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Instead of America. Immigration and Governmental Influence in the Hungarian Émigré Community of France between the Two World Wars*

Using the typology of French sociologist Stéphane Dufoix, this essay attempts to discern the moment at which an emigrant community based on political opposition begins to function according to a dynamic of center and periphery. Following this shift, influential figures of the home country take its institutions and its direction from their political opponents. A physical fight that broke out in August 1929 in Roubaix, an industrial city in northern France, between Hungarian communists and Catholic workers offers a case study that sheds light on the change of strategy of the Hungarian government in its approach to the Hungarian emigrant communities. Before 1914, the liberal politicians of the time made little effort to organize the several hundred-thousand Hungarian speaking emigrants living abroad, for the most part in North America (in part because the national minorities of Hungary were overrepresented among the emigrants). In contrast, after 1918, at a moment of history when the notion of the nation as an organic entity had risen to prominence, Hungarian speakers living outside Hungary were seen self-evidently as subjects of political policy. After 1920, the United States closed its gates to immigrants from Eastern Europe. France consequently became important, in part as a country in which there was a dire need of labor for reconstruction following the war. While the community of Hungarian emigrants was never as large numerically as the Polish, Russian, or Italian communities, by the end of the 1920s and the early 1930s there were some 50,000 Hungarians living in France. This essay is an examination of the political policies adopted with regards to them.

keywords: emigrant community, center and periphery, political opposition, diaspora

Research into the history of the émigré community does not at present represent one of the favored research topics of the Hungarian historical profession. After the proper historiographical perspective emerged, historians in Hungary were expected and allowed to deal with these topics only from the viewpoint of the history of the labor movement, and in any event delving into the topic did not hold out the promise of a major historical synthesis. The situation did not change radically after 1990 either: exploration of the history of the emigration remained

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largely stuck in the same place, with the initiative in many cases passing into the hands of sociologists and ethnographers.¹ In France, meanwhile, exploration of the history of the Hungarian emigration in France has not gone beyond a few doctoral theses at best; the focal point of these, moreover, falls rather after 1945. Linguistic barriers obviously play a role in this fact, as does the circumstance that even at the height of immigration the Hungarian community never numbered more than a few tens of thousands and, as such, in terms of institutional structure does not bear comparison to the mass of Russian, Polish, Portuguese or Italian migrants, not to mention those arriving more recently from the countries of the Far East and the Maghreb.²

In what follows I shall attempt, out of an case almost encountered by chance, to discern a few of the basic motifs in the history of the Hungarian émigré community in France, reflect on the historiographical topoi linked to it and try to explore the social and political motivations of those involved in the events. According to my hypothesis, a brawl that took place in a northern industrial town, its presentation and treatment not only tell us much about the event but also demonstrates the preconceptions and expectations of interwar Hungary concerning her own economic and political émigrés as well as the instrumentalization of certain organizations and individuals. In addition, the case presented here serves also to capture the shift in strategy of the émigré (or, from the viewpoint of the receiving country, immigrant) community.

1 See Julianna Puskás, *Ties That Bind, Ties That Divide: 100 Years of Hungarian Experience in the United States* (Ellis Island Series: Holmes and Meier, 2000), however her researches in this matter begun in the early 1960's. Julianna Puskás, ed., *Overseas Migration from East-Central and Southeastern Europe, 1880–1940* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1990); Zoltán Fejős, *A chicagói magyarok két nemzedéke 1890–1940. Az etnikai örökség megőrzése és változása* [Two Generations of Hungarians in Chicago 1890–1940. Preservation and Transformation of an Ethnic Heritage] (Budapest: Közép-Európa Intézet, 1993); With the noticeable exception of Tibor Frank's, *Double Exile: Migrations of Jewish-Hungarian Professionals Through Germany to the United States, 1919–1945* (Oxford–New York: Peter Lang, 2009).

2 At the same time there are examples of the inclusion of smaller colonies in the historiographical field. See Jean-Philippe Namont, *La Colonie tchécoslovaque. Une histoire de l'immigration tchèque et slovaque en France (1914–1940)* (Paris: Institut des Études Slaves, 2011). On the interwar Hungarian emigration Benjamin Janicaud, a doctoral candidate at the University of Nice, gave a few conference talks and published a few brief articles; see Benjamin Janicaud, "L'immigration hongroise en France au XX^e siècle (1919–1989) – vie politique et associative," *Historiens & Géographes* 383 (July–August 2003): 311–23; and idem, "Les missions religieuses au sein de l'immigration hongroise en France (1927–1940)," *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 78 (2009): 131–40, accessed September 15, 2012, <http://cdlm.revues.org/index4684.html>.

The Battle

An answer to the question “what happened?” is not impossible, though somewhat complicated. On the afternoon of August 18, 1929 a group of Hungarians in the French city of Roubaix celebrated Saint Stephen’s Day in a ballroom not far from the city center, on the Rue Saint-Antoine. This venue was provided by the benefactor of the local Hungarians, a spinster from a well-to-do industrialist family, Louise Derville, for the Saint Stephen Circle (*Szent István Kör*), an organization gathering together the Catholic Hungarians of the northern industrial town. While we do not know the precise schedule of the festivities for that year, the program for 1928 has survived: this included a celebratory mass, ceremonial assembly, and cultural evening, followed by a ball. The mass was celebrated by Imre Kurcz, the parish priest assigned by the bishop of Szombathely to minister to the spiritual needs of the locals; the children appearing in the cultural performance were taught by the missionary sisters Mária Logojda and Irén Tergina, while organizing work was overseen by László Ölvedi, the secretary assigned by the Hungarian Association of Paris (*Párizsi Magyar Egyesület – PME*). According to the data uncovered during the subsequent investigation, at around six-thirty in the evening a group of some fifty to seventy, consisting overwhelmingly of Hungarian men, appeared at the entrance. They struck the caretaker, Géza Pálinkás, in the head; then about twenty people remained outside on the sidewalk in front of the cultural center (making sure that those inside did not receive reinforcements), while some thirty to fifty forced their way into the building. Here they first began singing the Internationale, then cut to pieces the garments hanging in the coatroom and set about breaking the furniture. Upon hearing the noise, the members of the Catholic workers’ circle streamed out of the upstairs auditorium and tried to repulse the attack. Soon brass knuckles, knives and other striking or cutting weapons appeared in the hands of the attackers, and a desperate fight ensued in the stairwell of the building, during which a part of the stairway was also destroyed. After a struggle lasting about half an hour, the male members of the crowd of approximately 150 inside forced the attackers out. In the meantime 15 (according to other sources 16) were wounded, six of them seriously (one of the attackers was slightly wounded). The Hungarians’ benefactor, Louise Derville, also received a punch, while others were stabbed (like Secretary Ölvedi) or suffered contusions. The police forces notified after the scuffle set about rounding up the culprits that very night, and a day later six persons were under remand and the first interrogations and even witness confrontations had taken place. And already on August 19 the examining judge went out to the

crime scene in order to reconstruct the events.³ The leaders of the perpetrators were caught, and during a judicial proceeding held in October 1929 11 of the 12 defendants received prison sentences ranging from three months to half a year, with one acquittal. The defendants were even obligated to pay for the financial and physical damages. A sad postscript to the story was that one of those sentenced, a twenty-eight-year-old loader named Márton Molnár, committed suicide. His funeral provided an occasion for a Communist demonstration in Wattrelos (near Roubaix) in April 1930.

The Battle Scene

Before attempting to uncover the background, antecedents and epilogue to the events, it is worth reviewing two competing historiographical interpretations of what happened. In 1982 a researcher at the Institute for Party History, Anna Pécsi, after numerous preliminary studies, published her synthesis of the history of Hungarian workers' movement in France between the two world wars. In it she covered the happenings in Roubaix in a separate subchapter, under the title "The Bloody Saint Stephen's Day in Roubaix" (*A roubaix-i véres Szent István-nap*).⁴ On these pages (based partially on the source materials used by the present author, too), she offers an interpretation of what happened that fully tallies with the Communist propaganda of the era: in her view the attackers who could be connected to the Communist Party had been lured into a trap; the Catholics were ready for them and "awaited the leftist Hungarians armed with knives and rubber truncheons." The latter, however, held their ground, since "they dealt more blows than they received." The text does not discuss what precisely the Communist workers were doing at the gathering of the Catholic circle. In her presentation, the affair appears as a sort of self-defense, which was intended

3 Although the sources and their reliability will be discussed in several places, in this description I have relied on the following: Károly Kotzig, "Ólmosbotos kommunisták megzavarták a roubaix-i Szent István Kör Istvánnapi ünnepségét" [Communists with Leaded Sticks Disrupted the Stephen's Day Celebration of the Saint Stephen Circle in Roubaix], *Magyarság*, August 23, 1929, 7 (the *Párisi Magyarság* also carried the article). Politikátörténeti és Szakszervezeti Levéltár [Archives of Political and Syndical History, Budapest, hereafter: PIL], 878 f. 8. cs. 270. ó. e. 122–24. f. report of Ferenc Virág (Frigyek Karikás) to the Vienna Bureau of the KMP [Hungarian Communist Party], Paris, September 3, 1929; and Archives Nationales (Paris, hereafter AN) F7 13542, report of Chief Inspector Desmettre to the prefect of Nord Department, Roubaix, August 20, 1929. The report can be found in the PIL as well, reference: 508 f. 4/2 ó. e. II. dosszié, 142–44. f. (Hereafter, wherever possible, I cite the more easily verifiable Hungarian references.)

4 Anna Pécsi, *Magyarok a franciaországi forradalmi munkásmozgalomban, 1920–1945* [Hungarians in the Revolutionary Workers' Movement in France, 1920–1945] (Budapest: Kossuth, 1982), 127–32.

to stem the continuous ideological encroachment of official Hungary and to eliminate the provocation represented by the Saint Stephen Circle. In Pécsi's interpretation, the French police pounced on the workers despite the "justifiable self-defense" and the trap, and together with the court they had served definite class interests when meting out the punishment. Rounding out the passion story, she depicted Márton Molnár's death, too, as if the French jailers had thrown him out the prison window and he had not taken his own life.⁵ It must be added that already at the time of its appearance this one-sided and orthodox party approach garnered critics. In the journal of the Institute for Party History, János Johancsik expressed his displeasure thus: "The historical appraisal nevertheless becomes questionable when the brave determination and heroic sacrifice of the movement's participants gain expression in actions aimed at asserting an erroneous line. Thus, for example, the description and appraisal of the disruption of the Saint Stephen's Day celebration in 1929 may confuse today's reader."⁶ Pécsi therefore fully identified with the discourse used by the party historiography of the era, was highly selective in her use of the available sources (the Hungarian National Archives, as well as the documents of the Archives Nationales, which she herself had probably filmed in Paris and for which she prepared the finding aid at the Institute for Party History, later Institute of Political History, etc.), and in every respect accepted the descriptions of the incident by Frigyes Karikás, the Hungarian party functionary reporting on the case, as well as the Communist press and brochure literature. All this she wrote, however, in the language customary of the era's scholarship, with the expected (albeit occasionally somewhat difficult to retrace) scholarly apparatus, and even if the correct spelling of names (in the cases of Kurcz, Ölvedi and party delegate Wolf) occasionally caused her trouble, her work follows standard academic models. Thus it may appear that, freed from the clichés of the history of the workers' movement, the narrative may provide a credible answer to the question "what happened?"

The situation is different with the work of the theologian and canonist József Borovi (1917–2005).⁷ The relevant chapter of the well-structured work of church history, despite the fact that its author conducted research in both the

5 Ibid., 131.

6 *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 1 (1983): 203. Here I would like to point out that it is not my aim to obtain some sort of historiographical justice.

7 József Borovi, *A franciaországi magyar katolikus lelkészségek története. Vol. I, 1925–1945* [History of the Hungarian Catholic Ministries in France] (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 2000). Here the Roubaix mission is discussed in the subchapter dealing with the activity of Imre Kurcz: 77–84.

episcopal archives of Szombathely and the Hungarian National Archives and analyzed some of the press material of the era, is simply unaware of the Roubaix affair. (Its handling of sources, however, is quite weak, and the citations, where given, cannot be verified.) Although from the correspondence and the documents available to him he detected the existence of some sort of tension between the local Hungarians and the French ecclesiastical and secular authorities, leading all the way to a trial, he saw the roots of this in something completely different. He wrote of the “events of September 18, 1929,” in the course of which the Bishopric of Lille raised an objection to Imre Kurcz’s service there, particularly because the priest was conducting propaganda in favor of territorial revision and against the Treaty of Trianon.⁸ Aware of the legal trial as well (but completely misunderstanding its purpose), Borovi writes as though it had been conducted against the Hungarian Catholic pastor of Roubaix. He detects the conflict and fashions a narrative in order to fill in the gaps in information. He, too, has trouble with the correct spelling of certain names (e.g., Ölvedi), while at the same time the clerical and anti-Communist outlook brings about a text which squares with such an arbitrarily assembled series of events on only very few points. In his attempt to fill in the gaps in the story, the author of the text, which is openly empathetic to the church, produces a narrative which fails to mention the very circumstance that launched the sequence of events (the fight). In this way the two competing narratives (Catholic and Communist) each give a false interpretation to the events. The present author (without thinking himself the champion of a kind of absolute truth either) believes that use of the available sources (sources available to the two authors presented above as well) makes it possible to draw a much more nuanced and differentiated picture. And the fight, which obviously is impossible, and even inadvisable, to describe,⁹ creates an excellent opportunity for discussing the social structure of the Hungarians of France and the nature of Hungarian-French relations.

8 The Treaty of Trianon was signed between the Allies of World War I and Hungary in 1920. Post-Trianon Hungary had 72 percent less territory and 64 percent less population than the pre-war kingdom. See Ignác Romsics, *Dismantling of Historic Hungary: the Peace Treaty of Trianon, 1920* trans. Mario D. Fenyo. (Wayne, NJ: Center for Hungarian Studies and Publications, 2002).

9 See Gábor Gyáni’s reservations concerning the constructedness and descriptibility of the “battle” as historical event: “Elbeszélhető-e egy csata hiteles története? Metatörténeti megfontolások” [Can the Authentic History of a Battle be Told? Metahistorical Considerations], *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 1 (2006): 121–33. Although it requires great generosity to regard a fight similar to what occurred in Roubaix as a battle, the conclusions that may be drawn are similar.

Commanders

The year 1929 was an eventful one in the history of Hungarian-French relations and in Hungarian history generally. It was at this time that relations between Budapest and Paris, which had deteriorated notably following the franc forgery scandal in 1925–26, seemed to improve: in June 1929 Prime Minister István Bethlen was cordially received in Paris.¹⁰ In the so-called Optants' Trial—with and at French urging—the Hungarian and Romanian positions moved beyond the impasse.¹¹ In August 1929 the World Congress of Hungarians opened in Budapest, the famous tale writer, Elek Benedek passed away in his native village of Kisbacon, and the Third World Scout Jamboree was held at Arrowe Park in England, where the Hungarian troop achieved a fine success. And the average newspaper reader would have been preoccupied by the growing reports about the later infamous arsenic murders in the villages of the region of Tiszazug. It was in this context that the fight in Roubaix would for a few days become a short-lived sensation.

A few circumstances not widely known at the time also may have helped to mythologize what happened. In fact, on either side of the fight two literary intellectuals confronted one another. The organizing secretary of the Hungarian Association of Paris sent to northern France was by no means unknown to the literature-reading public of the era. Born in Érsekújvár (today Nové Zámky, Slovakia) in 1903, László Ölvedi appeared on the Hungarian literary scene in Slovakia with his poems in the early 1920s.¹² His first volumes, *Valakit várunk* (*Waiting for Someone*, 1922) and *A bányász éneke* (*The Miner's Song*, 1923) were enthusiastically received by the critics. Thanks to the backing of the newspaper *Prágai Magyar Hírlap* his name was soon being mentioned alongside that of the noted Catholic priest and poet László Mécs, and he was touted as one of the great hopes of Hungarian lyric poetry in former Upper Hungary. Following his university studies abroad, however, Ölvedi was unable to return to Czechoslovakia

10 On the franc forgery affair that erupted in late 1925, see Balázs Ablonczy, "A frankhamisítás. Hálók, személyek, döntések" [The Franc Forgery Affair. Networks, Persons, Decisions], *Múltunk* 1 (2008): 29–56.

11 In the wake of the Treaty of Trianon, during the land reform the Romanian state confiscated the lands of Transylvanian estate owners who had chosen Hungarian citizenship (optants), resulting in a legal dispute between the two states that dragged on for almost ten years. From a Hungarian point of view, see: Francis Deak, *The Hungarian-Romanian Land Dispute: a Study of Hungarian Property Rights in Transylvania Under the Treaty of Trianon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928).

12 For an assessment of Ölvedi, see Sándor Csanda, *Első nemzedék* [First Generation] (Bratislava: Madách, 1982), 108–12.

because—allegedly—he had vehemently spoken out against the Czechoslovak state at an international student debate in Geneva.¹³ (At the same time, this is contradicted somewhat by the fact that as late as the late spring of 1929 the poet was still a Czechoslovak citizen and attempting to evade the Czechoslovak recruiting board).¹⁴ In early 1928 he was sent from Paris to the industrial region of northern France to help to develop local Hungarian institutions. Ölvédi assiduously sent his reports, but he encountered many problems. In 1928 the jurisdiction of the Hungarian Association of Paris, which ideologically stood close to the government in Budapest (it described itself as “apolitical”), was extended to all of France. The decision did not always meet with the approval of the local communities. The Saint Stephen Circle in Roubaix was the chosen center for organizational work in the north. In operation since 1926, the Catholic-run association was the only such organization in provincial France, the political mobilization of the Hungarians having been monopolized until then largely by the Communist, and to a lesser extent the Socialist, workers’ movement. Ölvédi was soon sending dissatisfied reports from the northern textile city: the leaders of the Circle were at times too lenient with Communist sympathizers and did not accept the instructions of the Paris headquarters. The caretaker, István Szalay, three times tore down a resolution of the PME decreeing the expulsion of one of their fellow members, and he declared that he did not take orders from the Parisians.¹⁵ And in 1928 they had wanted to hold their vintage celebration right when the Hungarians of the neighboring settlement were preparing for the house-warming of their own social circle, and they were dissuaded from their plans only with the utmost difficulty.¹⁶ The focal point of organizational work in the north was soon transferred to nearby Hénin-Liétard (today: Hénin-Beaumont, Pas-de-Calais Department), where a vibrant Hungarian cultural life unfolded under the leadership of Ödön Bodnár, a teacher commissioned by the

13 On his life, among contemporaries see Dr. Géza Gábor, *Ölvédi László* (Sopron: v. Tóth Alajos könyvnyomdája, 1931), and Marcell Jankovics, *Ölvédi László emlékezete. Elmondotta Érsekújvárott, 1941. június 22-én* [In Memoriam László Ölvédi. Delivered in Érsekújvár, June 22, 1941] (Érsekújvár: Farkas Könyvnyomda, 1941), as well as Zoltán Fónod, ed., *A cseh/szlovákiai magyar irodalom lexikona* [Encyclopedia of Czech/Slovak Hungarian Literature] (Pozsony: Madách-Posonium, 1997), 246–47 (the entry was written by Lajos Turczel).

14 Magyar Országos Levéltár [Hungarian National Archives, Budapest, hereafter: MOL] K 708, a Franciaországi Magyarok Demokratikus Egyesületének iratai, 3. cs. 3. t., a Párisi Magyar Egyesület levelezése 1928–1934. Ölvédi-dosszié, 323. f. Unknown correspondent to László Ölvédi, Paris, May 6, 1929.

15 Ibid., 1. cs. 2. t. László Ölvédi to the presidium of the PME, Paris, September 11, 1928. 546–48. f.

16 Ibid., László Ölvédi to the presidium of the PME, Hénin-Liétard, October 21, 1928. 558–59. f.

Julian Association from Budapest and with Ölvedi's collaboration. Soon a singing circle and an amateur theatrical group were formed. The Saint Stephen Boy Scout Troop was also established with 12 members, and the local Hungarians were regularly visited by the doctor of the Hungarian House in Paris, Karola Papp (in certain cases she treated Communist patients as well), which likewise enhanced the Circle's popularity. However, apparently Ölvedi not only encountered trouble with the Hungarians of Roubaix but also quarreled with the circle's benefactor, Mademoiselle Derville, in late 1928. In fact, in the spring of 1929 his superiors emphatically warned him a number of times to observe accounting and financial discipline, and on one occasion they even reproached him for his "sleepiness," because of which he had been late to important meetings.¹⁷

He was injured in the fight of August 1929, though his injury could not have been serious because on September 2 he was already back at work. His position, however, changed: he was transferred to Paris, and then in December 1929 he left France and went to Budapest, citing among other things his illness. "And I would be very happy if through two or three months of expensive medical treatment I could avoid the operation," he wrote, then adding bitterly, "this, too, is one of my fond memories of the PME."¹⁸ In Budapest he found work at the headquarters of the Hungarian National Alliance (*Magyar Nemzeti Szövetség*), which engaged in domestic and foreign propaganda, and continued his literary activity. His illness did not improve, however, and only worsened following a trip to Sofia in 1931: the young poet passed away in June of that year in Budapest, soon after his twenty-eighth birthday. Although the obituaries appearing at the time of his death did not mention the cause of death, already in that year there appeared the first small booklet tracing the cause back to a kick received in the fight with the Communists.¹⁹ A decade later, according to Marcell Jankovics (and along with him Lajos Tamás, who wrote an appreciation of the poet), Ölvedi had been kicked about by Communists in Paris, and this was the cause of his premature death.²⁰ For his part Lajos Turczel in the encyclopedia entry he wrote

17 MOL K 708, 3. cs. 3. t. managing vice-chairman Dvortsák to Ölvedi. Paris, June 18, 1929. 332. f.

18 Ibid., 336. f. Ölvedi's letter to an unknown recipient, Paris, December 10, 1929.

19 See "Ölvedi László dr.," *Prágai Magyar Hírlap*, June 24, 1931, 3, "Szlovenszko magyarsága is képviseltette magát Ölvedi László temetésén" [The Hungarians of Slovakia Also Had Themselves Represented at László Ölvedi's Funeral], *PMH*, June 25, 1931, 5–6; Dr. Gyula Alapy, "In memoriam – emlékezés Ölvedi Lászlóra" [In Memoriam – Remembering László Ölvedi], *PMH*, June 28, 1931, 6. On the complications arising from the brawl, see Gábor, *Ölvedi László*, 5.

20 Jankovics, *Ölvedi László emlékezete*, 4, 8.

mentions the cancerous knife wound that hit a lung as the cause.²¹ Because there is no record of Övedei having been attacked a second time in Paris, the knifing probably must have been the “scratch” received in Roubaix. Naturally, we do not know Övedei’s exact illness, but there is no doubt that he was ailing already prior to August 1929: in late 1928 he requested leave citing the fact that the climate was undermining his health.

Although he did not take part in the fight (in fact he was not even in the town during these days), Frigyes Karikás (1895–1938; according to other sources 1942), who acted as the official leader of the Hungarian Communists in France, similarly played a key role in the events. A locksmith by training, the party worker was sent to France by the External Committee of the Communist Party of Hungary (KMP) in 1928 to restore the party organizations, riven by earlier factional battles and expulsions. After the fall of the Republic of Councils in 1919, Karikás fled via Vienna to the Soviet Union, where he obtained a diploma. There his career as a writer, during which he portrayed mainly the battles of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, also commenced; the film *A harminckilences dandár* (*The Thirty-Ninth Brigade*, 1960), which would become a ritual element of remembering 1919 in Hungary during the Kádár era, was based on his cycle of short stories. From Karikás’s reports there emerges the portrait of a Communist activist, one ready for action who occasionally even dispensed with the party jargon and who under the names “Fritz” and “Ferenc Virág” dashed off his letters and reports to the party headquarters in Vienna. His relationship with the latter was far from harmonious,²² firstly because in the factional battles raging within the KMP in the 1920s between Béla Kun and Jenő Landler,²³ he had taken the latter’s side, and after the politician’s death in 1928 this did not cast too favorable a light on Karikás. Secondly, the leader of the organization in France made no effort to conceal his objections about the state of affairs prevailing in the headquarters in Vienna: he criticized the uncoordinated personnel policy, confusion and doctrinaire direction. Nor were his spirits dampened by the constant disparagement he regularly received from Vienna. Karikás developed good relations with the leader of the short-lived Hungarian People’s Republic in 1918–1919, Count Mihály Károlyi,²⁴ who

21 Fónod, *A Cseh/szlovákiai magyar irodalom lexikona*, 246.

22 See Pécsi, *Magyarok a franciaországi...*, 111–18.

23 See Rudolf Tokes, *Béla Kun and the Hungarian Soviet Republic: the Origins and Role of the Communist Party of Hungary in the Revolutions of 1918–1919* (New York: Praeger, 1967), 215.

24 Former Prime Minister (1–16 November 1918) and President of Hungary (November 16, 1918–March 21, 1919). See Bryan Cartledge, *Mihály Károlyi & István Bethlen* (London: Haus Publishing, 2009).

happened to be living in France and who in this period was turning ever more resolutely towards the Comintern. Karikás succeeded in winning over the prestige and bearing of the count, the “Hungarian Kerensky,” for numerous causes important to the Communist movement.²⁵ In the second half of 1929 Károlyi acted on behalf of Communist prisoners conducting a hunger strike in the prison at Sopronkőhida, and the party devoted a role to him in the Roubaix trial as well, even though the count had not been present during the clash. Karikás at the same time approved of and encouraged physical violence against the “embassy fascists.”²⁶ Roubaix was by no means an isolated case: there had been an attempt to disrupt the celebration of the Saint Stephen Circle (in Communist parlance, the “Stevie Circle”) on August 19, 1928, but Ölvedi’s action had prevented this at the time.²⁷ And that the happenings in Roubaix had by no means come about spontaneously is unmistakably indicated by Karikás’s account as well: “back in the spring we decided we would take care of them when the opportunity arose.”²⁸ In October 1928 the Communists beat up Ödön Bodnár, the Hungarian teacher in Hénin-Liétard, and Kálmán Ivics, a miner in Méricourt. Karikás did not at all disapprove of the brawl in Roubaix in August 1929 and in fact sang the praises of the perpetrators. Over the course of 1930 similar such attacks befell the Hungarian Students’ Association of Paris (*Párizsi Magyar Diákegyesület*), meeting in the Hungarian House in Paris, as well as the participants in the Hungarian revisionist rally gathering in the Wagram Hall in Paris.²⁹ In 1931 Karikás (undoubtedly because of his clashes with the party leadership as well) was recalled from Paris and illegally sent to Hungary. In 1932, together with the leaders of the illegal party, Imre Sallai and Sándor Fürst, he was arrested and sentenced to death. Due to international protest in 1935 he was released to the Soviet Union, where during the Stalinist terror in 1938 he was arrested, convicted and sent to the Gulag. He likely perished in 1942.

25 On Karikás’s activities, see PII, 878. f. 8. cs. 270. ó. e. passim.

26 The expression is present in the brochure literature of the era also, and is used by the first attempt at creating a synthesis of the Hungarian workers’ movement in France: Magda Aranyossi, “A franciaországi magyar munkémigráció történetéhez” [To the History of the Hungarian Worker Emigration in France], *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 3 (1961): 59–85.

27 MOL K 708, 1. cs. 2. t. report of László Ölvedi, Paris, August 28, 1928. 538–39. f.

28 PII 878 f. 8. cs. 270. ó. e., 122–24. f. Report of Ferenc Virág (Frigyes Karikás), Paris, September 3, 1929.

29 Archives de la Préfecture de Police de Paris (hereafter: APP), BA-2182, dossier: Ligue Hongroise oppositionniste au Traité de Trianon, information report, Paris, June 5, 1930.

Of the story's other, central figure we know substantially less: Imre Kurcz, born in Szentpéterfa and of Croat nationality, went out to northern France as a young chaplain, having been consecrated a priest in the Diocese of Szombathely in 1924. The fight did not enhance his renown either: although the truth is difficult to piece together from József Borovi's euphemisms, it appears that his participation in irredentist propaganda (the Circle joined the Revisionist League in July 1929) embarrassed the superior French ecclesiastical authorities, namely the bishop of Lille, Liénart, and the auxiliary bishop of Paris, Chaptal; the latter was entrusted within the episcopate with supervising the pastoral care of the foreign-speaking faithful living in the country. Kurcz must not have enjoyed himself in France, because in June 1930 he was transferred to Paris, then in late 1931 he returned home and served in smaller parishes under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Szombathely: between 1932 and 1936 in Tótszentmárton, and later in Vaskeresztes.

Combatants

After the First World War, France, which emerged from the war victorious though calamitously bled dry and to a great extent (in the north and east) lying in ruins, was in urgent need of labor. Taking advantage of this economic trend, tens of thousands of Hungarians took to the road to try their fortune in Paris or some industrial region. Their exact number is difficult to estimate, especially because a significant portion of the incoming workers resided in France illegally, and in addition the occasional shifts in economic trends also seriously impacted the colony's numbers. In 1922–1923 emigration received new impetus from the unemployment generated by the closing of mines in Hungary: the size of the Hungarian colony multiplied from the few hundred persons previously resident in France to several tens of thousands by the middle of the 1920s.³⁰ To illustrate the numbers of legal and illegal immigrants, let it suffice here to point out that whereas Hungarian publicists estimated the number of Hungarians living in Paris and its environs at between 15 and 30 thousand, a police report dated

30 Pécsi, *Magyarok a franciaországi...*, 27–28, puts the permanent number of Hungarians at 40,000. Sándor Molnár speaks of 70,000 persons together with family members; Sándor Molnár, *Magyar sors francia földön* [Hungarian Fate on French Soil] (Paris: Párisi Magyar Akadémia, n.d. [1932]), 5–8. Estimating the number of Hungarian speakers who emigrated from the successor states represents a separate problem. On the other hand, the 1926 French census found only 13,577 Hungarians among 2.5 million foreigners; Benjamin Janicaud, “Le rejet des Hongrois en France (1919–1939): un exemple de rejet ordinaire,” *Méditerranée Tanulmányok* (Szeged) XIII, (2004), 6, n. 6.

1932 put their number at nine thousand.³¹ The geographical distribution within France, too, was uneven: a significant portion of them tried to earn a living in the capital and its immediate environs. Another major group was formed by those working in the northern mining and industrial region (Lens, Méricourt, Lille, Valenciennes, Sallaumines, Hénin-Liétard and Roubaix). The third major group was employed by the large towns and industrial establishments of the Rhône Valley: of the Hungarians of Lyon, Grenoble and Isieux the contemporary chronicler noted that almost all hailed from the town of Sárvár; the closing of the silk factory there had prompted them to try their fortune in France. In the east, larger-sized Hungarian populations could be found in a few industrial establishments in Alsace: Mulhouse and for instance (briefly) the industrial works of Creutzwald–Falck. Hungarian colonies existed in other major cities (Bordeaux, Marseille and Rouen) as well; Sándor Molnár, general secretary of the Hungarian Association of Paris, estimated the number of Hungarians living in Algeria under French administration at a further 4,000–5,000 in 1931.³² Regarding the number of Hungarians living in northern France, once again we can rely only on estimates, but their number may be put at several thousands. According to one report well acquainted with the local conditions, in 1929 the Hungarians of Roubaix numbered 900, approximately 100 of whom had arrived from Czechoslovakia.³³ Another report that emerged almost simultaneously provides an entirely precise figure: it indicated 635 Hungarians living in Roubaix – true, it cannot be known whether this number also included the labor force of the industrial establishments that had virtually grown together with the city.³⁴

The “French Manchester” of the nineteenth century and one of the international centers of the textile industry, Roubaix experienced its golden age in the years prior to the First World War. The nearly four years of German occupation had bled it dry, and the repeated crises of the industry made the instability permanent. The city had its greatest number of inhabitants in 1896

31 AN F7, vol. 13542. Summary report about the Hungarian emigration living in the vicinity of Paris, Paris, August 9, 1932. At the same time a confidential police report in 1940 gives the number of the Hungarian colony in France relatively accurately (perhaps even overestimating it somewhat) as 30,000 people. See APP, BA-2182, rapports, divers, strictly confidential report, Paris, April 5, 1940.

32 Molnár, *Magyar sors francia földön*, 5–7. For a vivid description of the émigrés’ society, see PIL, 794. f. Bóta Ernő iratai, 2. ő. e. I. dosszié, 22–23. f.

33 MOL K 28, Miniszterelnökség, Kisebbségi és Nemzetiségi Osztály iratai, 166. cs., 286. t. 26. f. report of teacher Ödön Bodnár to the Julián Association, Hénin-Liétard, March 12, 1929.

34 János Pilis, “Magyarok Roubaix-ban” [Hungarians in Roubaix], *Századunk* (August–September 1928): 401–8.

(124,000), but from this time on the population entered into a gradual decline (today 30,000 fewer live here); in 1929 the city had around 117,000 inhabitants.³⁵ In the period between the two world wars the municipality was led by a socialist mayor: Jean-Baptiste Lebas (1878–1944) was not only a successful city leader whose socio-political program in some cases was ahead of its time, but as the labor minister in the first Blum government (1936–1937) he had a key role in introducing, for example, the forty-hour work week, paid vacation and other socio-political measures. Lebas belonged to that group of French socialists (SFIO: *Section française de l'Internationale Ouvrière*) who immediately following the break at the Tours Congress had displayed an aversion to the Communists.

We find in the city a sharply divided Hungarian community, which—unlike the miners, who enjoyed relatively good living conditions—had to struggle mightily for its daily bread. Nearly half of the local Hungarians worked as wool-combers, which was quite toilsome and exhausting work, and approximately eighty found employment at one of the iron or timber enterprises. The employers as a rule were satisfied with the Hungarian workers, whom they considered more conscientious than the Polish guest workers typical of the region; the Hungarians also showed a lesser propensity to commit crime than the latter. One point of interest from the reporting of the bourgeois radical monthly merits particular attention: a significant number of Hungarians were “living in sin” because it was necessary to wait months, or even years, for the official procedure due to the slowness of the Hungarian consulate in Paris.³⁶ The majority of Hungarians arrived from two regions of Hungary: from along the eastern border (the vicinity of Csenger, Sima and Nagygéc) and from the industrial region of the central part of Transdanubia: Felsőgalla, Bánhida, Oroszlány and Lábatlan. Of the 11 captured combatants whose personal data we know, five (or six) came from this region. One person was born in Hódmezővásárhely, while the tragically deceased Márton Molnár was the only one born in Budapest.³⁷

However, this Hungarian community, the size of a small village, lived its everyday life amidst rather profound political and ideological antagonisms. In

35 See Louis Trénard, *Histoire de Roubaix* (Dunkerque: Éditions des Beffrois, 1984).

36 Ibid., 406.

37 PIL 508 f. 4/2. ő. e. I. dosszié, 48–49. f. report to the director of the Sûreté Générale, Lille, August 20, 1929. The above-noted uncertainty derives from the fact that the birthplace of one of the perpetrators, the house-painter József Madarász, is indicated as “Szentmiklós.” There were at least half a dozen settlements with such a name in Trianon Hungary. If this refers to the village of Dunaszentmiklós, located near Tata, then this would be the sixth settlement in the area.

the (at least) three-way field it is undoubtedly the Communists who appear the most organized. According to contemporary observers (and the reports of the party organization), workers connected to the party in one way or another, either as party members or members of the Communist-controlled trade union, the CGTU (*Confédération générale du travail unitaire*), may have numbered between 150 and 200 persons. The disciplined group, which appeared closed to outsiders, was one of the most active Communist groupings in the region. Although comprising only 33–35 party members, 175 copies of the Communist-run *Párisi Munkás* were circulated in their circle. The group organized regular gatherings, balls, excursions and *proletkult* lectures for its members, indeed (and here it is impossible not to recognize the allusion to the church liturgy) on Sunday mornings at ten o'clock they listened to the broadcast of Radio Moscow together. Information on the exact content of the gatherings may be provided by an extant leaflet about the celebration of September 1, 1929, which the Roubaix group organized along with the Hungarian workers of Lens, Méricourt and even Brussels. Here, the program of the festivity, which was combined with a picnic, included a chess tournament, football match, dance and *proletkult* lecture. Children paid nothing, and the organizers even thought to have someone with local knowledge meet the comrades coming from farther away at the end-station of the tramline to direct them. "Supporting this celebration of the revolutionary Hungarian working class is a comradely obligation!" emphasized the leaflet.³⁸ According to a police report, thanks to this deliberate, disciplined conduct there were almost as many Hungarian members in the local Communist party organization as there were French. The local party organization as a rule gathered at a local café, the *Prolétarienne*, or in restaurants. In view of this type of organized operation, it appears inconceivable that the Hungarian party organization would have attacked the Catholic workers' circle without the knowledge of the higher party organs (especially since there were French workers among the attackers as well, one of whom was even brought to trial).³⁹ The party inspectors visiting them, including Ernő Gerő (one of the later leaders of Communist Hungary, who visited in 1928), declared their satisfaction with the group's activity. The weight of the locals is indicated by the fact that outside of Paris only Roubaix was

38 For the leaflet, see PII., 508 f. 4/2. ő. e. II. dosszié, 147–51. f. Prefect of Nord Department to the interior minister, Lille, August 29, 1929.

39 On the Hungarian Communists in Roubaix: Pilis, op. cit.; PII., 508 f. 4/2. ő. e. II. dosszié, 185–86. f. Special Inspector Blanquart to the director of the Sûreté Générale, Lille, March 16, 1931; and *ibid.*, 878 f. 8. cs. 270. ő. e. passim.

allowed to send three delegates to the national conference held under the aegis of the CGTU in 1928, the rest had to make due with fewer.⁴⁰ At the same time, by 1929 the signs of stagnation, in certain cases a retrogression, began to show in the Roubaix organization, too, thus the presence of the Catholics' circle meant increased provocation to the Hungarian Communists active in the industrial region. This closed, sectarian behavior obviously was not independent of the policy reversal implemented by the French Communist Party in 1927 on the orders of the Comintern, which called for an intensification of the class struggle and rejected any form of cooperation with other left-wing forces, including the "social fascists." As a consequence of this policy, the party would record a significant setback in the 1928 parliamentary elections: its number of deputies fell from 24 to 12.

The Socialists also possessed a group in the town (*Világosság*), but it was not nearly as populous and in numerous respects was divided in its estimation of Hungarian politics. In addition to politicians from the mother country (e.g., Károly Peyer), émigrés also visited them (Sándor Garbai, Mihály Károlyi), and at some unspecified date (at least according to the recollection of one of the founders, Ernő Bóta) the Hungarian League of Human Rights (*Emberi Jogok Magyar Ligája*) had also possessed a branch organization in the town. A few of the leaders of the Socialist groups living in the surrounding towns (Sándor Cézár) sought out the Hungarian Association of Paris, for example, to partake in the medical treatment provided by the Hungarian House.⁴¹ Their number in Roubaix amounted to a few dozen.

The other circle comparable to that of the Communists was that of the Catholics; several times in 1927–1928, though, it was deemed undeserving of the Hungarian legation's trust (despite the fact that the sponsor, Mademoiselle Derville, had also received a high Hungarian state decoration in November 1927). The teacher in Hénin-Liétard, Ödön Bodnár, considered the missionary sisters and Father Kurcz unsuitable for directing the local Hungarians. He wrote in a letter that "due in part to incompetence, and in part to the excessive bias stemming from their calling they are incapable of overseeing the Circle's cultural leadership and organizing the Hungarians outside of it," noting also that their

40 PII. 878 f. 8. cs. 270. ó. e., report by Ernő Gerő, September 23, 1928. 73–74. f.

41 On this see OSZK Kézirattár [Széchényi National Library, Manuscript Collection], Fol. Hung. 3574/3. Sándor B. Molnár, "A francia nyelv hullámhosszán" [On the Wave-Length of the French Language], 72–77. f.; and Molnár, *Magyar sors francia földön*, 170–74.

program included an overabundance of frivolous pursuits, such as dances.⁴² At these occasions (including the ominous August 18) 150–200 persons regularly appeared—even if fewer attended the masses.

Strategy and Consequences

As we mentioned, the brawl could not have been an accident. The Communists felt their hitherto exclusive sovereign territory to be in danger, and by no means without reason.

From the mid-1920s on numerous actions, initiated partly locally and partly in Budapest, were launched in France which were aimed at organizing the non-left-wing (in official usage: “apolitical”) émigrés. Teachers, priests and missionary sisters arrived. The Catholic Church reacted somewhat earlier than the Reformed, but in the late 1920s permanent Reformed ministers also appeared among the Hungarians of France. To counter the *Párisi Munkás*, in the summer of 1928 the *Párisi Magyarság* was launched; published by Sándor Pető, it was actually edited by Ferenc Honti, secretary of the Revisionist League in Paris and the later founder of *Le Monde diplomatique*. The aim of the biweekly paper, which at first struggled with difficulties and later changed format several times, was to hold the communities together and serve as a kind of newsletter among the scattered colonies. After a lengthy period of construction and wrangling, in June 1929 the new center of the Hungarians in Paris and France, the Hungarian House of Paris, was inaugurated. Located along the Rue Vaugirard, on the Square Vergennes, the house not only provided a home for the Hungarian associations (athletic clubs, singing circles, students) and Hungarian clergy operating in Paris, but also served as a school, assembly hall, employment office and, not least, a medical clinic, where patients found doctor’s and dentist’s consulting rooms furnished with modern equipment subsidized by the Hungarian Ministry of Welfare. Likewise in 1928–29 the building of a Collegium Hungaricum in Paris, intended for Hungarian students studying abroad, also nearly became a tangible reality: ultimately this project was thwarted by the world economic crisis. This was not the only field of the offensive: in 1928 the children’s summer holiday campaign was launched. Through this program, which likewise exerted a significant attraction, special trains took Hungarian children in France to the

42 MOL K 28, Miniszterelnökség, Kisebbségi és Nemzetiségi Osztály iratai, 166. cs., 286. t. 26. f. report of teacher Ödön Bodnár to the Julián Association, Hénin-Liétard, March 12, 1929.

resorts of the Children's Defense League in Szigetmonostor and Bakony in Hungary.

Under such circumstances physical violence, even if not leading to lasting results, in any case left its mark on the community. The pamphlets of the Hungarian Communists, which agitated against the “Hungarian cleric whores,” the “lackeys of the franc forgers” and the “Trianon imposters,” hit their target to the extent that in the spring of 1930 the local prefect wrote that in Roubaix the “Hungarian Fascists and Communists” had gotten into a fight.⁴³ This was largely reminiscent of how the French state viewed the clashes between the Fascists and leftists within the Italian community in France. The local, and indeed the national, public sharply condemned the events: while the national papers (except, naturally, for the paper of the FCP, *L'Humanité*) generally blamed the “foreign Communists,” the *Journal de Roubaix* wrote uniformly about the “foreign subversives coming to France,” without regard to their ideological stance.⁴⁴ In contrast to the idealism of the period immediately following the war, the attitude of the French administration and public at this time became much more reserved, even outright closed, towards the immigrant workers. This conduct would become even more explicit in the crisis milieu of the thirties and become filled with stereotypes.⁴⁵ At the same time, the Hungarian community in France always remained small in number in comparison to the members of other nations; thus, it did not form its own distinct stereotypes around itself, but rather judgment of it followed the judgment of the great masses of immigrants.

At the judicial proceedings of the Roubaix affair in October 1929, the Communists produced Mihály Károlyi and the secretary of the local Red Aid, the later resistance fighter and pre-eminent mayor of Montreuil, Daniel Renoult (the latter had to be removed from the trial for insulting the court) as witnesses. Both drew parallels with and highlighted the oppressiveness of the dictatorship in Hungary: the Catholics were operating a spy network in the town, and by paving the way for revision they were plotting to ignite a new war in Europe. The Communist press also presented the affair in this light.⁴⁶

43 AN F7, vol. 13542, Prefect of Nord Department to the prime minister, Lille, April 4, 1930.

44 See Janicaud, “Le rejet...”, 11.

45 For the same in the context of southern France, Mary D. Lewis, *Les frontières de la République. Immigration et limites de l'universalisme en France (1918–1940)* (Marseille: Agone, 2010), 219–59.

46 It should be added that neither Károlyi nor his wife mentions this involvement in their memoirs (in either the Hungarian- or English-language versions). Cf.: “Une bagarre éclate à Roubaix au Cercle Catholique Hongrois,” *L'Humanité*, August 20, 1929; “Le guêt-apens des fascistes hongrois à Roubaix,”

In fact the propaganda did succeed: the intensity of the Roubaix Hungarian Catholic circle's activity receded, temporarily fewer people attended the events, the pastors were replaced in rapid succession, and Kurcz's successor, Ferenc Kozma, a religious instructor from Zalaegerszeg, also remained in his post for a brief time only. In addition, the doctor's visits, viewed as the main attraction, were also eliminated in 1930. The Circle nearly ceased to function.⁴⁷ Furthermore, in the 1930s unemployment caused by the economic crisis, and later the winds of the approaching war, diminished the number of local Hungarians. By 1941 barely eighty Reformed Hungarians "worthy of care" remained in all of northern France, and the number of Catholics could not have been considerably higher either.⁴⁸ At the same time the émigré Communist movement also suffered a blow: the *Párisi Munkás*, which had been appearing for six years, was banned by the French authorities in November 1929 (formally for insulting the police prefect of Paris, Chiappe). Until mid-1930 it was able to appear under five other names (*Harcos, Új Harcos, Fáklya*, etc.); after some hesitation, however, all met this same fate. A seemingly permanent Hungarian-language Communist press publication would appear again only in the late thirties, in the form of *Szabad Szó*.

Conclusion

As we mentioned in the introduction, the 1929 brawl in and of itself is uninteresting: much rather it is those tensions and processes which led to the explosion of violence. And the seemingly simple Sunday brawl conceals motifs which point far beyond the simple struggle over hegemony or the urban space or the local Hungarian community. In his summary work about ethnic diasporas, the French sociologist Stéphane Dufoix, who began his scholarly career by researching the Hungarian community in France, has distinguished four operating modes of the diaspora: 1. the centropерipheral mode (*mode centro-périphérique*), when the mother country plays a key role in the life of the community through its official institutions, be it the consulate, the embassy or the cultural institute; 2. the enclaved diaspora mode (*mode enclavé*), which is characterized by locality,

L'Humanité, October 13, 1929. The tabloid press likewise presented the case as sensational and exotic, albeit with emphases closer to reality: "L'agression communiste à Roubaix," *Petit Parisien*, August 20, 1929.

47 MOL K 708, 2. cs. Kozma Ferenc-dosszié, passim (f. 995-1018)

48 MOL K 28, 166. cs., 286. t. 1941-D-15497, Bishop László Ravasz and Jenő Balogh to István Csáky, Budapest, January 16, 1941 (based on the report of Deaconess Ida Molnár).

meaning a local community organizes itself and it is not citizenship but rather identity that plays the decisive role in its functioning; 3. the antagonistic mode (*mode antagonique*), designating that situation in Dufoix's categorization in which the community living abroad defines itself along political principles against those in power in the mother country, and not infrequently the groups of the exile polity (*expolitie* – Dufoix) oppose one another as well; and 4. the atopic mode (*mode atopique*), which defines itself along transnational principles, but not necessarily against something, but rather it is precisely the (ethnic or religious) diaspora, dispersion, that is the true form of identity. In each mode what is important is the attitude to the space and/or the state, or to the lack thereof.⁴⁹

In the late nineteenth century the Hungarian state and administration, in accordance with their liberal principles and latent nationality policy stance, (i. e., that the national minorities living in Hungary were strongly overrepresented among the émigrés) for a long time ignored the masses of émigrés. Tending to those who immigrated to America, too, was long confined to dispatching pastors or teachers. Like the other communities, the Hungarians in America had begun to live lives independent of the mother country, and new forms of identity also appeared which did not fit easily into the social and political model of the mother country.⁵⁰ However, the shock of Trianon, the appearance of a new, more bellicose and organic (or thought to be so) Hungarian concept of nation and its official adoption no longer recognized “lost souls,” thus the previous enclaved diaspora model (United States) or the antagonistic mode, as the great masses of Hungarian workers pouring into France at first were drawn by left-wing organizations under their intellectual and cultural direction, was no longer acceptable to the mother country. The 1928 Saint Stephen's Day brawl is an important stage in a process, beginning sometime around 1927 and reaching its culmination by the end of the decade, whereby the antagonistic diaspora model was gradually replaced by the centrop peripheral model: the mother country offers members of the diaspora social assistance (medical treatment, subsidies, organizing holidays for children), cultural services (press) and institutions (school), organizing its activity around a central core, and it attempts to turn the masses away from the political emigration hostile to it. For its part, the left-wing emigration, and its Communist wing in particular, sensed the threat facing it: the

49 Stéphane Dufoix, *Les diasporas*. Collection “Que sais-je?” (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2003), 72–75.

50 On this, see John Bodnar, *The Transplanted. A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 184–205.

meeting of the dynamic Hungarian government offensive and the revisionist movement threatened the positions of the local Hungarian Communists, who had just entered into decline and turned in a strongly sectarian direction, and their leaders believed terror as political means to be legitimate and permissible. And the colliding, seemingly inextinguishable tempers exploded into a bloody fight.

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