolosi 1988, 405–419.

¹⁰⁶¹ Majtényi 2005, 39–40. According to this theory, there were seven “active” groups and one “inactive” group, differentiated by the nature of their work (whether it was physical or intellectual). The basis of group formation, according to these studies, was the group’s status within the social division of labour. In this way labour influenced the relations between people and groups, and these were later called “strata”.

¹⁰⁶² Móré 2008, 143–154; Takács 2011. According to Takács, in the Kádár era the leadership differed from the previous regime in that they now understood the importance of feedback from the people. It was not reasonable to cling to the former one-sided, top-down style of communication. New, modern mass communication strategies had to be used instead.

and propaganda¹⁰⁶³. This resolution made it quite clear that the total silencing of different opinions was not a rational way to govern.

We also communicate about those facts that are unpleasant to us, or those opinions that we do not agree with. And we do not distance ourselves from them through being silent about them, but rather we offer explanations that will put the phenomena in their proper place.¹⁰⁶⁴

This change in political style was explicitly putting a stop to old Stalinist practices that were now seen as utterly misguided. In another example of this tendency to accept the benefits of differences in opinion, Hungarian psychologist István Harsányi wrote an article in 1962 on the “Significance of mass communication in social life”.¹⁰⁶⁵ In the introduction to his article, Harsányi recalled the words of the famous science fiction writer, H.G.Wells, who had prophesied that, just as the 19th century had been the century of material advancement, the 20th would be the “century of psychology”. Harsányi argued that people and societies were currently witnessing a “revolution in human relations” that was to be more comprehensive and significant than the revolution experienced in the material sphere before.¹⁰⁶⁶

In Harsányi’s opinion, the inevitable era of mass communication would mean that no nation, could afford to cut itself off from global trends - least of all Hungary. Information flows would disregard traditional boundaries, and therefore socialist science should not hesitate to investigate how mass communication affects people,¹⁰⁶⁷ especially in a “democratic, socialist society”. For Harsányi, the genuine promise of mass communication in socialism would be that it could convey an “enormous treasure of collective experience” (*együtttes élmény*¹⁰⁶⁸), and by inventing shared experiences and traditions it would help to build mutual understanding and respect between people and peoples, and it would enhance the level of social integration.¹⁰⁶⁹ With this in mind, he then underlined the importance of allotting more resources to social psychology-oriented mass communication research. To do this, he employed the metaphor of a shoe-cleaner in the street, taken from a western social psychology text book written by Eugene Hartley (German translation, 1955). While polishing the shoes of a lawyer, he listens to the same music from the

¹⁰⁶³ The difference between the concepts of ‘mass communication’ and ‘propaganda’ was rather fluid at the time. According to Raija Oikari, the communist elite were sure that they had the right consciousness and knowledge in their possession; and from this it followed that the term propaganda was not understood in Hungary as negatively as it was in the west. Rather than “implanting” an organised lie in peoples’ minds, Oikari writes, the aim was to get reality “onto the right track”. Therefore, propaganda was seen as necessary tool for building the right kind of world. See Oikari 2006, 301.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Cf. Móri 2008. The original can be found in Vass 1968, 244–245.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Harsányi 1962, 11–32. Harsányi (1908–2002) was an educational psychologist who at the time worked in the Institute for Child Psychology (ICP) within the MTA.

¹⁰⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁰⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁰⁶⁸ “Collective experience” was a famous concept introduced by social psychologist Ferenc Mérei to the international audience in 1949. See Mérei 1949a, 32–39.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Harsányi 1962, 22.

radio as his customer. What's more, he polishes the shoes "in time with the rhythm of the lawyer's toes moving".¹⁰⁷⁰

And we too [in socialism] can easily see similar situations. Who wouldn't have noticed the masses of people flowing out of the movie theatre laughing or with tears in their eyes? They were moved by the same experience, although they inhabit different places on the social ladder. As Zoltán Kodály [the famous Hungarian composer and ethnomusicologist] once said, let there be a time when the baker's apprentice walks down the street whistling opera arias.¹⁰⁷¹

After this fine display of socialist rhetoric, Harsányi gave his view of society. For him, a well-functioning system needed a certain amount of uniformity (*egyformaság*), and social psychology could help build this. However, there should also be some room for difference built in too; as if the demand for uniformity over-reached itself (this was referring to the Rákosi era), it would only stifle socialism and lead to "dullness" in society. If society was to thrive in a constructively ordered way, it needed citizens to want to conform and it needed positive social identification.

As social psychology research had shown, mass communication was mediated by the individual psyches of its recipients, he continued. Most importantly, it happened "voluntarily" (if it happened at all). Although deviance was certainly not being encouraged here, social psychology was based on the general premise that differences existed between people and they should be allowed to exist. Due to this fact, policymakers needed to know people's attitudes, preferences, and interests so that they could better serve the people and tailor their policies accordingly. Social psychology was seen as a potential tool for making social differences visible and yet governable at the same time.¹⁰⁷² In many ways, Harsányi's text belongs to the genre of 'apology' in social psychology, a peculiar narrative product of Hungary in the early '60s, which was aiming to make social psychology ideologically palatable under the prevailing ideological conditions.¹⁰⁷³ Géza Sáska has noted something similar in his research on Hungarian education under state socialism, where the academic debate was often also tied up with catching the interest of the science policymakers. In many cases the real aim was not so much to disseminate knowledge but to convince the audience.¹⁰⁷⁴ Thus, in the early '60s, ideas were publicly promoted in social psychology through regular apologies. Their aim

¹⁰⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷² The rise of the human factor was also acknowledged by the Czechoslovakian Marxist social psychologist Jaromir Janoušek. At the end of the '60s, he wrote that for him it was "by now clear" that the mental life of people living in particular social conditions not only depended on a "correct or incorrect" view of the world or on the ethical norms society imposed upon them, but rather on how people themselves were able to "live through" these social conditions. According to Janousek, the laws which would help to predict how individuals psychologically processed existing social conditions, and linked them to their behaviour, were still largely unknown. See Janoušek 1969, 1.

¹⁰⁷³ Pataki 1977, 7.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Sáska 2005, 32–36.

was to show that previously stigmatised forms of knowledge would now match rather well with the aims and visions of socialist progress.

Béla Buda also made some convincing remarks on the usefulness of social psychology in the *Hungarian Psychological Review* in 1963. He began his article by attacking the most basic ideological argument that had been raised against it in the Soviet bloc: that by focusing on the “subjective factor”, social psychology was undermining historical materialism as the leading scientific world-view and therefore threatened the very foundations of state socialism. In fact, he showed the dialectical nature of the materialist philosophy of history in a letter that Engels had written to J. Bloch (1890) in which he sought to deny the determining role of the economy in historical materialism.

[H]istory is made in such a way that the final result always arises from conflicts between many individual wills, each of which has been made, in turn, by a host of particular conditions of life. Thus there are innumerable intersecting forces, in an infinite series of parallelograms, which give rise to one result - the historical event. This may nevertheless itself be viewed as the product of a power which works unconsciously as a whole and without volition. For what each individual wills separately is obstructed by every one else, and what emerges is something that no one willed.¹⁰⁷⁵

Buda’s message was that if society was to neglect the nature of these individual wills (i.e., social psychology), and to instead treat psychology as simply a physiological concern limited to a study of reflexes, then we would “not understand the real, dynamic psychical world (*lélekvilág*)” of the *zoon politikon*, a driving force behind society. Buda’s rhetoric also pointed out that social psychology had a real theoretical and ideological bearing because it had the potential to connect and rearticulate the two basic pillars of Soviet science - Marxist social theory, and Pavlovian theories of the nervous system.¹⁰⁷⁶ The social environment, other human beings, and cultural symbols were not simply a “series of stimuli” but also important phenomena in their own right according to this researcher and his clearly human point of view.¹⁰⁷⁷

The role and place of social psychology within the communist framework of science also had to be elaborated upon in the ideological discussions led by the agitprop branch of the Party. The basic conditions for research had to be renegotiated to ensure they were safe for socialism. Regarding Hungary, one significant reference point for these high-level ideological ‘discussions’ was the article published in 1967 by Pataki in the journal *Társadalmi Szemle*.¹⁰⁷⁸

¹⁰⁷⁵ Cf. Buda 1963, 612. Translation: https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1890/letters/90_09_21.htm. (8.12.2015)

¹⁰⁷⁶ Buda 1963, 612–613.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Buda 1963, 613. Buda’s arguments come close to Edward Bernstein’s criticism that narrow “economism” had forgotten ideas, traditions, geography, and the human subjective dimension in explaining historical materialism. Bernstein also noted that by claiming itself to be a science, socialism had simply subordinated the ideals of scientific objectivity to serve its own political ends. See Bernstein 1910, 11–19, 37–38.

¹⁰⁷⁸ HU-MNL M-KS 288-41/91. ó. e. MSZMP Központi Szervei. Agitációs és Propaganda Bizottság iratai. 1968. március 26. ülés. Tájékoztató a jelenleg folyó fontosabb ideológiai vitákról.

In the article, Pataki used his skills of rhetoric and argumentation to define what he thought social psychology should be used for in Hungary, by outlining his pragmatic position somewhere between Soviet, American, and East German stances on the matter.¹⁰⁷⁹ After blaming some American social psychologists for producing overly psychological explanations for issues that were basically social and political (e.g., racial problems); he then went on to criticise contemporary Soviet and East German social psychologists, as they either founded their explanations on simplified versions of Plekhanov's "social psyche", or over-estimated the role of "cooperation" as a primary motive for group behaviour.¹⁰⁸⁰

Pataki went to great pains to define Marxist social psychology. Although he argued that it should be based on a clear theoretical and philosophical understanding of the human as a "social being" (*társadalmi lény*), the only way to safeguard the autonomy of social psychology from political intervention was to avoid presenting it as a "all-encompassing social theory" and to give it a solid professional basis. In this respect he was criticising the prevailing practices of social control in Hungary which lacked a certain "psychological sensitivity". Although this was a clear nod in the direction of the US, where professional psychologists were very much in vogue, Pataki also made sure to criticise the Americans, and acknowledge that social problems could not be solved by psychological means alone. Nevertheless, his main point was that socialists (in Hungary) could surely benefit from knowing more about the "psychological mediation of reality".¹⁰⁸¹

Essentially, Pataki was combining western ideas with the teachings of Marx. Adjusting them to his own agenda, he argued that "every individual [psychological] manifestation is one of man's sociability, and his nature within a community". However, this did not mean that the sole object of social psychology research should be some socially determined human psyche; the real issue was rather to understand people as "*subjects* of social cooperation and interaction", and to study how this manifested itself in their real-life social surroundings.¹⁰⁸² In a later extended version of the same article¹⁰⁸³, he came even closer to popular western ideas, insofar as he explicitly shared Gordon

¹⁰⁷⁹ Pataki 1967b, 77–97.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Pataki 1967b, 87–91, 88–89. Plekhanov saw the human psyche mirroring social groups and their traits, and Pataki also argued that social influences were "selected" by individual consciousness and its "predispositions" (*beállítódások*) towards certain stereotypes and traditions, but he had doubts about the idiosyncratic brand of East German social psychology represented by Hiebsch and Vorweg, which saw it as all-encompassing. Although the "act of social cooperation" was considered in itself to be significant by Pataki, cooperation should not be treated as the primary motive in group behaviour, but as something more complicated which should be the subject of careful empirical studies. Here, Pataki clearly voiced doubts about Marx's principles as expressed in *Das Kapital* because they saw the social sciences as "ideologically predetermined".

¹⁰⁸¹ Pataki 1967, 80–81.

¹⁰⁸² Pataki 1967, 92.

¹⁰⁸³ Pataki 1977, 7–39. Ten years later (1977), Pataki was already mentioning the renegade Mérei (15, 33), thus recognising his significance in the fields of education, methodology, and especially social psychology.

Allport's classic definition of social psychology. According to this definition, individual behaviour could be explained in terms of the "actual or imagined presence of the others" via reference persons, social roles and cultural norms.¹⁰⁸⁴ Pataki's discourse was symptomatic of the increasing disparity between ideology and the social sciences. Already in 1967 he seemed to be claiming that human behaviour was in many senses situational. This implicitly challenged essentialist notions of (ideal) personality types that had been one of the pillars of a 'socialist education', for example.¹⁰⁸⁵

In his later writing, Pataki developed his ideas further and made further connections with international social psychology. For instance, in *Social Psychology and Social Reality* (1977) he produced a synopsis of his social psychology, indicating the relevance of the discipline as a science-based tool for explaining diverse and complicated social processes in the modern era.¹⁰⁸⁶ His main point was that if social processes (such as socialisation) were now seen as spontaneous but then ignored, it would only exacerbate the situation.¹⁰⁸⁷ Meanwhile, in *Roads and Crossroads in Contemporary Social Psychology* (1976), he took the stance that social psychology should not ask impractically big questions about *what is society and man*, but instead look into the psychological processes which had contributed to the "current state of society". Again, this was to be done through rigorous empirical research.¹⁰⁸⁸ He even went so far as to imply that this kind of "scientific self-knowledge" about the motives of peoples' activities in groups and communities would help determine the future or "fate" of socialist society.¹⁰⁸⁹

4.1.3 William F. Robinson on Hungarian social psychology

Pataki's 1967 article had also drawn the attention of journalist William F. Robinson, a Radio Free Europe (RFE) correspondent in Hungary at that time. He used Pataki as an example to show his audience that Hungarian reform policies went beyond the NEM, as the article was arguing that social psychology could do more to explain human behaviour and attitudes than ideology alone.¹⁰⁹⁰ After a long report on the various dimensions of Hungarian reform polices Robinson concluded that by supporting social psychology, the

¹⁰⁸⁴ Ibid., 32. Allport's definition became widely used after it was published in the 2nd edition of the Handbook of Sociology (1968). "Social psychology is the attempt to understand and explain how the thoughts, feelings, and behaviours of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of other human beings." See Allport 1968, 5.

¹⁰⁸⁵ On the challenge posed by the situationist view of human behaviour, see Burr 2004, 33–38.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Pataki 1977, 9. The book includes both empirically and theoretically oriented articles on group psychology, socialist lifestyle, and young people's way of life. Pataki also describes the social interactionism of George Herbert Mead.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Ibid., 38.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Pataki 1976, 77. In one chapter, Pataki repeated his criticism of the "declarative" uses of Marxism and stressed the significance of solid empirical evidence in social planning.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Pataki 1977, 9–10.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Robinson 1970, 82.

MSZMP had shown its commitment to “eliminate the legacy of dogmatism in the social sciences” and thus had “opted for a realistic [and pragmatic] rather than ideological solution” to the problems of modernisation.¹⁰⁹¹

Robinson was rather well acquainted with the discussions concerning the rise of the social sciences in the Eastern Bloc. The two reports¹⁰⁹² on Hungarian social sciences he wrote just before the Soviet tanks rolled into Prague in 1968 especially reflect the general western excitement at the implications of Hungarian reforms for social change. The report from 1967 focused particularly on one article by sociologist András Hegedüs (1922–1999) called “Sociology: the self-criticism of a socialist society”.¹⁰⁹³ Hegedüs was a sociologist with socialist-humanist leanings, characteristic for the critically oriented sociology of the time. He was also a former minister under Rákosi’s government who had now turned into a “leading revisionist”. According to Robinson, Hegedüs was a combination of Trotsky and Bernstein, and an “excellent example” of creative Marxism.¹⁰⁹⁴ For Hegedüs, sociology was the “most direct instrument for the self-analysis of society and social conditions”. Hence, in his rhetoric, sociology was both an essential part of the latest stage in the political development of Marxism and a branch of scholarship which would help in the future of socialism. The NEM should thus also be seen as an opportunity to further sociological self-analysis, which could then be followed by comprehensive social, political, and cultural reforms.

Hegedüs also criticised the more general tendency of Eastern European sociology to be seen as having one of two mutually exclusive functions - either “manipulative” or “analytical” - with nothing in between. The first saw the sociologist as a technocratic provider of information, a proponent and defender of the social status quo; while the other was for sociologists who cherished their role as social critic and wanted to disrupt the current state of things. For Hegedüs however, both functions were part of the same process as critical social analysis was clearly impossible without a solid knowledge of society.¹⁰⁹⁵ The self-analysis of socialist society was not an intellectual “trick” in his opinion, or any kind of revolt; it was to “humanise” and “optimise” society and so any friction between illusion and reality was welcome and to be expected as it was simply part of the process.¹⁰⁹⁶ For Robinson, this was nevertheless revisionism *per se*, and he rightly guessed that the political elite would not let this go unnoticed;¹⁰⁹⁷ as indeed they did not when, in 1969, Hegedüs was removed from his position as a head of the working group in sociology within the MTA, and dismissed from his post as an editor in the journal *Valóság* due to

¹⁰⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹² Robinson 1967 & 1968.

¹⁰⁹³ For the original Hungarian, see Hegedüs 1967.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Robinson placed Hegedüs alongside Lenin, Kautsky, Trotsky, Bernstein, Liebknecht, and Luxemburg in terms of importance.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Robinson 1967, 3–4.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Ibid., 5.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Ibid.

a disciplinary campaign that was being carried out against critical intellectuals.¹⁰⁹⁸

For the Party, the essential difference between problematic and useful criticism depended on the political character of the person who was making it. As already shown in chapter 2, acceptable social scientific discourse did not arouse negative attention when it was “constructive” in style, but how was this construed? After 1956, writers in the field of social research were certainly encouraged to find more out about social realities, but there were strict boundaries which could not be crossed. And this was perhaps best summed up by Ferenc Erdei’s description of the political role of “sociographers” (approved social researchers) in 1957. According to Erdei they were the “engineers of reality” insofar as they tried to grasp everything that could further the “healthy development of society”. In the same vein, the sociologist Tibor Huszár argued in 1975 that sociology was like a mirror for the Party, and an “indispensable tool for reform”, so that its policies would not get too dogmatic and inflexible (*merev*).¹⁰⁹⁹

Clearly informed by this idea, and possibly with the intention of co-opting socially sensitive young writers into the service of an acceptable reformist agenda, a special series of literary sociographies (*Discovering Hungary*) was eventually set up in 1967, partly modelled on significant precedents in the 1930s. Nevertheless, some of the publications did manage to raise ‘negative’ attention by focusing criticism on the prevailing contradictions and grievances of everyday life. By 1974, it can be seen from one document in the series that the borders of acceptable social criticism were being carefully sounded out: sociology was, after all, a literary style which “would perish” were it not acceptable to make criticisms of society.¹¹⁰⁰

Robinson’s opinion, at any rate, was that the social sciences in Hungary had increasingly taken on a more “objective character”. As he saw it, not only had the Hungarians managed to shake off the worst of communist dogma, “while continuing to pay lip service to its more general forms and tenets”; but also the Hungarian authorities were beginning to understand that there was a “pressing need” to come to terms with the complex social problems caused by urbanisation and industrialisation. The result was that they were now permitting “free enquiry into areas that were previously regarded as closed issues”.¹¹⁰¹

Robinson’s main source for his opinions on Hungarian social psychology was a newspaper article published in a local provincial paper - *Kisalföld*. The article was an interview with György Hunyady, the leader of the social psychology research group (est. 1966) at the Institute for Psychology, and a seminal figure in the institutionalisation of the discipline in Hungary during the

¹⁰⁹⁸ Gough 2006, 154–156. Hegedüs had argued that alienation also existed in socialism.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Cf. Berkovits 1975, 48. According to Erdei, the political spirit of the sociographer lay in his social consciousness and his role as “prophet” (*vátesz*).

¹¹⁰⁰ HU-MNL-MKS- 288 f. 36/1974/20 ő.e. MSZMP KB Tudományos, Közoktatási és Kulturális Osztálya. Feljegyzés a Magyar Felfedezése sorozatról.

¹¹⁰¹ Robinson 1968, 1.

socialist era.¹¹⁰² For Robinson, the revival of social psychology reflected the changing intellectual and political atmosphere, comparable with what was happening in Hungarian sociology too, in that professional posts were opening up. However, unlike in sociology, Robinson believed that Hungarian social psychology was getting closer to what was happening in the subject stateside. To show how they were not so dissimilar, Robinson compared the definitions for social psychology from a basic western handbook and from the Hungarian *Small Philosophical Dictionary*.¹¹⁰³ He found that, even if the means were still quite different, the ends were similar, and many of the methods and research techniques seemed to correspond (e.g., questionnaires, interviews and word-meaning tests).

To give an example, Robinson wrote about the psychological methods used in one Budapest school to analyse the “aims and habits” of a group of high-school teenagers. Referring once more to Hunyady (his most important source), he referred specifically to an experiment on the “ideological structure” of a typical school class. Hunyady had administered a word-meaning test, with pairs of words, such as “bricklayer-banker”, “Englishman-Rumanian”, “tradition-revolution”, and “red-primitive”. On the basis of the answers given, the individual pupils were divided into small groups. The main aim was to find out the social psychology laws behind forming small groups. It was found out that “a circle based on common friendship shared opinions for the most part [...]”.

One interesting conclusion Hunyady made was that the tests revealed that there was a “very observable English orientation” displayed by a group which preferred “jazz, dancing and girls over their studies”.¹¹⁰⁴ Moreover, some pupils differed from others in their “originality and independence of opinions”. These pupils also ranked higher in “affection tests”, being more popular than their average peers. Moreover, Robinson quotes how schoolchildren were queried about their group habits to find out more about the particular “physiognomy” of the group. In particular, they were asked who the “stars” of the class were, who their “admirers” were, and who was pushed to the periphery.

¹¹⁰² Váriné Szilágyi 2012, 578–582.

¹¹⁰³ According to this dictionary, social psychology was either the study of the “totality of feelings, moods, habits, ideas, illusions, volitional endeavours and particular features characteristic of people within the collectivity of their socioeconomic circumstances... [and described in terms of] classes, nations, social strata, occupational groups”; or the “psychology of society” whereby, according to Marxist-Leninist interpretation, it included the study of “socioeconomic objective factors, laws, and actions which stimulate and shape social feeling and mood”. Meanwhile, the ‘western handbook’ was the *Outline of Social Psychology* by Sherif & Sherif (1956). According to the Sherifs, social psychology was “the scientific study of the experience and behavior of the individual in relation to social stimulus situations. The social stimulus situations are composed of people (individuals and groups) and items of the socio-cultural setting.” This definition of culture included “cooperative labour, property rights, tool-making, housing, and the division of labour and trade”. Cf. Robinson 1968.

¹¹⁰⁴ Robinson 1968, 4.

[I]t is clear that Hungarian efforts in the field of social psychology, like those in sociology, are quite ‘westernized’ in their approach and thinking. There is no attempt here to produce a ‘Socialist Man’, either as a model to be emulated or a goal to be achieved. Likewise, there is no shallow analysis based on the Marxist concepts of class or of false consciousness, nor any sham analysis based on ‘bourgeois remnants’ or ‘petit bourgeois mentality’. Instead, it is quite obvious, from their rejection of the Pavlov concept as the sole valid approach that the Hungarians are trying to discover how and why people really act, rather than attempting to confine reality within the uncomfortable boundaries of a preconceived ideological framework.¹¹⁰⁵

From a present-day perspective, this conclusion does not seem surprising. The attraction and influence of American social science and scholarship was big either side of the Iron Curtain in Europe, and resources from American foundations were being pooled to “build bridges” with the east.¹¹⁰⁶ Also, mainstream Hungarian social psychology increasingly tended to orient itself towards the west as the 1970s drew closer.¹¹⁰⁷ Hunyady himself was active in this process, having imported and adapted many Anglo-American psychological traditions already to the socialist environment in his research on attitudes and prejudices of the people in the 1960s.

But one should bear in mind that Robinson’s message about the western orientation of reforms was also somewhat biased, and not simply because he was American. Due to his emphasis on the scientific, neutral, and objective nature of these methods, he was ignoring (perhaps voluntarily) the general social and political context in which Hungarian social psychologists were operating at the time. Furthermore, he seemed to take it for granted that, in general, the psychological sciences were somehow objective and value-free. But, as we have seen, the rehabilitation of the social sciences in the Eastern Bloc was intimately related to a careful critique of Stalinist dogmatism and the reassessment of ideology, whereas in Robinson’s interpretation the ‘end of dogmatism’ would simply make it free from politics.

The problem becomes clearer if we actually look directly at a 1968 article published by Hunyady called a “Psychological study of social attitudes and world-views”.¹¹⁰⁸ It is true that the cited literature in Hunyady’s article came almost solely from western, mainly American sources, and he was explicit in pointing out that while Marxist social science had failed to scientifically examine (*ellenőriz*) “educational and political practice” in any effective way, the Americans had acquired several valuable results without having to either fully embrace a “comprehensive” Marxist world-view, or outrightly reject it.¹¹⁰⁹ He also implied social psychology could help update prevailing Marxist definitions of the concept of “world-view” (*világnézet*).¹¹¹⁰ His criticisms were in line with

¹¹⁰⁵ Robinson 1968, xx.

¹¹⁰⁶ e.g., Sułek 2010, 330. For more on transnational social science and American “bridge-building”, see Riska-Campbell 2011.

¹¹⁰⁷ Erös 2006, xx

¹¹⁰⁸ Hunyady 1968.

¹¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 389.

¹¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 389. For Hunyady, the prevailing socialist definitions did not recognise any mutual connection between action, emotions and intellect; dealing with world-views in terms of simple, abstract concepts such as “mirroring”, and often removed from real-life. This emphasised the “conviction” part of world-view (*nézet*) more than the

the reform-socialism of the time though, and so he framed his research with juveniles in the context of serving socialism in the future. The introduction to the article thus specified that the aim was to use scientifically tested methods to develop human personalities in “conscious and targeted ways”, so that they would develop a rational (“patriotic”) world-view.¹¹¹¹ He also made it clear that rational governing would also need a knowledge of social structures and psychological processes. At this point we could simply ask, why, and Hunyady would point to the very “practical needs” related to “political and educational training” (*emberformálás*).¹¹¹² But this was not all, significantly, this information could also be used by the Party¹¹¹³ - as testified by the research in social psychology carried out, for example, by the TKK (Centre for Mass Communication Research).

Pataki, too, in his article from 1967 elaborated on which topics should be studied by social psychologists in the future. He pointed out the importance of empirical studies on the “structure and dynamics of social relationships” and how these varied in different real-life situations. He also encouraged inquiries into the political “moods” and attitudes (*társadalmi hangulatok*) of socialist citizens, indicating that these could not be properly understood (and governed) without the help of social psychology. A simply sociological approach to peoples’ attitudes was not enough, he argued, since also the psychological mechanisms which “mediated” material and economic factors had to be explained.¹¹¹⁴ Indeed, research on how peoples’ social attitudes, preferences, and values materialised, spread, and differentiated themselves from each other would greatly concern social psychologists in Hungary from the start of the ’70s onwards.

4.1.4 Rumours of an earthquake

In one of a series of live interviews from 1988-9, renowned Hungarian psychiatrist Miklós Kún (1908-2005) revealed that at the end of the ’60s he had written a short treatise on power and corruption, and sent it to his friend György Aczél, the all-powerful chief of cultural affairs.¹¹¹⁵ Kún was, at that time, the head of a department at the Lipótmező psychiatric hospital in Budapest. While being one of the Hungarian pioneers of social psychiatry, he was also a respected communist who had joined the rank and file of the Party as early as 1932.¹¹¹⁶ Aczél’s relationship with him dated back to the late ’30s, when they had met while both working in a Jewish children’s home run by

“view”. The significance of emotions was not so much to do with “strength of belief” for him, but because they would make people engage with the social phenomena around them more.

¹¹¹¹ Ibid., 388.

¹¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹¹³ On the role of “background institutes”, see Csizmadia 2001, 111–112.

¹¹¹⁴ Pataki 1967, 90–91

¹¹¹⁵ Hungarian Oral History Archives (OHA), Miklós Kún. 188th Interview (October 1988 - February 1989), 202–203.

¹¹¹⁶ Kún used his influence in the higher Party circles to help psychologist Ferenc Mérei to have a job in Lipotmező, for example.

psychiatrist Júlia György.¹¹¹⁷ Kún's treatise on power and corruption was in fact warning about poor communication between the ruling elite and the people, particularly the psychological consequences for those in power. According to the psychiatrist, if they received reports (*jelentések*) that were whitewashed and prettified they tended to lose their sense of reality. Although it was to be expected that, by virtue of their position alone, those in power would receive messages which are to some extent distorted; the situation should not be made worse with less information on society.

"In the old times the messenger with bad news was hanged" Kún noted, and so now everybody wanted to be a good messenger, but these rose-tinted reports about the social realities out there only supported distorted personality features among those in power. If they believed their position originated solely from their own "personality" and not from the "strength of organised society", they would turn into "boastful idiots" and would "only keep in touch with their own caste".¹¹¹⁸ According to Kún, Aczél promised to forward his treatise to Politburo for consideration, but Kún never really knew if it was ever read.

In 1991, Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman also discussed the problematic nature of governing in dictatorial regimes. Like Kún he points out the political vulnerability of one-party dictatorships, although from the angle of blame. As the leadership, or state, is so clearly the only authority, so it is also held (by society) as the only one responsible.

The doorstep on which to lay the blame is publicly known and clearly marked [...] and for each and any grievance it is the same doorstep. [...] The state is the major, and sufficient, factor in forging the variety of often incompatible complaints into a unified opposition - [...] the conflicts that otherwise would remain [in democratic capitalist societies] diffuse and cut the population in many directions tend to be subsumed under one overriding opposition between the state and society.¹¹¹⁹

Kún's anecdote and Bauman's observation together tell us something about the general problem faced by the decision-makers in a one-party dictatorship, and go some way to explaining some of the problems Hungary had in building legitimacy and continuity for the system after the crisis of 1956. As Martin K. Dimitrov has noted, authoritarian governments soon realise that they need feedback, not only on the state of economic and social development, but also on the quality of their leadership, so that they know how to avoid bad decisions in future, and to stop dissatisfaction among the population reaching untenable

¹¹¹⁷ As a Jew, Kún had been forced to resign from his previous job at the Psychological Laboratory at the College of Special Education (*gyógypedagógiai főiskola*) due to tightening anti-semitic legislation. Kún later became Aczél's family doctor and was thus also able to witness the ups and downs of Stalinism and after. For example, Kún undertook Aczél's medical examination after he was rehabilitated and released from prison in 1954. See OHA/Kún, 53–54; 183–184.

¹¹¹⁸ OHA/Kún, 203.

¹¹¹⁹ Cf. Fehérvári 2009, 427–428. For the original, see Bauman 1991, 40. According to Krisztina Fehérvári, one dimension of political vulnerability in socialist states was linked to socialist consumerism and the peculiar politicization of (the lack of) western goods.

levels.¹¹²⁰ In his research, Dimitrov came across an overwhelming number of ‘citizen complaints’ that had been handed in to Party organs at various different levels of society. As the state promised welfare to the people, the majority of complaints were about economic and welfare issues; but these were just one of the peculiar systems of feedback encouraged and orchestrated by the Party.¹¹²¹

There was also the system of “mood reports” (*hangulat jelentés*), which tended to make sure that everything was relatively rosy; and then there were special departments working in major newspapers which received and compiled citizens’ letters, and forwarded them to the agitprop department. Towards the end of the ‘60s, however, sociology and social psychology were also put to use by the regime to find out better what exactly the social reality was; and producing a more differentiated discourse in social psychology was one significant step in the transition from the dictator-prone era of Stalinism to a less monolithic post-Stalinism.

One institution with a science policy agenda that used social psychology in this sense was the aforementioned TKK, established within the Hungarian Radio and TV Corporation (MRT) in 1969.¹¹²² The TKK produced a large number of empirical and theoretical studies to advance the professionalisation of public communication and the media. One interesting example of this was the survey of TV viewers conducted by social psychologist László Halász in 1971, and published secretly as a classified piece of work.¹¹²³ The study aimed to find out the effectiveness of a cartoon character in a TV animation called “Mr. Brain”, whose job it was to get the basics of the NEM (e.g., the dynamics of the market) across to the viewers. The animated film was meant to be entertaining and the message internalised, but the study revealed that this had not happened.¹¹²⁴

The results painted a pessimistic picture, as especially among the workers, the “unexpected turns”, “fast-paced tempo” and “playful ideas” of the main character were what the audience had picked up on, not so much the scientific message. For Halász, who based his arguments on up-to-date research in communication, this was also a stiff reminder that even TV could not bridge the cultural differences between various groups of viewers. The existing differences in socioeconomic position, schooling, and so on, meant that their expectations and attitudes towards what they saw on TV varied considerably. In terms of

¹¹²⁰ Dimitrov 2013, 2.

¹¹²¹ Dimitrov noticed that during late socialism the number of complaints tended to diminish. He speculates that perhaps one reason was that people felt there was no point in complaining anymore. This also relates to the discussion about the nature of the ‘social pact’ between Kádár and the people, and how it worked in practice, in particular. This approach is interested in contemporary future horizons of planning and building legitimacy, not so much on questions such as why the regime ended but rather why it lasted so long, i.e., how the legitimacy was built, or tried to be built. See also Dimitrov 2014; Tokarska-Bakir 2014.

¹¹²² Terestyéni 2010.

¹¹²³ Halász 1972. TKK publications came in different coloured covers, which indicated how widely they would be distributed; and this one was red, which meant that it was for the “inner use only”.

¹¹²⁴ Halász 1972, 17–24, *passim*.

social psychology, the message was clear - "propaganda" should not be understood as a one-way broadcast of messages simply directed to the homogenous masses.¹¹²⁵

TKK also conducted research on the public's political opinions and studied long-term changes in peoples' attitudes and preferences.¹¹²⁶ Using up-to-date social psychology methods, the results were most often strictly classified, and from the early '70s onwards the TKK was one of the most important employers of social psychologists in Hungary. Studying people's attitudes had traditionally been one of the classic topics for social psychologists, but in the US they were also beginning to help with political decision-making, social adjustment, electoral forecasting, and economic marketing.¹¹²⁷ Meanwhile, in state socialist Hungary, research on attitudes, morals, values, and preferences was done for specific ends to meet the needs of a political dictatorship.

One of the best examples of this concerned a peculiar study in the autumn of 1979 which centred around a talk of an earthquake that was supposed to strike the following January. The study was actually looking into the social dynamics of rumours, and according to a Japanese scientist the quake was going to happen in Bicske, a large village in Fejér County approximately 40 kilometres west of Budapest. As the rumour strongly affected the people in Bicske, the researchers at the Centre for Mass Communication Research (at MRT) decided to do some fieldwork on the spot by conducting 82 free interviews with people chosen in a random manner.¹¹²⁸ The social psychologist who wrote the report, Endre Hann¹¹²⁹, saw rumours as one indication that there had been a "disruption in the social system of communication", because of, for instance, "latent" tensions in society. At this point, Hann clearly referred to his earlier taboo-breaking research on prejudices against the Roma people in Hungary, entitled "*Egy rémhír nyomában*" (1976). This was a 'gypsy-version' of the notorious anti-semitic incident that had occurred in Tiszaeszlár at the end of the 19th century, in which a rumour had quickly spread concerning a bloody criminal act supposed to have been committed by one of the Roma. As Ferenc Erős shows in his review of the study, Hann argued that the explanatory factors lay in social psychology: firstly, those who spread the rumour emotionally identified themselves with the non-Roma victim; and secondly, the rumour was a vehicle for socially forbidden aggression to flow freely, so people experienced "cathartic" satisfaction.¹¹³⁰ By touching on a rather delicate social topic, Hann showed how public and private channels of communication could diverge, so that the same people who in public communication would show "solidarity"

¹¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹¹²⁶ Terestyéni 2010.

¹¹²⁷ Smith 1997, 769-771.

¹¹²⁸ Hann 1981, 5. I thank Professor Kaarle Nordenstreng for finding this particular copy for me from the archives of the Department of Journalism in Tampere, Finland.

¹¹²⁹ Endre Hann worked in the TKK for twenty years, since its establishment in 1969.

¹¹³⁰ Erős 1994/1985, 132-133.

with the Roma, would be unashamed, in private, to discuss the “final solution” for getting rid of them.¹¹³¹

In the earthquake study a few years later, Hann delved further into the complicated relationship between rumours and mass communication, as there had been what he thought was a disproportionately large media campaign launched to refute the claims. With field data gathered on how the people in Bicske reacted, Hann argued that the media announcements had only prolonged the rumour’s survival. So what were the structural peculiarities that made socialist mass communication so ineffective?¹¹³² Hann found, by comparing the messages in the media to data gathered from interviews with the residents, that it was perhaps not enough to use a strictly ‘rational’ explanation to refute the Japanese scientist’s purported claims.

Yes, unfortunately there have been earthquakes in Hungary, and it is certain that there will be more in the future. No responsible expert would pronounce an area completely earthquake-free, after all, regardless of how thorough and accurate their measurements were; and for the very same reason none would claim that an earthquake was going happen at a particular time and place either - even if that was an area known for its earthquakes.¹¹³³

The author of this official explanation seems more concerned with the logical tightness of his argument than trying to address people’s ‘irrational’ anxieties, Hann observed; with the result that although the experts were ‘right’, they were made to look totally powerless in the face of a seismic threat and dismissive of people’s concerns. His conclusion was that the refutation campaign was too general, and did not take into account various target audiences and their different socioeconomic situations.¹¹³⁴ Some of the people interviewed by Hann and his associates noted that they had little reason to believe the official news, as news coverage seemed quite arbitrary. To most common people it seemed the case that “one day they say this, and the next day something quite different”. But luckily, it seemed there were other ways to get the news.

Many people say - or at least I heard them say this in the tram or bus, just as they too heard it from others - that Radio Free Europe mentioned this research which had located the place on earth where the earthquake was going to happen, and this place is Bicske. And this was literally what the radio said, but I did not hear it myself. Mind you, I don’t really follow any of the news as it’s a total waste of time. There doesn’t seem to be any point, as they will just say what they want anyway.¹¹³⁵

According to Hann, three main factors contributed to the failure to dispel these rumours. Firstly, mass media and communications in Hungary lacked a certain

¹¹³¹ Ibid. As Erős notes, Hann’s study concretely reveals some of the social psychology mechanisms responsible for racial prejudice. For Erős, it was also a severe critique of the latent “democratic deficit” in socialism. The failure to discuss things in public because of political and social taboos was one explanation for the “hysterical” spread of racial hatred.

¹¹³² Hann 1981, 6.

¹¹³³ Ibid., 25–26.

¹¹³⁴ Ibid., 31.

¹¹³⁵ Ibid., 36–37.

degree of professional quality at this time; secondly, people were able to ignore this information if they wanted to, so it wasn't a very efficient means of dispelling rumours. Finally, people no longer trusted the media,¹¹³⁶ and this was what Hann saw as the root of the problem. One of the main reasons for this, he thought was the uniformly anodyne nature of official news, the flipside of which was that suspicious lack of any bad news - clearly "too much a question of ideology". People were thus forced to look elsewhere (e.g., Radio Free Europe) and would experience social reality in their own ways, which was more "difficult to control". Judging from the interviews, it seemed to be well-known that official news sources were heavily controlled and used for top-down propaganda more than anything else.¹¹³⁷ Hann mooted the point that these factors may have even combined to create a kind of "thirst" among people for bad news.

There seemed to be three major mass communication strategies for dealing with rumours as Hann saw it: (i) criminalising them, characteristic of the early Stalinist years in Hungary; (ii) silencing them (*agyonhallgatás*); and (iii) belittling them. In the case of the earthquake, there were no political implications involved so the third strategy was applicable - the rumours were made to seem "ridiculous". But this was not to say that the other two strategies were no longer being used, as they clearly were.

You have to draw your own conclusions from the statistics which point to great work achievements, and add to this the number of casualties caused by, for example, a mining accident. Not even the weather forecasts can be relied upon as the Met Office is only allowed to promise good weather on May Day.¹¹³⁸

Hann's advice for the political authorities was pragmatic. Although he criticised the veil of silence, which had caused people to not trust public messages, he also warned that if the "floodgates" were opened too quickly, there would be unexpected results. He thought that even if people did finally get to hear the "whole truth" they might still not believe the authorities. In fact, according to "undisputed historical" evidence, Hann believed it could lead to a "destabilisation of the whole political structure". Of course, this was a clear reference to what happened in 1956, and to counteract this threat, Hann suggested a compromise be made in mass communication strategy between peoples' thirst for information and the need to maintain control of events based on rational management based on the precepts of social psychology.¹¹³⁹

¹¹³⁶ Ibid., 51.

¹¹³⁷ Ibid., 37.

¹¹³⁸ Ibid., 38.

¹¹³⁹ Hann 1981, 39-40.

4.2 Alternative voices in social psychology

4.2.1 Psychology and social symbolism

According to Vivien Burr, social psychology always “take a stand” on questions related to the human condition, so it can never be purely academic in nature. The explanations proposed carry implicit messages on how people should live their lives, and how they should perhaps change themselves, or the society around them.¹¹⁴⁰ In writing about the ‘social symbolism’ of scientific theories, Pléh argues that “activity” became a key issue for Eastern Central European psychologists after 1956, as there was a “strong social determination”, not only under hardline Stalinist Rákosi in the 1950s, but also under the ‘soft dictatorship’ that followed. Psychological theories not only had symbolic relevance to the way things were organised socially and politically, but a literal one too, as the field itself was being politically controlled and pushed in certain directions.¹¹⁴¹

Nevertheless, Pléh drew attention to some less transparent forms of social symbolism. For example, from the late ‘50s onwards, the majority of Hungarian behavioural psychologists supported the ‘instrumental view’ on learning popularised by Skinner in the US. In the socialist context, Pléh reminds us, Skinner’s behaviourism implied that human motivation played not merely a background role, but one that was active and crucial; and so it happened that the same Skinnerian model of learning that, in the late sixties, had become a symbol of control, manipulation, lack of freedom, and an over-ambitious reductive and deterministic view of man among American academics, became a symbol for activity and freedom in Eastern Europe. It was a welcome contrast to Pavlov’s dogs, who were merely subjected to interventions and were seen to undergo learning passively.¹¹⁴²

As much of Hungarian biology and psychology had become strictly Pavlovian during the ‘50s, many of the younger psychologists in the ‘60s were quick to embrace something else. One aspect was what Pléh referred to as a “cloud-like” and loosely-defined opposition between two approaches to human mind. They came to symbolise not only two different visions of human nature and how society should be organised (top-down vs. bottom-up); but also the difference in approach between psychologists and science policymakers.

Another intriguing example of social symbolism explored by Pléh is linked to group psychology. With the rise of self-knowledge groups from the ‘60s onwards, social psychology in the form of group therapy (especially in the more informal contexts) became more attractive.¹¹⁴³ Pléh thought that compared to the more formal bureaucratic settings, these “spontaneous groupings” were probably more attractive because they were “based on emotional attraction”.

¹¹⁴⁰ Burr 2004, 7–8.

¹¹⁴¹ Pléh 2008, 185

¹¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 186.

¹¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 190.

But perhaps we should also ask if this dichotomy between the apparently staid official practices and these emancipatory and spontaneous self-knowledge groups is a somewhat overly 'cut and dried' way to describe this socialist era in all its complexity. Rather than searching for hidden deviant psychologies, we could perhaps instead dig deeper into the contexts where these various discourses met and (more usually) intertwined each other.

4.2.2 Self-knowledge groups

In 1976, the social psychology research group at the Institute for Psychology published an overview of Hungarian research that had taken place in the field between the mid-'60s and early '70s. The anthology was mainly based on papers presented at the 1st Hungarian national conference of social psychologists in 1972. Debates were held on topics of importance such as the social psychology of the workplace, communication studies, public opinion, management and leadership, social attitudes, group psychology, clinical social psychology and socialisation, which were considered topical in Hungary at the time.¹¹⁴⁴

As the conference was the first big academic event for social psychology in the country, it aimed to be comprehensive in scale and its significance was increased by the presence of Ferenc Mérei. This was the first public presentation he would attend after he was released from prison in 1963.¹¹⁴⁵ However, for László Garai (1935-), one of the most influential Marxist social psychology academics at the time, the conference had negative consequences, as it was decided that his innovative research into the social psychology of personality would be abandoned. According to Garai who had brought post-'68 methodological and theoretical criticism from Western Europe to Hungary, the "critique and isolation" of his group during the conference was symptomatic of the need to create a clear public profile for the social psychology establishment.¹¹⁴⁶

At least two of the cases presented at the conference focused on questions of work and community.¹¹⁴⁷ In the first, social psychologist Sándor Erdősi offered tools for rationalising management ideologies with a focus on mid-level management and the decision-making environment on the factory floor. Erdősi's suggestions were based on empirical social psychology data gathered from an unnamed factory outside Budapest. He claimed that the formal organisational hierarchy in the factory did not take into account the social dynamics that really mattered at the informal level on the factory floor.¹¹⁴⁸

The other case, presented by István Fehér, looked into the psychological elements of democratic leadership and presented some group therapy

¹¹⁴⁴ Hunyady (et.al.) 1976.

¹¹⁴⁵ Interview with Ferenc Pataki, 27 September 2013.

¹¹⁴⁶ Interview with László Garai: 21 April 2012; See also Garai, *Theoretical Psychology: Vygotskian Writings* (<http://mek.oszk.hu/12700/12752/index.phtml>), (4.2.2015)

¹¹⁴⁷ Erdősi 1976; Fehér 1976.

¹¹⁴⁸ Erdősi 1976, 147-156.

techniques that could be used to increase social cohesion in the workplace, which had been developed while leading self-knowledge groups together with his colleague Sándor Szepessy in 1970-1972. The expressed aim of this particular 'psychological technology' was to democratise management more effectively through knowing more about oneself (*önismeret*) and the various members of one's team. 'Psychological technology' was not used as a concept by contemporaries in this context. However, following Nikolas Rose I use it to refer to the potential role of psychological expert discourse (and interest) in producing subjectivities.¹¹⁴⁹ Seen in this light, Fehér's case presents a good example of how people were being increasingly encouraged (in the historical context of Hungarian socialism) to evaluate their situation and actively orient their lives in a more individualised modern socialist environment. The wider implications of this were also that the authorities were now acknowledging the dangers of atomisation; since educationalists and psychologists were being asked to find ways to improve social cohesion and identity at the local level.

The first of Fehér's self-knowledge groups (*kör*) had been organised at the Zrínyi Printing Press for 12 of the trained workers there who were all members of the KISZ and aged 20-28. The second *kör* formed part of a further education course for plant managers, financial officers, mid-level managers and local party leaders. They were all affiliated with the printing industry, and fairly advanced in their careers. The practice in both these self-knowledge sessions was based on international as well as Hungarian theories of group therapy, especially on Ferenc Mérei's work, such as the non-directive psychotechnics, and the therapeutic 'marathon session' he had taught with psychiatrist Miklós Kun¹¹⁵⁰ at the Semmelweis University Clinic.¹¹⁵¹ Mérei had told his eager students that this "non-directive" practice crucially depended on whether therapists were sensitive enough to remain in the background and yet somehow be able to pull the right strings so as to contribute to the positive development of the group. In a considerate yet nevertheless spontaneous manner, the group therapist could thereby show his trust in the group's ability to lead itself, while at the same time giving a good example of those leadership skills. Like Mérei, Fehér made it clear that this would *not* lead to "laissez-faire anarchy", as some might have feared. The end result would instead be that group-members would participate as active agents in the therapeutic process.¹¹⁵² One concrete way that Fehér recommended for the therapist to take an active role while still remaining non-directive was via "confrontation". In creating emotionally loaded situations and mirroring the reactions of others, the

¹¹⁴⁹ Rose 1999/1989, introduction.

¹¹⁵⁰ Miklós Kun was oriented towards social psychiatry at the Lipotmező Hospital in Budapest.

¹¹⁵¹ This was first tested out by a "methodological committee" at the Iron and Steel Workers' Sports Club in the Angyalföld workers' district. In this therapy session, group members included a sports school director, teachers, coaches, and assistant coaches.

¹¹⁵² Fehér 1976, 218.

therapist taught the group members to “stand face to face” with their own behaviour.¹¹⁵³

The first self-knowledge group met once every two weeks, over 2½ years; having all volunteered to do so because of various “challenges” they had met in their everyday work within KISZ. The group included white-collar workers, engineers, technicians, and one chemist from the Faculty of Natural Sciences at ELTE University. They were hoping that the course on psychological leadership would help them do their jobs more efficiently. So with the social background of each participant firmly in mind, the psychologists set out to give those present the means to recognise and reflect on their group’s behaviour, and know about the unconscious motives that affected it. The clearly expressed aim was to help these young leaders understand the psychological issues related to the aforementioned “democratic style of leadership”.¹¹⁵⁴ The meetings were not always the same length, with the marathon sessions sometimes lasting for up to ten hours; and during the first few meetings of the group, the psychologists found that the background of the participants often made it difficult to adopt a non-directive approach. Fehér soon realised that they were so accustomed to the social and political hierarchies in KISZ, they always “wanted to be informed about the opinion of their superiors”, or were expecting to receive “silent instructions for action” as Fehér put it.

Eventually however, Fehér’s method paid off and the democratic nature of the group-sessions managed to induce a surprising openness among the participants, especially during the marathon sessions (organised three times). In these sessions, the members of the group really seemed to throw themselves wholeheartedly into the project. For example, some members openly confessed “their sexual feelings towards each other” and learned to recognise the situations that “sparked emotional reactions”.¹¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, the members of the group became more open about their political and religious affiliations, even confessing their stands on certain “ideological questions”. Even “extremist, antisemitic and nationalist” opinions were heard but because of the “democratic atmosphere” the group members “proved themselves tolerant” and listened carefully to the other opinions before expressing their own.¹¹⁵⁶ In the end, the personalities that were sincere and open also won the respect of others as they were able to reveal their innermost feelings or, as Fehér put it, “problems in their instinctual lives (*ösztönélet*)”. In short, according to the sociometric measurements carried out after the session to unravel the inner relations of “sympathy and antipathy”, it was revealed that these people were in fact “the stars of the group”.¹¹⁵⁷

As the group continued to meet regularly for the next two and a half years, it became stronger. Fehér noticed that the participants were really

¹¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵⁵ Fehér 1976, 221.

¹¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

experiencing the “security offered by the collective”;¹¹⁵⁸ and that they had undergone a “process” of transformation in which they had turned themselves from a loose group of individuals, unconscious of their identities within a community, into a tightly knit “reference group”. The concepts used in this description testify to an eclectic combination of intellectual sources. “Reference group” was a term popularised by the American sociologist Robert K. Merton (1910-2003);¹¹⁵⁹ but the “process” of transformation made a clear reference to socialist discourses on the nature of ‘true communities’ - which was a significant theme in both Hungarian and Soviet social psychology at the time. According to Fehér, the tightness of these bonds was testified by the fact that those members who had changed their working place (Zrínyi) or even moved to another city, visited the meetings.¹¹⁶⁰ For the social psychologists, who naturally wanted to show the practical efficiency of their method, all this proved that these members of the factory youth organisation had genuinely internalized the meaning of the psychologically sensitive, democratic, and non-directive management.

The second self-knowledge group described by Fehér started off quite badly. It turned out that these middle-aged executives mostly wanted psychological advice from Fehér and Szepessy concerning only very practical problems of management. Fehér confessed that his first mistake had been to ask a fellow psychologist to come in and help ‘teach’ the participants the basics of spontaneity. Perhaps too soon, this colleague proceeded to tell their life-story and share the most intimate issues in their life, such as marriage-conflicts, problems at work, and their relationship with their boss. This was only the first session, and after that the colleague did not return, so the rest were suspicious as to the real reasons for the visit. Was it just to make them reveal ‘incriminating’ evidence about their own real opinions? Perhaps the Rákosi era was still too fresh in their memories, so there followed an impasse for the group, where no progress in group psychology was made for months. The self-reflective Fehér concluded that this technique had failed because it smacked too much of “manipulation”.¹¹⁶¹ Yet eventually, after some time of lecturing more conventionally on the basic social psychology facts related to management that they had originally wanted, the participants were eventually “won over”.

They became friendly, helpful, and got closer to each other [...] previously aloof, distant and austere financial officers soon forgot their titles and addressed each other with first names.¹¹⁶²

For Fehér this was yet more proof that otherwise atomistic individuals (judging from their initial distrust of the group) could develop into more rational and

¹¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 223.

¹¹⁵⁹ Reference group referred to the group of people by which the individuals measured and evaluated their own behaviour and thinking; and Fehér noted that the participants were actually starting to think “what would I do, if I were they?”

¹¹⁶⁰ Fehér 1976, 223

¹¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹¹⁶² Fehér 1976, 225.

conscious units as a result of the social psychology techniques the participants had learnt in the self-knowledge sessions. One could argue, of course, that these people had simply got used to each other after months of sessions, but then again they could equally have become more dysfunctional in that time.

As it was, the groups led by Fehér and Szepessy had transformed into genuine small communities that could now control their emotions and feelings more effectively for the purposes of working towards the common aim. Because of the “safety” offered by the reference group, the members of this newly modernised collective seemed to become more capable of taking initiatives too, which was a crucial breakthrough. The conclusion was that this particular form of group therapy had functioned as a kind of “pre-school for democratic and social leadership”.¹¹⁶³ Of course, this could have simply been a piece of popular political jargon used with the intention of convince science policy authorities about the relevance of these techniques; then again it might also have been part of the wider changes regarding the management of social groups (such as workers in factories) to develop more effective leadership skills within socialism.

One way or another, whether the authorities really were convinced or not, self-knowledge groups did nevertheless become more popular in Hungary as the early '70s wore on.¹¹⁶⁴ Indeed, different variants of group therapy in Hungary, and of group psychotherapy in East Germany were also being promoted.¹¹⁶⁵ In 1972, for instance, the psychologist Judit Temesvári encouraged the readers of *Valóság* to improve their self-knowledge with the help of therapeutically oriented group discussions.¹¹⁶⁶ Although the article was essentially about young people listening to rock music and going to music clubs,¹¹⁶⁷ it was clearly written with adults in mind, so that they might better understand their children and show more empathy and understanding when dealing with the young.¹¹⁶⁸ To start with she mentioned two somewhat different theoretical sources, both of which were already well-known in Hungary at the time: Mérei's famous social psychology concept from the '40s of “collective experience” (*együttes élmény*); and the western group psychotherapy concept of “training group” (or T-group), popularised by American psychologist Carl Rogers in the '50s and '60s. Temesvári and her colleagues were understandably keen to create therapeutically oriented group discussions with a positive dynamic. This would ideally be a space where people could open up, ideally suited for critical and self-critical dialogue between participants, with the ultimate aim of increasing self-knowledge. This social dialogue was to be guided by two facilitators in much the same way as Fehér and Szepessy had done. One would “provoke” a conversation and ensure that

¹¹⁶³ Ibid., 227.

¹¹⁶⁴ Interview with János László: 19 April 2012.

¹¹⁶⁵ See Füredi & Szakács 1969; Hidas 1975; Popper 1975; Hidas & Szónyi 1977; and Buda (et.al.) 2009, 82.

¹¹⁶⁶ Temesvári 1972.

¹¹⁶⁷ The self-knowledge group was organised in *Illés*-club, which was one of the most famous beat clubs in Hungary at the time.

¹¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 76–77.

the participants were “face to face with their own behaviour”, while the other interpreted the results. After this, the emotionally tense situation that was expected to ensue would be explained and resolved in conjunction with the participants.

This relatively “western” method, however, was not an immediate success. It seemed that for teenagers, at least, the presence of psychological experts was “paralysing”. It made them silent and passive, and so more “egalitarian” methods were apparently tried, and these met with greater success (though these are not described in any detail). Certain subjects were discussed in the sessions to elicit the necessary emotionally tense situations, such as the “essence of happiness”, sexual morality, the relations between men and women, and situations that might lead to conflict between the generations; as well as political questions, such as the “cult of personality” and patriotism. According to Temesvári, questions of “power and compromise” as well as honesty were discussed quite openly, such as this contribution from one of the younger participants.

Are we honest to ourselves? Is society honest? There will be no social honesty until there is full equality. Until then everybody lies because they desperately want to proceed in life.¹¹⁶⁹

A conversation about the cult of personality in one session was particularly interesting. The agitprop secretary of the KISZ from an unmentioned factory arrived at the session late and in tears. After some discussion about what was upsetting her, it became clear that it was to do with the Lenin centenary celebrations that they had been organising in her factory.

Members of our KISZ factory committee had been preparing for the celebrations for weeks, but in the end the remembrance was a total failure. People have become bored of these never-ending celebrations, and it’s certain that even Lenin would be fed up with them too.¹¹⁷⁰

The presence of psychologists as self-proclaimed ‘leaders’ in these discussions appeared awkward to Temesvári, when really they should have been merely facilitating. She felt more democratic methods were needed since “these kids had been hardened (or silenced) by their strict, austere upbringing” and needed instead to see a group of their like in a friendly, open, and honest environment. She observed that they were happier to discuss these issues with like-minded people who faced “the same everyday struggles” and were not somehow placing themselves above them. After the first couple of meetings, for example, one teenager was even quoted as saying that “maybe one day we can be as talkative and openly discuss matters in KISZ meetings too.”¹¹⁷¹

Although these self-knowledge sessions may have been in many ways a watered-down version of social psychology, it was clearly a place where young

¹¹⁶⁹ Temesvári 1972, 73–74.

¹¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 71.

¹¹⁷¹ Ibid., 72–73.

people could legitimately express emotions and let themselves “have a good political rant” (*viharos politizálás*). The implicit message seemed to be that these keen opinions, which were now accepted as being held by many of the younger generation, could and should be channelled into manageable chunks with the help of proper psychological techniques. Indeed, these teenagers were presented in this new context as willing and able to develop themselves morally and socially through enhancing their self-knowledge, and in this respect they had certainly internalised the basic parameters of the ideal socialist personality. In other words, they were the decent kids compared to those “ruffians and hooligans” excellently described by Sándor Horváth.¹¹⁷² The group facilitators, in turn, presented themselves as experts in educating young individuals so that they would become more likely closer into a socialist with a mature and civilised personality. For Temesvári, the measure of her success lay in the fact that Mérei’s *együttes élmény* was being effectively put into practice with average working people,¹¹⁷³ and some of them had even decided to continue these practices in other self-knowledge groups.

These examples from Temesvári and Fehér are both cases of a psychology-based practice which aimed to increase social cohesion by creating an ‘authentic’ experience of belonging to a group in an emotionally open atmosphere. And both were heavily influenced by the work of Ferenc Mérei. By using his concept of *Együttes élmény*, the psychologists in both cases cherished his notions of the emotional “surplus” that emerged as a powerful experience (*erlebnis*) in the midst of living, concrete relationships between individuals in a group. According to Mérei, as the group welded together to form a community, this experience was based on and manifested itself in shared gestures and signs (*utalás*) which combined to form the “mother tongue” of the community. This was the ‘added value’ of community - the powerful idea that group experience was more than just the sum-total of its parts (i.e., people’s individual experiences). This was clearly the domain of social psychology - it could not be explained simply with reference to individual characteristics of members of the group.¹¹⁷⁴

Mérei’s indirect influence on these experiments (and in others) could also be seen in the way “informal social dynamics” had been embraced. As we have already seen, Erdősi for one, had noticed how useful it was for mid-level management to know more about informal group dynamics, so they could make use of these kinds of spontaneous group structures in the community.¹¹⁷⁵ The group therapy sessions conducted at Zrínyi thus also had important and useful ramifications for the Hungarian government too. Fehér’s experiment in particular gets quite close to the “socio-psychological training” described by Susanne Cohen,¹¹⁷⁶ that had been developed by Soviet psychologists in the ‘70s and ‘80s (*sotsial’no psikhologicheskii trening*), and was very much influenced by

¹¹⁷² Horváth 2009.

¹¹⁷³ Temesvári 1972, 76.

¹¹⁷⁴ Mérei 1989, 29, 288.

¹¹⁷⁵ Kantas & Kantas 1965, 248–261.

¹¹⁷⁶ Cohen 2010, 180–181.

the “T-groups” popularised globally by Carl Rogers.¹¹⁷⁷ However, as Cohen argues, far from being mere copies of their American counterparts, these training sessions were carefully developed “in relation to the concerns and traditions of the Soviet environment”.¹¹⁷⁸

Rogers, for his part, argued that T-Groups could only flourish in democratic environments as they represented individual freedom and carried the message of social transformation, rather than control.¹¹⁷⁹ But, as Cohen shows, to organise a T-Group in the socialist universe was far from unthinkable. In fact, the new method was heralded by Soviet psychologists as an innovative new form of education, which was both proactive and egalitarian, and stood out from mainstream methods of lecture and memorisation. Reminiscent of T-groups, small groups of participants spent their time taking part in activities and role plays, and not being just passive listeners. In the Soviet training sessions, the focus was not so much on self-expression skills, but on social and ‘communication’ (*obshchenie*) skills, such as showing understanding and being attentive of others.¹¹⁸⁰

Oleg Kharkhordin reminds us that the terms ‘individual’ and ‘collective’ were charged with very particular meanings in the USSR, and by the ‘70s there was already a well-established Soviet tradition of self-training and of ‘working on oneself’ to be able to internalise the skills necessary for participating in various collectives for the common cause.¹¹⁸¹ This kind of active participation had also been at the centre of reformist educational theory, both in the works of Anton Makarenko and his former role model, the American reformer John Dewey. Now, in the Soviet context of the socio-psychological training that took place in the ‘70s and ‘80s, all these elements were brought to bear on workplace ‘communication’, which was said to be especially useful for managers, doctors, and teachers.¹¹⁸²

Besides rationalising social relations and humanising communication in the workplace, the aim of these Soviet group therapy practices was to teach socialist skills of citizenship that could be used outside the factory and office premises as well. Hence, the idea was to produce “citizens and workers who interacted in a manner that was less egocentric and more attuned towards others”.¹¹⁸³ This was congruent with the socialist idea strongly present in Hungarian public discourse on work too. The workplace should be seen as the “second home”, so on top of their day-to-day workloads, workers were also

¹¹⁷⁷ Ibid. T-groups, often in remote locations, flourished in the US especially from the ‘50s to ‘70s. Carl Rogers himself argued that they were a radical invention. As the group demanded emotional honesty from its members, they were often forcefully encouraged to tear down all “masks”. For more, see Rogers 1970, 27–28.

¹¹⁷⁸ Cohen 2010, 183.

¹¹⁷⁹ Rogers 1970, 160. Perhaps by emphasising the incompatibility of T-Groups with fascist and communist societies, Rogers was hoping to silence his critics.

¹¹⁸⁰ Cohen 2010, 181–184.

¹¹⁸¹ Kharkhordin 1999, 231–278. Kharkhordin’s judgment about these collective forms of governing individuality was highly pessimistic as he showed their close connection to the disciplinary techniques of surveillance characteristic for the Soviet collectives.

¹¹⁸² Cohen 2010, 182–183.

¹¹⁸³ Ibid., 178.

expected to internalise the behavioural codes and lifestyle of the socialist worker,¹¹⁸⁴ no matter how idealistic this particular view of reality was (at least in Hungary).¹¹⁸⁵ Nevertheless, as the case of Fehér and Szepessy shows, the discourse in social psychology resonated with the reform socialism of the time. Reformist discourse, in turn, seemed to offer a good channel for social psychologists to promote their studies and knowledge claims and to build a professional career in a field that was, after all, financed and controlled by the party-state. In what follows, I try to contextualise these experiments further by paying attention to certain not so mainstream tendencies in Hungarian social psychology.

4.2.3 Sociometrics and “hidden network of communities”

James C. Robinson was right when he noted that group psychology was a forte of Hungarian social psychology in the '60s as part of his Radio Free Europe report on the reforms; yet he may not have been aware of the Hungarian traditions on which it rested. Ferenc Mérei, for instance, was not mentioned once, but this was probably because after his prison sentence he was pushed to the academic and political margins. In spite of this, Mérei was however very influential in an indirect and informal manner as an *eminence grise* in several fields. Particularly because of his role as a charismatic teacher and a role-model he became significant in introducing a good number of young wannabe psychologists to the field. But although he wrote several important publications on child psychology, sociometrics, and clinical psychology, the fact that he was not allowed to participate in planning science for the establishment would have an effect on the orientation of mainstream social psychology as it evolved from the '60s onwards.

What Mérei achieved in his life is both scientifically significant and politically resonant. In his youth in the '30s, he studied under Henri Wallon in Paris, where he also got involved with the Hungarian left-wing; and so on his return to Hungary he joined an illegal circle of activists and avant-garde artists.¹¹⁸⁶ During and after WWII, he not only taught social psychology and child psychology in various institutions, but also wrote some of his most significant works. The article “Group experience and institutionalisation” (*Együttes Élmény*), for example, was published in *Human Relations* in 1949 and became both internationally famous and, as we have already seen, highly influential for many later Hungarian social psychologists.¹¹⁸⁷

Along with several of his contemporaries in Europe at the time, Mérei's analysis of group psychology tied in with studying the social psychology mechanisms of Central European Fascism. Thus, *Együttes élmény* was also an analysis of Hungary's recent deeply problematic past. As such it was linked with the other Hungarian analyses of antisemitism written at the same time by

¹¹⁸⁴ Tóth 2007, 59.

¹¹⁸⁵ See, for example Haraszti 1977.

¹¹⁸⁶ K. Horváth 2006, 39–40.

¹¹⁸⁷ Mérei 1949a.

political philosopher István Bibó and psychoanalyst Imre Hermann. While the other two went straight to the point, Mérei's manifest aim was to support the contemporary needs of socialist educational reform. In the utopian spirit of the time he aimed at showing how 'authentic' communities should have an experiential added value. In contrast to the experience of fascism, these true communities would cherish and promote the uniqueness of individuals instead of controlling and suffocating human personalities. But while Mérei was contributing to the nationalisation process of Hungarian schools, he also had an influential and academically compromising role in the politically influential Science Council led by one of the leading communists - Ernő Gerő. Due to this position in the Council, Mérei was charged with organising the fields of psychology and education, and his role became somewhat like an ideological 'commissar'.¹¹⁸⁸ When the political winds turned against psychology, because of this position, Mérei felt obliged to publish texts in which he criticised 'bourgeois psychology'.¹¹⁸⁹ He also persuaded his psychoanalyst colleague Imre Hermann to admit the 'ideological mistakes' of psychoanalysis in public.

Thus, as both a leftist ideologue and an active public figure, Mérei also got himself involved in the dangerous game of communist in-fighting. He was twice forced out of his position and into exile (albeit within Hungary), first in the early '50s and finally in 1958 due to his claimed counter-revolutionary activities after the Soviet invasion. As Éva Gál has shown, Mérei's case following 1956 was also motivated by the claim that he was having a pernicious professional and political impact on youth.¹¹⁹⁰ After being released in the general amnesty in 1963, Mérei was prevented from working in official academia, and was followed by the secret police practically until the end of his life. However, as a result of negotiations behind the scenes,¹¹⁹¹ he soon became employed in the psychiatric hospital at Lipotmező, where he established his own psychodiagnostics laboratory. This laboratory soon developed into a major centre for the development of clinical psychology and for training future generations of psychologists.

In the works he published during the socialist era, Mérei developed his leftist convictions, but this time from the vantage point offered by his politically marginal position. Rather distinctive in this sense were the *Psychological Diaries* (see below) he wrote when behind bars, which were published only posthumously. As Pléh notes, one of the lasting contributions from this book was the idea that the manifest content of dreams is intimately connected to real-

¹¹⁸⁸ Huszár 1995, 94–101; Lányi 1997. See also OHA: Véra Mérei (1916–2007). Number of the interview: 306 (1991). Interviewers: Andrásné Havril, Erzsébet Havril, 183.

¹¹⁸⁹ See, for example Mérei 1949b. In "Bourgeois Objectivism in Child Psychology", Mérei used Jean Piaget (who was actually one of his role models) as a typical of bourgeois psychology which tried to universalise an abstract idea of the child. By doing this, he publicly followed the Stalinist line of those who were against the idea of introducing more psychology into education.

¹¹⁹⁰ Gál 2013; Gál 2011.

¹¹⁹¹ He was helped by his old friend, psychiatrist Miklós Kún at Lipotmező. As mentioned above in 4.1.4, Kún was also a close friend of György Aczél, the leading science and cultural politician who had the power to influence these matters.

life social relationships.¹¹⁹² This was probably the result of Mérei spending a lot of time recording and analysing everything he was thinking, from his inner thoughts and “wandering ideas” to his dreams and day-dreams; which he then used to build his theory.¹¹⁹³

As Erős notes, although he may not have been the first social psychologist in Hungary to have a politically resonant discourse, Mérei was clearly instrumental in creating the empirical and theoretical foundations for social psychology as an autonomous discipline with a clearly defined object of research. It essentially differed from earlier forms which operated with rather speculative concepts, such as the “collective soul”.¹¹⁹⁴ In his psychological theory, Mérei combined a Marxist interpretation¹¹⁹⁵ of French functionalism with Kurt Lewin’s philosophy of science - in its conviction that a group was not just an aggregate of individuals but a living reality.¹¹⁹⁶

Both Csaba Pléh and Ferenc Erős have pointed out that Mérei’s case represents an Eastern Central European variant of “role hybridisation”. In his life and work, clinical practice and expertise in child psychology came together in Mérei’s role as a radical social reformer motivated by communist convictions.¹¹⁹⁷ This was also partly due to the nature of the discipline itself being on the borders of science. The history of social psychology has consequently been heavily influenced by this mixing-up of academic and sociopolitical roles;¹¹⁹⁸ with the result that the notion of hybridisation is crucially important in the present research. Although Mérei was not part of mainstream social psychology in the Kádárist Hungary, he influenced the field indirectly by his central role in several more informal networks. As mentioned already in 4.2.2, there was a trend in Hungarian social psychology from the ‘60s onwards to focus on the dynamics of ‘spontaneous group formation’. In fact, just before the national conference in 1972, Mérei published the seminal *Hidden Network of Communities* (1971), which especially dealt with these issues.¹¹⁹⁹ Basically, it went further into sociometrics, but it is also remembered for its symbolic value to Mérei’s followers at the time, because it used the word “hidden” in the title, and therefore implied the legitimacy of small social circles which were presumably not being controlled by the regime. Mérei’s book is thus clearly one of the key social psychology texts for looking at just how socially embedded the subject actually was in Hungary under state socialism.

¹¹⁹² Pléh 2010, 478. This idea that even the most intimate memories, even our dreams, are situated within social framework, was already being proposed by Maurice Halbwachs in the 1920s. Mérei kept a diary of his dreams in prison and noticed that he was dreaming about everyday social situations outside the prison walls.

¹¹⁹³ Mérei 1994, 46–68.

¹¹⁹⁴ Erős 2006, 133

¹¹⁹⁵ Mérei 1977, 634. As Mérei himself stated in an interview in 1977, he especially owed a lot to Marx’s famous declaration in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* on history and the human condition.

¹¹⁹⁶ Moscovici & Marková 2006, 45; Manicas 1988, 315–316.

¹¹⁹⁷ Erős 2006, 129–130.

¹¹⁹⁸ Smith 1997, 748.

¹¹⁹⁹ Mérei 1988/1971.

Sociometrics is a method used to investigate and measure the levels of sympathy and antipathy between members of a group. The method is usually associated with Jacob Moreno (1889-1974), an Austrian-American psychiatrist and social psychologist who is also recognised as a founder of psychodrama.¹²⁰⁰ During his first creative period in 1945-1950, Mérei had already expanded Moreno's method, but in the Hidden Network of Communities, he went further by incorporating the ideas of his French teachers Henri Wallon and René Zazzo to expand the possibilities of sociometrics. For instance, the idea of his "multivariate sociogram" involved the members of the group not only answering questions related to who they liked or disliked within the group, but also revealing their views about the various skills and abilities of each member to work towards the good of the group as a whole.¹²⁰¹ Mérei's contribution to sociometrics became influential during the '60s and '70s when it became fashionable in Hungary. The method was used in schools to learn more about inner social dynamics and "spontaneously" formed subgroups in the school community. As expressed in one guidebook on collective education, unearthing hidden social processes could both help the teacher and offer much needed resources to create high quality schools where the children could thrive in an "organic community".¹²⁰²

As Géza Sáska writes, sociometrics was a popular method especially among the experts involved in organising alternative, experimental schools, and as a means to link these projects to the wider reform socialist agendas of the time.¹²⁰³ Sociometrics found eager followers in Eastern Central Europe, as 'community spirit' was already a value that many held dear there; but with sociometrics even rather intimate social relations could now be mapped and disclosed to the teachers in charge. Sociometrics thus became a tool for organising social relations in schools in a rational way. At a time when society and the economy were both assumed to be planned in a rational manner, organising school communities in this way was transformed from a potentially political issue into a simple matter of professionalism.¹²⁰⁴

It is worth noting at this point, (as Pataki does in his in-depth monograph on Makarenko)¹²⁰⁵ that the Soviet educator also had his own working theory for the careful analysis of a collective's inner social stratification. According to Pataki, "analysing" the collective in this fashion was understood by Makarenko as the educator's constant task, as it served as a "barometer" by which the "psychological state of the collective" could then be measured. With this working theory, Makarenko aimed to reveal those subgroups who were not only "stagnating" in their development, but also find out the number of children pushed to the periphery in the collective. But I would agree with Pataki that Makarenko's concepts were sometimes rather crude and

¹²⁰⁰ Pléh 1992, 233.

¹²⁰¹ Csepeli 1999, 68-70.

¹²⁰² Hunyadyne 1970, 22-23.

¹²⁰³ Sáska 2005, 41.

¹²⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁰⁵ Pataki 1966, 435-442.

unscientific. Besides the “leading stratum”, there were only two other categories of children - the middle group of potential leaders, and the lowest group of the “morally deteriorated” (*mocsárok*¹²⁰⁶) - who were described in rather colourful terms as either “spoilt brats” or “worms” respectively. The last category especially described those who were treated with antipathy by the group for some mistake they had made.¹²⁰⁷

From Hungarian perspective of the social psychology discourse which emerged in the '60s, there were conflicting active interests in the concept of “group” (*csoport*) and group psychology. For example, the studies of “pair and group”, when applied to the organisation of communities, could serve both emancipatory and manipulative purposes. The interests of the “rational organisers” (e.g., the school collective) might in fact be to weaken couples wherever they may have been, since they could very well pose a threat to the social coherence of the community. Mérei, for example, had found out that there were three basic trajectories that such a couple could follow. It could either disintegrate; create “double standards”; or end up in a compromise between these two.¹²⁰⁸ From the perspective of the ‘socially symbolic’, these studies and their various conclusions pointed towards very different community ideals and, in the end, the relationship between the individual and the community was essentially at stake.

Sociometrics was also applied in the workplace. In the aforementioned Zrínyi Printing Press, for instance, sociographic data was used to learn about the “stars” of the therapy group. The fact that sociographic data was mentioned in passing gives the impression that sociometrics was already a well-established practice, and a method that was self-evident to use in these kinds of studies. But clearly, as Ferenc Erős has pointed out, it could also serve as a potential tool for manipulation, since it provided the means to find out about hidden beliefs, “forbidden agendas” and ideological disagreements.¹²⁰⁹ In spite of this contradictory status, however, sociometrics could make up for the perceived democratic deficit, or at least “missing politics” in the system. The group members’ evaluation of each other was, after all, based on “voting” and “elections”, so a situation could feasibly emerge in which the power of the bureaucratic, officially elected leader (e.g., the foreman) could be challenged and the true leader acting in the background would be revealed.¹²¹⁰

Mérei was clearly aware of the contradictory status of sociometrics, as within the opening sentences of the *Hidden Network of Communities*, he also suggests that the book might serve as a guide for rationalising the planning of communities. According to Mérei, this kind of planning was “far-sightedness”, related to the ability to anticipate the development of the group’s inner life in light of the information that was gathered from it with social psychology tools.

¹²⁰⁶ The Hungarian noun, “mocsár”, refers to a marsh, a moor or a bog. It has also been used to describe a “morally perverted” person.

¹²⁰⁷ Pataki 1966, 435–442.

¹²⁰⁸ Mérei 1989, 45–49.

¹²⁰⁹ Erős 2006, 146–147.

¹²¹⁰ Pléh 2008 190.

Thus, planning was, above all, about psychological sensitivity and more “conscious” management.¹²¹¹ The good manager, Mérei advised in his book, should see human beings as active creators of “social structures”, not passive receivers of commands.¹²¹² In his opinion, the monopolising of decision-making was dangerous for the community. He warned that if individuals just carried out decisions made far above their heads something essential to their individuality was being removed, which would otherwise be developing and “unfolding” in an immediate relationship with their social group. In this situation, their community would be threatened by conflicts, work efficiency would deteriorate, and their human personalities would become diluted and insecure.¹²¹³ Instead, Mérei suggested that leaders and managers should endorse an “active” view of their respective community members. In doing this, they would develop positive leadership qualities, as they could adopt and control the norms, traditions, and values developed at the “pre-institutional” level of the group.

Csepeli has noted that one question that was implicit in Mérei’s research on Hungarian leadership immediately after WWII was “who was leading who from 1938-1944”? The research was based on participatory observations among groups of children, which showed how the leader was often weak in relation to the institutions, norms, and values that the group really respected. But it was implied that this could change if the psychological “score” (*partitúra*) of the group could be improved upon.¹²¹⁴ Interestingly, some of these ideas were now transferred to the context of reforming the workplace. The emphasis was on mutual benefit, since not only the manager would be provided with tools for rational (and human) leadership, but also every worker would be more efficient in their work. In a well-organised community the individual would be more motivated as she could increase his social weight (*penetráció*) in the sense of being an active member of the community.¹²¹⁵ Critically drawing from the collectivist conceptual space, Mérei’s advice was that a “good group spirit” depended on creating a dynamic balance in which the individual could experience the safety of the community, but this “joy of merging” did not necessarily “deny” his personal freedom.¹²¹⁶

4.2.4 Mérei’s utopia

Although Mérei had already carried out his classic social psychology experiments in the 1940s, his experience of being pushed into the political margins, and especially the difficult time he spent in prison seemed to crystallise his ideas further around the seminal notion of the “warmth of small groups” as a prerequisite for the healthy development of the individual. This

¹²¹¹ Mérei 1988/1971, 3.

¹²¹² *Ibid.*, 5.

¹²¹³ *Ibid.*, 204.

¹²¹⁴ Csepeli 1999, 371-372.

¹²¹⁵ Mérei (1988/1971), 18.

¹²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 207.

much can be seen from his posthumously published *Psychological Diaries*.¹²¹⁷ In the 1940s, he had thought that social psychology only really merited an existence if a qualitative difference between social (*társas*) and individual (*egyéni*) phenomena could be distinguished; whereas now he was of the opinion that social psychology should in fact concern itself with both these kinds of phenomena, as all human manifestations of life could be seen from a social perspective.¹²¹⁸

For Mérei, the main reason for emphasising the importance of this “social point of view” (*társas szempontú*) was not to produce an interpretative framework for scientific explanation, but rather to “open eyes” and get people to see things differently.¹²¹⁹ At the same time he pointed out that in social psychology often only social phenomena were registered (e.g., group cohesion), while the “thing itself” was actually left unexplained. Shared traditions, for instance, certainly had a crucial role in forming the “sociality” (*együttesség*) of the group, but they were only the tip of the iceberg. It was a bit like arguing that the essence of emotions could be determined from “outbursts of anger” without noticing that they are also present in every human situation; or to base our perception of movement only on “when we see dancing and exercise”. In the same way Mérei was arguing that there could be no human manifestation of life without a *társas* factor involved, no matter how hidden this might be.¹²²⁰

He criticised Piaget and Freud for their notion that the basis for socialisation was egocentric. For instance, Freud thought of the father as the object of *my* feelings, whereas Mérei thought the father should be understood as a “living, affective force” and as one of the active creators of the child-adult relationship and mediator of social order. Thus, he underlined the role of continuously existing and living ties between people.¹²²¹ The essence of the “social point of view” was that it very much created the relation and the contact. Referring to René Spitz, he pointed out that it was not enough to study the symptoms of two groups of children with different social backgrounds, and to simply conclude that they were a result of qualitative differences in early care. For Mérei, it was even more important to notice that children were in themselves maintaining the social relationship with their continuous presence. The common “signs and gestures” between people were not just to express feelings, for instance, but perhaps more importantly for also producing and building continuity.¹²²²

Mérei’s orientation was thus actually quite geared towards the future, and this also had important consequences for his clinical views. By indicating how social gestures not only produced but also broke relationships, he argued that prevailing psychoanalytical ideas and attitudes had to be reassessed. The traditional way had been to explain and interpret psychological symptoms (e.g.,

¹²¹⁷ Mérei 1986.

¹²¹⁸ Mérei 1986 (IV), 94–95.

¹²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 5. Mérei pointed out that it was not “how I explain but rather how I see”.

¹²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 7–8.

¹²²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²²² *Ibid.*, 9–10.

neuroses) in referring to some presumably significant moment in the life history of individuals, and produce prognoses based on the idea that the “future repeats the past”. Mérei, however, suggested that more attention should be paid to the quality of social relationships in the present. Thus, by emphasising the importance of the ‘social present’, this allowed for countless individual variations in people’s future lives, even if they had experienced difficulties in the past. In this way, the past did not predetermine the future as so many psychoanalysts seemed to claim. On the contrary, the characteristic value of the social approach (to therapy, for example) was to be aware of those moments in everyday social life which contributed to either maintaining and strengthening human relations, or the opposite.¹²²³

In fact, if we follow the ideas introduced by Jürgen Habermas on ‘knowledge interests’ (technical, hermeneutic, and emancipatory) and see social actions (gestures, signs, reactions etc.) as a significant part of producing social relationships, Mérei was emphasising the importance of freeing people from predetermined paths, whether they be dictated to them by a psychoanalyst or a bureaucrat. By focusing on the social, those psychological mechanisms which narrowed the future horizons of individuals could be revealed, and the emancipation of those individuals from any inherited and predetermined “way of being” was made possible. Habermas also made a difference between the “nomological” and the “critical” in social sciences. Whereas the former was about finding laws, explaining social processes, and perhaps even predicting the future; the latter went to the root of the matter, he argued, by asking whether particular theoretical statements might actually just be manifestations of “frozen relations of dependence”. For Habermas, the critique of ideology and *psychoanalysis* would encourage self-reflection and this process would then become the cornerstone of future criticisms and even possible transformations for the better.¹²²⁴ Mérei however seems to suggest that psychological knowledge had been too readily articulated in nomological terms. For example, when he defined the basic idea behind his *társas szempontú* methodology (on the importance of social perspective), it was not so much about providing yet another theoretical framework for scientific explanation (and prediction); after all, too much of 20th century psychology had already been postulated as such. Rather, *társas szempontú* was for him about opening up new horizons for reflection and “ways of seeing”; and perhaps this also applied to how he saw psychoanalysis as a therapeutic practice. Even when acting with a genuine intention to heal, these (nomological) experts not only seemed to focus on explaining the present with past dramas, but also the patients’ future. For Mérei this was clearly a questionable practice, not only because human life continuously evolved in the midst of real-life social ‘dramas’, but also because of the potential risks of limiting the options available for an individual.

In the literature on Mérei it is often noted that his research interests were a logical consequence of his first-hand experiences in the political “roller coaster”

¹²²³ Ibid., 9–11.

¹²²⁴ Habermas 1972, 310.

that was Eastern Central Europe in the mid 20th century. Indeed, Mérei himself explicitly encouraged this; stating that all his works should be read in the light of his “personal biography”.¹²²⁵ However, this tendency to frame such interpretations, together with the “cultic” and marginalised image that surrounded his personality, also makes it somewhat difficult to disentangle the various dimensions in his work from his life.¹²²⁶ The Psychological Diaries present a good example of such difficulties. In the chapter on social psychology for children, for example, he defined his approach to the subject as an attempt to operate in “the fields of invisible psychological phenomena”. Besides taking a swipe at the behaviourist bias for studying only the visible “facts”, Mérei was hinting that he had always been sensitive to the “secret” and “hidden”. Furthermore, in mentioning his plans to write a “psychopathology of prison life”, he also clarified that it would include a discussion on the attraction of “hidden actions”. In this way Mérei implied that it was not a coincidence that he had tried to smuggle alternative “routes” (*mellékút*) into the existing communist system, having experienced this world of “secret signs” (*utalás*) and “all that they entailed” not from books but from real-life experiences during the 1950s.¹²²⁷ While locked away from the outside world, he still tried to convey the moments of belonging to the group community he was experiencing while in prison. In his diaries he especially mentioned the experience behind bars of “travelling in a half-wild continent”, and learning “its peculiar habits” and the “ways” of the natives. Coming to realise that the life in prison was all about the here and now, he claimed to have learnt how to “seize the moment” rather than expect what life was to offer in the future. In his opinion, there were plenty of possibilities for feelings of empathy and joy in prison life, if one could adopt the attitude of a gypsy and see life as more than the “metaphorical representation” it was usually given by a fiction writer.¹²²⁸

However, being a marginalised academic did not stop Mérei from discussing the future state of Hungarian civilisation. In, for example, his 1973 text perhaps¹²²⁹ called “Togetherness and self-knowledge: the determinants of behaviour on the verge of the third millennium”¹²³⁰ he dwells especially on the “warmth” of small groups, and while being futuristic and utopian in style, it is also about the current state of human relations in Hungary as they were in the '70s. In many ways it can even be seen as an alternative discourse and critique

¹²²⁵ Borgos (et.al.) 2006, 279.

¹²²⁶ Mérei's work and personality clearly gained a degree of cult status due to his marginalised position. As József Havasréti has noted, his biography is so “enchanting” that it has come dangerously close to overshadowing his actual research in the human sciences. There is thus a clear risk of interpreting his work in terms of his biography rather than his actual writing. See Havasréti 2008.

¹²²⁷ Mérei 1986 (IV), 96.

¹²²⁸ Mérei 1986 (IV), 89–90.

¹²²⁹ Or perhaps it was not. The original context of this article is a bit unclear as it was not actually published until 1989 in an anthology of Mérei's works, called *Társ és csoport*. There is simply a footnote saying that the article was intended as a contribution to a “conference on the future” in 1973 on “Hungarian culture in the year 2000”. However, it is possible that this conference was one Mérei hoped would happen but actually did not.

¹²³⁰ Mérei 1989, 182–191.

on the failure of socialism, despite all the talk about socialist man, as it draws attention to how socioeconomic changes had affected peoples' psychological health, and it crystallises some of Mérei's basic psychological ideas by projecting them onto a social level. He starts the article by treating the future as an amplified projection of present social conditions and value-systems onto the future. According to Mérei, three different models of thinking had usually followed from this commonly accepted starting point for considering 'the future'. Firstly, there was the overly optimistic "utopian idyll" which could be found in Fourier; secondly, the prophecies of apocalypse (e.g., pollution, nuclear war and meltdown); and thirdly, the conservative claim that nothing would essentially change. Mérei distanced himself from each of these however, offering instead his "Marxist model of anticipation".¹²³¹

For Mérei, Marxism highlighted the contradictions and conflicts of the present-day and encouraged them to be brought out into the open, so as to create the right intellectual and political conditions for progressive action. Mérei detected an anticipation of the future and a "cathartic" tension in Marx's criticism, for instance, of child labour - between the squalor of children in this real-life situation, the present-day solution, and the ideal future. Thus, he implied that politics informed by this kind of anticipation of the future should not be based on any "idyllic" version of the present, but on improving what he pictured as unbearable, conflict-ridden, and unpleasant. In short, bad conditions necessitated action for good, and in terms of future human relations, he saw the "development of personalities" as the "weakest point" in usual speculations about social life in the future.¹²³² But what did Mérei consider to be the psychological properties of the man of the future? Mérei felt that this question was not often raised in Hungary.¹²³³ Surprisingly, without any reference to the socialist educational discourse on moulding human personalities, he claimed that most people saw future conditions changing, but people's 'psychology' (the feelings of love and hate, joy and jealousy) remaining the same.¹²³⁴ Mérei, however, disputed this popular claim with a somewhat evolutionary argument.¹²³⁵

Already for our ancestors in the ice age, there was the ability to act intellectually in problem-solving situations, and this perpetuated into our system. Another example was how we adapted to a way of life in an urban environment.

Then, referring to the "Marxist model of anticipation", he saw that the "seeds of the future" were rooted in present conditions which seriously threatened peoples' personal integrity. For example, a centralised system of "regulation", and "a dense system of control" were a burden on people. Huge organisations

¹²³¹ Ibid., 182–183.

¹²³² Ibid., 183.

¹²³³ Mérei mentioned the "Hungarian Orwell", Sándor Szathmári (1897–1974), as one exception to the rule.

¹²³⁴ As we have already seen in subchapter 2.3, this kind of argument was used to justify the continued need for psychology in socialism.

¹²³⁵ Mérei 1989, 184.

were a weight on peoples' shoulders, and universal "registers" were being gathered, which in the future would penetrate into the "most intimate territories" of life.¹²³⁶

For Mérei it was clear that there was an ongoing "exodus" from the pressure of such an over-regularised world. Here he referred to the recent 'New Age' phenomena of hippies and a renewed interest in spiritual or religious beliefs and practices.¹²³⁷ But he also stressed that however colourful and varied this exodus was, and however well-intentioned and "naïve" the agents of this escape were, their route was a "deviation". Because, if this exodus proved to be a very real and lasting one, then all "productive work" would disappear, production of consumer items would stop, and people would "slide from the level of civilisation into the inner world of experience (*élmény*)".

Mérei felt that the existence of these sects and subcultures could be explained by people's need for the "warmth of small groups", the safety of being together, and the social comfort which reached even into the intimate spheres of life. In fact, this was characteristic of modern socialist society, as this form of 'deviance' was more about searching rather than any kind of escape. Mérei predicted that there would be spheres that would be beyond the control of the "state apparatus", characterised instead by the comparative freedom of self-control (*önszabályozás*) and "self-activity".¹²³⁸

At this point in the article, Mérei shared a utopian anecdote about some young workers he encountered in a big unnamed factory in the early '70s.¹²³⁹ The factory's cultural group had been performing theatre, reading poems and producing pantomimes and they were all from a working-class background that loved music, dancing and poetry. Mérei was enchanted by the "deep humanism" they showed, and the "excited manner in which they [spoke] about theatre". According to Mérei, they called themselves the *egyorrúiak* (which could be loosely translated as "one-toed"), because all you needed to have to be in the group was 'at least a toe' - the idea being that, in effect, anyone could be in it. For Mérei, this group presented a particular ideal: there was the "joy of togetherness" combined with the feeling of an "independent-minded" aspiration for creativity, humour, and spontaneous action. What is more, and perhaps this would explain the name too, these young workers consciously wanted to "protect themselves" and their personal integrity from the damaging, psychological 'amputation' caused by the nature of their work and its countless sub-tasks on the assembly-line.

In fact, these workers were the seeds of the positive future that Mérei foresaw; in the form of "autonomous small-groups" that would be capable of independent "intellectual production" (*szellemi produkcióra*), and would "necessarily" supplement the current ways of life. As the future avant-garde

¹²³⁶ Ibid., 185.

¹²³⁷ For more on the presence of "deviant neo-religious sects" in Hungary, see Kovács 1975.

¹²³⁸ Ibid.

¹²³⁹ With these sources it is impossible to prove if this kind of group really existed or was it a metaphor invented by Mérei.

they would form autonomous 'thinking workshops', and would help prevent the "dogmatism of institutions" by posing new questions and "shaping the scientific public opinion".

Let us jump ahead a quarter of century. We stand on the verge of the third millennium. Housing problems are solved, material conditions are incomparably better than today, everybody is travelling, both at home and abroad, and even to distant parts of the world. Being more mobile and open in their views, people now have extraordinary technical possibilities for their self-expression. Those with at least one toe, and the other hundreds and thousands like them can rent small independent studios as a toehold, arrange special materials for sculptors, and build their own fireplaces; they can direct and screen films which they have worked on by themselves, publish their works with their own duplicator in five, ten or twelve copies. If their interest is scientific, they can buy computers.¹²⁴⁰

The encouraging message was that, besides protecting their personal autonomy, these small groups would turn out to be in fact the primary "forces of socialism". By their common work they would produce real social values, with the implication that socialism in its present form had failed to do this. Yet the birth of these groups would not be an "idyllic" process; on the contrary, it would breed trouble, give birth to resistance and meet with opposition - of that Mérei was sure. For most of them it was not so much their values, which were actually in line with the prevailing socialist ideology, but more the fact that they aimed at 'autonomy'. As Mérei noted, this search for autonomy was a problem for "adults". For instance, the young wanted to decide for themselves the "poems they like", the way "they would like to live and behave over the spring holidays" (*tavaszi kirándulás*) and indeed for any kind of truly "collective existence" (*közösségi lét*) to exist, these values needed to be allowed to form freely. But because these groups tended to cherish the freedom of intellectual expression, they would inevitably get into conflict with controlling central authorities.

Mérei ended his story of the "one-toed" by pinpointing the true achievements of socialism. He referred to the abolition of misery and unemployment (*cselédsors*) - which in the socialist reading of history was associated with the Horthy era - and emphasised how compulsory public education had benefited the overall culture of the Hungarian people. Nevertheless, the real challenge facing socialism was how to deal with these small groups.

For the central regulating institutions in this country the real problem is not the existence of gangs hijacking airplanes, or the counterfeiters and groups of gangsters, because there aren't any. But they have a problem with self-motivated (*öntevékeny*) small-groups, whose artistic attempts, aesthetic needs or philosophy deviates from the prescribed.¹²⁴¹

The clear message from this was, rather than become increasingly weighed down by a cumbersome bureaucracy that risked bringing the whole edifice of

¹²⁴⁰ Mérei 1989, 187-188.

¹²⁴¹ Ibid., 188.

state socialism to a standstill, the state needed to accept the challenge and undertake bold reforms.

* * *

Nikolas Rose argues that in the Anglo-American world from the '30s onwards, group psychology was in many ways a response to the challenge posed by the "soulless" organisations of the corporate industrial world of work. Thus, for example, the 'human relations' school popularised by the likes of Elton Mayo, also examined the experience of belonging to the group.¹²⁴² In a liberal state, Rose notes, the promise of social psychology - and psychology in general - was related to the need to create greater social cohesion and the building-blocs of social identity via small groups. The workplace and family, for example, served in this reading as a basic foundation for democratic citizenship and positive identification, because the ideas of democracy and the state were otherwise too abstract.¹²⁴³ Meanwhile, in the Hungarian context, Csepeli has noted that sociometrics, especially Mérei's interpretation, started to be used beyond its original purely technical context, and applied also to the prevailing political conditions. It may even be relevant to ask if one of the reasons that groups were being studied was to discover the essence of the "authentic" community spirit that socialist society seemed to be lacking. But there was also the very real concern that workers did not really identify with the abstract notion of a "workers' state". Maybe social psychology, and specifically psychological studies on small groups would render existing working groups (and those of the future) not only more effective, but also stronger and more self-assured; and contribute to the feelings of identification with socialism at the local level.

4.3 Psychology and management of the workforce

4.3.1 Rational management

Partly due to the liberalisation of Hungarian economic policies, both legal and illegal forms of private economic initiative started to feature more prominently in the country during the '60s. In fact, private farming became crucial for the state economy at a certain point. Nigel Swain notes that the umbrella term 'second economy' first began to be used with the discovery of commuting "worker-peasants". Indeed, already in 1956 the Hungarian statistical office (KSH) produced a survey on those people who regularly travelled between home and the workplace, and found that they numbered approximately 216,000.¹²⁴⁴

¹²⁴² Rose 1996, 136-139.

¹²⁴³ Ibid., 140.

¹²⁴⁴ Swain 1992, 171. Although not all of these commuters actually had a plot to cultivate, this does put a rough figure on the extensiveness of the phenomenon. In effect, 25%

Hybrid forms of work emerged as people were most often tied to an official state job while having some kind of business on the side. It soon also became clear that workers were taking time off to earn money elsewhere (e.g., in their private plots or business). So it was that in 1968, the local paper *Fejér Megyei Hírlap* reported that the managers of the state-run “Harmony Farm” had hired a sick leave inspector to regularly check if workers were genuinely sick, or actually working in their second job while being paid for being sick.¹²⁴⁵ In 1980, István Kemény wrote in the *Magyar Füzetek* (a Paris-based Hungarian journal) that the Hungarian worker had metamorphosed to a “strange, centaur-like creature”, whose strategies of life were increasingly characterised by an “entrepreneurial mentality”.¹²⁴⁶ As Valuch notes, conflicts and contradictions in state enterprises and workplaces also grew as some could take more advantage of the existing resources than others.¹²⁴⁷ In time, social psychologists also started to investigate the psychological consequences of these kinds of structural peculiarities to the socialist economy.¹²⁴⁸

The NEM aimed at decentralising economic decision-making. For example, the reform gave companies more power to hire and fire employees, and a more efficient use of labour was now encouraged, but one consequence of this was now that unemployment was now a very real possibility, and ultimately threatening for a system whose legitimacy was based on maintaining full employment.¹²⁴⁹ In light of these concerns, psychological research on job instability (*munkaerővándorlás, fluktuáció*) became increasingly relevant.¹²⁵⁰ Tibor Engländer, for instance, commented on problems of “job fluctuation” in one such study from 1976. It recommended the regular changing of the workplace, and questions of management and leadership, which had both been two major themes for social psychologists from the end of the ‘60s onwards.¹²⁵¹ According to the report on the state of Hungarian research in work psychology at the turn of the ‘70s, the question of job instability was still a major concern, but also in terms of the social problems commuting was causing. The report’s solution regarding the problem of workers quitting their jobs too easily was straightforward. If the workers were satisfied, they were more likely to stay (the

of all workers regularly commuted between the countryside and their other work in some urban locality.

¹²⁴⁵ Cf. Lampland 1995, 216.

¹²⁴⁶ Kemény 1980, 95.

¹²⁴⁷ Valuch 2008, 94.

¹²⁴⁸ See, for example: Csepeli 1988, 32. Csepeli studied the contradictory identities stemming from the encounter between two economic orders existing side by side, but working with different rules. He argued that the existence of the “first” and the “second” economy produced simultaneous but contradictory “selves”. Whereas one was based on “socialist redistribution”, the other one identified with the markets.

¹²⁴⁹ Haney 1999, 94; Gough 2006, 159. As argued by Haney, this prospect also gave ammunition for demographers who argued that it would be wise to subsidise child-rearing since mothers could then stay at home and raise the children, leaving more employment opportunities open for men.

¹²⁵⁰ See Rókusfalvy 1970; Horváth 1970; Engländer 1970; Gelléri 1970.

¹²⁵¹ Engländer 1976.

implication from this was that they generally were not).¹²⁵² As regards the social repercussions of commuting (*ingázás*), the report referred to Péter Gelléri's studies. Gelléri had suggested, for example that commuting had turned into a genuine lifestyle for a great number of people. Psychologists warned that this could have negative consequences for social cohesion. Namely, it seemed that the commuters, who most often were men, could become "too independent" from family bonds. Although they recognised that economic reasons were the main motor behind commuting, they also claimed that for some men it was an almost conscious decision. A commuter lifestyle was also a solution to difficult situations in personal life. As the writer of the report suggested, this way of life might lead to new forms of deviant subculture.¹²⁵³

The improvement of management and leadership practices was acknowledged to be an economically and politically important condition for the success of the NEM by the Party. Already during the planning stage, the processes of management were being heavily scrutinised. On 10 May 1966, the political committee of the MSZMP brought forward a resolution on the "Training and further training of firm managers"¹²⁵⁴. Because of the "demands of the new system of economic planning" the firm managers should be provided with up-to-date knowledge on professional leadership skills. The relevant themes of study for gaining this knowledge were then assembled with the involvement of experts from various fields. After this, the themes were discussed at the agitprop committee (APB) meeting on 3 August. According to the minutes of the meeting, the discussion was "profound", and the draft accepted with small additions.¹²⁵⁵ According to the document, the first courses would start the following winter (1967), and as suggested by Rezső Nyers, one of the main architects of the reform, the first course should focus on the political and economic "essence" of the NEM. This should be supplemented with practical knowledge on organisation, management, and planning, and so it was also vital to find high-quality experts (teachers), who could properly convey and "implement one of the main political projects of the party".¹²⁵⁶

Besides the large number of questions posed about market principles being introduced to socialism, there were also questions about sociological and psychological management methods which might be used within further education programmes. With these tools the manager, i.e., the "organiser of work communities", would be able to recognise and resolve the problems he faced at work. Psychology would not only offer leadership the tools for

¹²⁵² HU MNL MK-S 288 f. 904 / Agitáció és Propaganda Osztály. Társadalomtudományi intézet. 2 cs./56 ő.e. Rövid áttekintés a munkásosztály helyzetével kapcsolatos üzemi pszichológiai vizsgálatokról, 22-23.

¹²⁵³ Ibid.

¹²⁵⁴ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 5/395 ő.e. Jegyzőkönyv a Politikai Bizottság 1966. Május 10-én tartott üléséről, 2. Előterjesztés a vállalatok vezetőinek tovább képzésére - Az új gazdaságirányítási rendszer követelményeiből fakadóan, 2.

¹²⁵⁵ MSZMP Központi Bizottsága Agitációs és Propaganda Bizottságának (APB) iratai. Jegyzőkönyv 1966. augusztus 3-i üléséről, 1.

¹²⁵⁶ Ibid.

selecting the proper workers, but also in shaping or even “transforming” the “objective and subjective” conditions of the working place.¹²⁵⁷

According to the course plan from November 1967 (held at the Institute for Social Sciences), these courses covered a wide variety of topics related to management, leadership, decision-making, and organisation. One of the themes was dedicated to social relationships at work, i.e., both between workers, and between individuals and the work organisation itself. Furthermore, the “social, psychological, and human conditions for optimal decision-making” was taught. For example, in one of the lessons organised in December different styles of leadership were taught to allow them to be more psychologically sensitive with employees. There was “authoritarian”, “democratic”, and “indifferent”. Interestingly, the phenomenon of informal (*nem szervezetszerű*) groups was also studied, especially with regard to how people were “reacting” to decisions.¹²⁵⁸ Among the four teachers of the course was a renowned psychologist Béla Radnai from the University of Budapest.

Another recommendation in the APB’s 1968 report to the MSZMP political committee, which was duly accepted, was to raise the quality of not just leadership skills, but also the general education of all leading cadres. According to the report, the development should lead to management and planning which had a proper “scientific basis”. In other words, managers needed to learn sociology, psychology, and management studies.¹²⁵⁹ The spheres of management and work were also acknowledged to be important targets for development in East Germany too. In 1967, a Hungarian delegation returning from the GDR reported on the introduction of a “human factor” in the way work was now being planned there. As István Balló reported, there seemed to be an increasing focus on managing humans rather than industrial complexes in the GDR. Work organisation and planning (*irányítás*) had been modernised via the scientific means offered by sociology and cybernetics, as humans were increasingly considered to be the “most important force of production”. Consequently, besides the aim to increase living standards (salaries), there was also an attempt to take into account “workers’ suggestions and opinions” more efficiently.¹²⁶⁰

It was made clear that these measures were a “logical step” onwards from previous advances in socialism. Consequently, lots of resources were allocated to modernising management methods by making them more scientifically convincing. One concrete manifestation of these aims was the East German Centre for Management Education (*Vezetőképző Intézet*) which the Hungarian delegation also got to visit when they were there. As Balló reported, all the

¹²⁵⁷ Ibid. Javaslat a KB Agitációs és Propaganda Bizottság részére a gazdasági vezetők továbbképzésének alapjául szolgáló tematikára, 8.

¹²⁵⁸ HU-MNL M-KS 228 f. 904/2 állag/39 ó.e /1967/Társadalomtudományi intézet. Feljegyzés Lakos Elvtárs részére. Megjegyzések a “Vezetési, szervezési ismeretek” c. előadássorozat programjához.

¹²⁵⁹ HU-MNL MK-S 288 f. 5/476 ó.e. 1968. November 12. Jelentés a politikai bizottságnak a pártoktatás helyzetéről és színvonala emelésének feladatairól, 11.

¹²⁶⁰ MSZMP Központi Bizottsága Agitációs és Propaganda Osztályának (APO) iratai. 1967, 20. óe. Jelentés az NDK-ban járt pártküldöttség útjáról, 2–3.

future middle and top-level managers and leaders (in industry, ministries, etc.) were to be trained in line with the “eight central themes” of science-based management, published by the SED. These included, for example “modern leadership styles”, keeping in mind the management of “socialist men”; the use of cybernetics; the relationship between manager and collective; socialist democracy and “individual leadership”; and input-output models. Balló was convinced that East German achievements in the field of management education were promising, and he suggested that Hungarians should also take heed.¹²⁶¹

As the East German example already implies, the “human factor”, especially in relation to the need to increase productivity, was becoming a popular discourse in the Eastern Bloc during the '60s. For example, the psychology of engineering - articulated in the wider context of “planning and control” - was visibly present at the 4th annual Congress of Soviet psychologists, organised in June 1971 in Tbilisi, Georgia.¹²⁶² In one symposium, called “Psychology, technical progress, and problems of control”, the problems of the “scientific-technical era” were discussed. Here, images of the “human operator” and the “man-machine unit” had a central place. In particular, questions were asked about how the “self-regulation” of workers could be improved upon, so that work would be done more efficiently.¹²⁶³ Although it was not strictly in the context of management, in one social psychology session a group of psychologists from Leningrad presented the results of their joint research on the psychological “atmosphere” in industry. In their analysis they had found several factors to be significant: these were the broader environment; the infrastructure in the factory; and the state of “interpersonal relationships”. At the same time, however, types of “collective leadership” were mentioned (democratic, autocratic, and liberal), with the conclusion that the principal “social psychology function” of the foreman was to ensure the maintenance of “harmony in interpersonal relationships”.¹²⁶⁴

The guidelines for psychological research were found in the resolutions of the 24th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, calling on psychologists to improve labour efficiency by focusing on the “human factor [and] role played by people” in production (i.e., both workers and leaders). It was advised that social psychology should contribute to proper methods of leadership, “principled comradesly relations” within the collective, and foster a “sense of teamwork” in the factory. The measure of its success would be a proper “psychological climate”, which would encourage pride in one’s trade, and foster a “striving for professional perfection”.¹²⁶⁵

¹²⁶¹ Ibid., 6-7, 9.

¹²⁶² “Fourth Congress of the Psychological Society of the USSR” in *Soviet Psychology* X (4), summer 1972: Psychology’s role in providing knowledge for scientific regulation of the economy and the mathematical modelling of information processes also came up.

¹²⁶³ Ibid., 393-396.

¹²⁶⁴ Ibid., 398-399.

¹²⁶⁵ “The 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Tasks of Soviet Psychology.” In: *Soviet Psychology* X (4), summer 1972, 324-325.

These tasks were also summarised by B.F. Lomov, the director of the Institute for Psychology (est. 1971) within the Russian Academy of Sciences.¹²⁶⁶ According to Lomov, there was a clear change of paradigm in the psychology of engineering. When engineering psychology had been in its “infancy” in the USSR, “man-machine systems” were approached from the perspective of the machine, but now the activity of the “human operator” was analysed with “humanist” ideas in mind that the ‘subject’ of labour was working with the ‘instrument’ of labour. As Lomov pointed out, this also meant that human activity could finally be planned, so the focal point of engineering psychology would now be the human operators, the knowledge they possessed, their personality and the skills they employed. It was envisioned that the expert in engineering psychology would be able to plan work activities in such a way that it would no longer be about “fitting the man into finished technological systems” but rather about creating “machines with thought”.¹²⁶⁷

A question can be posed: did the drive towards rationalising management stem from the inner reformist considerations within the Eastern Bloc, or was it part of a more global orientation? Riska-Campbell in her research on transnational social science and American policies of “bridge-building”, has noted that the modern problems of governing and managing huge scale social processes were high on the agenda in the US-led field of transnational social science.¹²⁶⁸ In this context, there was a recurring discussion about the “management gap” between advanced and developing nations, with the result that management education was actively exported to East European socialist regimes too.¹²⁶⁹ RFE’s Polish correspondent Andrzej Czechowicz had also noticed this. In a background report on the training of management cadres in Poland (1965), he mentioned that a special National Management Development Centre had been established there in 1958 already.¹²⁷⁰ Czechowicz also noted that the Polish centre currently received substantial help from the United Nations. In fact, Poland had been cooperating with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) for several years. ILO had also been instrumental in getting six month scholarships for 43 Polish experts which permitted them to study the art of modern management in the west. As he noted, the need for competent managers had thus been acknowledged quite early on in Eastern Bloc countries, but in Poland this was even more the case, as due to the prominence of sociology, it was serving as a model for the others. Indeed it seemed management was deemed to be of “first-rate importance”.¹²⁷¹

¹²⁶⁶ Lomov 1972, 329–358.

¹²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 335–336.

¹²⁶⁸ Riska-Campbell 2011, 29–89.

¹²⁶⁹ On the role of Ford Foundation in financing Management Education in Eastern Europe from the mid-1960s onwards, see Gemelli 1998.

¹²⁷⁰ Czechowicz 1965, 14.

¹²⁷¹ *Ibid.* Czechowicz described a detailed plan for the long-term training of leading cadres was made in 1964 after the decision of the 4th congress of the PUWP and concurrent resolution of the Council of Ministers. Supervising personnel throughout the economy was to be included in the training scheme, “from the foreman to the director”. The curriculum offered various relevant topics, such as work psychology, sociology, work studies, personnel policy within companies, model projection,

4.3.2 Importing “human relations” to Hungary

All over the world up-to-date management of economic organisations is increasingly concerned about the human factor in production.¹²⁷²

The new emphasis on humanising work also found its way into work psychology guidebooks of the time. In writing one such guide for managers in 1973, Mihály Murányi and István Bálint referred to Douglas McGregor (1906–1964) from the MIT Sloan School of Management, and Frederic Herzberg (1923–2000) from the University of Utah. McGregor came to the attention of the psychologists for his “Theory Y of management”, while Herzberg’s attraction was his motivation-hygiene theory.¹²⁷³ Bálint’s and Murányi’s book was then followed by an anthology of articles on industrial psychology in 1974.¹²⁷⁴ Besides the introduction written by psychologist Tibor Engländer, the book consisted of translated texts by a diverse group of scholars, including Leontiev, Bornemann,¹²⁷⁵ and the famous Americans, Likert¹²⁷⁶ and Herzberg.¹²⁷⁷ The aim of the book was to be a general reader and overview of the field.

Hungarian experts were well aware of these western developments. József Perczel, for instance, one of the pioneers of social psychology-oriented ergonomics in Eastern Central Europe, was familiar with Herzberg’s thinking. In fact, as he revealed in his autobiographical note later in the ‘90s, he was invited by the Czechoslovak communist leadership to Prague in 1967 to act as chairman for a special seminar which focused on Herzberg’s humanist ideas on worker motivation (e.g., “recognition increases motivation”). After some uncertainty the seminar was eventually held. But during the Prague Invasion (1968), as Perczel recalls, he stayed in Amsterdam and then soon travelled to London, and stayed there because his position back in Hungary had become problematic.¹²⁷⁸ In Britain, Perczel was appointed as a consultant by the Directorate of British Railways in 1969. He set about studying the motivation and work achievement

economics, production planning and personnel management. Also modern educational methods (films, discussion, other visual aids etc.) were tried out to make the topic “attractive and stimulating”.

¹²⁷² Bálint & Murányi 1973, 3.

¹²⁷³ Bálint & Murányi 1974, 1–20.

¹²⁷⁴ Engländer 1974.

¹²⁷⁵ Ernest Bornemann (1915–1995) was an amazingly versatile personality – an anthropologist, jazz-musician, psychoanalyst, crime writer, and a committed socialist. He is known for being one of the founders of scientific sexology. Bornemann was also influenced by the anthropological views of Hungarian psychoanalyst Géza Róheim and was personally analysed by Róheim. (WIKIPEDIA: 4.5.2015.)

¹²⁷⁶ Rensis Likert (1903–1988) was the inventor of the ‘Likert-scale’. It is a psychometric scale which can be used in questionnaires, for example.

¹²⁷⁷ Psychologist Herzberg was globally influential figure in Business Management at the time. He represented a powerful trend in the US during the ‘70s as managers, corporate executives, politicians and academics began to discuss “alienation” at work among blue and white-collar workers. As Wrenn notes, these intense public debates had academic precedents in psychological discourse on “humanising” work by Herzberg, Likert, and McGregor in the ‘50s. See Wrenn 1982, 23.

¹²⁷⁸ Bodor (et.al.) 1997, 234. Perczel only mentions that for some reason or other his work laboratory in Hungary was closed and he was forced to stay in Britain.

of 50 engineers working on the rolling stock, and managed to get some significant results.¹²⁷⁹

Perczel's work in London had a distinctive Eastern Central European flavour. In many ways this was not just because he was Hungarian, but because his academic role model was also a fellow Hungarian - the late Gestalt psychologist Pál Schiller Harkai¹²⁸⁰. Harkai had developed his theory by focusing on human action as "situational", with the basic idea that the visual perception of a figure is only possible against a background conceived as a whole. Philosophically put, the basic conscious structures are not conceived in parts, but as organised wholes or "Gestalten" (forms)¹²⁸¹. Harkai and his peers argued that human awareness was intrinsically organised. Perczel, in turn, described Harkai's thinking as "revolutionary", yet without Gestalt psychology's traditional focus on perception. Instead, he was moving towards a holistic understanding of the role of social psychology.¹²⁸²

Perczel's biography does not only show how difficult the Cold War could be for scientists. It also shows that, despite the breaks experienced by psychologists in many fields because of WWII and the communist takeover, there were also some productive continuities. For instance, Perczel argued that "practically all he achieved" in the field of Hungarian work psychology during the Kádár era should be understood as a continuation of the work of Harkai, whom he "miraculously resurrected" even though he was totally forgotten in the intervening years. In the socialist context, Perczel's Gestalt orientation with regard to ergonomics made him one of the innovators in the field and also linked his work in London to a particular Gestalt oriented critique of behaviourism.¹²⁸³

Bálint's and Murányi's anthology (1974) started with a presentation of McGregor's "Theory Y" of motivation, which originally dated back to 1960. It was called Theory Y simply to differentiate it from what he called the "Theory X" of motivation. As psychologists described it, Theory X was based on the presupposition that the worker "hated his job" and was working only through compulsion caused by the insecurities of life. Therefore, the best way to encourage him was with the "threat of punishment" and the "promise of economic reward" (the proverbial carrot and stick). Clearly, these ideas were

¹²⁷⁹ Ibid., 235-236. Perczel studied the simultaneous interaction of various possible factors affecting the work done *in situ*. This resulted in an experiment with 19 variables and a coefficient of 0.87. With a sense of genuine pride, therefore, he acknowledged that the only "problem" had been, in the light of international standards, that the coefficient was exceptionally high. With his British colleagues he could thus prove that work achievement, both in theory and practice, was a product of both organisation and individual.

¹²⁸⁰ Pál Schiller Harkai (1908-1949) was a one of the pioneers of Hungarian Academic Psychology. As a role-model for later generations of Hungarian psychologists, he also put his theories into practice by establishing aptitude-test centres for the Hungarian Army and Hungarian National Railways. He emigrated to the US in 1947 but died soon after in a skiing accident.

¹²⁸¹ Smith 1997, 681-688

¹²⁸² Bodor (et.al.), 234.

¹²⁸³ Smith 1997, 681.

also familiar from crudely behaviourist psychological models.¹²⁸⁴ Additionally, psychologists noted that Theory X was essentially based on a particular view of man as *homo economicus* as in solely “pay-oriented”, so the basic relationship which characterised the organisation of work was between the employer and the employed. According to Bálint and Murányi, the managers of western big business had been forced to overhaul this model of “alienated work” partly as a result of WWII (i.e., regulated capitalism and changes in the labour markets), but “especially because of the worldwide socialist revolution”. For this reason, they argued, those managers now had to pay more attention to the “human and subjective” side of work organisation.

In contrast, Theory Y argued that people did not necessarily need money, punishment, or “kind words” from an employer to be productive, but simply an “inner need for self-fulfillment”. Therefore, to make them productive, not only the work organisation had to be humanised, but the work itself. In other words, the real and only aim was to find the right work environment for individuals which corresponded to their personality. In practice, this meant that the work should be interesting, and vary in nature so that it “could transform into one form of self-fulfillment”. Here, Albert Maslow’s humanist theory on the hierarchy of needs was explicitly stated as a source for inspiration.¹²⁸⁵ The Human Relations (HR) school, popularised by Elton Mayo in the 1930s may have gone some way towards Theory Y, and yet, while it duly paid attention to workplace communication and work atmosphere with a reformist edge, it had also aimed at controlling social relations in the factory to increase productivity, and failed to pay attention to changing the (capitalist) organisation itself. Hence this model, although it was based on *homo socialis*, was not enough for the socialists, and this included the progressive thinkers in the west, the psychologists argued.¹²⁸⁶ In other words, although HR had originally been borne out of Marxist concerns, it still smacked of capitalism as it was still essentially about improving internal communication in factories and adapting and “pacifying” (*összebékíteni*) the workers. Thus HR was not to be confused with the concept of “socialist man”, the psychologists warned.¹²⁸⁷

As for Theory Y, the psychologists thought that while McGregor’s theory had been accused of being “utopian” in its effort to “overcome the capitalist framework” it was worthwhile recommending it as a model for consideration for socialists back home. It could perhaps be combined with the idea of rationally planned work organisation, and as such it gave “very necessary

¹²⁸⁴ Murányi & Bálint 1973, 13.

¹²⁸⁵ According to Maslow, there were four kinds of needs, which were ranked into a hierarchy within humans. First, there were basic needs (e.g., salary). Second, the need for safety was brought by permanent work. As Bálint and Murányi noted, both of these needs could be used to support the thesis that the “fear” of losing the job was a source of motivation. Third, after the existential position was safeguarded by a decent standard of living, an “egoistic” need for prestige was born. At this level, the moral and social standing achieved through work became relevant (e.g., the HR school). Fourth, there was the highest level, i.e., the need for self-fulfilment: people tended to search deep personal satisfaction from work.

¹²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 10–12.

¹²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

perspectives for our society” in its efforts to encourage workers.¹²⁸⁸ Based on McGregor, there were two ways for this: first, to automatise those work processes which made people psychologically numb; second, to include workers in the process of decision-making in factories.¹²⁸⁹

Clearly, these public discussions revealed a certain change in thinking. In Bálint’s and Murányi’s discourse, work within socialism was not articulated from the vantage point of individual achievement and work morality (in the sense of some higher cause); rather it was through the ideal of “non-alienated” work which might also be rewarding. As the earlier views on productive organisations started from the relationship between employer and employed (i.e., atomistic man), now production organisations were seen as a special form of social integration, with the work of individuals seen as a function of the whole organisation and, in the spirit of the “young Marx”, as one dimension of human self-fulfilment.¹²⁹⁰ It seemed that McGregor’s theories could be easily integrated into the Marxist anthropology of work and its thesis on the “many-sided development” of personality and self-fulfilment through work.¹²⁹¹ This discourse on the “humanisation” of work was also an attempt to intervene in the bureaucratic hierarchies that were so often characteristic of the social reality of work. The psychologists were thus trying to turn the attention away from abstract notions of socialist morality and towards the everyday problems of the workplace instead.

Bálint and Murányi proposed that HR thinking should be combined with the Theory Y so as to influence the “socialist relations of production” from within. They hoped that the eagerly anticipated improvement in objective conditions due to the “scientific and technological revolution” would support this. In the future, work would go from being merely “compulsory” to becoming a genuinely multifaceted activity carried out by versatile personalities.¹²⁹² Of course, this implied that the reality of most work in socialist factories was still mainly experienced through compulsion. Indeed, there were reasons to be worried about the state of work morality since the able people seemed to be “realising” themselves elsewhere - in the ‘second economy’.¹²⁹³

4.3.3 Keeping the workers happy

Polish RFE correspondent Czechowicz also explained the relative flourishing of management education in Poland by referring to particular social and political reasons. The apparent decision to concentrate more on merits and

¹²⁸⁸ Murányi & Bálint 1973, 15.

¹²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 11–13, 17.

¹²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 7–16.

¹²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹²⁹² *Ibid.*, 16.

¹²⁹³ Swain 1992, 17; Kemény 1978, 43–44. As Kemény argued in the “subsidiary market” people could feel themselves freer and even discover the “joy of work”. According to Nigel Swain, besides economic factors, the desire for “self-fulfilment” and more personal autonomy motivated the new cooperative economic institutions that were established in the early ‘80s.

professionalism than political preferences and class background in choosing the leaders was also motivated by the political experiences of 1956. In both Poland and Hungary at this time, incompetent factory directors and foremen had been “put in wheelbarrows and wheeled out of the factory premises” during the revolutionary fervour of 1956.¹²⁹⁴ This perspective brings some new elements to the story. Indeed, maybe the newly acknowledged need for sociological and psychological research in socialist factories was not only related to the economically motivated modernisation and rationalisation of management practices, but also to politics.

The workers in factories formed a crucial target of Kádár's reconciliatory policies after 1956. In the “Resolution on the working class” (1958), wages went up, a continuous improvement of living standards was promised for the population, an ambitious housing programme was launched, and working-class education and culture was championed. Furthermore, national surveys were to be conducted at regular intervals to make sure the programme was being implemented as planned.¹²⁹⁵ Kádár aimed at building the legitimacy of the regime by not only improving living standards for the whole (working) population, but also by actively showing the population that the system wanted to separate itself from the Stalinist work culture of the past. That had been characterised by the daily presence of politics, ideology and related disciplinary “campaigns” within factories, and by a strong leadership cult around Mátyás Rákosi.¹²⁹⁶ Furthermore, in 1950 the system of obligatory work was introduced to state work legislation, and the concept of socialist competition at work became law. Thus, for example, the worker who did not show up to the workplace, or was regularly late, could be punished with up to six months in prison. Following the terms commonly used back then, those who left the workplace were labelled “migrant birds” (*vándormadár*), and seen as being motivated by only selfish economic interests. As shown in several studies however, workers still had their own “ways” of dealing with pressure.¹²⁹⁷

But in the new political constellation that swung into position after 1956, it was deemed more important to keep the workers happy. This was crucial too, because of the active role that the workers’ councils had played as an alternative political force in the uprising. Indeed, one important motive for the politicisation of work in the revolutionary process – especially among skilled workers and technicians – had been the frustrations caused by arbitrary discipline, lack of autonomy, and the lack of professionalism among factory managers.¹²⁹⁸ As well as the immediate solutions of satisfying material needs and loosening the reins of administrative discipline, the reforms also involved

¹²⁹⁴ Czechowicz 1965.

¹²⁹⁵ Bartha 2013, 5-6.

¹²⁹⁶ Pittaway 2012, 230-270; Varga 1994. On Stalinist work discourses in Hungary, see Szabó 1998, 40-79, 44-45.

¹²⁹⁷ Hankiss 1990, 27; Varga 1994, 50, 61-62; Tóth 2003, 78. As Tóth shows, one stockings factory would regularly add to their breaks while having lunch at the nearby market place. Or as Varga has shown, workers were often successful in fighting back against attempts to increase production norms.

¹²⁹⁸ Laine-Frigren 2007, 41, 100-104. Gyáni 2007, 44-45; Bartha 2013, 6-7.

the launch of further sociological studies into the workers' socioeconomic and working conditions to win back their trust quite soon after 1956. As noted in the introduction of one early study of its kind, the MSZMP had brought forward a resolution in 1958 on "Improving the living conditions of workers". This was what spurred the research into action at the Lenin Metallurgy Works, and the reasons given were that the "evolution of social life" had brought certain changes to the lives of workers.¹²⁹⁹ In another sociological study, carried out at Diosgyőr Machine Factory, the resolution of 1958 was also referred to, and they investigated whether working conditions had "really improved in accordance with wishes of the Party". If it had not, then the reasons for existing "negative tendencies" were looked at together with potential ways for eliminating them in the future. It was noted that over 2000 workers were involved in the research, an impressive achievement in itself.¹³⁰⁰ Indeed, as also indicated by social scientist György Kerekes, who came to witness these early policies first-hand at the factory-level, the Party was quick to find out more about the interests of the workers very soon after 1956, thus introducing at least a semblance of communication between the political elite, and the working masses - its crucial basis of legitimation.¹³⁰¹

It also seems that the public discussion on the existence of 'alienation' in socialism that was happening in the early and mid-'60s had elements that were also later promoted and incorporated into the psychologically oriented discourse on work. For example, many of the issues in the "Discussion on Work" - the 6 month-long (and carefully controlled) sharing of opinions started by Ferenc Erdei in the journal *Life and Literature* (Élet és Irodalom) in 1965 - were later followed up by further studies into work psychology. The discussion was also explicitly contextualised with the imminent introduction of the NEM approaching, especially as it was related to the planned system of rewards based on the quality of work, and thus work motivation.¹³⁰² As Erdei admitted in his introductory article, in socialism there were phenomena that also led to

¹²⁹⁹ HU-MNL MK-S Társadalomtudományi intézet 904 f./2 cs./56 ó.e. Üzemszociológiai jellegű vizsgálat a Lenin Kohászati Művekben, 1965. Bevezetés. As noted in a later report on the state of work psychology in Hungary, Lenin Metallurgy Works was one of the first sites in which work psychology research was made in Hungary. Full-time psychologist was applied there to carry out research at the turn of the 1960s. This was rather significant decision at the prevailing conditions. See HU MNL MKS Társadalomtudományi intézet 904 f./2 cs./56 ó.e. Rövid áttekintés a munkásosztály helyzetével kapcsolatos üzemi pszichológiai vizsgálatokról, 26.

¹³⁰⁰ HU-MNL MK-S Társadalomtudományi intézet 904 f./2 cs./56 ó.e. Üzemszociológiai Vizsgálat a Diósgyőri Gépgyárban, 1964. Bevezetés.

¹³⁰¹ The interview with György Kerekes: 14 April 2012. According to Kerekes, already in 1957 special working groups were established in some factories in order to receive information on workers' moods and to listen to their opinions. (György Kerekes worked a major part of his career as a researcher in the MSZMP Institute for Social Sciences. He became one of the leading specialists on Cuba in the country.)

¹³⁰² HU-MNL-MKS. MSZMP Agitáció és Propaganda Osztály. 904 f. /12 cs. /72 ó.e. "Vita a munkáról" az Élet és Irodalom című irodalmi és politikai hetilapban. The discussion was summarized for the CC Department of Agitprop by Levente Sós.

alienation,¹³⁰³ it was not just a capitalist feature. However, unlike in capitalism, alienation was not a “lawful” consequence of the relations of ownership under socialism, but due to the “division of labour” instead (which incidentally was not quite ready yet). As an example, Erdei brought up the example of a “former independent small-holder” who might be alienated at his work in a cooperative. In such situations, these “concrete conditions” could breed alienation among the workers. Furthermore, he added that although this was “clearly not a main problem in socialism”, it was still part of the problem. There was a big difference if people’s jobs were based on something they really wanted to do, or if it was dictated by pure necessity.¹³⁰⁴

In reaction to Erdei’s suggestions on the kinds of administrative tools that could be used to increase discipline at work, András Hegedüs (see 4.1.3) demanded that it should be more the case that workers be treated in “socialist-humanist” ways, as this would diminish the amount of people constantly changing posts (i.e., ‘job fluctuation’).¹³⁰⁵ Furthermore, Hegedüs suggested that workers would be more motivated if they were made part of the immediate processes of economic planning in factories. As with several other opinions given in this discussion, the introduction of the NEM was eagerly anticipated, with its promise of more worker initiatives being included in the decisions that directly affected their autonomy. This led on to further discussion of poor organisation at work and the “outdated” (*elavult*) system of economic planning. “Bureaucratic behaviour” against the workers was common, and seen the lingering residue of “old ideas” which had tended to differentiate between white-collar workers “above”, and those who worked “below”. Furthermore, the general problems brought on by economic shortages and overly strict parameters of planning were blamed for the motivational problems among the workers where good work was often reported as turning to “rubbish”.¹³⁰⁶

Later on in the “Discussion on Work”, Zoltán Molnár argued, workers would be given proper conditions to work in, if only these weak management practices could be changed. He called for “constructive dissatisfaction”, to be used as a resource for improvements. This implied a need for sociological and psychological research, in the same vein as Dr. József Kéri’s comment that too little had been discussed, until now, about work psychology and biology. He emphasised that “comfortable” (*kellemes*) conditions would actually increase productivity, as “work without rest was inhuman”, and the workers “would eventually always find ways to slack off” (*lazítás*). It was neither acceptable nor rational to lead the workers with a “desire for control” because this would only breed “revulsion and defiance” among them.¹³⁰⁷

¹³⁰³ Ibid., 6–8. Testifying the politically delicate nature of this discussion, Levente Sós implied in his summary that Erdei’s address did not incorporate an “oppositional edge”.

¹³⁰⁴ Ibid., 7–8.

¹³⁰⁵ Ibid., 11.

¹³⁰⁶ Ibid., 19–20.

¹³⁰⁷ Ibid., 21–22.

Dr. Kéri also wrote about basic issues which had been left unnoticed for far too long, such as the temperature, lighting, noise levels, and overall monotony of some workplaces (in assembly lines, for instance) which all too often caused “inhibitions” and feelings of “dullness, emptiness, and drowsiness” in the workforce. Kéri's humanist, and optimistic view of human nature was that “the majority of men, due to their nature, always aspire for better. But this human instinct (*ösztön*) is only ever realised in a suitable environment”.¹³⁰⁸ The discussion was understandably far from free of ideological and moralist overtones. Indeed, several standpoints seemed to be quite out of touch with reality. The prevalent practice of having more than one job, for instance, was morally judged without due attention to the socioeconomic realities. Also the presumed tendency of people to “search for well-paid jobs” (for their offspring, for example) expressed in ‘moralist’ terms, as was the presumption that the will to advance in a career for some writers was simply an expression of old “bourgeois prejudices”.¹³⁰⁹ All the same, the topics of alienation and the NEM and its potential implications for work, did eventually allow for a surprisingly large variety of voices.

Much of the “Discussion on Work” therefore actually revolved around topics that could be addressed by research in sociology and the psychology of work, although this kind of research was clearly not, in itself, the main topic. For example, psychologist Tibor Frank in his article in the collection, “Organisational studies, psychology, and work-norms” called for psychologically oriented management studies to be developed, so that the atmosphere in workplaces could be more harmonious. For Frank, the simple but telling reason for this was the claim that the prevailing work culture and legislation did not allow workers a moment of rest.

In only a few factories the law allows the workers a moment's rest. Those places are rare where they can sit and rest for a while amidst their work, because it is considered malingering.¹³¹⁰

Although the question of alienation in socialism was a controversial topic - indeed, as noted by Sós and Erdei, some intellectuals had even claimed it was a phenomenon to be found *only* in socialism¹³¹¹ - it was treated in this discussion as a relevant starting point for the proposed reforms. Hence, some of the contributors were plainly of the opinion that psychology and sociology should be regarded as the principal means for rationalising and humanising the organisation and management of work.

As for the report on the current state of work psychology research in Hungary in the early '70s, it seemed to concentrate on two issues. Firstly, the '60s was described as a period when work psychology had begun rapidly and research proliferated. The conclusions from this wealth of new knowledge were that working on the “human factor” would be a significant dimension for

¹³⁰⁸ Ibid., 22.

¹³⁰⁹ Ibid., 23–25.

¹³¹⁰ Ibid., 26.

¹³¹¹ Ibid., 7–8.

increasing the productivity of work. Thus, work psychology laboratories had been established in some major factory complexes.¹³¹² Secondly, it was acknowledged that the development of research in the field had nonetheless been very uneven, and suffered from a lack of coordination and the “burden of old ideas”. Very often, for example, these laboratories had just a one psychologist, and might not be anywhere near the factory management’s offices, but rather in the personnel departments. Furthermore, among other issues, the research was often focused on very local and practical problems, so it was “campaign-based”, and it certainly did not treat the general problems of the “whole working class”.¹³¹³ Thus, there were major discrepancies between the high-flown declarations of humanising work and the real circumstances in countless localities, where the preferences often were quite far away from the abstract notions of ‘scientific and technological revolution’. As sociologist Zsoltán Zsille wrote in his sharply ironic article on “Psychology in industry” in 1971, what factory directors who encountered psychologists really wanted to see, was concrete evidence of what they could actually “bring to the table”.¹³¹⁴ Furthermore, Zsille referred to particular kind of prejudice which still seemed to prevail surrounding the relevance of psychology itself - why talk about psychology at all, if there was no such thing as a psyche?¹³¹⁵ Zsille even went so far as to claim that the founding of psychological laboratories, for all their great expectations, had been a total “dead-end”. Reading between the lines, it seemed that despite the resources devoted to improving working conditions, factory managers were not really heeding the advice of the psychologists.¹³¹⁶ But perhaps Zsille was painting too bleak a picture, as there had also been positive initiatives and results.

For example, in the so called ‘branch institutes’ within various ministries, the situation of work psychology, and particularly ‘ergonomics’, painted a far more positive picture.¹³¹⁷ Towards the end of the ‘60s, following developments in the west, Hungarian psychology-oriented ergonomics gradually emerged as an autonomous discipline. Research initiatives were made, for example, at the Institute for Industrial Economics, Organisation, and Computing (KGMI) within the Ministry of Metallurgical and Machine Industries (ISZSZI),¹³¹⁸ and eventually the experts in the field even got their own Department for Ergonomics within the Union of Engineering and Natural Sciences (MTESZ¹³¹⁹).

¹³¹² HU-MNL-MKS MSZMP Agitáció és Propaganda Osztály. Társadalomtudományi intézet. 904 f./ 2 cs./56 ő.e. Rövid áttekintés a munkásosztály helyzetével kapcsolatos üzemi pszichológiai vizsgálatokról, 26, 33. According to the report, there were 500 large state enterprises in the country. At the turn of the ‘70s, there were psychological laboratories in only 30 of them.

¹³¹³ *Ibid.*, 3–4, 27, 33. Testifying to the “atomised” nature of work, in 25 of these laboratories psychologists worked alone.

¹³¹⁴ Zsille (1971, 45.

¹³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹³¹⁶ Rövid áttekintés a munkásosztály helyzetével kapcsolatos üzemi pszichológiai vizsgálatokról, 2–3.

¹³¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³¹⁸ Kohó és Gépipari Minisztérium Ipargazdasági, Szervezési és Számításintézet.

¹³¹⁹ Műszaki és Természettudományi Egyesületek Szövetsége.

Following international tendencies, the profile of work psychology and ergonomics laboratories in Hungary changed towards the '70s. As the previous focus had been almost solely on aptitude tests - with the most developed example, in this sense, being for the Hungarian National Railways and traffic safety in general (see Pál Schiller Harkai above) - now the focus was on psychology-based research on workers and their working environments.¹³²⁰ Thus, social psychology studies on "work atmosphere" and the management of human resources began to also be included in the wider ergonomic framework, with the most "urgent" question at the end of the '60s being the training of managers.¹³²¹ With so many work psychologists at the branch institutes, it meant that a large part of their research was not published in the journals of the Academy, but rather in such titles as *Munkaiügyi Szemle*, *Munkavédelem*, and *Ergonómia* (est. 1967).¹³²²

According to the report, there had been work psychology research on the psychological background for workers' "job instability" (*munkaerővándorlás*) - in other words their levels of "satisfaction" at work¹³²³; but the major trend at the end of the '60s was on objectively improving working conditions and "work hygiene". Nevertheless, the number of accidents had not been sufficiently reduced and the management were held responsible in many cases. Although resources allegedly had been put aside to improve conditions, the factory managers had not paid all due attention to work safety as they often only referred to "economic interests", or accused workers for the accidents.¹³²⁴ They only seemed to be trying to solve minor individual problems, rather than improve the "general comfort of work". For example, noise pollution was another major problem. Referring to the statistics compiled from factory physicians, it was estimated that there were between 50,000 and 100,000 workers who suffered from "occupational deafness" in Hungary. Factories that were equipped with more modern technology usually fared better in these statistics, but it was still often the case that while the technology was modern, old tools would still be used alongside the new ones.¹³²⁵ One minor issue that could have quickly been taken care of was the lighting - had factory managers listened to psychologists more readily. Indeed, psychologists were saying to them that even the smallest positive alterations in working conditions would be considered by the workers as a sign that the management was looking after them.

¹³²⁰ Antalovits (2004), 699-744. Some of the active researchers and developers in the field were Mihály Vaszkó, József Perczel, and László Gábor Horváth.

¹³²¹ Rövid áttekintés..., 32-33. Regarding the training of managers to be more psychologically sensitive in their leadership, the report highlighted the significance of the recently established Institute for Management Education (1970).

¹³²² Ibid., 27-30. For example, psychology research was launched at the Institute for Forest Economics, to lessen the "burden of work" in the forestry industry.

¹³²³ Ibid., 2-4.

¹³²⁴ Ibid., 3.

¹³²⁵ Ibid., 6-8. Only the cases of silicosis and lead-poisoning had really decreased in number.

It was also pointed out in the report that the use of psychological knowledge would have a clear economic impact. For example, it was argued that as a result of employing psychologists in one glassworks the amount of garbage had already greatly decreased. Or in the case of the United Incandescent Lamp Factory (*Egyesült Izzó*), reforming work practices by introducing work in pairs had significantly increased turnover.¹³²⁶ Psychologists also argued that aptitude tests not only had a positive effect on productivity but they also decreased “job instability” among the workforce. Again, the seemingly simple breakthroughs caused by introducing breaks in the midst of work shifts were shown to be saving money through better quality work; and psychologists had also made a difference in bringing down the number of work-related accidents.

But does it not sound rather profane to claim that to prevent accidents we underline the gain in turnover just to prove this usefulness [of psychology]? Yet this is clearly true, and if it is not always immediately obvious, it becomes apparent if we think about the improved quality of work we achieve with proper pauses; not to mention the benefits of proper safety protection for the workforce.¹³²⁷

When it came to examining the general satisfaction of workers, one survey in particular springs to mind from 1968. It was carried out via questionnaire at the aforementioned United Incandescent Lamp Factory among 3500 of the workers there (237 workstations). Of those that participated in the initial basic research, 1000 (100 workstations) took part in further research. Workers were asked about their relationship with co-workers and superiors, and about their status in the workplace, i.e., whether they felt “morally appreciated” and recognised for their contribution. It was also asked if the demands of management were reasonable, and if the tasks workers were given were commensurate with their salary; finally, they were also asked about the objective conditions of work.¹³²⁸

The results were rather worrying since they seemed generally dissatisfied with their working conditions. Their dissatisfaction was mainly to do with the immediate managers on the factory-floor, with low wages, and with the lack of opportunities for advancement. The general atmosphere in the “collective”, however, seemed good, and workers even tended to like their jobs. However, 87% of the workers asked said that they were dissatisfied with their work, especially with their direct managers. The conclusion was that a positive relationship needed to be forged between the workers and line managers since this “greatly affected other possible causes of dissatisfaction”. Workers had complained that they were often given tasks which were either pointless or just to maintain discipline and psychologists warned that this simply did not work. It was very unreasonable to give tasks “for drill” (*drill kedvéért*) only.¹³²⁹ In a follow-up carried out in 1969 to find out if the psychologists’ suggestions had been put into practice, the psychologists claimed they had some better results.

¹³²⁶ Ibid., 34.

¹³²⁷ Ibid., 36.

¹³²⁸ Ibid., 14.

¹³²⁹ Ibid., 15–17.

Although the level of dissatisfaction was still relatively high, it had dropped by about a third (to 69%). Of course, with the restricted evidence available here, it is impossible to know what happened in the factory between the surveys. For example, some of the more negative workers may have left the workplace, or perhaps some may even have been 'encouraged' by their superiors to be more favourable the second time round. After all, the psychologists wanted it to be seen that with their methods were working.¹³³⁰

"Workplace neurosis" was also brought up in the report, as this was found to have greatly increased in Hungary - due to bad working environments and individual adaptation disorders related to various forms of fatigue and anxiety. The finding was based on recent Hungarian research which had focused on the prevailing conditions in mass production, on assembly lines, and in female dominated sectors of the national workforce. But there was great variation between the different sectors, and the authors explained that these were due to the way the work was organised differently, with the quality of management, the level of modernisation, etc. They also warned that psychological issues were behind people wanting to leave their jobs, and if not treated, this affected the quality of work.¹³³¹

In the previous literature, something has been said about what may have caused mental problems during state socialism. Valuch, for instance, pointed to the increase in various deviant phenomena (e.g., suicides, alcoholism etc.) - also detected by the authorities early on - and saw it as the result of a 'schizophrenic' split between values held officially and privately. Furthermore, Valuch acknowledges that the common practice of having two or even three jobs at the same time (in both state and private sectors) very likely had consequences for the psychological well-being of people.¹³³² Meanwhile Romsics linked the increase in mental problems to changes in the social structure, such as urbanisation, and the break-up of traditional social communities; as well as the everyday tensions caused by the political system.¹³³³

The actual number of cases of neurosis is also difficult to verify. Some have compared the situation in Hungary with similarly bleak figures in the US, which would mean 50% of Hungarian people (!) were suffering in 1970 from "non-somatic" mental diseases¹³³⁴ Then again, this bleak picture was balanced by others who stressed that the purportedly high numbers of neurotic cases was the result of the popularity of neurosis as a diagnostic category in post-war Europe. Thus it became easier to pin various ailments as symptoms to this particular mental disease (and Hungary was no exception). As Béla Buda suspected in 1970, the increasing "popularity" of neurosis as a diagnosis gave

¹³³⁰ Ibid., 21.

¹³³¹ Ibid., 11-13.

¹³³² Valuch 2005, 357-359; Romsics 2004, 400.

¹³³³ See Romsics 2002. Romsics also adds that the suicide mortality rate had been internationally high in Hungary already at the turn of the 20th century

¹³³⁴ Balázs-Piri & Hegedűs 1970.

people the chance to act out the “sick status” and get released from difficult social situations at the workplace.¹³³⁵

With regard to workplace neurosis it could also be interesting to compare the statistics gathered by the factory physicians (*üzem orvosok*) and compare them to the numbers shown by official statistics, as the physicians generally experienced these cases on the spot. However, in the present study, the more important question relates to the role of psychologists. Clearly, they tried to show that there was a psychological dimension to the workplace which also contributed to well-being in the material dimension. In other words, they tried to direct the gaze of the decision-makers towards those areas that needed to be taken into account in social planning, such as the “atmosphere” of work, which would require social psychology expertise. The question is, of course, whether they did succeed in convincing the authorities though?

Unfortunately, the restrictions posed by the source material used here only allows room for speculation. It seems that the issues of mental health among adults (let alone children) were slowly being recognised by the decision-makers as problems in their own right. In 1977, the Ministry of Health officially accepted neurosis as a disease category.¹³³⁶ Already in the early '70s there had been attempts to deal with mental problems in a cooperative manner on the supranational level of the Eastern Bloc. In 1973, for example, the first joint Symposium of Psychotherapy for the socialist countries was organised in Prague. As a result, the so-called *Prague theses* (1979) were published following the symposium as an action plan for advancing the state of psychotherapy in all the countries involved. Shortly after this, the ‘theses’ were officially sanctioned by the Ministers of Health of each country in a high-level meeting at Yalta. It was recognised, that because of the great number of mental problems in socialist countries (such as workplace neurosis) there was an increasing demand for psychotherapeutic knowledge to be put into practice.¹³³⁷

In 1979, in an APB report submitted to the MSZMP Political Committee, the spread of neurosis and other “non-somatic” illnesses were acknowledged as a “national disease” alongside cardiovascular disease, respiratory disorders, high blood pressure and cancer.¹³³⁸ This strongly suggests that psychological problems were no longer seen as a remnant of the bourgeois past but a very real and urgent topic of debate in Hungarian society; and as this debate had been raging for a decade now, it could even be publicly asked if various deviant phenomena should be understood as side-effects of socialism. Interestingly enough, Hungarians decided to speak quite openly about high suicide rates and

¹³³⁵ Buda 1970, 70. On the spreading of neurosis as a popular diagnostic category in the 20th century, see Pietikäinen 2007.

¹³³⁶ “Beszélgetések a pszichoterápia és a pszichoterapeuta-képzés magyarországi helyzetéről.” In: *Magyar Pszichológiai Szemle* 36 (6), 583.

¹³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 595–596, 606–609.

¹³³⁸ Jelentés a Politikai Bizottságnak az egészségügyi ellátásról és fejlesztésének fő feladatáról. 288. f. 5/780. ő. e. Jegyzőkönyv az 1979 Szeptember 11. üléséről. The immediate context was the amendment made to the 1972 Health Care Bill. In that year the principle of free, universal health care became part of the Hungarian Constitution as a basic right of citizens.

“new world records in divorce and psychosomatic illnesses”¹³³⁹. Ferenc Pataki got the political core of these worries in a research report published within the framework of the large state-supported project on “Social Adaptation Disorders” in 1986. To what extent was the existing socialism in Hungary responsible for producing these adaptation disorders, he asked.¹³⁴⁰

¹³³⁹ New York Times 26 August 1988. “Budapest Gets the Last Laugh on Moscow.”
¹³⁴⁰ Andorka (et.al.) 1986, 13-18.

5 PSYCHOLOGY'S PART IN SOCIAL CHANGE

Chicago¹³⁴¹ is colourful and rough. It's a bit like Liliom¹³⁴², who puts on a show to hide the real poverty underneath. The people in Chicago are very intelligent - as proud of what they don't know as of what they do. They don't really have money, but they are all the more elegant for it. Chicago's main road is the Boulevard (*Körút*), with all its cheap glitz and glamour. It's neither petit-bourgeois nor upper middle-class - it's just Chicago, with its many tramps and scavengers mixing in with the slick, the sly, and the smart. If they were to see a psychologist and notice that she was cool and doesn't yak it up, then they might start something with you. But if she was to try and be boastful with her knowledge, she's done for. Once I did a Szondi Test with a taxi-driver. I put some pictures on the table, at which point he asked if we were playing poker. So I said to him, OK, but only I can be the winner. It was a deal. We loved it from then on. Basically the only way to convince him was to say "I'm not playing games here", so that he knew where he was, with someone, together.¹³⁴³

According to Lilla Szilágyi (1921-1994), doing her job in the '70s, in a rough neighbourhood like Chicago (Budapest) was not an easy task. However, it could in many ways be a rewarding one. The above quote was taken from her autobiographical text published in 1994, about her working as a psychoanalysis-oriented psychologist in the department of internal medicine at Sándor Péterfi Hospital in Budapest. It was an appointment without official status, but in practice the psychologist's presence in the department was seen as very useful by some doctors there who were well aware of the confused nature of psychosomatic illnesses.¹³⁴⁴

From her childhood, Szilágyi witnessed a socially liberal Central European intellectual life from close-range. Her father, Géza Szilágyi, belonged to the famous western-minded group of artists, social scientists, psychoanalysts, and writers grouped around the journal *Nyugat* (West); and he was also analysed by Sándor Ferenczi, the one-time leader of the Budapest school of psychoanalysis. In this atmosphere, Szilágyi could really "breathe the air of analysis".¹³⁴⁵ After WWII and the introduction of communism, Szilágyi was forced to drop her

¹³⁴¹ Chicago is a late 19th century city block within the 7th district of Budapest.

¹³⁴² Liliom is a rough-speaking carnival barker in Ferenc Molnár's play.

¹³⁴³ "Interjú Lilla Szilágyival" (1994) In: *Thalassa* 5 (1-2), XX.

¹³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 325-326.

¹³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

initial idea of becoming a journalist (because she was a social democrat), and so she studied instead to become a psychologist. Due to this, she worked nine years at the Institute for Psychology within the Academy of Sciences. Gradually she acknowledged that her interests lay in psychosomatic illnesses, a rather “unfashionable” topic back then. As she had experienced that there was thus a gap in the field, but lacking the desire to undertake scientific research, she oriented herself towards clinical practice.

Being one of the first Hungarian psychologists who was given the chance to study abroad, Szilágyi worked two months in 1967 with a Hungarian scholarship at the Hoff Institute in Vienna. While there, she also got a chance to experience western prejudices first hand. Namely, for a 45 year-old woman who had grown up with the culture of psychoanalysis all around her through childhood, it was a “dubious pleasure” to be thoroughly examined because of her presumed lack of psychological knowledge “[they] examined me almost up to the point that I might not know who Freud was, and as if I only knew Pavlov. This was one test that as a human being I just had to bear somehow”.¹³⁴⁶

After working for a while in the 1st Department of Internal Medicine at the Budapest Medical University hospital, she was asked to come to Sándor Péterfi Hospital in the '70s. There she worked with both psychosomatic and neurotic patients until her retirement, being especially well versed with various methods of short therapy. Carefully negotiating her place amidst the doctors who officially took credit if the difficult patient was cured, Szilágyi managed to carve a meaningful role out for herself as a practising clinical psychologist in an environment which generally favoured the biological view on mental illness.

By all means, a psychologist has to have great tolerance of frustration. This is because she is always frustrated. When something goes wrong, it is of course the psychologist who messed things up. If the patient is cured, then the internist cured him. It should be enough for her vanity that she regularly finds flowers on her table. Officially, the credit goes to the doctor.¹³⁴⁷

Szilágyi's recollections bear witness to several overlapping themes brought up in this study. It shows how the development of psychology-based therapies in socialism faced difficulties which were not only related to the presumed ideological obstacles posed by socialism, but also to the existence of professional hierarchies and power games which often worked against the dissemination of psychological views. Her case also gives some pointers on how to study the place of psychological knowledge within political systems which pose various kinds of obstacles to the free play of ideas. In the Hungarian context, her case seems to suggest that even if psychological views on society and human nature were for a long time downgraded by the science policymaking establishment, they could still nevertheless be disseminated in a low key fashion, and used in more discreet locations.

¹³⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁴⁷ Ibid., 321.

This research has shown that to be able to comprehensively study the history of psychological disciplines in socialist countries, the institutional, structural and political peculiarities of research and dissemination of knowledge in these countries should also be considered. A narrow focus on only that side of the academic field of research which was politically controlled during 'difficult times' will clearly miss a lot of the initiatives and undercurrents that were potentially happening elsewhere, for instance, in the political margins. In this respect, particular conditions related to each different 'marginal' context of knowledge production and its use need to be acknowledged. Failing to do this ignores the real variety of power-knowledge relationships that existed in previous political regimes.

The amount of freedom enjoyed by the experts could also depend on the position of the research institute in which they worked. Important and even sometimes 'heretical' research could be made in institutions which were far enough away from the main teaching hubs of the universities that had otherwise been given the task to educate socialist intelligentsia.¹³⁴⁸ Even intellectuals with a history of being critical of the establishment could provide for the needs of the Party too, especially when it needed to come up with reformist policies. This is not to say that we should underestimate the overall output and quality of psychological research that was carried out *within* the limits of the Cold War era either; but to focus solely on politically controlled academic circles unfairly eclipses the seminal work done - even if minor in scale - in several smaller research units and institutions elsewhere in Hungary.

Furthermore, analysing the history of the social sciences in communist regimes should not be restricted to the immediate or implicit consequences of the party-political dictates that confined academic debate. As this research has shown, it is also relevant to investigate those areas and institutions where political expectations and academic interests met and sometimes even intertwined. One such institution around which a lot of Hungary's psychological discourse evolved was Child Guidance (CG). Its position was crucial in the context of local child welfare policies, as this study has hopefully proved. CG workers contributed to the gradual professionalisation of the field of child welfare, and to some extent stepped into the shoes of the 'social worker' at a time when the term itself was avoided in public for political and ideological reasons.

These findings also suggested that it would be relevant to inquire about similar institutional channels that may have helped psychological views (on therapy and on the wider state of society) spread during the Kádár era. One of these channels may again have been CG, not only a meeting-place for several different needs and interests, but also a vantage point from which countless human fates were experienced first-hand. During the rehabilitation of psychological research in the 1960s, the basic principles adopted in applied child psychology, especially those manifest in the therapeutic ideologies and practices of CG, became gradually more influenced by pre-war Hungarian

¹³⁴⁸ Macrakis & Hoffmann 1999, 7.

psychology and social psychology traditions (e.g., Mérei and the Budapest School). These ideas were then combined with post-war child and developmental psychology from abroad to address home-grown social concerns. Although psychoanalysis was publicly and even systematically criticised by party ideologues, psychoanalytical ideas in the form of 'deep psychology' were introduced into CG practices at the local level.

On the other side of the Iron Curtain, people also began to take note that the Hungarian psychoanalytic movement was one of the first in the Eastern Europe to be coming back to life again, in spite of the violent break caused by WWII and the communist takeover. This revival followed in other East European countries, until by the 1980s it was clear to many that Hungary was in an "excellent intermediate position" for organising a conference for therapists from both sides of the Curtain.¹³⁴⁹

To stress the new opportunities offered for psychologists after 1956 does not mean that the very real difficulties and obstacles posed by a 'soulless' regime should be downplayed. In fact, psychotherapy professionals were still painting a gloomy picture for their field even at the end of the 1970s. In a science policy document called the *Current State of the Psychological Sciences* (1980) there was a report on the state of psychotherapy in Hungary.¹³⁵⁰ According to the Working Group, authorized by the MTA Psychology Committee in 1976 to assess the current state of psychotherapy¹³⁵¹, there were "tragic inadequacies" in the public health institutions concerned. The writers went on to say that "the conditions in our country show strong signs of lagging behind in comparison to socialist countries and almost all the other countries in the whole of Europe." The GDR was mentioned as one positive socialist role model for psychotherapy, but even then it was said to be "still in its initial stages".¹³⁵² In some fields, however, there seemed to be genuine results. For instance, the report on the *State of Child Psychotherapy Services* (1980) pictured the situation as surprisingly positive,¹³⁵³ with professional standards described as quite up-to-date. The treatment ideology in Hungarian child psychology institutions was "eclectic", but at the same time "open to anything that was

¹³⁴⁹ In 1987, the Hungarian Psychoanalytic Society, under the chairmanship of György Hidas, organised a conference on 'Working on trauma in the analysis of adults and children' at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. This was attended by 400 participants from all over Europe.
[http://www.epf-fep.eu/Public/ArticlePDF.php?ID=507&article_lg=\(16.1.2015\)](http://www.epf-fep.eu/Public/ArticlePDF.php?ID=507&article_lg=(16.1.2015)).

¹³⁵⁰ Akadémiai levéltár. II. Osztály. A Filozófiai és Történettudományi Osztályának Iratai. Pszichológia tudományterületek helyzete és a kutatóhálózat tízéves fejlesztésének lehetőségei. Jelentés az MTA Pszichológiai Bizottság részére a "psychoterápia helyzetének áttekintése" tárgyában.

¹³⁵¹ The members of the Committee were: László Garai, Pál Juhász, Zsuzsa Kulcsár, Miklós Kun, Erzsébet Moussong-Kovács, Bertalan Pethő, Jenő Ranschburg, and Ferenc Szakács.

¹³⁵² Jelentés az MTA Pszichológiai Bizottság részére a "psychoterápia helyzetének áttekintése" tárgyában..., 9.

¹³⁵³ Jelentés az MTA Pszichológiai Bizottság részére a "psychoterápia helyzetének áttekintése" tárgyában /a Gyermekpszichoterápiás ellátás helyzetéről. The report was signed by psychologist Péter Popper.

deemed useful". For example the following therapies were listed as being used: play therapy, focal short therapy, creative art therapy, music therapy, hypnosis, family group therapy and "relaxation".¹³⁵⁴

As noted by Péter Popper, the psychologist behind publishing the document, psychotherapy was characterised by its "lack of dogma" - there was no "biologising" nor any "dogmatising" for that matter either. It was generally accepted that educational, psychological, and psychopathological questions should be understood as being intimately connected to "social and environmental" factors. This also meant that psychotherapy in Hungary focused strongly on the family, understood as a "unit and a unity", with an added emphasis (from social psychology) on the particular social milieu of each individual.

Of course, there were also plenty of problems. Psychotherapeutic services were plentiful in the capital, but scarce outside Budapest. Furthermore, the perennial problems with socialist bureaucracy caused difficult situations as different institutions were responsible to different ministries without being able to cooperate between themselves. Child Guidance, for instance, was answerable to the Ministry of Education, while psychotherapists in child psychiatry clinics (*gyermek ideggondozók*) and psychotherapy units elsewhere were answerable to the Ministry of Health.

One also gets the impression from the report that the neglect in developing certain psychotherapeutic services for adults was to some extent 'compensated for' by the therapists who were working in the institutions for children (e.g., CG centres).¹³⁵⁵ On the other hand, as Popper mentioned, child psychologists also needed adult therapy skills as children's psychological problems were rarely solved without the "psychological adjustment" of the family and adults involved with the child too. In the future, he wrote, these questions should be taken account if an official system of child-psychotherapy education and training was to ever be established. The reason he said this was because no child psychotherapy (nor any psychotherapy for that matter) was taught in public institutions of higher learning at this point. Both reports, understandably, called for this situation to change however, as there was a great social need for trained psychotherapists of all ilks.¹³⁵⁶

The two reports differed too, however, both in their tone and in their evaluation of the situation. In light of the evidence at hand, it is difficult to say if this stemmed from the different professional and existential positions of their respective writers, which would mean they had different reference points for comparing the quantity and quality of psychotherapy services in Hungary. But what is clear, however, is that psychologists - regardless of their position - clearly had to struggle for their place in the sun. Having said this, I would still argue that the situation was not as extreme as some narratives, which analyse the fate of psychotherapy in Hungary purely through the lens of political

¹³⁵⁴ Ibid., 3-4.

¹³⁵⁵ Ibid., 4.

¹³⁵⁶ Ibid., 5.

control, have suggested. Indeed, in light of this research, it would be an overstatement to claim - for instance, as Béla Buda (et.al.) have lately done - that the dictatorship "strove to do the same to therapists as it strove to do to all other people; degrade them into an atomised mass without opinion or will". According to the authors, socialist regimes favoured the theories of Lamarck and Pavlov because they emphasised "ontogenetic conformism", and did not want to accept the existence of the soul *at all*, not "even in the form of psyche or as the highest-level operation of the nervous system".¹³⁵⁷

The problem with these kinds of heavily value-laden statements is that they fail to consider the finer gradations of historical change. If we simply accept that "the individual was not important with his or her interests and demands" and it was the "words of the collectives and the crowds that counted", then 'ideology' is endowed with all-invasive powers, and 'regime' is treated as something homogenic and static. However, in light of this research, one could argue that socialist ideology itself experienced changes during the transition from Stalinism to post-Stalinism; or that the Hungarian variant of socialist 'consumerism' actually represents one aspect of a wider change toward some kind of post-ideological age within the Eastern Bloc.

In 1983, Péter Bakonyi referred to the 'soulless' character of state socialism, but also noted that as the '80s approached, the psyche of the individual had been making a comeback. In his sociography, entitled *Madness, Therapy, Stigma*, Bakonyi set out to reveal the true face of mental health in contemporary Hungary, with a special focus on the state of Hungarian psychiatric institutions and the ideology behind their prevalent treatments. As he noted, his aim was to "investigate, not to shock." However, the result was a far from easy-going report dealing with the contemporary Hungarian world of the mentally unwell. According to Bakonyi, the socialist "economy of shortage" had failed to address those spheres of society that were seen as "non-productive" - the weird and deviant world of people that culture and tradition had given countless imaginative names, such as "idiots, nutters, wackos and queers".¹³⁵⁸

Bakonyi confessed that the treatment of the mentally ill had not been much better before 1945, but socialist conditions had certainly not made things easier; it had merely produced optimistic illusions. There was the claim, for instance, that mental problems would quickly vanish as optimal social and economic conditions were achieved. So like a "good doctor", Hungary would be able to cure these diseases with patience and rational planning, and this would automatically eliminate the psychological problems inherited from the capitalist past.¹³⁵⁹ In practice, however, the problems were persistent enough, and they had to be faced. Thus, during the "early stages of socialist construction work" the insane were most often isolated in distant asylums so they would not pose a threat to 'normal' socialist life.¹³⁶⁰

¹³⁵⁷ Buda (et.al.) 2009, 71.

¹³⁵⁸ Bakonyi 1983, 9-15.

¹³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 81-82.

Bakonyi's notions gain further weight if they are complemented with Agita Lūse's arguments, based on her analysis of the role of the psychological sciences in Latvia when it was part of the USSR. Marxist ideology underlined the significance of harmonious social relations as a means for achieving the harmonious development of each individual; and Lūse shows that due to the ideological expectations of (inevitable) social progress, treating mental and emotional health in Soviet Latvia generally was more about healing social pathologies than about techniques "designed for reconciling the conflicting forces of the individual psyche and for promoting autonomy and self-esteem". Whereas Freud had focused on the idea of a universal human nature, Marx had stressed that human nature is actually quite changeable, and that at some point in time (hopefully sooner rather than later), harmonious social relations would be established as a condition for the harmonious psychological development of man.¹³⁶¹ Lūse goes on to argue that in the Soviet hemisphere, psychiatry was originally expected to not only treat the mentally ill but also with contributing "to designing a 'healthy' psychosocial environment and eradicating the flaws of society". Bakonyi, in turn, did not fail to mention that there had been lots of positive initiatives in Hungary in this respect too - such as the humanist psychiatry of István Benedek - but these had unfortunately become lost in the depths of bureaucracy and the struggle for meagre resources. Thus Bakonyi was nonetheless also paying attention to the constraints that ideology placed on psychological concepts. For example, because terms such as "psyche" (*lélek*) were most definitely 'out', he argued that it meant the concepts of "mind" (*elme*) and "spirit" (*szellem*) dominated the field of psychology instead.¹³⁶²

Under socialism, Bakonyi argued that the concept of an individual's psyche was replaced by the collective ideal of socialist citizenship, which called for a morally positive spirit (*szocialista szellem*) in each individual. Meanwhile, in the field of clinical psychology, the concept of "mind", traditionally related to the generally 'humanist' contexts of thinking, acting, and feeling, had been "colonised" by medical and the pathological terminology. Henceforth, the mind had become one-sidedly medicalised with the outcome that in popular usage *elme* was usually only referred to in terms of mental deviancy within the psychiatric hospital (e.g., *elmeegyházintézet*, *elmeorház*).¹³⁶³ Fortunately, Bakonyi noticed that 'psyche' was now "slowly returning" to usage. It even seemed that in Hungary a "high season" might be approaching, i.e., explanations of mental illness were now being accepted in social psychology. As the 1980s approached, policy-makers finally started to realise the grave situation for mental health in the country. New winds were blowing and they were distinctly blowing Hungary in the direction of social psychiatry - understood by Bakonyi to be the "starting point" for so much else, and for too long neglected by Hungary's social planners. Criticism was still being voiced from within the ideological horizons of socialism though: did the actual situation in society really

¹³⁶¹ Lūse 2011, 21.

¹³⁶² Bakonyi 1983, 57-58.

¹³⁶³ Ibid.

correspond with the socialist, humane ideals that were the basis of legitimacy for state socialism?¹³⁶⁴

According to Lūse, psychiatrists in Soviet Latvia too were so often confronted with the “harsh conditions” and stresses of life met by their patients under state socialism, that they eventually gave up on the ideological presupposition that human nature could be significantly moulded by simply improving social conditions.¹³⁶⁵ Whether they actually believed the argument within state socialism (that socioeconomic conditions had not yet improved enough) didn’t really matter, as the result was the same - mental health remained an unresolved issue and the message was that psychiatry could help. Similarly, was state socialism in the Hungarian context reinvented to incorporate psychological discourses to answer the very real challenges of the modern era, and even serve the needs of reform and reinvention of socialist society, or was the psychological discourse simply waxing as the socialist discourse waned?

In this dissertation, the commonly accepted interpretation of the gradual ‘liberation’ of psychological language from the grip of ideology has been reassessed by examining a wider range of different contexts in which psychological knowledge was disseminated after 1956. To fully grasp why the above mentioned “high season” for psychology was dawning with the approach of the 1980s, one needs to know how psychological discourse gradually evolved from the 1960s onwards, in what contexts, and for what purposes. My research has shown that the state-controlled fields of child welfare, education, and work were all seen as needing the professional help of psychologists with their knowledge-claims. The idea was that if socialist citizens were to be rationally governed and their behaviour channelled in ‘normal’, efficient and healthy directions, psychology-based solutions were needed. By focusing on the human factor, psychologists were thus also trying to incorporate discourses on the individual into an otherwise officially collectivist system.

The need to build systemic viability after the political crisis of 1956 meant committing more resources to improving workers’ living standards via paternalist institutions of welfare. Regarding the field of work, the daily ‘political culture’ in the factories changed as open expressions of ideological affiliation and identification to the communist cause were no longer obligatory. As this research suggests, there were also efforts to increase the motivation of workers in state factories by positive means. The introduction of a new psychological discourse on humanising work - and its implicit critique of the culture of punishment and discipline characteristic of the Stalinist era is one example of this change in political culture. But perhaps the most important role offered for work psychologists was to improve the social adaptation of employees to their workplaces, and to decrease those factors which eroded the state-controlled economy from within (such as ‘job instability’ and having other

¹³⁶⁴ Ibid., 17–18.

¹³⁶⁵ Lūse 2011, 21.

jobs in the 'second economy'). Interpreted in this context, the social psychology discourse on 'authentic' communities, introduced in chapter 4, had a peculiar role; it not only helped those in power find out more about the informal processes of socialisation in factories, but also allowed for a very real psychological discourse on topics such as the "hidden network of communities" (cf. Mérei).

Another crucial topic in Hungary (for child psychologists) was juvenile delinquency. It was seen as the manifestation of a deviant 'personality' in need of rational treatment and care. Behaviour that was seen as problematic for the socialist community could thus be individualised and medicalised. In this way it could be managed, controlled, and perhaps even healed. The child and its (nuclear) family were, of course, supported by the 'gaze' of the psychologist in the west too. In socialist Hungary however, the role of public experts clearly revolved around the 'struggle' against deviance, which was conceptualised as a threat, and one must also bear in mind that only recently the knowledge offered by psychologists had been almost completely ignored. The moral panic was quite clear when 1956 and teenage malice were put in the same boat. Some could even call attention to the presumably dangerous presence of group action as harking back to 1956. Keeping this particular historical experience in mind, it could be interesting to compare Hungarian developments in the field of child psychology with the wider post-war international context, and to analyse the possible differences, similarities, and connections. We could ask, for instance, about the long term significance of the educational optimism that was characteristic to the Hungarian psychoanalytic tradition; and inquire into the historical meanings and roles attached to the idea of 'community' in the Eastern Central European context.

This study also argues that psychological discourses were disseminated with a critical message in mind. Seen in this light, it is interesting to notice that the public discussion on social and mental problems in Hungarian society really became more pronounced during the 1970s. Critical writings were also published on the inhuman conditions in psychiatric and other institutions;¹³⁶⁶ and alcoholism and high suicide rates were more often treated as serious social questions. In fact, the self-destructive behaviour of socialist citizens was often connected to low birth-rates and high mortality, making it somewhat of a national 'crisis of faith' problem for Hungary. The media of film and literature were used more often in the 1970s to portray different life situations in Hungarian society, with an ethos of 'finding out' what was really happening in society. New Hungarian documentaries screened small "pieces of reality", while some films also addressed questions of deviance, sometimes with a psychological edge.¹³⁶⁷ One particular genre of social research was put out in a book series called "Discovering Hungary" (*Magyarország Felfedezése*, est. 1967).¹³⁶⁸ Books were published on the problems of villages, on population

¹³⁶⁶ See, for example Hajnóczy 1975; and the 'official' response: Tariska 1976.

¹³⁶⁷ Balogh, Gyürei & Honffy 2004, 191–192, 205–209.

¹³⁶⁸ Standeisky 2004, 282–283.

policies, and on various aspects of everyday life. Social problems, such as homelessness and the daily hardships of workers were also touched upon.

Bakonyi's book on mental hygiene was the 27th title in this series. Both regarding its topic and its 'ethos' of finding out more about grim realities, it bore close resemblance to the publicly criticised article, "The Isolation Room" (*Elkülönítő*), by Péter Hajnóczy (1975). In it, Hajnóczy aimed to reveal the abuses that were happening in so-called community homes (*szociális otthon*), which according to him were simply a storage facility for "defectives" - those deemed incurable by the dominant (biological) psychiatric establishment.¹³⁶⁹ In this respect, Bakonyi's book was an equally critical piece of social research. From a post-socialist perspective, the fact that a dictatorial party supported these kinds of endeavours appears somewhat puzzling, and one is tempted to ask what the authorities were hoping to achieve.

Perhaps it is significant therefore that *Discovering Hungary* was supported by perhaps the most powerful cultural and science policymaker, György Aczél, who wanted to encourage Hungarian writers to investigate social and economic realities. As one contemporary commentator noted, the series was showcasing a new blossoming of sociographic literature in Hungary. Thus it was understood both as a continuation of the critical "spirit" - of the populist writers (*népi írók*) from the 1930s - as well as an intellectual resource for the MSZMP, who wanted to put its social planning on a more "realistic" footing.¹³⁷⁰ Looked at in this way, there were overlaps between the interests of the writers and the social planners, but it also begs a question about whether Aczél's policies were based more on the aims of control, or on the genuine belief that intellectual capital was needed for the viability of socialism? Either way, to have knowledge on social processes (e.g., research on political opinion) seemed to be very important for the MSZMP.

It is clearly tempting to see the emergence of the psychological and social sciences after the death of Stalin as a 'first wave' of social critique; but perhaps it was more the rather mundane case that reformist policies *unintentionally* led to the erosion (from within) of the political system's legitimacy. Keeping in mind the rise of a new intellectual "class"¹³⁷¹ from the 1960s onwards, and the gradually increasing presence of reform-oriented technocracy within the rank and file of the Communist Party¹³⁷², these speculations do not seem so far-fetched. With this in mind, it could be interesting to study further how the social and human sciences managed to frame the policies of social planning in socialist regimes at different times. This also ties in with previous research on the nature of Hungarian political dissent and its relationship to various forms of reformist thinking.¹³⁷³

¹³⁶⁹ Hajnóczy 1975, 99. Hajnóczy vividly describes entering one community home, at the same time revealing something about the motives that informed him and his crew: "We slipped into the community home in Szentgotthard almost like guerillas."

¹³⁷⁰ Berkovits 1975, 56, 60.

¹³⁷¹ Eyal, Szelényi & Townsley 2001, 29–30.

¹³⁷² Miklóssy 2010, 118–119

¹³⁷³ *Ibid.*, 97–99, 118. For more on East European dissent in general, see Falk 2011, 321–322.

Roger Smith has recently elaborated the inherent, historically rooted complexities in the term 'agency'. As Smith notes, it can be assigned in English to not only people but also institutions and a wide variety of material and spiritual phenomena (e.g., "God's agency"). The more moral interpretation of agency refers to the personally responsible actions of otherwise presumably free individuals, and it forms the basic condition of legal and political systems.¹³⁷⁴ Indeed, human agency is one of the most intriguing problems in the history of state socialist regimes.

Agency in this latter context is thus crucial to this research. How much did psychologists themselves actually influence the direction of research and its application? Were they really totally subordinate to the political wishes of the Party? I would argue that this research shows clearly that this was not the case. Some psychologists managed to find quite independent routes and relatively autonomous spaces for their work. When compared to sociologists, for example, the critical dimension of psychology was relatively minor, but the experts in the newly rehabilitated field nevertheless widely shared the critical view that, within the existing frame of socialism, technological and industrial advancement had been deemed more valuable than the quality of individual human life.

In future research, one possibility would be to study further the role of the social sciences in bringing about social and political change and to look more closely at the academic roots of the critically oriented social and psychological discourses involved. For instance, to what extent was reformist or critically minded thinking supported by influential personalities within academia? In the light of this research, I have no doubt those with political and intellectual clout would have supported critically minded research endeavours either openly or silently; and these endeavours would have led to further critical perspectives. But in what way, and were they unintended? Maybe the MSZMP really was unable to control the production of knowledge in different contexts, and particularly the meanings and messages carried by this knowledge.

In that case the knowledge-based planning of society was too much for a 'welfare dictatorship' based on political control. The social psychologist, Ferenc Pataki, might well have carefully questioned the rationale behind the "planning will" (*tervező akarata*) in his suggestions for macro-level solutions for treating social deviance. In 1986, for example, he stressed that the ability to have "foresight" and the tools for intervention were "by no means limitless", either locally nor centrally. In reality, unexpected side-effects and unintended consequences seemed to intervene. As Pataki noted, it was perhaps "naive" to think it was enough to create "favourable social conditions" for people and assume that their behaviour would automatically change.¹³⁷⁵ Keeping these unavoidable problems in mind, Pataki suggested that the space for local society (*communitas*) should be open and its autonomous development cherished. In

¹³⁷⁴ Smith 2014

¹³⁷⁵ Andorka (et.al.) 1986, 23.

other words, local councils should represent real local interests, and not be mere mouthpieces of the Party.¹³⁷⁶

In the framework of a large state-supported research project on deviance (TBZ) at the turn of the 1980s, it was already possible to ask self-critical questions about the possible failure of socialism in guiding the human processes of socialisation with the tools of education, control, and care. As Pataki put it, in the introduction to the research report published in 1986, the aim of the TBZ project was to study the dark side of social reality, to approach it “from the backyard”. After all, how could it be possible that there were still severe adaptation disorders in a society which declared itself as championing those principles and values seen to be fundamentally right and humane?

¹³⁷⁶ Ibid., 73–77.

FINNISH SUMMARY

Ihmistieteet ja 'ihmiskasvoinen sosialismi': psykologia, valta ja ideologia Unkarissa 1956 kansannousun jälkeen

Tutkimuksen lähtökohdat ja keskeiset väitteet

1900-luvun aikana, erityisesti toisen maailmansodan jälkeisinä vuosikymmeniinä, psykologian ja sen sovellusten yhteiskunnallinen merkitys kasvoi nopeasti useilla elämän osa-alueilla. Länsi-Euroopassa ja Pohjoismaissa psykologinen asiantuntijuus kytkeytyi läheisesti hyvinvointivaltion instituutioihin ja niiden kehitykseen psykologisten näkökulmien yleistyessä kasvatuksen, koulutuksen, terapian ja työelämän kentillä. Psykologinen kielenkäytön jokapäiväistyminen terveyden- ja elämänhallintaa ja ihmisten välisiä suhteita jäsentäväksi puheta- vaksi kytkeytyi myös lääketieteen yhteiskunnallisen painoarvon lisääntymiseen. Näitä pitkän aikavälin prosesseja on historiantutkimuksessa kuvattu muun muassa *medikalisaation* ja *psykologisaation* käsitteiden avulla.

Tämä tutkimus käsittelee psykologisen asiantuntijatiedon roolia Unkarin yhteiskuntasuunnittelussa ja sosiaalisen kontrollin politiikassa valtiosocialismin aikana keskittyen 1956 kansannousun jälkeiseen aikaan. Yksilöstä ja tämän mielenliikkeistä kiinnostuneen psykologian asema kollektiivista ihmiskuvaa ja sosialistista moraalialia julistavassa järjestelmässä oli kuitenkin lähtökohtaisesti ongelmallinen. Uuden järjestelmän rakentamisen alkuvaiheissa mielenterveysongelmiin suhtauduttiin kapitalistisen lännen ongelmina tai jo mailleen painuneen Horthyn ajan sortopolitiikan jäänteinä, jotka pian katoaisivat työväenluokan elintason nousun myötä. Yhteiskuntaan sopeutumisen ajateltiin tapahtuvan työn ja toiminnan kautta. Unkarissa perinteisesti vahvan psykoanalyttisen koulukunnan edustajat nousivat toisen maailmansodan jälkeen näkyviin institutionaalisiin rooleihin, mutta kylmän sodan kiristyvässä ilmapiirissä kansainvälisesti verkostoituneet psykologit leimattiin imperialistisen lännen käytyreiksi ja "pseudotieteilijöiksi".

1960-luvulle tultaessa tilanne muuttui. Psykologisen asiantuntemuksen tarve politiikan ja yhteiskuntaelämän eri alueilla tunnustettiin vähitellen, joskin kehitys oli epätasaista ja vahvasti ohjattua. Kádárin 'pehmeässä diktatuurissa' vallankäytön muodot muuttuivat, mutta poliittinen ja ideologinen kontrolli säilyi realiteettina tekotieteilijöiksi leimattujen mielenmaisemassa. 'Freudilaisuutta' kritisoitiin toistuvissa julkisissa kampanjoissa ja biologisesti orientoitunut psykiatrian valtavirta pyrki säilyttämään tiedepoliittisia asemiaan. Selvitän tutkimuksessani, miten ja miksi psykologinen diskurssi murtautui esiin poliittisesta marginaalista ja yleistyi vähitellen yhteiskunnan eri tasoilla; miten poliittinen ohjaus vaikutti psykologian orientoitumiseen; miten psykologien pyrkimykset suhteutuivat puolueen yhteiskuntapolitiikkaan; ja miten nämä prosessit kytkeytyivät laajempiin muutoksiin poliittisessa kulttuurissa ja yhteiskuntapolitiikassa

siirryttäessä Mátyás Rákosin diktatuurista János Kádárin jälkistalinistiseen järjestelmään.

Psykologian, psykiatrian ja mielenterveyden historian tutkimus on ollut voittopuolisesti länsi- ja metropolikeskeistä. Kuten Sarah Marks ja Mat Savelli toteavat vastikään ilmestyneessä, psykiatrian ja itäeurooppalaisen kommunismin suhteita luotaavassa artikkelikokoelmassa, psykologiatieteiden historioitsijat eivät juuri ole olleet mukana itäblokin valtioiden historiallista kokemusta koskevissa uudemmissa keskusteluissa. Näiden ammatti- ja oppialojen asemaa kommunistissa järjestelmissä on usein lähestytty yksipuolisesti korostaen psykiatrian väärinkäyttöä (vrt. neuvostopsykiatria) tai tieteentekijöiden ahtaita raajoja (vrt. rautaesirippu).

Viime vuosina tutkijat ovat heränneet tarkastelemaan itäisen Keski-Euroopan, Itä-Euroopan ja Balkanin 1900-luvun historiaa terveyden, sairauden ja psykologiatieteiden teemojen valossa näiden alueiden omista lähtökohdista käsin. Tämä kiinnostus on virinnyt osana laajempaa huomion kiinnittymistä erityyppisiin poikkikansallisiin prosesseihin, tiedon, ihmisten ja kulttuuristen mallien liikkeisiin sekä toisaalta keskusten ja periferioiden vuorovaikutukseen. Myös kiinnostus erilaisten poliittisten järjestelmien 'psykologioihin' on lisääntynyt viime vuosina. Esimerkiksi Itä-Saksan, autoritaarisesti johdetun Argentiinan tai vaikkapa apartheid-ajan Etelä-Afrikan kokemukset on nostettu vertailevan tutkimuksen piiriin. Uusin psykologian historian tutkimus on korostanut tarvetta kansainvälistää yhä usein 'voittajien historiana' ja tieteellisenä edistyskertomuksena näyttäytyvä yleiskuva tuomalla analyysin keskiöön psykologisen tiedon ja käytännön vuorovaikutus kulttuurisen ja poliittisen toimintaympäristön kanssa.

Ihmis- ja yhteiskuntatieteiden valtiososialismin aikaista historiaa on Unkarissa tutkittu vähän. Usein on keskitytty lähinnä sen osoittamiseen, että näihin tieteenaloihin ja niiden (kriittiseen) älymystöön kohdistui diktatuurille luonteenomaista poliittista kontrollia. Sosiaalipsykologian kaltaisten oppialojen tilanne olikin lähtökohtaisesti hankala, sillä ne analysoivat yksilön ja yhteiskunnan välistä suhdetta, jonka määrittelyn yksinvaltiainen puolue halusi pitää hallussaan. On niin ikään totta, että dogmaattisessa muodossaan marxismi-leninismi sisälsi vahvan kannanoton ihmismielen sosio-ekonomisen määrittelyneisyyden puolesta, mikä eittämättä vähensi mahdollisuuksia esittää ihminen autonomisena toimijana.

Puolueen harjoittaman politiikan ja vallitsevan ideologian vahvaa roolia painottavat tulkinnat kuitenkin unohtavat joitain keskeisiä seikkoja. Itä-Euroopan yksipuoluejärjestelmät jakoivat monia yhteisiä piirteitä, mutta ne olivat myös keskenään erilaisia. Ideologia ei ollut jotain staattista ja 'valmiiksi annettua' vaan pikemmin jatkuvassa muutoksen tilassa. Unkarilaista kommunismia määritteli ajan myötä yhä enemmän poliittinen pragmatismi ja marxismi-leninismien ideologinen joustavuus. Tieteentekijät ja asiantuntijat eivät olleet vain vallankäytön kohteita. He olivat toimijoita: he puhuivat, kirjoittivat, sovelsivat tietoa ja muokkasivat ja loivat käytäntöjä poliittisen kulttuurin mahdollis-

tamissa rajoissa. Näin he myös osallistuivat järjestelmän ylläpitoon ja – kuten tässä tutkimuksessa osoitan – sen muuttamiseen.

Työni lähdeaineisto koostuu Unkarin Sosialistisen Työväenpuolueen (MSZMP) eri elinten tuottamista raporteista ja päätöslauselmista, psykologien tuottamasta tieteellisestä ja populaarista aikalaisdiskurssista, Unkarin tiedeakatemian arkistossa säilytettävästä psykologiaa koskevasta materiaalista sekä omaelämäkerrallisesta aineistosta. Olen myös haastatellut kymmentä sosialismin aikana työskennellyttä unkarilaista psykologia. Puolue-elinten tuottamasta aineistosta keskeisiä ovat tieteen, kulttuurin ja koulutuksen kentän kontrolliin, ohjaukseen ja suunnitteluun liittyvät dokumentit, joita tuottivat puolueen keskuskomitean alaiset Agitaatio- ja propagandaosasto, Tiede-, kulttuuri- ja opetusosasto sekä näiden toimeenpanevat komiteat.

Tutkimukseni teoreettiset lähtökohdat nousevat valtiososialismin historian revisionistisista tulkinnoista, uuden kylmän sodan historian tutkimuksen vuorovaikutusta ja ylijäisiä prosesseja korostavista näkökulmista ja tieteellisen asiantuntijatiedon yhteiskunnallista ja kulttuurista kontekstia korostavasta ajattelusta. Suhtaudun kriittisesti ns. 'totalitaristista narratiivia' seuraaviin tulkitoihin, joissa puoluevaltion ja sen kansalaisten suhde on usein näyttäytynyt liian yksiulotteisesti eräänlaisen muuttumattoman megasubjektin ja atomististen kansalaisten suhteena. Alexei Yurchakin tapaan näen, että valtiososialistisen kokemuksen kuvaukset ovat liian usein määrittäneet yksinkertaistavien dikotomioiden kautta (esim. sorto ja vastarinta, totuus ja valhe, julkinen vs. yksityinen minä). Käsitän sosialistisen valtion pikemminkin kerrostuneena rakenteena, jossa oli monenlaisia ja myös keskenään ristiriitaisia intressejä, pyrkimyksiä ja toimintakenttiä. Näin väitän, että tieteen kentän kehitysdynamiikkaa on mielekästä tarkastella suhteellisen autonomisena prosessina myös autoritäärisen järjestelmän puitteissa. Lisäksi näen, että nuorisorikollisuuden kaltaisten yhteiskunnallisten ongelmien hallinta oli moniulotteinen prosessi, jossa määrittelyvaltaa käyttivät puoluevaltion eri toimijoiden lisäksi myös alan asiantuntijat, kuten psykologit, psykiatrit, kasvatustieteen ammattilaiset ja sosiaalityöntekijät.

Metodisesti työni yhdistelee aatehistorian ja historialliseen kontekstiin pureutuvan tieteenhistorian menetelmiä. Analysoidessani psykologien tuottamia julkisia tekstejä sijoitan ne siihen tieteelliseen ja yhteiskunnalliseen aikalaiskeskusteluun, johon ne osallistuivat. Luen psykologisia tekstejä myös poliittisesti. Lähtökohtani on, että kirjoittajat operoivat aikalaishorisonteistaan käsin unkarilaisen valtiososialismin kontekstissa. Metodini kannalta tämä merkitsee erityisesti kahta asiaa. Yhtäältä analysoin aatehistorian ns. Sussexin koulukunnan esimerkkiä seuraten tieteellisen/asiantuntijadiskurssin ja ideologisen/poliittisen diskurssin välisiä yhteyksiä ja yhteen kietoutumisia. Toisaalta, erityisesti valtiososialistisen ideologian viitekehyksessä operoivien kirjoittajien kohdalla, pyrin välttämään sellaista luentaa, jossa tekstien merkitykset pelkistyvät 'retoriikaksi', tai vallitsevan ideologian uusintamiseksi. Yurchakia seuraten päinvastoin näen, että juuri hegemonisen diskurssin kohdalla on kiinnostavaa ja mielekästä tarkastella tekstejä ja niiden merkityksiä erilaisissa käyttöyhteyksissään. Käsitän ideologian kielellisenä *resurssina*, en vain merkityshorisont-

teja kaventavana rajoitteena. Toisin sanoen kiinnostuksen kohteeksi nousee se, mitä psykologian ammattilaiset kielellä tekivät ja miten he eri asemista käsin toimivat suhteessa ympäristöönsä.

Osoitan tutkimuksessani, että psykologiset interventiot ja asiantuntijaroolit yleistyivät 1956 kansannousun jälkeisinä vuosikymmeninä. Tutkimus keskittyy erityisesti kasvatuksen, koulutuksen, lastensuojelun ja työelämän kentillä tapahtuvaan toimintaan. Psykologit osallistuivat paternalistista hyvinvointivaltiota rakentavan puolueen sosiaalisen kontrollin politiikan määrittelyyn ja poikkeavan käyttäytymisen ("devianssin") hallintaan, mutta myös moniin tutkimusprojekteihin, joissa tuotettiin tietoa yksinvaltaisen puolueen hallinnon tarpeisiin. Psykologit tutkivat myös työelämän tilaa tarjoten sovelluksia työyhteisöjen johtamisen tehostamiseksi ja työolosuhteiden humanisoimiseksi. Sosiaalipsykologian kentän marginaaleissa syntyi myös kriittistä ajattelua, joka kurkotti vallitsevien ajatustapojen ja käytäntöjen tuolle puolen.

Tutkimuksen keskeinen väite on, että ihmis- ja yhteiskuntatieteiden vetäminen mukaan osaksi valtiososialistista yhteiskuntasuunnittelua ilmensi tärkeitä muutosprosesseja näiden järjestelmien historiassa. Näiden oppialojen sosialismin aikaista historiaa ei tulekaan tarkastella kovin mustavalkoisin lasein. Kiinnittämällä huomio sosialismin ajan yhteiskuntasuunnittelun aikalaishorisontteihin ja niihin kytkeytyviin (tai niiden kanssa konfliktissa oleviin) asiantuntijaintresseihin on myös psykologiatieteiden historialliseen kokemukseen mahdollista tarttua uudella tavalla.

Psykologiaa muuttuvassa toimintaympäristössä

Unkarin 1956 kansannousu – virallisen tulkinnan mukaan vastavallankumous – oli merkittävä käänne niin Unkarin kuin koko sosialistisen leirin historiassa. Neuvostotankkien tukemana valtaan nousseen puoluejohtajan János Kádárin (1912–1989) haasteena oli rangaista vastavallankumoukselliseen toimintaan syyllistyneitä sekä samalla rakentaa järjestelmälle legitimitettä ja jatkuvuutta, jota myös Neuvostoliitto uusilta johtajilta odotti. 1960-luvulla Unkarin politiikkaa luonnehti poliittinen pragmatismi, Neuvostoliiton luottamukseen perustuva kansallisen tilan etsintä, ideologista pakkosyöttöä välttävä poliittinen kulttuuri ja uuteen talousmekanismiin (NEM) huipentuva melko liberaali talouspolitiikka. Tieteen ja kulttuurin julkaisu-ympäristöä määritti niin sanottu kolmen T:n periaate, jonka mukaisesti kulttuurintuotteet olivat joko "kiellettyjä" (*tiltott*), "siedettyjä" (*tűrt*) tai "tuettuja" (*támogatott*).

Psykologian akateemisten instituutioiden rakentaminen käynnistyi 1950-luvun lopulla samanaikaisesti kansannousua seuranneen kurinpalautuksen kanssa. Poliittiset puhdistukset kohdistuivat myös psykologiamattikuntaan, kun sosiaalipsykologi Ferenc Mérei (1909–1986) ja eräät häntä lähellä olevat lastenpsykologit tuomittiin erimittaisiin vankeusrangaistuksiin väitetystä osallisuudesta vastavallankumoukselliseen toimintaan. Poliittisen kriisin jälkeinen tilanne vaati psykologeilta ja heidän tukijoiltaan tasapainoilua, harkittua tilanraivaamista ja luottamuksen rakentamista. Integroituminen osaksi puoluejohtoista tiedejärjestelmää merkitsi alistumista poliittiseen ohjaukseen ja kontrol-

liin mutta antoi myös lupauksia tulevasta. Ensin oli saavutettava autonomisen oppiaineen status, ts. irtauduttava ”sosialistisen pedagogiikan” ylivallasta. Voisiko psykologian avulla luoda ihmiskasvoisempaa sosialismia? Myös puolue asetti tehtäviä yhteiskuntatieteille. Miten ne voisivat vastata sosialismin rakentamisen ja järjestelmän kestävyuden haasteisiin yhä monimutkaisemmassa maailmassa?

Yksi psykologeja koskevista tiedepoliittista linjauksista koski ”sosialistisen tietoisuuden” tilaa ja sen pitkän aikavälin kehitysnäkymiä. 1960-luvulla käynnistynyt kärkihanke antoi mahdollisuuksia esimerkiksi kasvatuksen ja koulutuksen kehittämistä kiinnostuneille psykologeille. Yksi heistä oli Ferenc Lénárd (1911–1988), joka tuli tunnetuksi erityisesti matematiikan ja historian opetuksen kehittäjänä. Unkarin tiedeakatemian psykologian instituutin kärkitutkimusta edustanut Lénárd työskenteli vuosia budapestiläisen kokeilukoulun psykologian laboratoriossa, joka oli ensimmäinen laatuaan Euroopassa. Mutta hänen metodinsa kohtasivat myös kritiikkiä – siinä määrin että puoluearkistoon on jäänyt hänestä jälkiä.

Lénárd halusi kasvattaa itsenäisesti ajattelevia ja aktiivisia persoonallisuuksia sosialismin nimissä. Jäljelle jääneistä tutkimussuunnitelmista käy ilmi, että hän tukeutui teoreettisesti muun muassa neuvostoliittolaisen Sergei Rubinsteinin (1889–1960) marxilaiseen ”toiminnan psykologiaan”. Tämä ei ollut vain retorinen keino tutkimuksen kytkemiseksi hegemoniseen diskurssiin. Lénárdin kohdalla kiinnostus kertoi myös yhteisöllisestä oppimiskäsityksestä ja vakaumuksesta, jonka mukaan kasvatopsykologian tutkimuskohdetta (yksilöä, oppilasta) ei tullut irrottaa elävän elämän ympäristöistään, kuten ajan amerikkalaisessa sosiaalipsykologisessa laboratoriotutkimuksessa tuntui olevan tapana.

Mutta psykologialla tuettu sosialistisen persoonallisuuden rakentaminen sisälsi myös kiinnostavia paradokseja. Se perustui ajatukseen itseohjautuvasta mutta samalla omat ja ympäristön tarpeet harmonisoimaan kykenevästä ihmisestä. Persoonallisuus ei ollut vain yksilöllisiä pyrkimyksiä ja mielihaluja vaan se kiinnittyi toimintaan elävissä ympäristöissä ja viime kädessä realisoitui vasta osana niitä. Toisaalta ajateltiin niin, että ihminen oli ainoa eläin, jolla oli ”korkeampia tietoisuuden tasoja”. Tietoisena toimijana hänen tekonsa saattoivat olla oikeita tai vääriä ja häntä oli mahdollista sekä palkita, rangaista että kasvattaa.

Jälkistalinistiseen psykologiaan introdusoitu toimivan ihmisen idea merkitsi kuitenkin myös *toisin toimimisen* mahdollisuutta, jonka myös psykologit puheenvuoroissaan nostivat esiin. Lénárdin tapaus onkin kiinnostava esimerkki siitä, miten puolueen avokätisesti resursoima tutkimus – jonka julkilausuttu päämäärä oli sosialistisen yhteiskunnan aatteellisen ja moraalisen perustan luojittaminen – käytännössä pyrki kohti vapaan ja autonomisen ihmisen ideaalia, kenties yksinvaltaisen puolueen näkökulmasta ristiriitaisella tavalla. Psykologian kannalta ajatus toimivasta yksilöstä oli välttämätön, mutta autoritäärisen vallan näkökulmalla liian pitkälle vietyä kestämätön.

Kolmannessa luvussa pureudun myös kentän toimijoiden kokemukseen. Omaelämäkerrallisia narratiiveja, haastattelumateriaalia ja arkistoaineistoa

hyödyntäen nostan esille erilaisia strategioita ja taktiikoita, joilla pyrittiin orientoitumaan vallitsevissa tiedepoliittisissa olosuhteissa. Yhdeksi keskeiseksi huomioksi nousee tieteen ja politiikan problemaattinen suhde. Joidenkin muistelijoiden mielestä objektiivisen ja eksaktin tieteen harjoittaminen oli hyvin kivikoinen tie olosuhteissa, joissa poliittiset ja ideologiset kompromissit auttoivat huomattavasti uralla etenemisessä. Tällöin henkilökohtaisen ja tieteellisen integriteetin säilyttäminen merkitsi vahvaa kutsumusta ja jopa vastarintaa. Eri-tyisesti 1950–1960-luvun vaihteessa opiskelleen ja sittemmin työelämään siirtyneen psykologisukupolven kohdalla kokemus vaikuttaa hyvin todelliselta. Useissa muistelukertomuksissa nousi esille myös poliittisen vainon kokemus (tai tietoisuus siitä), ja tätä seurannut tarve tehdä pesäeroa kaikenlaiseen poliittiseen orientaatioon. Kaikissa näissä suhteissa paradigmaattinen hahmo ja monen psykologisukupolven tärkeä roolimalli oli ELTE-yliopistossa opettanut Lajos Kardos (1889–1985). Työ- ja johtamispsykologi Tibor Engländerin silmissä Kardosin tapa korostaa viimeiseen asti empiiristä tutkimusta oli irtautumista psykologiasta ”salatieteenä”. Tieteellisyyden korostaminen oli myös irtautumista siitä poliittisesta leimasta, joka alaa oli Stalinismin aikana raskauttanut.

Esimerkkinä menestyksellisestä noususta tiedepoliittisen hierarkian ylemmille tasanteilla nostan sosiaalipsykologi Ferenc Patakin toiminnan. Pataki oli yksi monista ”puolueen sotilana” 1940-luvun lopulla uransa aloittaneista kommunisteista, jotka 1956 jälkeisinä vuosikymmeninä loivat nahkansa uudelleen tiedemiehinä ja puolueen luottamusta nauttivina ekspertteinä. Näin hän kykeni kartuttamaan poliittista ja kulttuurista pääomaa, jonka avulla oli mahdollista toimia eräänlaisena portinvartijana ja psykologian kentän puhemiehenä. Tämä tarkoitti myös mahdollisuuksien avautumista nuoremmille tutkijoille, esimerkiksi tutkimusmatkoja rautaesiripun tuolle puolen.

Patakin toiminta oli myös malliesimerkki unkarilaiselle poliittiselle kulttuurille luonteenomaisesta tasapainottelusta poliittisten äärimmäisyyksien välillä. Hän kirjoitti 1970-luvulla, että sosiaalipsykologian olisi kyettävä kulkemaan keskitietä amerikkalaiselle valtavirralle tyypillisen ”psykologisoinnin” ja neuvostososiaalipsykologiaa vaivaavaan dogmaattisuuden välillä. Yhdysvalloissa esimerkiksi rotuennakkoluuloja selitettiin yksipuolisesti pureutumalla tunteisiin ja muihin mielensisäisiin ilmiöihin. Sosialistisessa leirissä taas yksilöpsykologian merkitystä sosiaalista todellisuutta välittävänä tekijänä ei oikein edes ymmärretty. Patakin mielestä myös Unkarista puuttui sensitiivisyyttä yksilön psykologiselle todellisuudelle. Marxilaisena hän ajatteli, että ihminen oli lähtökohtaisesti sosiaalinen olento, mutta kaikenkattavaa yhteiskuntateoriaa ei psykologian avulla tullut luoda. Kardosin tapaan Pataki varjeli tieteenalansa autonomiaa poliittisilta interventioilta.

Unkarilainen psykologia ja lastensuojelun politiikka 1956 jälkeen

Kommunistien valtaannousun (1948–1949) yksi kiinnostava ulottuvuus oli sosiaalipolitiikan käsitteen julistaminen vanhentuneeksi. Väite oli, että sosiaalipolitiikalla vastattiin kapitalistisille sortojärjestelmille luonteenomaisiin ongelmiin. Täystyöllisyyden oloissa ja kommunismiin siirryttäessä sosiaalisten ja psykolo-

gisten ongelmien julistettiin katoavan, vieläpä nopeassa tahdissa. Komentotaloudessa sosiaalisia ja taloudellisia resursseja voitiin työväenluokan etujen nimissä jakaa vahvasti valikoiden – toisia ryhmiä suosien ja toiset ulkopuolelle jättäen (vrt. kulakit). Kádárin järjestelmässä sosiaalipolitiikasta voitiin jälleen puhua. Käsité alkoi destalinisaation myötä yleistyä osana hyvinvointipolitiikkaa ja sen suunnittelua. 1950-luvun lopulla poliittiselle agendalle nousi erityisesti kaksi laajaa ongelmakenttää: alkoholin väärinkäyttö ja lastensuojeluongelmat.

Tutkimuksen kolmas luku käsittelee psykologien tarjoamia vastauksia nuorisorikollisuuden ongelmaan. Kysyn, millaisen roolin lastenpsykologia sai osana prosessia, jossa sosiaalipolitiikan roolia yhteiskunnan legitimitettiin ja jatkuvuutta tukevana tekijänä arvioitiin uudelleen 1956 kansannousun jälkeen. Psykologit profiloituivat erityisesti lastensuojelua tukemaan perustetun kasvatusterveystieteiden instituution kehittäjinä ja pyrkivät popularisoimaan uuden yksilölähtöisen tavan puhua nuorten ongelmakäyttytymisestä. Näin heidän tavoitteenaan oli myös psykologisen sivistyksen lisääminen unkarilaisissa perheissä sosialistisen kasvatuksen ja ihmishanteen nimissä.

Huoli ”ongelmalapsista” ja -nuorista nousi sekä poliittis-ideologisista lähteistä että psykologien ja muiden kentän toimijoiden keskuudesta. Poliittinen eliitti oli kauhukseen huomannut, että jotkut nuoret – jopa lapset – olivat vuonna 1956 painuneet ase kädessä kadulle edistämään vasta-vallankumouksen asiaa. Tämä näyttäytyi tapahtumien jälkeen sekä moraalisenä että kasvatuksellisenä ongelmana ja huolena siitä, missä määrin nuoret olivat sisäistäneet sosialismin sanoman. 1960-luvulla uhan tuntua lisäsi sosialistisessa lehdistössä yleistynyt kirjoittelu jengeistä ja ”huligaaneista”, jotka nyt ottivat entisen ”luokkaviohollisen” paikan järjestelmän virallisina ’toisina’. Taustalla häilyi varsin relevantti kysymys siitä, mihin ilmansuuntaan uuden sukupolven nuoriso katsoi: Unkarissa länsiraja oli suhteellisen avoin kulttuurisille vaikutteille ja malleille.

Psykologien tulkinnan mukaan Pestin kaduilla tai Budan kukkuloilla vetelehtivät ja lehtiotsikoihin asti rötöstelevät nuoret oirehtivat psykologisesti. Heidän intresseissään oli osoittaa, että lasten ja nuorten kasvuympäristöä, ennen kaikkea sosialistista kasvatusta (niin kotona kuin laajemmin yhteiskunnassa), oli humanisoitava ja rationalisoitava. Yhteiskunnallisen hallinnan (*governing*) perspektiivistä psykologinen kielenkäyttö murtautui esiin osana laajempaa yhteiskunnallista ja kulttuurista käymistilaa. Sosiologi Nikolas Rosea mukailleen kiinnitän huomiota historiallisesti kontingenttiin hetkeen, jolloin nuorten sopeutumattomuutta lisäävät tai sellaisiksi kuvitellut yhteiskunnalliset tekijät nousivat vallanpitäjien huomion kohteeksi ja näyttäytyivät sekä johtavien poliitikkojen että asiantuntijoiden mielestä merkittävinä ja ratkaisua vaativina.

Lastensuojelun politisoitumista ilmensi uuden valtiollisen toimijan perustaminen. Kovan linjan kommunistin Ferenc Münnichin (1886–1967) suojeluksessa 1958 toimintansa aloittanut *Valtakunnallinen Lasten- ja Nuortensuojeluneuvosto* (OGYIT) ryhtyi keräämään tietoa, kartoittamaan lastensuojelun instituutioiden tilaa ja edesauttamaan kentällä paljon kaivattua reformia. Vaikka neuvoston toiminta kytkeytyi läheisesti järjestysvallan tarpeisiin ja sai käytevoimaa

nuorison käyttäytymiseen kohdistuvasta moraalisesta paniikista, oli sen taustalla myös asiantuntijaintressejä – psykologeilla oli tärkeä rooli neuvoston synnysssä. Kasvatuksen ja koulutuksen kentän ideologisista vääristymistä oli puhuttu jo kansannousun aattona ja lastensuojelun ammatillistamisen tarve tunnustettiin laajasti.

Neuvoston tuottamat salaiset raportit välittivät synkän kuvan lastensuojelun instituutioista. Niistä keskeisin, lastenkotiverkosto, kuvattiin ajoittain pahemmaksi kuin ”Horthyn ajan orpokodit”. Holhousviranomaiset tekivät päätöksiään mielivaltaisesti eikä perheen ulkopuolelle sijoitettujen lasten taustoista tiedetty usein paljoakaan. Sekä lastenkotien työntekijöiden että lasten vanhempien kasvatustimet olivat brutaaleja. Lyhyen olemassaolonsa aikana – neuvosto lakkautettiin 1961 sen kosketeltua poliittisesti liian arkaluonteisia asioita – se ehti suosittaa useita sittemmin toteutuneita uudistuksia. Tällaisia olivat muun muassa nuorille tarjottu psykologinen uranvalinnan ohjaus ja kasvatuseurolajijärjestelmä.

Lastensuojelun instituutioiden toimimattomuuteen kohdistui jatkuvaa kritiikkiä, mutta muutos oli hidasta. Erityisen silmiinpistävää tämä oli sellaisissa lastenkodeissa, joissa taustaltaan mitä moninaisinkin lapsijoukko kehitysvammaisista ja epileptikoista orpoihin ja nuorisorikollisiin eli hyvin ahtaissa olosuhteissa. Mutta poikkeuksiakin oli. Useiden merkittävien lapsipsykologien mielestä ongelman ydin ei ollutkaan lastenkoteihin perustuvassa järjestelmässä sinänsä. Länsieurooppalaisten kollegoidensa (vrt. René Spitz, John Bowlby) tapaan unkarilaiset lapsipsykologit kritisoivat hospitalismia ja tähdensivät äiti-lapsi-suhteen olennaista luonnetta, mutta samalla monet heistä uskoivat neuvostoliittolaisen Anton Makarenkon yhteisökasvatukseen pyrkien tulkitsemaan sen sanomaa modernin kehittyvän sosialismin tarpeista lähtien.

1960-luvun alussa unkarilaisia psykologeja oli vähän, mutta sitä painokkaammin he julkaisuissaan tähdensivät lapsikeskeisen näkökulman merkitystä. Eräät Budapestin poliisilaitoksen lastensuojeluosaston kanssa läheisessä yhteistyössä olleet psykologit – sellaiset kuin psykoanalyttisen koulutuksen saanut Péter Popper (1933–2010) – ilmaisivat sanottavansa hyödyntäen vallitsevaa hulliganismin kielioppia. Näin Popper kirjoitti ”vastavallankumouksen” moraalikadon aiheuttamista ongelmista tähdentäen samassa yhteydessä sitä, että rikoksista tuomittujen nuorten ongelmat kumpusivat viime kädessä ”neuroottisesta maaperästä”. Ongelman ydin oli perheessä, josta nuori oli emotionaalisesti rikkinäisenä paennut jengien maailmaan. Vertailu ujoihin neuroottisiin nuoriin osoitti, että rikoksen tielle joutuneen ongelma ei ollut sopeutumattomuus sinänsä, vaan se mihin hän sopeutui.

Yhdysvaltalaisen psykoanalyttikko-kollegoidensa tapaan unkarilaiset psykologit käyttivät julkaisuissaan hyvin usein case-menetelmää (*thinking in cases*). Kasvatuseurolan potilaskorttiaineistoja ja omia kokemuksiaan hyödyntäen he *esittelivät* paikoin hyvin seikkaperäisesti ja emotionaalisesti latautuneella tavalla lapsen tai nuoren traagiset, vääjäämättömältä tuntuvat elämänvaiheet, ja *selittivät* tämän käyttäytymistä psykodynaamisista lähtökohdista. Psykologit kertoivat hoito- ja terapiamuodoista, onnistumisista ja epäonnistumisista, ja

pyrkivät näin popularisoimaan psykologisia selityksiä monin paikoin hege-
monisessa asemassa olevien biologisten selitysten ohelle ja sijaan. Yksittäisten
tapausten avulla synnytettiin toistuva ja todistusvoimainen kaava, mutta yksit-
täisen korostaminen oli ennen kaikkea huomion kiinnittämistä *yksilöön* ja hänen
kokemukseensa. Psykologien narratiivit korostivat nuoren uhriasemaa. Tästä
kertoi erityisesti vahva vanhempien moralisointi. Perheenjäsenten persoonalli-
suuspiirteitä ja jopa ulkomuotoa voitiin kuvata hyvinkin värikkäästi ja jopa bru-
taalisti.

Joskus psykologisen tapaustutkimuksen eteneminen muistutti rikostut-
kinnalle tai oikeusistuimelle tyypillistä kerrontaa, jossa tekojen taustalta etsi-
tään motiiveja ja syytetyn menneisyydestä raskauttavia seikkoja. Kansannou-
sun jälkeisen ”oikeuden kuoleman” kontekstissa tämä on mielenkiintoista. Oli-
han ’vastavallankumouksen’ syyllisten löytämiseksi ja nimeämiseksi kaivettava
hyvinkin kaukaa syytetyn menneisyydestä edes jokin järjestelmänvastainen ele.
Psykologien intresseissä ei ollut tuomita vaan parantaa ja sopeuttaa. Tästä in-
tressistä käsin he kertoivat lukijalle, minkälaisiin tekoihin potilas oli äitynyt,
sillä nämä ilmensivät tämän oireita. Teot olivat eräänlaisia kilometripaaluja
matkalla viimeiseen pisteeseen, rikolliseen tekoon.

Lapsipsykologien kannanotot sisälsivät myös poliittisia viestejä, sillä yksi-
löiden patologiat kertoivat sosialistisen perheen ja yhteiskunnan patologioista.
Vaikka monet yhteiskunnalliset ongelmat eivät saaneet juurikaan tilaan julki-
suudessa, oli ongelmia mahdollista käsitellä lapsuuden kautta. Esimerkiksi
psykologi Lucy P. Liebermann käsiteli 1963 julkaistussa artikkelissaan lasten ja
nuorten itsemurhayrityksiä ja niiden sosiaalipsykologista taustaa hyvin avoi-
mesti. Liebermann kehitti omaa ryhmäterapian malliaan yhdistellen unkarilais-
ta psykoanalyttista traditiota ja brittiläisen Wilfred Bionin ajatuksia socialisti-
sesta yhteiskunnasta nouseviin tarpeisiin. Ihanne oli, että lapsi ja vanhempi ei-
vät menisi terapiaan erikseen vaan yhdessä, kenties jopa laajemman lähipiirin
kanssa. Liebermannin terapia-ajattelussa oli vahva sosiaalipsykiatrinen ote.
Traumatisoitunut nuori ei kaivannut ”tukahdutettujen” muistojen esiin kaiva-
mista, tiesihän nuori varsin hyvin mitä hänelle oli tapahtunut. Sitä enemmän
tämä kaipasi hyvin järjestettyä nykyisyyttä, *sisäisen* ja *ulkoisen* harmoniaa ja
luottamusta tulevaisuuteen, koska vasta silloin ”menneisyyden unohtaminen”
saattoi todella alkaa.

Psykoterapia kehittyi sosialistisessa Unkarissa ensin lasten ja nuorten klii-
nisen psykologian yhteydessä. Lapsille ja perheille tarjotut palvelut, kuten kas-
vatusneuvola (*nevelési tanácsadó*), toimivat institutionaalisenä kanavana, jonka
kautta psykologisia käsitteitä levisi yleisempään tietoisuuteen. 1956 jälkeen un-
karilaisen psykoanalyysin freudilaisesta valtavirrasta poikkeava traditio löydet-
tiin uudelleen ja se alkoi vähitellen vaikuttaa paikallisen tason käytännöissä.
Näin tapahtui pitkään kestäneestä julkisesta leimasta huolimatta. ’Budapestin
koulukunnan’ erityispiirteitä olivat äidin ja lapsen läheisen suhteen korostami-
nen biologisena faktana, kasvatusoptimismi ja tähän liittyvä perinteinen usko
psykologis-kasvatuksellisen asiantuntemuksen merkitykseen yhteiskuntaan
sopeuttamisessa. Kiinnostava kysymys on, miten nämä piirteet osana keskieu-

rooppalaista mielenmaisemaa kenties laajemminkin määrittävän yhteisöllisyyden tradition kanssa vaikuttivat sosialismin ajan käytäntöjen muotoutumiseen.

Sosiaalipsykologiaa työelämän kentillä

Tutkimuksen neljännessä luvussa tarkastelen unkarilaisen sosiaalipsykologian suhdetta valtiosocialismin muutoksiin 1960–1970-luvulla. Analyysin keskiössä on työelämään ja työyhteisöjen kehittämiseen kohdistunut reformistinen kiinnostus. Itäblokin maissa sosiaalipsykologiaan oli liitetty vahva ideologisen harhaoppisuuden leima, mutta Stalinin kuoleman jälkeinen ideologinen revisio avasi uusia toimintahorisontteja. Alan nousua siivitti Neuvostoliitossa 1963 käynnistynyt ja myöhemmin Puolassa, Itä-Saksassa ja myös Unkarissa käyty julkinen keskustelu. Nuoren Marxin kirjoitukset löytäneiden sosiologien ja filosofien tapaan unkarilaiset sosiaalipsykologit kritisoivat historiallisen materialismin dogmaattista tulkintaa: ”elävä ihminen” historian tärkeänä käytevoimana oli unohtunut. Kiinnostavaa kyllä, Unkarissa sosiaalipsykologian valtavirta suuntasi viimeistään 1960-luvun lopulta alkaen katseensa tieteenalan dynaamisesti kehittyviin keskuksiin, erityisesti Yhdysvaltoihin. Viimeistään 1970-luvulle tultaessa länsitiedon aktiivinen omaksuminen sosialismin rakentamisen tarpeisiin ei ollut enää ongelma, kunhan se tehtiin ideologisesti solidilla tavalla. Ajanmukaista yhteiskuntatieteellistä osaamista edustivat muun muassa ne, jotka tarjosivat osaamistaan puolueen tutkimuslaitoksissa eri politiikan sektorien tarpeisiin. Tällainen oli muun muassa tieteellisesti korkeatasoinen Joukkoviestinnän tutkimuskeskus. Media-analyysijä, asennetutkimuksia ja poliittisen mielipiteen tutkimuksia tuottanut tutkimuslaitos oli merkittävä sosiaalipsykologien työllistäjä 1960-luvun lopulta alkaen. Unkarilaisen psykologian yksi originelleimmista hahmoista oli Ferenc Mérei, harmaa eminenssi ja poliittinen renegaatti, jonka laaja-alainen osaaminen ulottui lapsi- ja kehityspsykologiasta kliiniseen psykologiaan ja sosiaalipsykologiaan. Vakaumukseltaan kommunistinen Mérei oli toisen maailmansodan jälkeen merkittävä tekijä muun muassa demokraattisen kasvatus- ja koulutuspolitiikan suunnittelijana, tutkijana, tiedepoliitikkona ja opettajana. Mérei pudotettiin asemistaan Neuvostoliiton mallia jäljittelevässä ns. pedologia-oikeudenkäynnissä (1950), rehabilitoitiin 1956, mutta tuomittiin jälleen 1958, tällä kertaa kymmeneksi vuodeksi vankeuteen vastavallankumouksellisesta juonittelusta syytettynä. Yleisen armahduksen (1963) jälkeen hän toimi tutkijana ja opettajana Lipotmezön psykiatriseen sairaalaan perustamassaan psykologisessa laboratoriossa ja julkaisi kliinisen psykologian, lapsipsykologian ja sosiaalipsykologian alan teoksia.

1930-luvun alun Pariisissa Henri Wallonin alaisuudessa opiskelleen Méreihin holistinen ajattelu ja karismaattinen hahmo puhuttelivat 1960-luvun nuorta sukupolvea. Yhteisön ja ”sosiaalisen” (*társas*) rooli yksilön kehityksessä, ”pienryhmien lämpö”, ja ”kollektiivinen kokemus” (*együttes élmény*) tarjosivat emotionaalisesti aidomman vaihtoehdon vallitsevan keskusjohtoisen organisoitumisen falskiudelle. Méreitä koskevissa osuuksissa kiinnitän huomiota hänen psykologiansa *emansipatorisiin* piirteisiin. Toisaalta painotan sitä, että myös Mérei operoi yhteiskuntasuunnittelun kontekstissa. Muun muassa hänen

sosiaalipsykologinen pääteoksensa *Kätkeytyjen yhteisöjen verkosto* ja sen sosiometriset innovaatiot antoivat teoreettista kosketuspintaa ajatukselle, jonka mukaan virallisen tuotanto-organisaation sisällä toimi esibyrokraattisia verkostoitumisen muotoja ja sosiaalisia rooleja. Tässä tieteen marginaalissa toimineen Méreinin teos toimi paradigmana lukuisille tutkimuksille, jotka tarkastelivat yhteisöjen sisäistä dynamiikkaa. Jo ensiriveillään Kätkeytyjen yhteisöjen verkosto esiintyikin eksplisiittisesti organisaatioiden rationalisointiin tarkoitettuna oppaana, jonka avulla johtotehtävissä työskentelevät voisivat oppia sosiaalipsykologisen tutkimustiedon yhdistämistä työn suunnitteluun. Psykologien tutkimukset kertoivat laajemmista muutoksista työntekijän ja työn suhteen käsittämisessä. Neuvostoliittolaisessa työpsykologiassa oli 1960-luvulla alettu puhua tarpeesta lisätä psykologian avulla työn tuottavuutta. Huomio kiinnittyi työyhteisöihin ja ”inhimilliseen tekijään” (*human factor*) sen osana. Myös unkarilaiset työpsykologit ryhtyivät amerikkalaisia malleja sosialistiseen kontekstiin soveltaen puhua työn humanisoimisesta ja työyhteisöjen ’inhimillistämistä’. Alan kansainvälisiä kehityskulkuja seuraten he esittivät, että aikaisemmin tuotanto-organisaatioita koskevat psykologiset näkökulmat olivat rajoittuneet yksittäisen työntekijän ja työn suhteen tarkasteluun. Nyt työtä oli tarkasteltava yhtenä sosiaalisen integraation muotona ja työntekijää osana työyhteisöä, jossa havaittiin myös informaaleja sosiaalisia suhteita ja verkostoitumisia. Myös johtamisen (*management*) tematiikat nousivat esille. Kiinnostava kysymys on, missä määrin laajemminkin 1960-luvun Itä-Euroopassa virinnyt kiinnostus johtamisprosessien rationalisointiin oli seurausta Yhdysvaltain aktiivisista pyrkimyksistä tuoda tätä osaamista sosialistimaihin. Vaikka työ oli yhä valtiososialistisen identiteetin tärkein rakennuspalikka (työpaikka käsitettiin ihmisen toisena kotina), sosiaalipsykologian nousu ilmensi merkittävää muutosta. Sosialistisen industrialismin väkivaltaisissa varhaisvaiheissa kuuliaisien subjektin vaatimus ei kaivannut tuekseen psykologista asiantuntemusta vaan pikemminkin sosialista moraalia ja työnsankaruutta, stahanoviitin myyttistä hahmoa. Unkarin 1950-luvun alun työtä koskevassa julkisessa kielenkäytössä tämä näkyi jopa ihmisten arjen valinnoissa ruumiillistuvina persoonallisuupiirteinä, eräänlaisena ”feodaalisen ritarimoraalin” ilmenemismuotona sosialismissa. 1970-luvulla unkarilaiset psykologit kirjoittivat, että yksittäisen työntekijän tuottavuutta ei pitänyt enää ajatella vain tämän henkilökohtaisten ominaisuuksien tai työmoraalin kautta. Tuottavuus oli lähtöisin työyhteisöstä ja sen johtamisesta, jonka puolestaan ei pitänyt olla ”autoritääristä” (vrt. Theodor Adorno) vaan ”demokraattista”.

Työyhteisön rationalisoimista ja humanisoimista koskevaa sosiaalipsykologista diskurssia ruokki myös valtion tiedepolitiikan työelämän tutkimusta kannustava politiikka. Unkarin vuoden 1968 talousreformiin liittyvän taloudellisen päätöksenteon hajauttamisen hengessä myös johtamista ja päätöksentekoa koskevat prosessit joutuivat linssin alle, ja tämä näkyi myös yhteiskuntatieteellisen tutkimuksen resursoinnissa. Asiantuntijatiedon roolin kasvua valtiososialistisessa kontekstissa on syytä tarkastella myös poliittisen hallinnan muuttuvien tarpeiden näkökulmasta. Kuten Martin Dimitrov toteaa, autoritää-

riset hallitukset tarvitsevat tietoa taloudellisesta ja sosiaalisesta kehityksestä ja johtamisen laadusta voidakseen välttää huonoja päätöksiä ja estääkseen kansalaisten tyytymättömyyden kasvamisen hallitsemattomaksi. Tällaiset järjestelmän itsensä tuottamat tiedonintressit antoivat mahdollisuuksia esimerkiksi empiiriselle sosiologialle, mediatutkimukselle ja sosiaalipsykologialle. Yksilöllisistä eroista kiinnostunut psykologia lisäsi merkitystään yksipuoluejärjestelmässä, joka julkisesti markkinoi kollektiivista maailmankuvaa mutta käytännössä antoi suhteellisen paljon liikkumatilaa arjen tasolla. Samaan aikaa taloutta liberalisoiva poliittinen johto kuitenkin joutui toteamaan, että ”vääränlainen” individualismi oli odotusten vastaisesti kasvanut. Myös ristiriidat valtiontyöpaikoilla lisääntyivät toisten kyetessä paremmin hyödyntämään ns. ’toisen talouden’ tarjoamia vaurastumisen resursseja - olihan hyvin usein niin, että unkarilainen ihminen oli samaan aikaan työläinen valtionehtaassa ja yksityisyrittäjä vapaa-ajallaan. Sosiaalipsykologeilta odotettiin tietoa paremman johtamisen tueksi, syvällisempää tietämystä julkisesta mielipiteestä ja ihmisten asenteista sekä tukea ”uudentyyppisten” sosialistisen yhteisöjen rakentamiseen. Heiltä odotettiin analyysia, joka pyrki edesauttamaan yksilöiden (ristiriitaisten) intressien ja sosialistisen yhteistoiminnan yhteensovittamista. Ehkä työyhteisöjen sisäiseen dynamiikkaan kohdistunut kiinnostus kumpusi myös siitä varsin realistisesta huolesta, että työntekijät eivät sittenkään todella tunteneet kuuluvansa ’työläisten valtioon’. Ehkä sosiaalipsykologinen pienyhteisötutkimus tekisi työyhteisöt sekä tuottavammiksi että identiteetiltään vahvemmiksi. Näin sosiaalipsykologia mahdollistaisi ’sosiaalisen insinööriyön’, jonka avulla yksilöllistymisen ja kulutuskulttuurin esiinmarssin myötä kadoksissa oleva poliittinen yhteenkuuluvuuden tunne saataisiin pelastettua.

Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoitus on ollut luoda aiempaa monivivahteisempi käsitys yhden ihmistieteen ja sen harjoittajien kokemuksesta yhdessä sosialistimaassa. Kiinnostava kysymys on, missä määrin sosialismin reformoimisen projektin eräänlaisena tarkoittamattomana seurauksena syntyi sellaista tiedontuotantoa, joka rapautti järjestelmän legitimaatiota. 1970-luvun lopulle tultaessa esimerkiksi psyykkisten ongelmien sosiaalisia ja yhteiskunnallisia syitä voitiin entistä useammin käsitellä julkisuudessa sosialistiseen yhteiskuntaan kuuluviina, jopa järjestelmän itsensä tuottamina ongelmina.

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