

## 4 Cold War happiness

### Singing pioneers, internal enemies and Hungarian life under Stalinism

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Like a squirrel on the tree,  
The pioneer is just as happy,  
Singing songs endlessly.  
When he pitches a camp somewhere,  
All the small pals sing similarly,  
From dawn to dusk.  
Years pass under the summer trees,  
The singing is so happy,  
Happy melody forms the lines:  
Very good, this life is so happy.<sup>1</sup>  
“Happy Pioneer”

In June of 1965 I was part of a pioneer school group heading for a vacation to the mountainous part of Hungary, singing our songs, including the “Happy Pioneer,” over and over again all the way to the campsite, a six-hour journey, at least. At the time I did not fully understand this song’s hidden significance, but was amazed at how long we were able to persist with our singing. Looking back, I am not sure why we sang the way we did, nor am I sure whether we were told to do so (most probably yes) – but we reached our campsite in fine spirits, totally exhausted and more than ready for a good night’s sleep. Taking a closer look at that song, and its myriad of artistic ramifications in films, photographs, posters, music and fine art, one cannot but agree that the obviously banal message was simple: people under duress, like most Eastern Europeans after World War II, were not depressed, afraid, or lethargic. On the contrary, they were strong, brave, and ready to live in peace, and – above all – they all were extremely happy. This fabricated culture of happiness was one of the fundamental strategies introduced by Soviet Premier Josef Stalin and his followers during the period that has come to be known as the Cold War (*hidegháború* in Hungarian). To show how this culture of happiness functioned and why the construction of happiness was so important in shaping the Cold War atmosphere, I will investigate here the example of Hungary, a country that lost the war on the

side of Nazi Germany but soon managed to become a staunch ally of the Soviet Union.

I start with the assumption that some 20 years after the official Cold War ended, and well over 60 years since it was invented, enough time has elapsed whereby we can now see that this period was not the homogenous era it was once imagined to be.<sup>2</sup> Whatever date we assign to the inception of the Cold War, the meeting at Potsdam in July–August 1945 brought into clear relief the tensions between U.S. President Harry Truman and Stalin.<sup>3</sup> Winston Churchill, for example, was already convinced that the Soviet Union, and with it communism, was an evil force, conflating Stalin with the Devil. As for Eastern Europe, Winston Churchill reckoned later that “police governments are prevailing in nearly every case, and so far, except in Czechoslovakia, there is no true democracy.”<sup>4</sup> Not surprisingly, George F. Kennan’s idea of “containment” of Soviet power was received with cheers in the West. The U.S. and its allies’ ambitious efforts to install economic, military and spy operations in order to save the world from communist infiltration were part and parcel of Cold War ideology emanating from the West. As Harold Wydra writes, “The aggressive anti-communism of the United States in the absence of a concrete military conflict with the Soviet Union was based on the pervasive fear of contagion with the disease of communism.”<sup>5</sup>

In this chapter, I argue that there were different Cold Wars after 1945, and that their single most important unifying element was the antagonistic and dualistic thinking characteristic of both the Western powers, led by the United States of America, and the Soviet Union headed by its leader Josef Stalin. Cold war, just like any war, has an internal (i.e., how we see them and what we do about it) and an external dimension (i.e., how they see us and what they do about it) that provides its structure and meaning. The external dimension can be best summed up as a feverish, if not furious, competition between superpowers, specifically the victorious Soviet Union and the United States. This resulted in an ideological, economic, militaristic and cultural bipolarization of the world into us and them. A subtitle in an article in *Life* magazine on February 26, 1945, describes the Big Three (Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin) as those who will “shape the world’s future.”<sup>6</sup> Just how these leaders went about framing their own country’s future has been the subject of many previous studies; therefore, I intend to focus on what I consider to be the two most important aspects of the Cold War in its East-Central European setting – the combined processes of fighting against the enemy both literally and through the workers’ movement of Stakhanovism. All this was legitimated via a plan to obtain peace and social happiness through the Cold War personality cult of Stalin and his Hungarian double, Mátyás Rákosi (1892–1971).

### Stalinism, fear and happiness

After 1945, Hungary was not in a good position to negotiate with anybody about anything. It was disliked by the victorious Soviets and Westerners, but

it was even more hated by its neighbors. There were plenty of reasons for such antagonism.<sup>7</sup> Allied in both world wars with the losers and engaging in an irredentist and chauvinistic war from 1938 to 1941 to regain territories in Slovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia, Hungary had been a thorn in the side of her neighbors as well as the Western powers. After 1945, the presence of the Red Army in Hungary, together with hyperinflation and the war reparation payments to the Soviets, offered no other choice but to accept unconditionally the demands of the Kremlin.<sup>8</sup> Yet, in one way most of the East European countries were not saved from Stalinization that was more specific than just Sovietization. That meant not only a duplication of the political, economic and cultural models set up by the USSR, but also the acceptance of Stalin as the only authority, a supreme being whose words and deeds could not be questioned. In the Western world, Stalinization reinforced the conviction that Stalin embodied the Devil, responsible for all the evil standing in the way of progress, democracy and peace.<sup>9</sup>

There were several things that supported the Cold War – directly or indirectly – in Hungary. The first was the Stalinist version of Marxism–Leninism, the motivations of the communists during the period from 1947 to 1953, from the election when the Communist Party first gained a majority to the death of Stalin six years later. The megalomania of the Communist Party chief Mátyás Rákosi during his reign (1946–56) was another. Thirdly, Moscow and the presence of the Soviet army strengthened and supported movements to facilitate violent “revolutionary” policy, the “dictatorship of the proletariat” as it came to be called. The fourth had to do with the sheer number of police (both open and secret) and political cadres present not only on the streets but in schools and workplaces and on collective farms. The social and economic situation in Hungary, a weakened and war-torn country following the war, also contributed to the fear and terror as well as the creation of a new personality cult that would coalesce into an ideology of Cold War in Hungary following the rigged election in 1947.<sup>10</sup> When, on November 4, 1945, Hungary voted in its first free election after the war, the result was not unexpected: the Independent Smallholders Party (*Független Kisgazdapárt*) won 57 percent and the Soviet-backed Communist Party (*Magyar Kommunista Párt*) only 17 percent of the votes. It had begun to seem as if Hungary, despite occupation by the Soviet army, would be allowed to establish a truly democratic multiparty system, maintain its relative independence, and distribute land to needy peasants – in a word, to get on with a stable and normal life.<sup>11</sup> Yet in a matter of months it became evident that the coalition of peasant parties was on a steep uphill climb to make ends meet.<sup>12</sup>

With the escalation of Cold War hostilities, it became clear that the economic and political pressures did not go far enough to elicit the support from the population that the communist leaders felt was needed to build a strong Stalinist state.<sup>13</sup> Thus, to win over the masses, promises had to be made. One crucial aspect in formulating the culture of Cold War happiness had to do with the elimination of enemies, both real and fictitious, at home and abroad.

The original formulas of V. I. Lenin, that the “real enemy is in your own country,” and the necessity to transform “the imperialist war into civil war,” were aptly applied soon after the Soviet army occupied Eastern Europe. From the Soviet perspective, they were fighting against capitalist, mainly U.S., hegemony over the area, a concern that was not kept secret by either side, the U.S. and the Soviet Union. To be sure, the Yugoslav party boss, Josip Broz Tito, was soon described as a servant of Western imperialism, hence his fashionable imagery as a “chained dog.” Wholly under the sway of Cold War ideology, this is how the logic worked, according to the Hungarian party chief, Rákosi:

The accomplices of the imperialists, and especially the right-wing Social Democrats must be exposed. The British Labour leaders Atlee, Bevin and others, Blum and his ilk in France, all of whom wear a democratic mask, are helping reaction, are inciting hatred towards the Soviet Union and the people’s democracies and are trying to violate the unity of the working class. American reaction attaches the greatest importance to destroying the rights of the working people wherever possible. As a means towards its plans for world domination the Americans are trying to set up global military-strategic bases. They are taking over the strategic positions, which the weakened British imperialists can no longer retain. The Americans aim at turning the Western zones of Germany and Japan into military-strategic bases against the Soviet Union. They are trying to realise their imperialist designs through the economic enslavement of the weaker states. Greece, Italy, France, Turkey and Austria have received loans running into hundreds of millions of dollars, which have placed these countries in the front ranks of inflation.<sup>14</sup>

However, this was not the full story. Cold War ideology worked in a more complex fashion: to create fear in order to achieve victory was one thing, but to sell it – especially the threat of nuclear attack by the capitalist/imperialist enemy – an equally strong feeling had to be inculcated into citizens. To achieve that end, a promise had to be made of building a peaceful and economically sound as well as autonomous socialist society in which all would be happy. But the official discourse was even more sinister because it implied that anybody who was unhappy was also not a believer but an enemy of the system, its ideology and its leaders. And this is why the regime carried out its utopian goal of creating a happy society by instilling fear in its citizens that internal enemies would be outed and destroyed. Internal enemies had to be found first in the Communist Party for, according to Stalinist political demology, the untrustworthy class enemy had “infiltrated the communist party.”<sup>15</sup> As the writer-journalist Paul Ignatus (1901–78), who served a six-year jail sentence in Hungary between 1949 and 1956, wrote, anybody in the party could be an enemy described as “Titoist-Trotskyite-Clericalist-Zionist-Fascist-Racist-Nationalist-Cosmopolitanist-Imperialist-Capitalist scoundrels

who had been in the pay of American, British, French, Yugoslav and (before 1945) German and Hungarian secret agencies.”<sup>16</sup> They were not the same as those enemies on the right, since these internal enemies within the party were deemed to be traitors, a sin so grave in the eyes of the rulers that they all deserved harsh punishment, including the death sentence.

Soviet Stalinism simply meant, in the words of the philosopher Agnes Heller, “terrorist totalitarianism,” which can be defined as the inculcation of fear and the use of violence to achieve desired ends.<sup>17</sup> Promulgating fear, as Montesquieu recognized centuries ago, is one of the best weapons in the hands of tyrants. Violence against certain groups of people and spreading fear in others had a very specific momentum and direction, yet it also worked in a random fashion, for “random selection inflicts general fear, for no one knows who comes next.”<sup>18</sup> The new enemies had multiple faces: aristocrats, former military and police officers, youth, leftist subversive intellectuals, clerics, merchants and craftsman and, above all, peasants of the hinterland areas.<sup>19</sup>

Among the vestiges of the “bourgeois past” singled out for elimination in the new state was not only the retrograde peasant culture, but everything associated with it, most specifically religion and religious holidays, as religion still played a major role in people’s lives in 1947.<sup>20</sup> Priests and devout church members, especially, faced extreme prejudice and were used by the party as scapegoats for Hungary’s social problems. Young workers and intellectuals were urged to form “village brigades” (*falujáró brigádok*) to assist in rebuilding the devastated countryside and provide labor for the harvest and, undoubtedly, to re-educate the “untrustworthy peasants.” Industrial plants were also in the forefront of such village brigades.

Happiness and prosperity were very much a central concept in building a new society in postwar Hungary. The notion of creating a country inhabited entirely by happy people was on the mind of the country’s ruler from the beginning. Mátyás Rákosi, the first Communist Party secretary and a capable orator, loved to utilize in his speeches and writings the words “*boldog*” and “*boldogulás*” – meaning happy and prosperity respectively, although the root of the two words is the same. In a speech given to the miners (!) in 1947, he said of the new peasants: “All around the country, everyone speaks highly of those new farmers, still working the land with their ten fingers, and could not tell which plot was done by the old and which one by the new owners because both are tilled with love and care. All in all, this reveals that during our land distribution only those received land who love it and respect it. We want to make sure that all of them will become healthy and happy small farmers.”<sup>21</sup> Speaking to intellectuals a few weeks later, Rákosi reiterated that the Communist Party “respects and values the work of intellectuals, its willingness in helping reconstruction, and with this progressive elite the party wants to work together to build a happier society.”<sup>22</sup> Surely, there was something utopistic about communist happiness. Even though they promised happiness on earth, they did not envision that it would happen immediately or be within the reach of the masses. In 1948, Rákosi announced that “true advancement will start

with our new five-year plan to make our homeland flourish and happy."<sup>23</sup> Even people who were youngsters at that time enjoying the momentary benefit of the land distribution felt the same way. One woman had this to say about the years following World War II: "Of course we were happy. Before the war, my parents only had about 1 acre land rented from a rich peasant. We couldn't make a living on that, so my parents were constantly in debt. Following the land distribution act after 1945, my parents received almost 4 hectares of land on which they were able to build a small farm. That is how we started a new life on our new plot."<sup>24</sup> Youth who were drafted into the army now belonged to the "people's army of peace and happiness."<sup>25</sup> And youth were also trusted because "youth and workers are pervaded with optimism."<sup>26</sup>

The industrial working class, the real bastion in the building of the new society, was also exuding happiness: "In this new country the industrial worker is not a proletarian anymore, he is not the exploited worker of the capitalist. His labor is not robot, but respect and glory. This worker will build his future and socialist homeland proud and happy."<sup>27</sup> Women, too, shared in this sense of well-being: "Women in this new country are different; they were liberated and made equal in every respect to men by people's democracy. Hungarian women are especially thankful for this dual liberation, which made them both as workers and women happy, with joy they take their place in labor, a space that was closed to them by the reactionary forces but which is now open to them all."<sup>28</sup> For instance, various advertisements that appeared in the villages were aimed directly at women to elicit their help in promoting the new three-year plan introduced in 1947. One such slogan read: "Hungarian mothers, Hungarian women, for the happiness of our families assist the 3 year plan!"<sup>29</sup>

Happiness, however, had a price. The well-known Cold War formula – work for peace by fighting the enemy – meant several things. Hungary's Cold War euphoria resulted, according to one ironic saying of party chief Rákosi, in "salami tactics," the elimination of the radical opposition and then of members of the moderate opposition. The untrustworthy peasant was first the rich peasant for whom the Russian expression "kulak" was borrowed, but anybody could be placed in this category described as the enemy of the system.<sup>30</sup> Such "*zsiros paraszt*" (literally: greasy peasant), as the derogatory term was used at the time, however, found every means possible to avoid paying taxes or fines instead of providing the specific produce for the established quota set by the local councils. Here is a testimony as to why it was impossible to fulfill the established quota:

I declare that we do not have any means to work on the field, we are totally dispossessed. In 1945 I had only one horse which died, and all my money I had to use up to buy another horse without which I cannot do agriculture. In 1946 there was an incredible drought and what I harvested I had to sow immediately so I will have bread in 1947. At the same time,

there was an outbreak of a strange disease among the poultry and all of my chickens died. Thus, I am unable to pay any fine at this point.<sup>31</sup>

Another farmer also tried to get out of the established quota by arguing that "the pig bit his wife's one finger which makes working on the field difficult." Another man asked local leaders to be excused from having to pay a fine by explaining that he had just married his daughter off and her "dowry cost too much for him," a good reason, in his view, why he could not fulfill the established quota.

A baker and his wife also became declared enemies of the state for selling their bread above the price limit established by the state. Called "*feketézők*" (black marketers) in popular parlance, the couple received altogether a ten-year jail sentence. Their two teenage daughters wrote a letter requesting clemency to the president of the country, explaining their helpless situation:

Since 16 November 1947, we live without our father and mother and keep our sick 72 year old incapacitated grandmother with us as well. We do not want to beg on the streets, and we are too young to work. I am only 12, and my younger sister is 11. We know that our parents committed their crime in order to buy us food and clothing, all in all to provide us with a decent living. We are also aware that our parents are very sorry for the crime they committed and they now want to be useful members of the working society and by so doing to assist our developing democracy.<sup>32</sup>

It is possible that this letter was the reason that the baker's wife was released a year later from jail.

In the first years of the Cold War era, elimination of the "enemy" was the battle cry of state propaganda and, as such, dominated political messages throughout the country. The one group the regime did not target as possible enemies of the state was children, primarily because party officials believed that they had not been tainted by the old bourgeois ideas of their parents. No wonder the first gesture to Hungarian children was the opening of the Pioneer Camp at Csillebérc in 1948, a beautiful site in the hill district of Budapest. When the camp was opened a large sign was put up at the entrance: "For our happy and joyous childhood, we thank the Party and Comrade Rákosi." From that time on, the camp grew into the most coveted summer resort for pioneer camping. Naturally, being from the countryside, this was not within people's reach; the Pioneer City, as it was called by the 1960s, became so important and coveted that small schools from villages simply could not obtain permission to visit it. What was the solution? Naturally, to build many more similar camps all around the country, for both the pioneers and their older schoolmates, the Komsomol (*KISZ* in Hungarian) youth. Party rulers also favored another type of camp, the so-called "work camp" (*építőtábor*), which also aided various construction and harvesting projects throughout the

countryside as well as in neighboring socialist countries. By the time we went to school, Rákosi and his cronies were gone, but the Cold War remained, and the notion of happiness continued to linger in the air. As schoolchildren, we were told that if we studied hard and got good grades and behaved well, we would receive as a bonus a week or two at one of these summer camps. That was one incentive, the other was the price; it was virtually no cost to parents. I can speak only for myself, but most of my schoolmates felt the same way and we were really happy when we got the chance to leave our home village and go for the summer pioneer camp. So, why would we not sing?

Little did we know then that melodies and texts fashioned after the Soviet-written songs (*chastuski*) were embedded with satirical political rhymes aimed at bourgeois enemies and extolling the virtues of socialist reconstruction. One such song – “Let’s Sing, Pal, about Our Beautiful Homeland, Hungary” – that was popular in those years and which we were made to sing describes children enjoying life and expressing happiness. And what is the best sign of happiness? A singing child, of course. At least this is what the leaders and the people alike believed.

Let’s sing, pal, about our beautiful homeland, Hungary,  
This is where our cradle rocked,  
Our mother raised us here.  
Let’s sing, pal, about our beautiful homeland, Hungary,  
Our country giving us all its treasures.  
This land is ours, the forest, the meadow’s ears,  
And all flowers bloom for us.

Why sing? The answer is provided by another favored Cold War song, “Our Lips Sing a Happy Song”:

Life is easier and so is production when we sing,  
Singing hails us forward when we go to fight,  
So long as our lips open for a song.  
This earth will be ours and no one can beat us in the entire world.

There were, of course, more serious songs with similar tropes such as the “coming of the new, beautiful world” (új, szebb világ), the rising of “the shining sun” (napfény) and “how beautiful is this life” (szép az élet), together with the constants, “competition” (verseny), “work” (munka), and “fighting” (harc). These last two had numerous variations: fight and work, or to work in order to fight, or fighting while working and the like.<sup>33</sup>

The adoption of the Stalin Cantata, originally written in 1938 by composer A. V. Aleksandrov with the text supplied by M. Inuskina, is a good example of the eagerness and willingness on the part of Hungarian intellectuals to live up to ideological expectations.<sup>34</sup> In the first verse of the song the chorus sings, “Our hearts open up upon hearing the word of Stalin, And happy is the man

who sings of you.” However, the following verses in Hungarian do not follow the original cantata. This is especially noticeable in the third verse, in which the Russian composer extols the virtues of the Chinese (communist) soldiers, whereas the Hungarianized version is nothing but a mediocre attempt at pleasing Stalin, as in the lines: “Because Stalin is our fight and Stalin is the peace, And with the name of Stalin the world will be better.” The fact that there is no such lyric in the original Stalin Cantata is well worth pondering for a moment. How was it possible that a songbook with such a textual sabotage was allowed to pass censorship? Or was it the censors themselves who committed such a forgery? The answer probably is the latter: István Raics was asked to translate the first verse of the song faithfully, but instead of translating the rest he simply wrote verses two and three on his own about Stalin. This can be easily followed, for the editors decided to publish the original Russian text with the Hungarian, a task that aided major Hungarian choirs at that time that were required to sing in Russian as well as in Hungarian. No matter how fashionable it was, the Stalin Cantata went out of favor after the death of Stalin, and songs that we were required to learn as children did not include any reference to him. Yet, the desire to build a happy, new socialist society was still strong in the hearts of millions and commissioned artwork did not cease to be produced.

Indeed, Cold War ideology celebrated “the race for reconstruction” (*újjáépítési verseny*), which along with the slogan “Hurry, Give, Help” (*Siess, Adj, Segíts*), urged people to work together toward the building of a new socialist society. Nowhere is this summarized more beautifully than in the title of a fashionable song of the era, “The Future belongs to the workers” (*Munkásoké a jövő*), with the last two lines “The nation is building a new country, where the future belongs to the workers.”

In ideology it was Stalinization all right, but the means to implement it was the work of Andrei Zhdanov, the chief theoretician of cultural production after 1946 in the USSR. *Zhdanovshchina*, or Zhdanovism, meant not only a total censorship of all artistic production but a constant reminder that it is social realism that serves the purpose of the socialist state. Moreover, Zhdanov asserted that Western art – immoral, antihuman and decadent – serves only the interests of the ruling class. Throughout this period, Soviet figures were used for propaganda purposes: pictures of Lenin, Stalin and Rákosi filled the screens of theatres, and were evoked in songs, all to remind the people of the values of socialism, the imminence of war and the pre-eminence of the Communist Party. The country’s rulers advocated a new “socialist” popular culture and entertainment as vehicles for “justifiable” political indoctrination. The swift ideological programming of key propaganda tools such as movies, television, newspaper and radio, which took place from 1948 to 1950, all helped to contribute to the goal of making “agitation propaganda work” more popular.

The blueprint of proletarian culture was handed over to Hungary by the Soviets. As early as 1923, Leon Trotsky, later an enemy of Stalin, had this to

say about the future of proletarian culture: it will be “a society which will have thrown off the pinching and stultifying worry about one’s daily bread, in which community restaurants will prepare good, wholesome and tasteful food for all to choose, in which communal laundries will wash clean everyone’s good linen, in which children, all the children, will be well-fed and strong and gay, and in which they will absorb the fundamental elements of science and art as they absorb albumen and air and the warmth of the sun.”<sup>35</sup> The leaders also assured the people that the dictatorship of the proletariat was only the first stage of the fight. In Trotsky’s words: “The liberating significance of the dictatorship of the proletariat consists in the fact that it is temporary – for a brief period only – that it is a means of clearing the road and of laying the foundations of a society without classes and of a culture based upon solidarity.”<sup>36</sup> No wonder, then, that happiness culture was based on such a vision!

In conjunction with this propaganda, not only cultural identities but gender identities were also drastically reorganized. The era’s fashionable motto was “Fight” (*harc*), translated as men and women faithfully serving and fulfilling party incentives. “We are merely soldiers in a campaign,” uttered Trotsky earlier in the 1920s, and Stalin believed this until the last day of his life. “Forward for the establishment of socialist culture,” another popular slogan, extolled citizens to spend as much time as possible in an organized manner with fellow DISZ members. Young pioneers greeted each other with “Forward” (*Előre*), which was meant as both an exhortation and a sense of direction about the coming of the future communist society. Mass sports activities soon became the ideal way of educating oneself and keeping fit physically. Outstanding and “worthy” participants were awarded state honors such as the Prize for the Socialist Culture and, most prestigious of all, the Stalin Prize or Kossuth Prize. Cold War-era art was above all an ideological educational tool, an instrument to mould the consciousness of the individual socialist citizen. This utilitarian approach formed the foundation of the aesthetic of socialist realism, and indeed copied aesthetic trends present in popular (folk) music as well as that of Soviet culture. For poets and musicians, this provided an impetus to write music for the masses that was above all concrete and easily recognizable, like folk songs, and grounded in the plight of the socialist state. Obviously, they sought to communicate to a wide audience by drawing on the themes expressed in popular melody, such as happiness and optimism, as well as those endorsed by the Soviet Union (progress, industrialization, future). At the same time, in order to be coherent, and to avoid superficial imitation of folk music, they attempted to utilize the various forms of European music of the workers’ movement. Composers were also involved with a critical *Kulturkampf* endeavor: to root out all styles of song and music that were deemed bourgeois, anti-Soviet and Western. Since the function of socialist art was to acculturate the young and ideologically re-educate the peasants and the intelligentsia, it followed that “false art” and pre-World War II musical culture had to be identified, so that they could be properly condemned and

eliminated. The arts, including music, underwent a profound transformation in accordance with the cultural policy of the party.<sup>37</sup>

Literature, posters and films were under the ideological cultural-political sway of “socialist realism,” fabricated to hail Soviet heroes. György Lukács observed in 1962: “All science and all literature had to serve exclusively the propagandistic demands formulated above, by Stalin himself. The understanding and spontaneous elaboration of reality by means of literature, was more and more strictly prohibited. ‘Party’ literature must no longer creatively reflect objective reality, but must illustrate in literary form the decisions of the Party.”<sup>38</sup> This was equally true for cinema; as József Révai stressed, “From Hollywood we only get rubbish, from Moscow we get films teaching humanity ... It is not New York but Moscow, which teaches us the new, progressive, socialist culture expressing realism, educating the working masses and helping them in their fight and work – a culture for which the Hungarian people is longing.”<sup>39</sup> Popular culture surely followed such central directives, with movies being singled out as the number one medium for carrying the message, providing rich evidence of film and music, all with the central themes of happiness. As in the pioneer song:

This song is about our land,  
There is no more beautiful country,  
Our country is the land of peace,  
Its inhabitants are happy people.

To further inculcate awareness of communist Stalinism, clubs and “culture circles” were created under the aegis of socialist centralized cultural homes (*művelődési ház*).<sup>40</sup> Many of these buildings were prewar clubs and associations that were nationalized by the communists and had to be refurbished and painted accordingly. Women’s and workers’ poetry circles, brass bands, a youth folk dance ensemble, choirs, hiking and nature clubs, retired workers’ associations and Esperanto clubs were established to serve the recreational needs of the people. Local theatre was reorganized out of the prewar workers’ theatre to stage hundreds of “socially accepted and redeeming” plays, many of which followed the tradition that had taken shape during the 1919 Republic of Councils and ensuing decades. While some intellectuals were relocated to the countryside and to re-education camps in the areas of Hortobágy and western Hungary, socialist culture and progress became synonymous with hard-working men and women unselfishly – and in unison – building a socialist nation-state.

### Cold War on the labor front

In order to fight the Cold War successfully, the state needed both machinery (technology) and manpower (indoctrinated citizens). The world of labor became a fierce battleground as the nonexistent socialist proletariat had to be

created out of the prewar working classes at the same time as the rural underclasses, suspected of retrograde and clerical subversion against the state, had to be coerced into accepting the party line. The social and ideological pressure was immense for those who did not fulfill or comply with expected quotas. They were singled out and exposed as “enemies” of the socialist state.

The establishment of an official workers’ movement and the elimination of previous means of production dramatically altered the fate of workers, as well as that of East European industry as a whole. The transition from prewar capitalism to a postwar Stalinist state fundamentally changed the nature of working-class relations and the way in which political socialization affected youth within the entire Soviet orbit. The brief period of transition, however, was the time during which Stalin and his party bureaucrats (known through the Russian word *apparatchik*) made their move to construct Bolshevik-style and Soviet satellite states in East-Central Europe. Between May 1945 and December 1947, the Hungarian Communist Party increased its membership from 150,000 to 864,000, constituting a massive show of support and a popular base for its legitimacy. After two years of struggle, political and religious factions were eliminated and the newly created communist Hungarian Workers’ Party (*Magyar Dolgozók Pártja* or MDP) became the country’s only party.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, large landed estates were removed from aristocratic ownership, to be redistributed among needy peasants. Those who were teachers, bureaucrats and white-collar workers before the war were also suspected of harboring antagonism against the new regime and were “B-listed.” Everyone who was B-listed and held a job had to be checked as to his or her past involvement with fascist parties, trustworthiness and loyalty to the Communist Party.<sup>42</sup> With such state terror in full swing, no serious opposition to communist rule could emerge.

It soon became clear that the communists were not about to allow the proliferation of prewar youth organizations and, in keeping with the Soviet model of the *Komsomol*, a single association was created. The young János Kádár, Hungary’s powerful future leader, presented a radical proposition in 1947 to eliminate “reactionary” and “rightist” factions by propagating a single-party system. Consequently, following the establishment of the Hungarian Peoples’ Republic on August 20, 1949, all youth organizations not endorsed by the communists became illegal in March of 1950; in their place, a single youth group, the Workers’ Youth Association (*Dolgozó Ifjúsági Szövetség*, or DISZ for short) emerged under the control of the Communist Party.<sup>43</sup>

To successfully create a communist generation, the regime was eager to be the prime mover, together with Moscow, of the socialist international youth movement; hundreds of trusted cadres were sent from Hungary to its biennial world meeting (known in Hungary through its abbreviation as VIT). It seemed that the communist victory following World War II was a victory both by and for the youth in the newly created Soviet bloc.<sup>44</sup>

Following the ideological agenda, the infrastructure was modernized according to principles of socialist urban planning; paved roads were built, electric and water lines were repaired and extended to include the new apartment complexes. Drawing on well-known Soviet socialization patterns of cooperative living, schools, day nurseries, kindergartens and medical facilities were also erected close to where people lived and worked.<sup>45</sup> Free education and health care were introduced as basic rights of citizens of the Stalinist socialist state. Outstanding workers and their families received premium vacations, often spent on the former estates of aristocrats, which now functioned as publicly owned holiday resorts, such as those on Lake Balaton, where not only leisurely activities but also political education were the order of the day. Was this all happiness? Obviously, it was for some.

The overtly ideologized Stalinist work tempo could not have been achieved without winning over the 1.5 million industrial workers under 30 years of age. These nation-wide changes in Stalinist schooling and socialization were felt immediately, as gains in Stakhanovite economic production did not go unnoticed by the state or its citizens. The symbolic significance of the glorification of laborers is well illustrated by the words of a Stakhanovite song crafted to the folk song melody “*Megismerni a kanászt*” (“You Can Recognize the Swineherd”):

The Stakhanov movement is growing day-by-day,  
Our inventors help to materialize the five-year plan.  
Hey! We’ll get ahead for the Soviets are sending us machinery  
And the workers of the world will benefit greatly.<sup>46</sup>

As Valuch explains, “Combativeness, heroism and self-sacrifice acquired high values. A mythologized community rather than the individual, centrally defined so-called community values rather than individual norms, were now posited as the desirable norms for everyday life and public thought.”<sup>47</sup>

Work (*munka, dolog*) now became strictly “socialist work,” following the party’s directives. As opposed to the peasantry, which could not be trusted, industrial workers and miners were the primary social base of Stalinism. Wives of miners were especially urged to work as well as fight; as one political leader put it, “women’s hands are not only made for gently stroking but they could turn the tools faster, and if needed they can also take up arms.”<sup>48</sup> Moreover, women were useful not only for the battlefield and the world of labor but on the home front as well in order to discover enemies responsible for sabotaging the socialist “coal battle” (*széncsata*): “The miners’ wives should help their husbands so they start their shift in the mines punctually every day. They should urge their husbands by being interested in their work, by asking them about whether they fulfilled the daily quota or not. The wives should not allow their husbands to stay home without a good reason, or to be late at the morning shift making them conscious that out of the 480 minutes of daily work not one minute is spent idly.”<sup>49</sup>

This ideological Stakhanovite masculinization of Hungarian culture certainly stimulated some industrial production and aided the implementation of social policies. Equally extraordinary were the measures taken to curtail women's rights, sexual practices and family life, and the general subordination of women to men concomitant with the solidification of a masculine gender model. Michel Foucault's observation that the modern state attempts to regulate a specific sexual discourse is applicable to Cold War Stalinist-totalitarian states as well, where constraints were placed on fecundity and reproductive behavior.<sup>50</sup> Young females were viewed as essentially masculinized workers (*munkás*), an image reinforced by the blue overalls so visible in the popular media of the early 1950s.<sup>51</sup> Their individualistic desires and sexual pleasures were thought to require taming by the newly conjured citizen of the Stalinist state, replacing the purportedly selfish, egotistic, bourgeois personality. Young women were to bear children for Rákosi's homeland: "*Asszonyinak szülni kötelesség, lánynak dicsőség*" – "For a married woman to bear a child is obligation, for a girl, it is honor." Such mothers were identified as progressive and socialist, receiving maternity leave, supplementary consumer goods and "multiple-child bonuses."<sup>52</sup> To achieve a communist utopia, abortion was outlawed, childless families were forced to pay a surtax (tax on childlessness), and contraception was available only in extreme circumstances. At the same time, women were encouraged to be educated – often only at the Marxist-Leninist High Schools of the Communist Party – and to take an active role in local and state-level politics. A national women's organization was created, MNOT (following the earlier Soviet pattern of the *zhenotdel*), to address the needs of all women in Hungary.

The ideological and economic pressure was extremely successful: to date, there have been only three years during which Hungary has witnessed a population boom (1952–54), when children were called "Ratkó kids," after the Stalinist Minister of Health Anna Ratkó. The demographic changes during the early 1950s are instructive indices of Stalinist redefinitions of gender roles and the ways in which these patriarchal tendencies simultaneously undermined and elevated the status of working women. The many inherent contradictions notwithstanding, it looked as if youth had been tamed to become the true vanguard of the Communist Party. Remarkably enough, the image of youth and the future was fused into one common mythic theme, as exemplified by the Democratic World Federation of Youth anthem extolling youth as the "rhythm of the future."<sup>53</sup>

### Cold War personality cult

The making of a happy society could not be achieved without the help of Stalin – and his pupil Rákosi. In Rákosi's words: "The happier and freer the working people of Hungary are the more they will treasure the significance of liberation, and the more they will strive to express by all means their warm gratitude to the liberating Soviet Union, to the Soviet youth and the wise

leader, the great Stalin."<sup>54</sup> The personality cult of Mátyás Rákosi served to cement ideology to action and at the same time expressed Hungary's unwavering loyalty to the Soviet Union. As one of the Moscow-trained ideologues, József Révai, wrote, "Mátyás Rákosi and we, all the Hungarian communists, all simultaneously Hungarian patriots and patriots of the Soviet Union."<sup>55</sup> To emphasize total submission to their leader, young pioneers sang a hymn of praise to Rákosi:

We thank you comrade Rákosi,  
The pure flames of our gratitude burn for you,  
Seeing you, our faces become even more proud,  
We'll throw flowers wherever you go.  
We pledge to you comrade Rákosi,  
To take your road, just lead us forever!  
The spring beckoning childish song of ours,  
Will bow to you like a flowery branch.<sup>56</sup>

But the final verse causes a bit of a shock as we discover that the happy children singing their praises to Rákosi are living in a state foster home and their number is expanding:

Sunshine jumps through the window of our foster home,  
Many clean little tables, many small chairs await us,  
Many new little comrades will join us,  
How good and how beautiful is the foster home!

The father-party-family was one of the symbols that assisted in the remaking of social relations. As Jeffrey Brooks writes, "The metaphor by which the Party became a surrogate family, though less common than the military metaphor, served to enhance the loyalties and priorities of activists."<sup>57</sup> Cold War identity legitimized the workers' state, whose leader had acquired mythical proportions, a feat achieved by well-paid intellectuals. Both the Hungarian party chief Rákosi and Stalin were idolized as "fathers," inspiring numerous novels, poems, films, songs and posters describing their heroic deeds for the "socialist patria." According to one slogan, "*Rákosi a legjobb apa, szereti is minden fia*" ("Rákosi is the best father to all his country's sons"). In 1952, when the country celebrated Rákosi's sixtieth birthday, well-known centres of folk art all around the country were asked to produce new folk art with pertinent socialist themes expressing the unflinching love toward "the greatest son of our beloved homeland."<sup>58</sup> Galvanizing the entire countryside, village artisans were commissioned to create objects with Rákosi, his name or the well-known national coat-of-arms (Rákosi címer) placed on them. The number 60 adorns the middle of several pieces of art, to signify the age of the country's celebrated leader. A carefully selected



sample of these artistic objects was then exhibited for public viewing. Potters, carvers, and embroiderers were obviously told by the local leadership how to make these objects so they would pass the careful screening of censors.<sup>59</sup>

Stalin, the epitome of the aggrandizement of the self, stands alone among all of the other East European party chiefs of his time for his ability to maintain a personality cult based on both charisma and terror.<sup>60</sup> How did he achieve the status of a charismatic leader? Such a leader, according to sociologist Max Weber, possesses special gifts of grace that need to be openly offered to the public as proof of divine power. This was not a difficult task for the ideologues bent on dissolving churches, religious orders and Christian beliefs: they resorted to the image of the sacred father that Stalinists created for Stalin. In fact, the fabrication of Stalin/Rákosi as the father of the new socialist country recalls the “imperial cult of the divinely ordained Father of the Fatherland” of the Romanov tsars.<sup>61</sup> However, the cult of leader was not simply about just a father but, as John Schoberlein suggests, about an authoritarian father whose decisions, directions and leadership were never to be questioned.<sup>62</sup> György Lukács recognized this when he wrote after the twentieth congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: “I pictured Stalin to myself as the apex of a pyramid which widened gradually toward the base and was composed of many ‘little Stalins’: they, seen from above, were the objects and, seen from below, the creators and guardians of the ‘cult of the personality.’ Without the regular and unchallenged functioning of this mechanism, the ‘cult of the personality’ would have remained a subjective dream, a pathological fact, and would not have attained the social effectiveness which it exercised for decades.”<sup>63</sup>

The personality cult of Stalin and that of his Hungarian “pupil,” Rákosi, bore a striking resemblance to nationalist and religious cults that are used by those in authority to solidify citizens.<sup>64</sup> Actually, cults centre on a single charismatic figure idolized out of proportion. Stalinism primarily served the purpose of keeping Stalin as the headman of a helpless heterogeneous tribe. The people were led to believe that it was their duty to recognize their leader as a real one, if not by nature then through political education and, if needed, by force. Weber writes of the charismatic leader that “it is the duty of those to whom he addresses his mission to recognize him as their charismatically qualified leader.”<sup>65</sup> However, there is one important distinction: a true charismatic figure (“pure” charisma, according to Weber) is divine because the leader is naturally recognized as such a figure by the people. In creating a leader, Hungarian Cold War doctrine copied Stalinist charismatic leadership, and by so doing generated a structured ideology with its rituals, language and a whole bureaucratic organization to keep it going. But unlike Stalin, who could boast of victories both in the civil war of 1919–21 and in World War II, the Hungarian Rákosi could claim as his only achievement his success in purging the country of its internal enemies and creating a socialist happiness.

## Coda

With Stalin dead in 1953, Rákosi gone from power after 1956, *Life* magazine belatedly announced in 1961 the removal of Stalin’s body from the Lenin Mausoleum with the sentence “Stalinism was buried.”<sup>66</sup> True, signs appeared on the horizon that in the Soviet Union and elsewhere in the East bloc Stalinism was laid to rest for good. Although Stalingrad was renamed Volgograd, the cult of leader has transmogrified into many facets. In a strange way, even Vladimir Putin understood that to work for the future, he had to turn back to the past: he restored the old Soviet national anthem, but with new words.<sup>67</sup> In Hungary, “Happy Pioneer” remained in the repertoire of the youth movement well into the 1970s and 1980s, with many similar songs written by eager composers.<sup>68</sup> While Stalinism itself was reduced to history, it seems that the cult of leader and the culture of the Cold War, for all their inherent danger, remain an inspiration for many.<sup>69</sup>

## Notes

- 1 “Happy Pioneer” was commissioned sometime after the first months of 1946, when the official pioneer movement took off in Hungary. The music was written by István Loránd (1933–?), a composer of socialist and popular songs; the text is by the poet, translator and writer of children’s literature, Lili B. Radó (1896–1977).
- 2 The historian Walter Laqueur has warned that, despite obvious similarities, each Soviet-bloc country should be seen as unique; *Europe in Our Time: A History, 1945–1992* (New York: Viking, 1992), 67.
- 3 Alan Wood, *Stalin and Stalinism*, 2nd edition (New York: Routledge, 2004), 62.
- 4 Winston Churchill presented his Sinews of Peace (the Iron Curtain Speech), at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri on March 5, 1946.
- 5 Harald Wydra, “The power of second reality. Communist myths and representations of democracy,” in Alexander Wöll and Harald Wydra, eds., *Democracy and Myth in Russia and Eastern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2008), 68.
- 6 *Life*, 26 February, 1945, 26.
- 7 Stephen D. Kertesz, “The methods of communist conquest: Hungary, 1944–47,” *World Politics*, 1950, 3, 1, 20.
- 8 William A. Bomberger and Gail E. Makinen, “The Hungarian hyperinflation and stabilization of 1945–47,” *Journal of Political Economy*, 1983, 91, 801–24.
- 9 Roy Medvedev points out that, “The first issue of ‘Pravda’ for 1934 carried a huge two-page article by Radek, heaping orgiastic praise on Stalin. The former Trotskyite, who had led the opposition to Stalin for many years, now called him ‘Lenin’s best pupil, the model of the Leninist Party, bone of its bone, blood of its blood’. ... He ‘is as far-sighted as Lenin’, and so on and on. This seems to have been the first large article in the press specifically devoted to the adulation of Stalin, and it was quickly reissued as a pamphlet in 225,000 copies, an enormous figure for the time.” See Roy A. Medvedev, *Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism* (London: Macmillan, 1972), 148. But others – like Nikita Khrushchev and Anastas Mikoyan – were also involved with creating the personality cult. Actually, it was Khrushchev who coined the term Stalinism and referred to the 1936 constitution as Stalin Constitution.
- 10 The election was preceded by the promulgation of a new law on 23 July 1947 which restricted the number of citizens allowed to vote. The list of eligible voters

- was also manipulated; it left out about half a million voters, most of whom belonged to the peasant party or the social democratic party. On 31 August 1947, some voters cast their absentee ballots several times in different voting districts by presenting a temporary residency permit – the so-called “blue slip” – a reason why subsequently the election was termed the “blue slip election of 1947.” On the history of what took place between 1945 and 1947, see the Hungarian works by S. Balogh szerk., *Nehéz esztendőkrónikája, 1949–1953* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1986); I. Kovács, *Magyarország megszállása* (Budapest: Katalizátor Iroda, 1990). For English language studies, see László Borhi, *Hungary in the Cold War, 1945–1956: Between the United States and the Soviet Union* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2004); and Miklos Molnár, *From Béla Kun to János Kádár: Seventy Years of Hungarian Communism* (New York: Berg, 1990). For the elimination of the peasant parties and the agricultural policies between 1945 and 1947, see Ferenc Nagy, *The Struggle behind the Iron Curtain* (New York: Macmillan, 1948); I. Csicsery-Rónay, *Saláta Kálmán, Fejezetek a Független Kisgazda Párt 1945-os Küzdelméből* (Washington, DC: Occidental Press 1989); F. Donáth, *Demokratikus Földreform Magyarországon, 1945–1947* (Budapest: Akadémia Kiadó, 1969), and I. Vida, *A Független Kisgazdapárt Politikája, 1944–1947* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976).
- 11 This was certainly seen from the US; see, for example, the optimistic analysis of events by the political scientist Andrew Gyorgy, “Postwar Hungary,” *The Review of Politics* (1947) 9, 297–21.
  - 12 Aside from the Independent Smallholders Party there was a smaller party, the National Peasant Party (*Nemzeti Paraszt Párt*). For an excellent short English summary about the developments between 1945 and 47, see Nigel Swain, *Hungary: The Rise and Fall of Feasible Socialism* (London: Verso, 1992), especially pp. 35–40. On the nature of the social democratic party and its working during this time, see Ullin Jodah McStea, “Slowing Sovietization: The Labour Party, the Hungarian Social Democrats and the Elections of 1947,” *European History Quarterly* 3 (2006), 350–70.
  - 13 For an English description of Stalinist take-over in Hungary, see Joseph Held, “1945 to the Present,” in Joseph Held, ed., *The Columbia History of Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992) especially pp. 206–13. For an interesting comparative case, see, for example, on the establishment of Romanian national communism, Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Stalinism for All Seasons: The Political History of Romanian Communism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
  - 14 The speeches of Mátyás Rákosi, as well as his memoirs written originally in exile in the Soviet Union, are available in Hungarian. Excerpts in English can be found on the website <http://www.revolutionarydemocracy.org/archive/index.htm#pdhung> (last accessed January 15, 2012).
  - 15 Tismaneanu, *Stalinism for All Seasons*, 111.
  - 16 Paul Ignatus, *Hungary* (New York: Praeger, 1972), 107.
  - 17 Agnes Heller, “Legitimation deficit and legitimation crises in East European societies,” in Vladimir Tismaneanu, ed., *Stalinism Revisited: The Establishment of Communist Regimes in East-Central Europe* (Budapest–New York: Central European University Press, 2010), 151.
  - 18 Heller, “Legitimation deficit,” 151.
  - 19 On the trials of peasants – some 400,000 between 1948 and 1950 – see V. Révai, szerk., *Törvénytelen szocializmus* (Budapest: Zrinyi, 1991), 84–85.
  - 20 According to a survey, 38 percent of those asked considered the Bible to be one of the most important books, and going to the movies was the most favored pastime among the citizens of Budapest. Tibor Valuch, “Changes in the structure and lifestyle of the Hungarian society in the second half of the XXth century,” in Gábor Gyáni, György Kövér and Tibor Vlauch, eds., *Social History of Hungary from the Reform Era to the End of the Twentieth Century* (Highland Lakes: Atlantic Research and Publications, 2004), 662.
  - 21 From the speech of Mátyás Rákosi at the miners’ meeting in Pécs, May 11, 1947. <http://mek.niif.hu/04400/04493/04493.htm> (last accessed February 26, 2012).
  - 22 Rákosi’s speech in Debrecen, August 20, 1947. <http://mek.niif.hu/04400/04493/04493.htm> (last accessed February 26, 2012).
  - 23 Rákosi’s speech in front of the Budapest communist selectmen on November 20, 1948. <http://mek.niif.hu/04600/04670/04670.htm> (last accessed February 20, 2012).
  - 24 Interview with Julia Kiss Gálné, November 11, 2011.
  - 25 Speech in the parliament, August 17, 1949. <http://mek.oszk.hu/04300/04351/04351.htm> (last accessed February 28, 2012).
  - 26 Speech at the World Democratic Youth Forum, August 28, 1949. <http://mek.oszk.hu/04300/04351/04351.htm> (last accessed February 28, 2012).
  - 27 Rákosi’s speech at the Opera House for the fifth anniversary of Hungary’s liberation, April 3, 1950. <http://mek.oszk.hu/04300/04351/04351.htm> (last accessed February 28, 2012).
  - 28 Rákosi’s speech at the Opera House for the fifth anniversary of Hungary’s liberation, April 3, 1950. <http://mek.oszk.hu/04300/04351/04351.htm> (last accessed February 20, 2012).
  - 29 Photos of such village brigades and their political messages can be viewed at [http://server2001.rev.hu/oha/oha\\_picture\\_id.asp?pid=1672&idx=2&lang=h](http://server2001.rev.hu/oha/oha_picture_id.asp?pid=1672&idx=2&lang=h) (last accessed February 25, 2012).
  - 30 Actually, the official classification made a distinction between “*uribirtokos*” and “*kulak*.” To the former category belonged those land owners who were not of peasant origin, to the latter, land-owners with peasant origins who were not “working peasants” themselves, i.e. they did not do actual physical labor but only enjoyed the harvest.
  - 31 Letter by Antal Német to the County Land Distribution Council, Délpestvármegyei Földbirtokrendező Tanácsnak Kecskemétre, Lajosmizse, December 26, 1946, Földbirtokrendező Tanács Kecskeméti Tárgyaló Tanácsa, Lajosmizse, Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun vm., 45/1077., BKMÖL XVII. 501.
  - 32 Letter to Zoltán Tildy, President of Hungary, by A. Kármán and I. Kármán, July 11, 1948, Köztársasági Elnök Úr! Kármán Aranka és Kármán Irénke levele Tildy Zoltánnak, 1948. július 1-én. Original letter in the archive of the historical collection of Lajosmizse, Helytörténeti Gyűjtemény, Lajosmizse.
  - 33 István Raics (1912–86), pianist-composer, writer and translator had a special talent for writing the lyrics for such songs.
  - 34 Rudolf Víg ed., *Népek dalai* (Songs of the Peoples) (Budapest: Budapest Székesfőváros Irodalmi Intézete, 1949), 238–39.
  - 35 Leon Trotsky, *What Is Proletarian Culture, and Is It Possible?* (1923), available at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1923/art/tia23c.htm> (last accessed January 12, 2012).
  - 36 *Ibid.*
  - 37 See Robert M. Slusser, “Soviet music since the death of Stalin,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 303 (1956): 116. For example, the communists attempted to portray Béla Bartók’s music as transcending Eastern and Western dialectics by being a true “example of the new socialist music.” See Danielle Fosler-Lussier, *Music Divided: Bartók’s Legacy in Cold War Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 19.
  - 38 Georg Lukács, “Brief an Alberto Carocci,” available at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/lukacs/works/1962/stalin.htm> (last accessed January 15, 2012). For a discussion of Zhdanovism and its criticism, see Ann Demaitre, “The Hungarian Shores of Realism,” *Comparative Literature Studies* 1, 4 (1964): 311–23.

- 39 See Open Society Archives, <http://files.osa.ceu.hu/holdings/300/8/3/text/29-4-72.shtm> (last accessed January 12, 2012).
- 40 I have described these in much more detail in László Kürti, *Youth and the State in Hungary. Capitalism, Communism and Class* (London: Pluto Press, 2002) especially Chapter 4, 82–114.
- 41 The secret police (AVH) was one of the most important factors in assisting the establishment of the Stalinist order in Hungary, similarly to other East European countries. The *Stasi* in East Germany, the *Cheka* or later the *KGB* in the Soviet Union, the *Securitate* in Romania had the same role. They infiltrated all major institutions – schools, municipal administrations, factories, radio, television, newspapers and political parties – and instituted a reign of terror over the population. On February 27, 1947, the so-called “conspiracy trials” began, during which more than 200 people were sentenced before the People’s Court. For a first-hand account of the trials, see Istvan Szent-Miklosy, *With the Hungarian Independence Movement, 1943–1947* (New York: Praeger, 1988), 151–54.
- 42 The communists, consciously or not, followed the example of 1922 when, during the first years of the regime of Admiral Miklós Horthy leftist and communist sympathizers were fired from their jobs. On the cult of Horthy and possible parallels see, Dávid Turbucz, *Horthy Miklós* (Budapest: Napvilág, 2011).
- 43 The Workers’ Youth Association, DISZ (Dolgozó Ifjúsági Szövetség), was founded on June 16, 1950, with its purpose defined as follows: “The Workers’ Youth Association is a non-party mass organization uniting the widest spectrum of working youth into a revolutionary association. It is the vanguard of the Hungarian working-class and the people, led indirectly by the Hungarian Workers’ Party. All activities of the DISZ are determined by the victorious world-view of the working class, Marxism-Leninism.” Even as late as 1986, at the Communist Youth League congress it was stated that there was a need to “build and defend a developed socialist society,” see Kürti, *Youth and the State in Hungary*, 142.
- 44 Leerom Medovoi, *Rebels: Youth and the Cold War Origins of Identity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 18.
- 45 Victor Buchli, *An Archeology of Socialism. The Narkomfin Communal House, Moscow* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 28–30.
- 46 For a useful comparison see the detailed analysis of Stalinist popular music and the banal lyrics of mass songs in Soviet Russia by Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).
- 47 Valuch, “Changes in the structure and lifestyle,” 605.
- 48 Gyöngyi Gyarmati, “Nők, játékfilmek, hatalom,” in Gyöngyi Gyarmati, Mária Schadt and József Vonyó szerk., *1950-es évek Magyarországa játékfilmekben* (Pécs: ASOKA Bt, 2004), 33.
- 49 *Ibid.*, 37.
- 50 See, László Kürti “The Wingless Eros of Socialism: Nationalism and Sexuality in Hungary,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 164, 1 (1991): 55–67.
- 51 Gyöngyi Farkas, “Gyertek lányok traktorra, női traktorosok a gépállomáson és a propagandában,” *Korall* 13 (2003): 65.
- 52 Kürti, “The Wingless Eros of Socialism.”
- 53 The “Anthem of Democratic Youth” was written by the noted Russian Anatoly Novikov (1896–1984), and transcribed into Hungarian by Endre Gáspár (1897–1955), an excellent translator and literary editor. The trite and overzealous text reads as follows: “We have one slogan: peace, / We’ll go to war for a happy future. / For one grand goal advances our youthful army, / Wherever they live, whatever sky they are under, / The new generation of our struggling world is with us. / On the earth, in the sky, the new song is: / Youth, youth, youth! / Million hearts throb its rhythm, rhythm, / There can’t be no force defeating those fighting for the people, / And who sings the anthem of future: / Youth, youth!”
- 54 Speech at the World Democratic Youth Forum, August 28, 1949. <http://mek.oszk.hu/04300/04351/04351.htm> (last accessed February 25, 2012).
- 55 Excerpts of Révai’s speeches and writings can be found on the home page of the Open Society Archives, <http://files.osa.ceu.hu/holdings/300/8/3/text/29-4-72.shtm> (last accessed January 12, 2012).
- 56 The Hungarian text can be accessed at <http://www.justsomeselyrics.com/950774/K%C3%B6sz%C3%B6nj%C3%BCk-n%C3%A9ked-R%C3%A1kosi-elvt%C3%A1rs-Lyrics>; it can be listened as well, with some archival photos, at: [http://karpathaza.network.hu/video/a\\_szocializmus\\_korszaka/koszonjuk\\_neked\\_rakosi\\_elvtars](http://karpathaza.network.hu/video/a_szocializmus_korszaka/koszonjuk_neked_rakosi_elvtars). It is also available on YouTube, but with different, sometimes funny, photos <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MYGhcYJYtzU>.
- 57 Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin! Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 25.
- 58 Quote from an editorial in the journal *Ethnographia*, official quarterly of the Hungarian Ethnographic Society, 63 (1952): 2. The editorial is anonymous but it can be fairly certain that the editor-in-chief, Gyula Ortutay, wrote it, or that he ordered somebody to write it. Ortutay was also the first Stalinist minister of religion and education between 1947 and 1950, then president of the Hungarian Ethnographic Society.
- 59 A few photos of these objects can be seen on the digitized version of *Ethnographia*, see [http://www2.arcanum.hu/ethnographia/opt/a100602.htm?v=pdf&a=start\\_f](http://www2.arcanum.hu/ethnographia/opt/a100602.htm?v=pdf&a=start_f).
- 60 The cults of communist leaders are discussed by Balázs Apor, Jan C. Behrends, Polly Jones and E.A. Rees, eds., *The Leader Cult in Communist Dictatorships: Stalin and the Eastern Bloc* (Houndsmill and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).
- 61 See, Ernest A. Zitser, *The Transfigured Kingdom: Sacred Parody and Charismatic Authority at the Court of Peter the Great* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 142.
- 62 John Shoeberlein, “Doubtful Dead Fathers and Musical Corpses: What To Do with the Dead Stalin, Lenin and Tsar Nicholas,” in John Borneman, ed., *Death of the Father: An Anthropology of the End of Political Authority* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2004), 203–4.
- 63 Lukács published his reflections on the Twenty-second Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union first in 1962, Georg Lukács, “Brief an Alberto Carocci.”
- 64 Balázs Apor, “National Traditions and the Leader Cult in Communist Hungary in the Early Cold War Years,” *Twentieth Century Communism*, 1, 1 (2009): 50–71.
- 65 Max Weber, “The Sociology of Charismatic Authority,” in Hans H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 247.
- 66 “In Moscow a Plot Unfolds, A Despot Emerges. Big Pitch To Shake Up the Universe,” *Life*, 10 November 1961, 32. See also Robert Payne, *The Rise and Fall of Stalin* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), 713.
- 67 Robert Service, *Stalin: A Biography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 596.
- 68 Just to name some of the most important collections of socialist song from post-Stalinist years, “Zúgjon dalunk, miként fergeteg” (Like thunder, roars our song), published in 1975; “Daloljunk, pajtás” (Let’s sing, pals), published sometimes in the mid-1970s; and “Mint a mókus fenn a fán” (“Like a squirrel on the tree”) appeared in 1971. The “Happy Pioneer” song has also been revived since 1990

and it is in the repertoire of a number of music bands and singers, all using it to parody socialism.

- 69 Balázs Apor, "The 'Secret Speech' and its Effect on the 'Cult of Personality' in Hungary," *Critique*, 35, 2 (2007): 229–47.

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