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HALFWAY OR NO WAY?

ABSTRACT I am going to sketch a general picture of Hungary today. This will require to present in some detail the road on which we have arrived here: the peculiarities of the Kádár-regime, i.e. the "goulash-communism" and of the Hungarian "refolution" (self-contradictory mixture of revolution and reform) i.e. the constitutional revolution of 1989; the features and failure of the liberal enterprise that to a large extent characterized the first 10-20 years of the newly established democracy. I will describe the present situation in Hungary as a halfway in the learning process of a democratic political culture that already owes a lot to its established traditions: the state-centrism, paternalistic leadership, occasional outbursts of nationalism. The genre of this paper is properly called essay in its meaning of "attempt" at defining a concept of Hungarian political culture: "kádárism".

Keywords: state, liberalism, political culture, "kádárism", Hungary

Qui cherche dans la liberté autre chose qu'elle-même est fait pour servir.
L'ancien régime et la Révolution, livre III, chap. 3

He who seeks in freedom anything else than freedom itself is fit to become a slave.
Alexis de Tocqueville[1]

[1] A. de Tocqueville, 'The Old Regime and the Revolution' in idem, *The Recollections of Alexis de Tocqueville*, transl. by A. T. de Mattos, ed. by J. P. Mayer, New York 1896, p. 204.

INTRODUCTION

By now it seems quite obvious that something is going on in Hungary and we are not entitled to dismiss this "something" as merely "democracy's business as usual". Either the friends or foes of Hungary's actual government, the government notwithstanding, agree that we may speak about a kind of revolution. Viktor Orbán, prime minister of Hungary, in several public appearances talks about the "unfinished revolution", "failed revolution" of 1989, or he defines emphatically the 2010 elections as a "revolution in the voting booths". On the other hand the very recent, so-called *Tavares-report*[2] speaks about the "dismantling of the Rechtsstaat" or even more recently, Adam Michnik about a "gradual coup"[3] – all that seems to be a counterrevolution. Bear in mind that every revolution entails a counterrevolution, and without it is not complete.[4]

To be able to discuss the *context* within which Hungarian politics unfolds today we will investigate one (and only one) of the constituting elements of the Hungarian political culture: "kádárism" and try to be as consistent as possible to present what follows from it in regard to the process of transition from communism to democracy and policymaking in the new regime.

If we all, fathers, mothers, children and even grandchildren, are the bastards of communism – as Adam Michnik puts it – it is by no means a wonder why our regime is a bastard of the communist system – *despised by the enlightened classes, hostile to liberty, governed by intriguers, adventurers, and valets*.[5] But we will have no clearer picture of what goes on in Hungary until we investigate several other sources of the Hungarian political culture as well: authoritarianism and nationalism and social structure. But this paper has to have its limits; we won't be able to accomplish all that, except some scattered remarks when analyzing the present "state of affairs". My analysis is a political one

2 2012/2130(INI) *Situation of Fundamental Rights: Standards and Practices in Hungary (pursuant to the EP resolution of 16 February 2012)*, 2 May 2013. Preparatory document: *Working Document 4: On the Situation of Fundamental Rights: Standards and Practices in Hungary (pursuant to the EP resolution of 16 February 2012) – The Principles of Democracy and the Rule of Law*, Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, 5 March 2013, at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/libe/draft-reports.html?linkedDocument=true&ufolderComCode=LIBE&ufolderLegId=7&ufolderId=09747&urefProcYear=&urefProcNum=&urefProcCode=#menuzone>, 6 June, 2013.

3 'Polish Dissident Adam Michnik: "We Are Bastards of Communism"', *Der Spiegel*, 29 July 2013, at <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/polish-dissident-adam-michnik-on-eastern-europe-after-communism-a-913912.html>, 3 August 2013.

4 Alexis de Tocqueville speaks in his memoirs about the social revolution of 1848 and the bonapartist counterrevolution – the Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte – as being parts of the same process within which the claims for social security, order and state interference with all the affairs of people call forth the destruction of liberty. Being very well aware that history never repeats itself, I might answer – again with Tocqueville: *On voit que l'histoire est une gallerie de tableaux où il y a peu d'originaux et beaucoup de copies* (A. de Tocqueville, *L'ancien régime et la Révolution*, ed. by J. P. Mayer, Paris 1967, *Idées*) – that in the gallery of history are very many reproductions and just a few new pictures: the resemblance between bonapartism and the NCS (see last part of this paper) is striking.

5 Idem, *The Recollections...*

and I won't engage in discussing in detail the economy, economic development – this is indeed a serious self-limitation.

However, the aim of this paper is to give an insight into the Hungarian political culture. The "cultural turn" approach came about in political science some 20 years ago,[6] when professionals and commentators alike were unable to explain the differences of the revolutions of 1989 and more importantly, the differences in the prospects of the newly established democracies. Shall we look in the pre-revolutionary period to find the answers?[7] Clearly, this is an insight that would go back to Alexis de Tocqueville's

[6] In international scholarship, political culture studies – we may say – always were of a concern for authors. The modern history of the concept started with G. A. Almond, 'Comparative Political Systems', *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (1956), at <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2127255>. Of course, the most influential work is G. A. Almond, S. Verba, *The Civic Culture. Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, Princeton 1963 and under the form of "social capital" R. D. Putnam, R. Leonardi, R. Y. Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work. Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton 1993 and R. D. Putnam, 'Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1995). Although Putnam denies that he ever thought of political culture, the works inspired by his analysis make frequent reference to it. Several attempts were made to adopt, criticize, expand, restrict, and recast the original concept. An overview and a new operational proposal is to be found in: R. Lane, 'Political Culture: Residual Category or General Theory', *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (1992). A systematic categorization is found in: W. Mishler, D. Pollack, 'On Culture, Thick and Thin: Toward a Neo-Cultural Synthesis' in D. Pollack [et al.] (eds.), *Political Culture in Post-Communist Europe. Attitudes in New Democracies*, Aldershot 2003, which take into account post-communist experiences as well. These experiences are dealt with in many other studies. A summary of these is to be found in J. Kubik, 'Cultural Approaches' in R. Kollmorgen, W. Merkel, H.-J. Wagener (eds.), *The Handbook of Transformation Research*, Wiesbaden 2012. The most comprehensive inventory of theories and approaches for students is G. Pickel, S. Pickel, *Politische Kultur – und Demokratieforschung. Grundbegriffe, Theorien, Methoden. Eine Einführung*, Wiesbaden 2006, *Lehrbuch*.

[7] It is very instructive to re-read now Gabriel Almond's once-famous article: G. A. Almond, 'Communism and Political Culture Theory', *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (1983). With his own theory in mind, without a thorough knowledge of how the Soviet system operates, with barely any survey support or of evidence gathered in the field it is by no means a wonder that Almond failed to assess the correct relationship of political culture and communism, and this is true especially for Hungary. However, there is a sentence in this article that might help in a post-factum analysis. *What the scholarship of comparative communism has been telling us is that political cultures are not easily transformed. A sophisticated political movement ready to manipulate, penetrate, organize, indoctrinate, and coerce, given an opportunity to do so for a generation or longer ends up as much or more* ***transformed than transforming***, p. 137 – emphasis added. If this is true, than we are guided to investigate even further in time and social structure; it is possible that the "kádárism" is an expression of a much more deeply rooted political culture and not so much a "special Hungarian way" of communism ("goulash communism" as it was called). On the other hand, a dynamic concept of political culture is needed, because it seems also true that Hungarian-style communism has shaped political culture with lasting effects. By now there is a growing amount of literature that deals with communist legacy as influencing, determining in various ways and degrees the prospects of post-communist democratization. Some (more successful) examples include: R. Rose, *Understanding Post-Communist Transformation. A Bottom up Approach*, London–New York 2009; 'Trust, Distrust and Skepticism: Popular Evaluations of Civil and Political Institutions in Post-Communist Societies', *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 59, No. 2 (1997), at <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2998171>; R. Rohrschneider, *Learning Democracy. Democratic and Economic Values in Unified Germany*, Oxford–New York 1999, *Comparative European Politics*; G. Pop-Eleches, J. A. Tucker, 'Communism's Shadow: Postcommunist Legacies, Values, and Behavior', *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (2011), at <http://dx.doi.org/

The Old Regime and the Revolution. It would be undeniable that this paper owes a lot to the spirit of Tocqueville's *oeuvre*.[8]

THE FAILURE OF THE REGIME OR SYSTEM CHANGE?[9]

Ultimate failure: this is the overall consensus on the regime change in 1989. Gáspár Miklós Tamás the anarchist, left-wing theoretician, the extreme right, quasi-fascist *Jobbik* party, the greens, and Viktor Orbán, prime minister of Hungary share the same belief, which is based upon a wide-ranging popular feeling. The only exception is the socialist-liberal elite, but even they remain silent confronting the consensus, because they have to take upon themselves the guilt that probably is not theirs: being in power for 12 years out of the 23 years since the regime change, they are considered to be responsible for that failure.

The essence of the consensus is very simple. The regime-change created a world where things fare badly; or created a bad world, that from the moral, political, economic point of view is disaster itself, Hell on Earth.

Moving against the flow, we have to carefully analyze the results of the first decade of the new, democratic regime, and then ask again, why the disappointment has risen with such a force?[10] (From the point of view of a political analysis, we are confront-

10.5129/001041511796301588>; D. Pollack [et al.] (eds.), *Political Culture in Post-Communist Europe*...

8 When debating the "social capital" notion and research, Foley and Edwards (iidem, 'Escape from Politics? Social Theory and the Social Capital Debate', *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 40, No. 5 (1997), at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0002764297040005002>) basically distinguish between the rational choice-based school (see J. S. Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory*, Cambridge (Mass.) 1994) and neo-Tocquevillians. They analyze the *Democracy in America* and Tocqueville's picture of the American associational life, but I take inspiration from the whole Tocquevillian approach to politics in designing a broader concept of political culture. The "cultural turn" in political science means also a "sociological turn" in culturalist approaches, an attempt to define notions, find variables, research significant correlations... My references to Tocqueville and to István Bibó result in a far less operational – systematic and scientific one may say – inquiry and will be more theoretical-descriptive in nature.

9 I make a distinction between "regime" and "system". Regime is defined as a primarily political notion, as "ruling". If one party rules, within undemocratic or seemingly democratic circumstances (some elections, however fake, are held), then we may speak about a regime: like fascist, nazi, communist regime; or democracy, when the "people rule". The "system" refers to governance: a set of interrelated policies which would be recognizable by one common ground they constitute: market economy or state-centered policies; "statism" may refer to a system of governance that can operate within democratic or autocratic regimes.

10 In 2003 András Bozóki could describe the East Central European transitions as "success stories" (idem, 'Success Stories: Lessons of Democratization in Central Europe', *Regio: Minorities, Politics, Society – English Edition*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (2003)). Nonetheless, Bozóki's systematic and comparative account is worth consulting (downloadable version: http://epa.oszk.hu/00400/00476/00003/pdf/01.pdf). Christian Haerpfer, in a classical collection of studies on East European political culture, writes in the same vein: *Over 15 years after the events of 1989, the democratic transformation of the Hungarian politi-*

ed with an intriguing methodological question: something that is considered a *fact* by a citizen could be considered a *non-fact* from a theoretical point of view?)

THE LIBERAL REVOLUTION

At the beginning of the 90's, Stephen Holmes, reflecting on the "end of history" and the liberal revolution as the last stage of history thesis of Francis Fukuyama, wrote: *Throughout the post-Communist world... we are observing waves of radical change that look so far like a liberal revolution*. *Is liberal revolution*, he asked rhetorically, *not the most significant fact of contemporary political life?*[11] But the heralds of a new – liberal democratic – era in the history of East Central Europe were many, so no complete listing is possible (an overview is given by Jeffrey)[12]. Beneath this somewhat eschatological surface, questions and doubts were lurking. These were expressed most strikingly by a headline in the New York Times that predicted that East Central Europeans are likely to discover the "The Tunnel at the End of the Light".[13]

What went wrong with these high hopes? What do the scholars and what does the public expect from "liberal democracy"?

For theoreticians it was doubtless clear that "liberal democracy" means constitutionalism and the Rule of Law (Rechtsstaat) as components of liberalism, while democracy means a democratic political regime with its institutions and, above all, free elections. According to this recipe formulated by most of the thinkers, an effervescent period of constitution– and institution-building began in 1990.

If we consider the written, one-single-document constitution, seemingly, Hungary lagged far behind: there was no new constitution adopted until 2012. Bruce Ackerman's advice to East Central European countries to use "the window of opportunity" to frame a brand new constitution that will respond to the desires of those billions detaching themselves from communism, in Hungary was not accomplished.[14]

cal system is almost complete. (idem, 'Hungary – Structure and Dynamics of Democratic Consolidation' in H.-D. Klingeman, D. Fuchs, J. Zielonka (eds.), *Democracy and Political Culture in Eastern Europe*, London 2006, p. 148, *Routledge Research in Comparative Politics*, 15.) It looks like a democracy, it talks like a democracy – is it not a democracy? (See footnote no. 42. It is indeed hard to find the proper concepts, theoretical tools to evaluate a democratic performance.)

11 S. Holmes, 'The Scowl of Minerva', *The New Republic*, 23 March 1992, pp. 27, 33.

12 J. C. Isaac, 'The Meanings of 1989', *Social Research*, Vol. 63, No. 2 (1996).

13 Regarding the prospects and achievements of privatization in East Central Europe, Stephen Cohen uses the same metaphor (idem, 'Privatization in Eastern Europe: The Tunnel at the End of the Light', *The American Prospect*, 19 December 2001.)

14 When "the window of opportunity" had been long ago closed, capitalizing on the symbolic failure, the Orbán-government adopted a new constitution in 2011, which entered into effect "for another 1000 years" on 1 January, 2012. It was officially celebrated in many ways: commissioning illustrations from artists, placing the book in every local council on a specially-engineered uniform table ("the table of the constitution"), holding festivities at Ópusztaszer (according to the tradition, this is the place where the nomad Hungarians first agreed to settle and "made the basic arrangements for the country").

On the other hand, the ("communist") constitution being in effect from 1949 until 1989, was first largely revised in 1989 by the last communist parliament, allowing the multi-party system to be formed and consequently the organization of democratic elections; and it was completely changed by the newly elected parliament in 1990 by a compromise of the conservative majority and liberal opposition. There was a saying that time that except the title of the constitution and that the capital city of Hungary was Budapest, nothing else was left from the old constitution. Apart from this thorough transformation of the constitution, more important was the development of constitutionalism that began with the establishment of one of the most powerful constitutional courts in Europe, comparable with the Gerichtshof in the Federal Republic of Germany and that of the US Supreme Court.

Indeed, the Hungarian Constitutional Court relied heavily upon the rulings of the German and American courts. Its first president, László Sólyom, developed a whole philosophy for the necessity of "amending" the democratic law-making process, guiding it along higher principles inspired by the Natural Law (conservative-liberal) tradition.

While the triumphal march of liberalism went on undisturbed, the democratic component of the term "liberal democracy" suffered heavy practical blows – and I am going to mention **some of them**.

Firstly, as I have already suggested, there has been no brand new constitution adopted in Hungary that would foster democratic allegiance, and one that would have conferred democratic legitimacy to the new regime. But the situation was even worse. The constitution that took shape in 1990 was either discussed in the Round Table Talks by communists and self-proclaimed politicians – the so-called "democratic opposition" – and then voted by the communist parliament, or was changed trough a parliamentary compromise between the governmental majority and opposition in the newly elected parliament. All was done above the heads of the people. As if the liberal revolution would say to its soldiers: Constitution? None of your business!

Interestingly enough, this "democratic deficit", accumulated during the events which is usually called "negotiated revolution" or "refolution" (a mixture of reform and revolution; the term belongs to Timothy Garton Ash) didn't really bother the mass of people. Liberty just in one aspect was its concern: regaining the freedom of the country, regaining sovereignty, drawing out the Soviet Army from Hungary. Of course, there were some popular movements, incipient green rallies against a dam to be built on the

As regards the "novelty" of the constitution, there are two, perhaps not so distinct views: the first, most clearly expressed by László Sólyom, former president of the Republic and first president of the Constitutional Court is that the new is not at all new, and it preserves the basic liberties provided for by the old one as well. The serious backlashes are the curtailing of the powers of the Constitutional Court and dismantling the system of checks and balances. The other opinion agrees on previous two issues but adds that the constitution is new inasmuch that it reflects a certain worldview, introduces a certain kind of historical interpretation and a conservative-Christian philosophy into the text (mainly into the legally un-enforceable preamble of it, but giving guidance to the interpretation of the whole constitution). Ongoing debates are emphasizing another aspect of the adoption: it is uncertain how much public support the new constitution has got; there was no popular referendum on it, but it was crafted and voted by two-thirds in the parliament that "represents the majority".

Danube, or protests against the destruction of villages in Romania by the most oppressive communist regime, that of Nicolae Ceauşescu... None of these entailed the element of individual liberty.[15]

The reason of this "liberty-blindness" lies in the nature of the Kádár-regime and the history of Hungarian communism, the least oppressive – most liberal,[16] I would say – communist regime in the region. (I shall return to this controversial subject.)

Secondly, there were some rulings of the Constitutional Court that went straight against the public opinion. The first ruling of this kind was the one that abolished capital punishment. In October 1990, the ruling of the Constitutional Court[17] was certainly a landmark decision. László Sólyom, in his concurring opinion acknowledged that the abolishment of capital punishment was made possible solely on the ground of the personal opinions of the judges and the requirements of the "present time" – and had no foundation whatsoever in the written constitution. To be sure, this ruling ran completely against the opinion of the majority of citizens. The "right to life and dignity of the human being" thus found its way into the non-textual content of the constitution, in the last instance getting its philosophical underpinning in the natural law, and demonstrated once again that there are cases when liberal principles outweigh democratic decision-making.[18]

Beside the aforementioned conflict, the immediacy of the ruling also should be noted (the arguments consisted within the opinions already doing this). The US and its Supreme Court reached – after centuries – Obama and dismantled the discrimination in the country. But the leaders of the new democracies in East Central Europe couldn't tell the world and the European Union as they stared and later wanted to join, please wait a little bit, we'll assure you, that in the foreseeable future we'll conform to your set standards. The paradox of latecomers is this: they join the club, but they will feel uncomfortable.

To sum up, there was no "developmental model" at hand, just the revolutionary road was open. A constitutional, liberal revolution couldn't and indeed, shouldn't have

[15] There is good reason to make a distinction between the two notions, liberty and freedom. Liberty would mean constitutionally protected individual rights and civil liberties. The sense of freedom would be "independence", sovereignty linked to the liberty of a community, usually a nation. As with its republican aspect, the concept of freedom also entails the freedom of a citizen to have the possibility to be involved in political decision-making. The distinction of liberty and freedom is derived from H. Arendt, *On Revolution*, New York 1965, *Compass Books*, C166 and seems to be useful in approaching East-Central European politics: the crippled nature of freedom and the lack of a tradition in the development of individual rights (see also: H. F. Pitkin, 'Are Freedom and Liberty Twins?', *Political Theory*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (1988), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0090591788016004001>).

[16] Though Artur Zwolski remarks in a comment: *Every representative of a communist country claims that his or her communist regime was the least oppressive* we, as analysts, are entitled to compare these regimes according to their true merits. Meanwhile I would like to thank wholeheartedly Artur Zwolski for his tremendous help in proofreading my essay.

[17] L. Sólyom, 'A halálbüntetés eltörléséről', *ABH 23/1990*, The Constitutional Court of Hungary, 1990.

[18] For a good discussion of this eternal conflict see for example J. H. Ely, *Democracy and Distrust. A Theory of Judicial Review*, Cambridge 1980.

been avoided, but in this way the "real", popular revolution was averted, and instantly, political conflicts within the democratic regime itself were created. (But even the constitutional revolution hasn't been carried out consistently, introducing the element of gradualism referred to in the first remark.)

Thirdly, the first impressions of a liberal democracy in working were to some extent disappointing.

Several facts should be mentioned here.

a. The first free elections (March 24th and a second round on April 8th) were won by the MDF (Magyar Demokrata Fórum – Hungarian Democratic Forum[19]), a moderate--conservative party which traced its ideological roots to a "völkisch", "narodnik" intellectual tradition, both left and right wing, being socially sensitive but cultivating also nationalist issues. Its leaders, fully active between the two world wars, during the 60's, 70's, 80's, were half-heartedly anticommunists meanwhile collaborating with the communist regime that in exchange allowed some of their ideas to reach the public. When formed in 1987, the "party" has had no clear ideology and in its ranks we would encounter the representatives of "narodnik" traditition, would-be right-wing extremists, some people of the old aristocracy and socialists (even former members of the ruling communist party), and a few liberals. Its success at the elections can be attributed exactly to this unstructured character, representing to large extent an equally unstructured electorate. Their only pledge before the elections was "don't be afraid", we are the "Calm Power"[20], we won't turn your life upside down, we are not radicals and we won't hang communists by their neck to streetlamps. Anyone could find something for himself/herself in this promise, without being worried about making choices. The promise referred in a subtle way even to a well-ordered society; one that is served by a caring state and gets rid of open conflicts and leaves the individual alone in its business. The image that the electorate saw behind the slogan was that of the continuation of the Kádár-regime without János Kádár and without communists. It was already seen what four years later became clear, when the socialists, the reformed former communist party took power with overwhelming majority, that *the past is an unchallenged promise*.

b. On October 25 the largest protest in the new democratic regime took place. The so called "taxi drivers' blockade" paralyzed Budapest and in many places of the country road traffic was severely obstructed. The protest broke up because fuel prices went up.

The case was a perfect exhibition of a comedy of errors, where every participant misunderstood its place in the democratic play and acted according to old instincts. The cab drivers were revolted and asked vehemently for government regulation to serve their particular interests. Although the law on freedom of assembly was one of the most important laws agreed upon at the Round Table Talks and permitted free elections to be organized, furthermore restricted wanton actions of the communist police in the last phase of regime-change, drivers didn't ask for permission for demonstration. It was

[19] Note that there is no mentioning in the name of a "party".

[20] "Force tranquille", initially the slogan of François Mitterand back in 1981. Sometimes the "calm power" is associated with Martin Luther King.

a spontaneous movement which for the protesters and the government alike looked as if it were a true upheaval, revolution even. The government had a certain moral sympathy for "the poor people" that had to suffer under the unjust capitalism which suddenly appeared. At the beginning, they had no clue how to solve the situation, oscillating between using the army to clear the roads and withdrawing altogether. The opposition – mainly liberals (socialists, former communists were quiet: in good old times something like this couldn't have happened), though in parliament, went on to the streets and brought tea to protesters; they felt that alas! The real revolution has come and hoped in secret that government would collapse. In the end, the situation was solved peacefully, but many questions regarding democracy remained open. In the following period conferences were organized that aimed to somehow define the relationship of the rule of law and civil disobedience. Even today, from time to time, the issue comes to the fore and theoretical and practical consequences are weighed. One thing is certain: being in office for only few months, the government lost its popularity, it was considered that it deceived the people and never recovered. The new democratic regime began by proving itself unable to meet the expectations of the regime change; proving that democratic politics is nonetheless politics and not a community dream.[21]

c. The intrinsic interest of politics (and not much later that of the politicians taking on the form of corruption) prevailed over the interest in participation of the masses in politics.

Many provisions of the new constitution favored governability, reducing the area of participation of citizens in direct political decision-making. Some of these provisions stand out and should be mentioned here.

Perhaps the most important of them is the election of the president of the Republic. In 1989, on November 26th a referendum was held to establish the form of government in the 3rd republic of Hungary. Among other things, the main question the citizens were asked to respond to was if president should be elected directly by the population or should be elected in parliamentary procedure. The result was extremely close, just only about 6000 votes deciding that the president should be elected by the parliament. The most ardent champion of this solution was the already formed Alliance of Free Democrats (Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége) that succeeded to become the second largest party during the campaign, even with good prospects for winning the elections next year.

The argument for the position of AFD was a clear anticommunist message: we don't want any dictators anymore! A presidential republic will always carry the danger that a single person will seize more and more power and will be able to influence the political decisions more than the representatives of a democratically elected parliament. Furthermore, the long authoritarian, non-democratic history of Hungary should be interrupted.

[21] Of course, politicians knew this, they were well aware that "dirty politics" will clash with the fairy tale of democracy. József Antall, prime minister in 1990 declared that *we are doomed to be a kamikaze-government* and, during a discussion with MPs of his party: *We won the elections now, but we have lost the forthcoming ones*.

This argument has been very popular those days, but equally popular was the more democratic counter-argument that wanted the people to retain as much decision-making power as possible, and the direct election of the president is certainly the most important of all of them. This latter position, paradoxically, could have served as much the other position as well: to avoid one-man rule is good to have a balance of powers.

In more general terms, we can say that one position was rooted in an egalitarian political philosophy and the other was embedded in a hundred year political tradition of one-man rule in Hungary. Since the end of the 19th century, Hungary has always had a *ruler*: the Tisza-family, giving prime ministers, Admiral István Horthy, the Stalinist Mátyás Rákosi, János Kádár.

At the end of the day, a very strong parliament has been created, somewhat restricting the participation of citizens in direct decision-making, meanwhile creating a fertile ground for parliamentary dictatorship and thus the possibility of one-man rule couldn't be avoided.

Other provisions of the new constitution pointed in the same direction. Not the parliament got the cabinet and the prime minister, but the cabinet and prime minister got the parliament – the executive always can dominate legislation. The prime minister can be removed only by a "constructive" vote of no confidence as in Germany, Spain or Israel, meaning that a vote of no confidence requires that the opposition, in the same ballot, propose a candidate of their own. Ministers have to face only "censure motion" and no "no confidence vote". ("No Confidence" would lead to compulsory resignation of the minister whereas "Censure" is meant to show disapproval and does not result in the resignation of a minister.)

The governability of the country was a paramount concern for those who shaped the constitution of the newly established democracy, that issuing from dictatorship risked to slip into anarchy. Thus, the road towards democratic authoritarianism was paved.

Fourthly, we have to dwell a little bit on the nature and achievements of the "democratic opposition" that was thought to be the avant-garde of the regime-change.

"Democratic opposition" is a generic term which covers a multitude of attitudes, groups, acts, outlooks. Basically, it is a rejection of the Kádár-communism, a rejection of the compromise it offered after the retaliation of 1956. Following the birth of Solidarność in Poland and the introduction of martial law, democratic opposition in Hungary began to institutionalize: samizdats (half-clandestine publications) were edited (with the spiritual leadership of János Kis, later first leader of the Alliance of Free Democrats) and distributed (mainly through László Rajk's "boutique" and by the future mayor of Budapest, Gábor Demszky), "flying universities" (private gatherings, where a professor held courses, for example on the true story of the Soviet Union by Miklós Szabó, a famous historian, or Mihály Vajda about the Hungarian Jews and the "Jewish question") were organized, civil organizations were formed (like the SZETA – Organization for Supporting the Poor, with the leadership of some sociologists, Ottilia Solt and Gábor F. Havas).

The list is not intended to be a comprehensive one, but it exhibits the main threat of the democratic opposition: neither had a single, unified ideology or organization, nor was it a well-defined political movement. On the other hand, what united these scattered political movements was the hope that by its sheer presence they would force the communist regime to show its own limits; that they would reveal that behind the façade of the "most happy barrack" Hungarian communism is the same ghetto as all the others.

"Democratic opposition" was above all a moral attitude open even to a large public, resting on the rejection of "goulash socialism". The problem though was that Hungarians felt quite well boiling in that goulash (see the "Kádár's legacy" chapter below). For the majority of Hungarians, the democratic opposition was a rebuked, strange "movement".

This moral attitude drew much of its force from Václav Havel's *Power of the Powerless*[22] and György Konrád's *Antipolitics.*[23] When Konrád's *Antipolitics*[24] has been published in Hungarian in a "samizdat" edition in 1986, there was a clear sign that "something political" happened, without being clear what kind of politics it was all about. The publication was a proof of political courage, but the political aims were unclear. So the democratic opposition began to organize itself and emerged as a political movement with the publication of the first truly political document. "Social Contract" appeared in June 1987. The first line reads: *Kádár has to go*. Shortly after – in November 1988 – the Alliance of Free Democrats party – one of the main driving forces of the regime--change – was founded. Later, this party called itself AFD – Hungarian Liberal Party.

From this short account of the history of the democratic opposition follows that in the wake of the would-be democratic regime we encounter a republican rather than a liberal movement at the forefront of the regime-change.

The overlapping difference of civic republicanism and liberalism is defined by William Galston in this way: *An instrumental rather than intrinsic account of the value of politics forms a key distinction between liberalism and civic republicanism*.[25] For the republicans, politics has got a value for its own sake (it is intrinsic), for the liberals, politics is not as good, but is needed to achieve some goals, fundamentally safeguarding by political means the moral liberty of individual.

So, when the AFD, during the 90's increasingly labelled its position as being a liberal one and definitely when it assumed power in 1994 in coalition with the former commu-

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22 V. Havel [et al.], *The Power of the Powerless. Citizens against the State in Central-Eastern Europe*, ed. by J. Keane, Armonk 1985.

23 Though Havel and Konrád didn't say the same, as János Kis (idem, *A politika mint erkölcsi probléma*, Budapest 2004, p. 351) pointed out, the political messages of the two approaches overlap. The state power – even in a liberal-democratic regime – has to be resisted, has to be confronted either with a civil politics (Havel) or with the intellectual power of the individual. Havel speaks about a distinct politics to be constituted outside the sphere of government; Konrád speaks about the intellectual dignity and moral supremacy of the individual over the state.

24 G. Konrád, *Antipolitics. An Essay*, transl. by R. E. Allen, San Diego 1984.

25 W. A. Galston, *Liberal Pluralism. The Implications of Value Pluralism for Political Theory and Practice*, Cambridge 2002.

nists (Hungarian Socialist Party – MSZP) seemed to betray its own traditions, the morality of anti-politics and was accused even of giving legitimacy to its former enemy, communism. When confronted with the day-to-day business of "dirty politics", party wars and hatred, emerging right wing extremism, scrappy parties, corruption and politician's self-interest – all what was utterly unknown in the previous 40 years and now is called the "normality of democracy" – the citizens suffered a serious shock. Liberals desperately argued for long-term beneficial constitutional arrangements, liberty of the individual, self-government, Roma, gay, minority rights... Overall, the general feeling was that liberal issues, when carried out successfully, will just worsen the situation. Thus, the need for order was already born, and again, the kádárist order that knew nothing about open conflicts, fueled nostalgia even in those generations that were born after its extinction.

Until now, I have sketched the meaning of "liberal revolution" in Hungary during the regime-change. As we have seen, "liberal revolution" didn't rest on a clear-cut liberal ideology,[26] wasn't entirely liberal, at some points was undemocratic and hasn't had straightforward political representation. The "liberal revolution" seems to be more a republican movement that lost its appeal to the public exactly when it carried out its primary goal, the establishment of a liberal democracy.

THE KÁDÁR-LEGACY

Without Kádár there is *no way* to govern today in Hungary – this is the main lesson learned from 20 years of democratic transition. The "Social Contract" was excessively self-confident when it stated that *Kádár has to go*. János Kádár, the successful communist leader died on July the 6th, 1989 (born 1912, Fiume, today Rijeka, Croatia).[27] Few days earlier, on June 16th a large demonstration took place in Budapest during the reburial of Imre Nagy, prime minister during the 1956 revolution, later hanged probably by the orders of Kádár himself. The reburial of Nagy was considered the burial of "kádárism".

Today, in 2013, a headline of an Internet newspaper reads: *Kádár did so well that we cannot give him up*. The article sums up a conference that was held when the research papers of a defunct research institute[28] were deposited at the Open Society Archives. From those research papers, prepared for the communist leadership and state owned Radio and Television, we gain a fairly detailed picture about the mood and thinking of the people living in Kádár's regime.

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[26] One has to ask whether there is anything "clear-cut"? But for the purposes of this paper, I stick to Jerzy Szacki's methodological advice. We will use a *"situational"* definition of liberalism and not a *substantial* one: what has been the role of liberalism at different points in history (J. Szacki, *Liberalism after Communism*, ransl. by Ch. A. Kisiel, Budapest 1995, pp. 23-24).

[27] For a good biography of János Kádár in English, see R. Gough, *A Good Comrade. János Kádár, Communism and Hungary*, London 2006.

[28] Established 1969 as Tömegkommunikációs Kutatóközpont – TK, from 1988: Magyar Közvéleménykutatási Intézet – MKI: "Mass Opinion Research Institute".

In 1989, after the death of János Kádár and in the wake of the regime change, the public opinion ranked high some of the main features of kádárism and the personality of its architect.

More than half of the respondents (50-60%) acknowledged the positive achievments of Kádár's policy. Roughly 20% "loved truly" Kádár: in their eyes "Kádár was the undisputed greatest Hungarian political personality" and the "Benefactor of Hungarians". 87% said that always has had a "good impression" of him.[29]

Among the policies which were highly valued by the public was: education provided free of charge (61%), health care provided free of charge (58%), state provided pensions (55%). The people would preserve these.

From the economic point of view, the introduction of the "New Economic Mechanism", back in 1968, was very much appreciated, when small businesses, ownership of small plots of land (those "surrounding the house"), "a second job", and "private entrepreneurial communities" were allowed.[30]

Normal everyday life seemed to include central heating, long holidays, the possession of a fridge, color TV, stereo player, and the possession of a car wasn't considered something completely out of the ordinary.

How could the killer and communist János Kádár achieve this high degree of legitimacy for his regime that seems to be a lasting legacy?

By now, it is already a commonplace thing among scholars and all sorts of intellectuals that Kádár, out of fear for another revolution, came up with a political and economic gimmick that he himself summarized in the following words: "those who aren't against us are with us". (Compared to the other communist regimes based on: "those who aren't with us are against us".) If one didn't challenge publicly some basic taboos of communism and the restricted sovereignty of the country (the presence of Soviet Army

[29] It is no wonder that opinion polls after the regime change show high acceptance of the old regime compared to the new order. A survey carried out by TÁRKI, a renowned Hungarian research institute in 1991 and 1995, asking whether the old or the new regime is better, showed the following figures for the Visegrád countries:

	Czech Republic	Poland	Slovakia	Hungary
The new regime is worse				
1991	14	23	35	40
1995	23	39	51	51
The new regime is better				
1991	71	51	43	31
1995	57	44	32	26

(*Source*: Z. Ferge, 'A rendszerváltás nyertesei és vesztesei', *Társadalmi riport* (1996) – "The winners and losers of the regime change".)

[30] These were the key elements of a partly liberalized economy, where the monopoly of state ownership was left intact, but in small breaches the private enterprise was allowed to flourish. This "goulash" system, a mild mixture of socialist ownership and capitalist functioning gave rise to the so called "second economy" and of a class of entrepreneurs that was better off than the official "driving force" of the regime, the proletariat.

as the occupying force), one was not considered the "enemy of the proletariat" and was allowed to mind his business, chase around after extra earnings, build houses, and grow vegetables. Compared to other East Central European countries, a relatively high and ever-increasing standard of living was granted, of course financed by the state, and from the middle of the 70's from foreign loans. While the economy wasn't as sound as it was presented by the official propaganda, the people didn't notice anything but the crumbling of the planned economy.

Two decades (until the mid-90's, more precisely until 1995, the austerity measures introduced by Lajos Bokros, socialist finance minister) the constant policy of consumerism is described by János Kornai, the Harvard economist, as follows: *Hungarian economic policy for at least two decades could be described as seeking at any time to maximize consumption in the present and immediate future at the expense of debt that would devolve on later periods. Initially, this ensured a rapid growth of consumption, but it was already beginning to backfire to some extent after a decade: the rise in production, and with it consumption, began to slow down. Later, a decline in production and consumption set in, partly because of the policy resulting in debt accumulation in previous years. Yet the objective function, maximization of short-term consumption, was still unchanged. It continued, of course, with its sign changed, as minimization of the fall in consumption, and the price of this aim was still accepted: further accumulation of debt*.[31]

Of course, this steady consumerism-based economic policy that overarched into the transition period had a price and had consequences affecting the "morality", "mentality" or as I prefer to put it, "the political culture" of the population at large.

Although a sound interpretation of this claim is still under discussion and further research in undoubtedly needed, I will attempt to make some preliminary remarks that refer first of all to the relationship of the state and the individual.

Péter Tölgyessy sums up the essence of the Kádár-system in a few words: *Taking distance from the Soviet model already had begun in 1953, with Imre Nagy's new phase. Throughout the whole period, the elites in power acted scared by the events of '56, and willy-nilly, they made more and more concessions to the people they were afraid of. The party state abandoned permanent mobilization of the society, it yearned for the depolitization of it. It didn't tolerate the uncontrolled organizations, but seldom made use of criminal law. It concentrated mainly on raising the living standards of every strata of society and for this purpose launched newer and newer reforms. It opened up the country for foreign influences and lived out more and more from loans. An increasingly larger part of the life of the country was regulated by non-market and non-planned economic private deals, non-centrally organized activities gained ground. The autonomy of small circles of citizens advanced slowly*.

The individual in the Kádár-regime told the power: *I am willing to accept your rules, if you are willing to provide me with entitlements*. In contrast, the "liberal revolution" will tell the citizen: *I won't interfere with your desires, but I am willing to provide you*

[31] For a comprehensive economic discussion of the "goulash communism" see J. Kornai, 'Paying the Bill for Goulash Communism: Hungarian Development and Macro Stabilization in a Political-Economy Perspective', *Social Research*, Vol. 63, No. 4 (1996).

with the rules that will enable you to accomplish what you want. These two maxims differ to such an extent that is almost impossible to bridge the gap – a seemingly abortive tentative in Hungary.

The equality of entitlements (employment, wages, state provided free education, free health care, passport for travelling to the West) and the inequality of opportunities (housing, licenses for doing business, land ownership) developed a double thinking concerning the state. As far as equality is concerned, the state was able to protect the citizen against sudden changes in his or her life, and along the inequality dimension forced the citizen to bargain, to escape state control and pursue individualistic ends that would enable him or her to be better off than one's fellow citizens. Everyone could feel that one is part of the middle class, but within that middle class there were those fortunate who succeeded in finding loopholes. (Of course, there were poor people, but they were well hidden behind a full employment policy. After the system change, the so-called "unemployment behind the gates"[32] surfaced suddenly, affecting the poorest strata of society, mainly the Roma population.)

Basic security was granted, but one had to bargain, cheat, and have good connections, find back doors, be cloaked. Competition that was encouraged ran for favors, class envy and egoism poisoned the relationship of people, making them unfit for cooperation. Market economy behavior made its way into a community that was stripped of a market able to foster trust.

State interference is deeply penetrating everyday life and the citizen has a personal, twofold "hate-love" relationship to it.

Parallel to the "liberalization" in economy, there certainly went on a "liberalization" in culture as well. Except the aforementioned taboos that were untouchable in public and private discourse (the latter monitored by the secret police) a relatively free flow of ideas was permitted or tolerated. The already mentioned systematic sociological research has been possible, even if it was controlled by the party, and done for the political leadership. Although censorship was in place, it was mild. The other, dark side of this cultural policy seldom was to be seen, but nonetheless manifested itself. When in 1977 some intellectuals signed a petition as a token of solidarity with the '77 Charter, they were sacked and forbidden to publish, when Miklós Haraszti wrote a book about the situation of the worker in communism, the book was prohibited to appear, and so on and so forth.

The cultural policy was framed by György Aczél (Budapest, August 31, 1917. – Vienna, December 6, 1991), comrade and companion to János Kádár since 1956. He was the one who formulated in 1957 in a letter the famous principle of the TTT (Tiltani, Tűrni, Támogatni – in English PPP – Prohibit, Permit, Promote) that later

[32] A very important notion of socialist – i.e. based on state ownership – economy. In communism, it was compulsory to work and the state had to offer a workplace for everyone. On the other hand, socialist companies were interested to employ people with low wages, because after the New Economic Mechanism was introduced, they paid taxes according to the medium wage at the company. This created the so-called "unemployment behind the gates" resulting in people having a workplace, without having work. This kind of "unemployment" is estimated to reach even 20% at its peak.

became the slogan of the official cultural policy until 1985. The PPP meant a careful, rather pragmatic equilibrium and the abandoning of ideological indoctrination. Besides the atmosphere of a "liberal" cultural and intellectual life, the policy achieved an important goal that even hadn't been intended. In a non-coercive manner, it succeeded in creating the impression – and the practice, indeed, that only a discourse with the power can generate "results", and that it is utterly useless for intellectuals to communicate with each other. A very effective fragmentation of intellectual life emerged, and an equally effective control of the intellectual life had been made possible for the communist leadership, disarming from the outset any disarray.

Thus, the political culture of "kádárism" is characterized by a highly distorted entrepreneurialism, a shortage-bond consumerism, a civic culture that is broken up by individualism, slipping into egoism, trust-less competition, a hierarchical discourse, where the *partner* is the power and horizontal, peer-to-peer discourses are rare or missing.[33]

[33] Is this what Piotr Sztompka (idem, 'Civilizational Incompetence: The Trap of Post-Communist Societies', *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, Vol. 2, No. 22 (1993)), in terms of political culture, calls "civilizational incompetence"? In the case of Hungary in some respects yes, it is, in others no, Sztompka cannot capture the peculiarities of the Hungarian situation. But I have made good use of Sztompka's "political culture" definition and have analyzed the Hungarian case according to the components proposed by him: "entrepreneurial culture", "civic culture", "discourse culture", "everyday culture" which are the elements of a democratic political culture. Besides, I fully agree with Sztompka's methodological approach (and his reference to Tocqueville): *The real meaning of the revolutions of 1989 cannot be grasped if we do not take the cultural-civilizational dimension into serious account. Without turning our focus to the level of culture, to the realm of intangibles and imponderables, "soft" variables, we shall neither be able to comprehend nor to overcome the obstacles and blockades that inhibit the processes running at the more tangible, "hard" institutional, or organizational level* (P. Sztompka, 'The Lessons of 1989 for Sociological Theory' in idem (ed.), *Building Open Society and Perspectives of Sociology in East-Central Europe*, Madrid 1996, p. 19.) This lesson is drawn from those misconceptions that were forwarded by the "institutionalist" advisors in the first period of the transition. From ashore it was hard to see how "a ship is rebuilt at sea". *One mechanism by which the past makes itself felt in the present is socialization and cultural tradition. Citizens in post-communist societies developed their beliefs and desires, values and frames, roles and routines in past periods of life, that is under the communist regime or even earlier. We cannot expect those value patterns and ways of thinking to change all at once. They will continue to be pervasive after the political regime change, at least for a certain period of time. "Mental residues of communism" are usually stereotyped in the following way: people in Eastern Europe developed, under the old regime, bad work habits, contempt for effort and initiative, a fear of innovation, and an inclination to trade the expression of their loyalty for patronage and protection. Egalitarian and envious attitudes create reactions both against excessive poverty and excessive wealth. Due to their experiences under communist rule, citizens do not believe in the rule of law, tend to distrust political elites, and they are rather skeptical that political and economic reforms will bring about the desired outcomes. Conversely, we should bear in mind attitudes and skills unofficially cultivated under the old regime.* ***People in Eastern Europe developed virtues such as self-reliance, flexibility, effort, and inventiveness in order to cope with the vast inefficiencies of the past system. Those "unofficial virtues" turn out to be well-suited to the needs of a market economy.*** *In addition, we can observe the survival of pre-1949 attitudes throughout the region. Traditional values such as religion or various craft traditions which were preserved during the communist period could become important again. Likewise, traditional animosities between ethnic groups may re-emerge* (J. Elster, C. Offe, U. K. Preuss, *Institutional Design in Post-Communist Societies. Rebuilding the Ship at Sea*, Cambridge 1998, *Theories of Institutional Design* p. 61 – emphasis added). A full "translation" into plain English should be provided here! But if we concentrate only on the sentence in bold we have the following list of "unofficial virtues" which in fact were the "official" ones: "self-reliance" =

As an ultimate consequence, communism went almost unnoticed, and the expectation of the population after the transition negotiated by the elites was clearly the continuation of the practices of the old regime. A revolution which in fact was a counter-revolution without revolution.

Of course, the expectations for a counterrevolution that won't change too much couldn't be fulfilled during a revolution. However, *gradualism* remained the order of the day for politicians. When forced by external, mainly economic circumstances, politics had to abandon gradualism and ran straight into defeat.

In 1990, the Antall-government had to retreat when it wanted to introduce market--prices for gas (the taxi drivers' blockade which was discussed earlier).

The second free government led by Gyula Horn, after creating the self-image that would bring back the "kádárism",[34] at the brink of economic collapse had to introduce austerity measures in 1995. The socialist-liberal government, to a large extent due to these measures, lost its majority in parliament in 1998.

The first Orbán-government (1998-2002), building on the macroeconomic results of the austerity program of the previous government, at the beginning dared to pursue a reform agenda, but as elections were approaching, from 2000 onwards, it couldn't withstand to dishing out again. Surprisingly, the government lost its popularity at the elections, partly because the leadership didn't conform with Kádár's picture – "they were too arrogant".

The socialist prime minister Péter Medgyessy boldly introduced "kádárist" measures by raising the salary of a teacher by 50% and led the country in big economic trouble, debalancing the budget for 10 years. Although very popular ("a politician that has kept his promise") he was overthrown by his fellow party members because they saw that his policies would lead to an economic breakdown.

Ferenc Gyurcsány followed Medgyessy with extended "reform-programs". After he won the elections in 2006, he confessed at a party meeting with the MPs that "day and night we have lied to the people". He meant to say, that reforms are inevitable, and "kádárist" consumerism should be abandoned. It was a true sentence, that caused one of the most dangereous turmoils in the country.

egoism; "flexibility" = cheating and lying; "effort" = theft, corruption; "inventiveness" = duplicity and tax-evasion. All these developed during the communist era in relation with the state and marked the "manners" in society and are especially ill-suited for a market economy. The enormous difficulties of institution-building are suggested by Tocqueville: *Laws are always unstable unless they are founded on the manners of a nation; and manners are the only durable and resisting power in a people* (idem, 'Democracy in America', ch. XV).

[34] The "bread that costs 3,60 Forints" (last time in 1979 this was the price of 1 kilogram of bread). Though a topic for discussion even in 2013, when the former prime minister died, this "campaign promise" never had been uttered. Gyula Thürmer, the leader of the Worker's Party (the outspoken heir of the former communist party), in the party newsletter wrote an obituary: *We need someone who will make Hungarian people believe that they need not worry. What was good in socialism, will be carried along, just we will add everything that is good in capitalism. This someone became Gyula Horn. He stood in front of the people and for a moment the people saw Kádár re-appear, and everything good that Kádár meant. The 3,60 bread, safety-of-life, work* (*Szabadság*, 29 June 2013).

The last blow for his government was the so called "social referendum" in 2008. A referendum on revoking some medical and tuition fees was held in Hungary on 9 March 2008. The proposals would *cancel* government reforms which introduced doctor visit fees paid per visitation and medical fees paid per number of days spent in hospital as well as tuition fees in higher education. All three were supported by an overwhelming, (82-84%) majority of voters.

From this point on, it was absolutely clear that "kádárism" cannot be overlooked if one wants to preserve power in Hungary.

But this snapshot is a deliberately one-sided presentation of the political events that is meant to underline the *policy* heritage of "kádárism" and to single out the role of the state in maintaining those policies.

ISTVÁN BIBÓ'S UNDERSTANDING OF HUNGARIAN POLITICAL CULTURE

Hungarians seem to grasp easily the history and with much more difficulty the realities of the day (even the reality of being part of a freely established community, that of European Union). The outstanding theoretician of this kind of attitude is certainly István Bibó whose works were very much in vogue during the end of the 80's, the regime change, but only few references to them are encountered today.

As a theoretical introduction to a general description of the actual context I am going to summarize first István Bibó's ideas that seem to me extremely telling. They partly exhibit my methodological approach – the quest for learning the political culture of Hungary in which nationalism plays a defining role and Bibó is one of those thinkers who succeeded in understanding this feature of Hungarian political culture

In reconstructing Bibó's argument, we should take into account his description of the evolution of democracy and nationalism.

Bibó tells his own story about history. In his rendering the very moment when democracy and nationalism become twins whose relationship shapes the course of events in modern history is when the tiers état overtakes the national framework, dispossessing the dynasties that represented them for centuries. *Revolutionary democracy, but indeed every democracy, even if it declares the liberty of men, this liberty is fulfilled within a community* (*The Misery of Small East European States*, p. 191), and that community, from the French Revolution onwards is the nation. When in normal relationship, as in Western Europe (except Germany and Italy), Northern Europe, democracy and nationalism doesn't contradict each other, but when a state, for whatever reason gives way to nationalistic pretensions, democracy has to suffer. When a state that pretends to represent the community sets forth for expanding borders because it feels that it has the right to do so for historic, territorial, ethnic, linguistic reasons, the community's members collapse into a "captive mind" ecstasy. The "Captive Mind" (borrowed here with its entire meaning from Czeszław Miłosz) is by far the most insightful and enduring account of the appeal of authority and authori-

tarianism to the intelligentsia and more broadly to the community. Hysteria is Bibó's term for the "captive mind".

After a careful reading, we could identify three categories of democracies, according to the political culture, notwithstanding the degree of hysteria that characterizes them. These three are the organic (1), catch up (2), undecided democracies (3). Basically, these categories cover three distinct regions of Europe: Western and Northern (1), Central and East (2), and the Balkans (3). But individual countries are not fixed within a category, not at all times and are not permanently part and parcel of these regions. Their momentary status depends on how they cope with the basic relationship of nationalism and democracy; they can upgrade or downgrade, according to this criterion.

What is generally characteristic for East and Central European nations is that they were under foreign rule for a long time in their history; hence the state of cogency they were in. For these nations, the course of history is the continuity of intermittency rather than continuity with periodic interruptions. Under such circumstances the cogency tends to perpetuate itself, although is a schizophrenic situation. At the beginning, one tends to revolt against cogency, feeling that restraint limits liberty, but with the passing of time, one even falls in love with the situation of being a victim. In this way, one perpetuates by his or her own will what initially was rejected out of hand, not only because of very existential reasons, but because the situation cannot be changed anyway. In all this process of assimilating what cannot be assimilated one feels permanently that a trauma is guiding his or her existence. And here comes one of the most remarkable points of Bibó's analysis. The situation of cogency has a cognitive effect in that it locks the mind in just a tiny parcel of reality, a partial truth about reality. One part of the truth covers the whole of it. From this point on the victim (and he or she is a victim, without further ado) has only vindications against the rest of the world in the name of that partial truth that dominates his or her entire existence. My truth being the entire truth, there is no need or any quest for truth. A new trauma is then born: the fear to lose the truth which is mine and is absolute. This fear then is the essence of life, and from now on the problem is that I am right, the problem is that I possess the truth. This is the truth of a community that has lost its sense of reality. Obviously, from this situation there is no escape. The only way out is the "Münchausen-project", in which the criticism from within the community reveals the partiality of the community's truth, the reality itself. This could be the remedy for community-hysteria. (István Bibó names just only one example of a successful Münchausen-project, that of Denmark and we may assume that he would add Germany in the 70's.)

The central notion on which István Bibó builds almost entirely his analysis, is *hysteria*. Of course, this is a psychological term, but he doesn't use it for describing the behavior of individuals, this notion being rather a characteristic of public opinion and political decision-making, more precisely of political culture.

Hysteria, at community (read: national) level means that there is *no balance between what is real, what is feasible and what is desirable*. Hysteria distorts the political character of a nation. What is typical for these nations, peoples, is the rampant historical consciousness, merged with inner uncertainty, *amour propre*, conceit, merged with quail,

much talk about outstanding achievements and poor records, moral claims and moral irresponsibility.

Much of these nations chew their past as of a glorious great power, or aspirations of becoming again a great power, in the mean time, they can apply to themselves the attribute of being a small nation, so distressed, that a Dane or Dutch wouldn't ever understand.[35]

The hysteria driven by, as it were, a distorted community, gives birth to two types of people, intellectuals, politicians, civil servants: the *false realist* and the *ecstatic essentialist*. Then, even the society becomes divided along the policies advocated by these two, of course in perfect contradiction with each other. Reality and realistic plans for the future are regarded as nonsense (as in the words of the philosopher in Plato's cave, when he wants to share his experiences about the real world with those how are enchained and constrained to watch for a lifetime the shadows of the reality). Reality itself becomes a double reality where the structure of the society and the whole construction of the state are shaped according to *lies about reality*. For a society to progress, two things are needed: realism that enables the community to solve practical problems, and the capacity to distinguish between what is essential and what is not, that is: the capacity for rational answers. When a society's perception on reality is disturbed, when it creates a different reality for itself – of course tangible and very much existing, a mechanism of selection starts to function. The reversed selection will bring to surface those who are in the service of this new reality and contribute to its day to day construction, and on the other pole those who find themselves at the edges of society, kind of outlaws, who see the lies on which the new construction is built, but they become more and more angry prophets, without being taken seriously.[36]

The clash of false realists and ecstatic essentialists shapes the future of the community, just by strengthening the basic lies upon which that community is built upon. (These two categories resemble closely Raymond Aron's similar categories that of "advisor of the Prince" and "lover of providence", but Aron doesn't expand his predicament on the whole political culture.)

There is a direct link between this disturbed political culture and its consequences, the interrelationships between the small East and Central European states – this is exactly what we mean by misery. Symbolic and not so symbolic wars on language supremacy, on minority rights, are fought endlessly; territorial disputes can erupt any time, democracy is continuously under threat. The nightmare for these countries is to slip back into what Bibó calls "antidemocratic nationalism", the set up in which nationalism and democracy contradict each other: vindication of self-determination *for us* on one hand, and inner oppression and coercion *by us* on the other.

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[35] I. Bibó, 'A kelet-európai kisállamok nyomorúsága' in *Válogatott tanulmányok*, eds. by I. Vida, E. Nagy, Vol. 2, Budapest 1986, p. 224; idem, 'The Distress of East European Small States' in idem, *Democracy, Revolution, Self-Determination. Selected Writings*, eds. by K. Nagy, A. A. Boros-Kazai, Boulder–New York 1991, pp. 13-86, *East European Monographs*, 317. *Atlantic Studies on Society in Change*, 69.

[36] Idem, 'Eltorzult magyar alkat, zsákutcás magyar történelem' in idem, *Válogatott tanulmányok*, eds. I. Vida, E. Nagy, Budapest 1986, p. 604. 'Distorted Hungarian Temper, Dead-end Hungarian History' – 1948.

Now, we are ready to make one more step closer to the actual situation, refraining ourselves from taking a stance or to enter into a detailed description.[37]

Instead, we have at our hands the texts, speeches of Viktor Orbán in which he makes pretty clear what will be, or what the cultural background of his governance is.

In September 2008, one and a half year before the elections, already with more than fair chances of winning, at Kötcse (a regular gathering place for right-wing intellectuals and politicians), he delivered a talk in which he openly spoke about the political culture he intended to replace with a different one.

In his interpretation the "leftist liberal political culture" has got two pillars: the relationship between the individual and the community that has lost its equilibrium in favor of the individual, the other one being the failure of the faith in "scientific capitalism", in the "omnipotence" of the market. This culture has failed not only in Hungary, but in the whole world. Now the gates are wide open, and a new culture is ready to enter the scene: the state should be strengthened, a political alliance with the Catholic Church forged, and a genuine "Hungarian thinking" has to be placed at the starting point of searching for solutions for all the problems that a government is confronted with.

What is needed for this culture to win a definitive victory? Money, ideology and voters. These resources then will allow a "central political force field" to be created. That will allow Fidesz to *exercise*[38] (and by the same token: to stay in) power for the following 20 years.

In this talk all the elements of a political creed and even an outline of a political direction are present.

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[37] For anyone who wants to join the debate over the "nature" of the actual Hungarian government the Internet offers plenty of pros and cons. In English one of the most informed, though naturally biased (or objective – depends on standpoint) sources are the *Hungarian Spectrum* blog of Eva S. Balogh at <http://hungarianspectrum.wordpress.com/>. For an account of two years of Fidesz-government see a highly critical one: A. Bozóki, 'The Crisis of Democracy in Hungary, 2012', *Deliberately Considered*, 3 February 2012, at <http://www.deliberatelyconsidered.com/2012/02/the-crisis-of-democracy-in--hungary-2012/>, 20 August 24, 2013. Maybe the best analysis of the first 20 months of the Orbán--government and the far reaching consequences, mainly from economic point of view, but not only, is J. Kornai, 'Centralization and the Capitalist Market Economy', *Népszabadság*, 1 February 2012; also at <http://nol.hu/belfold/centralization_and_the_capitalist_market_economy?ref=sso>, 20 August 2013.

[38] "Exercising power" means that one has extensive institutional and non-institutional powers even if he or she is not in the government. This "external power" ("outside" the government) is exercised through individuals that were appointed for a long period as leaders of different governmental institutions, extra-governmental bodies, through granting ownership to different loyal groups in society, through an equally loyal administration, bureaucratic corps. The distinction between "force" and "power" might be the key to understanding the political ideals of Viktor Orbán. Interesting research proposal is that of Robert Rohrschneider (idem, 'Learning Democracy: Do Democratic Values Adjust to New Institutions?' in D. Pollack [et al.] (eds.), *Political Culture in Post-Communist Europe...*). He distinguishes between three core democratic values: *restraint* (willingness to accept losing a political or economic competition and not abusing a victorious one); *self-reliance* (acting on one's behalf, basically autonomy) and *corresponding societal values* (pp. 49-50). These categories, at first sight, are utterly different from those embedded in the "force-theory".

"Strengthening the state" means centralization, a policy that constantly is covering more and more fields: health care, education, pensions, tobacconist shops, casinos, state ownership in companies...

The Catholic Church became a political force, the Fidesz made an alliance with a barely existing party, the Christian Democrats, the brand new constitution is permeated with the tenets of the church. This means also that the balance between individual and community has been shifted towards the community. On another occasion Viktor Orbán acknowledged that the constitution of 2012 – that is "solid as granite" and is perceived as representing the organization of the "Magyar life" for the next millennia – is not a liberal constitution anymore; is not the safeguard of individual liberty, but the "right balance" between "responsibilities and entitlements".

The "Hungarian way of looking at the world" manifests itself in the "freedom--fighting" against the European Union and for the "Magyars outside the borders of Hungary", Hungarian citizenship granted for them, thus "national unification" without changing the borders, continuous tensions with the Romanians over the autonomy of the Hungarian "Székely"[39] land.

But the more interesting notion is the "central political force field" that has a two-fold meaning.

It is the name of the constant, all-encompassing effort to provide the means – money, ideology, voters – for the building blocks of the new culture. In its second meaning, it is a communication strategy that is intended to limit debates within the borders of the new culture: to define the topics of the public debates, direct communication of the power with the population, media regulation, outcasting any "alien" approach as illegitimate.

Is this foundation an appealing conservative nationalist ideology, a new interpretation of democracy and state, populism, or just an emerging autocracy[40] in building up its powers? These are the questions that are discussed at length and breadth not only in Hungary, but in Europe and even in the US.

Anyway, for the purposes of this paper we may conclude that the counterrevolution we have discussed earlier has got a name – National Cooperation System (NCS)[41], an ideology, a leader, backing – two-thirds in the parliament and large rallies under the guise of an-NGO called "Peace March" (partly organized by the government itself for its own support) and finally policies.

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[39] A compact "székely" population of roughly 600.000 people, living in South-East Transylvania, representing 65% of the population in three counties.

[40] It would be very easy, and indeed very misleading, to say, that *authoritarianism* has a long tradition in Hungary, and democracy has not. From the end of the 19th century we always encounter a "strong man" who is able to have more influence on the course of events, even holding a certain monopoly of the power, that any other politician. The Tisza family, István Bethlen, Béla Kun, István Horthy, Mátyás Rákosi, János Kádár and now Viktor Orbán. Some of them acted within a quasi-democratic framework, some were dictators and nowadays formally there is a democratic system. "Strong man" doesn't mean unequivocally authoritarianism. Nonetheless in Hungary, as in many, if not all, post--communist countries, the need for a "strong man" is somehow linked to the "disorderly democracy" that emerged after the transition.

[41] Nemzeti Együttműködés Rendszere – NER.

More importantly, the NCS stems from a general disappointment with what happened in the last 20 or so years. As we have seen, its leader has capitalized on the perception of the failures of the liberal revolution, launching a counterrevolution without revolution, comprising different restoration tendencies.

The NCS is based on a thorough learning of history. Anti-Trianon feelings (in 1918 the Paris peace treaty – known in Hungary as Trianon – dismembered the Habsburg Monarchy and the partly sovereign Hungary, leaving a large Hungarian population in successor states, as Romania, Slovakia, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Austria), the symbolism of the 30's and 40's, antibolshevism (20's and 50's), the Kádár legacy (60's, 70's, middle of 80's), statism (state ownership and state care and the state providing order) are a perfect mixture of nationalistic and non-democratic elements that gain democratic, i.e. populist,support today. Most of the public policies, in one way or another, are based on this bulk of historical reminiscences, disappointments, past glories and political failures of the present.

So, we may reiterate the main argument of our paper: *the past is an unchallenged promise.*

However, the question in the title of this essay is rather a rhetorical one, and cannot be answered right away. If Hungary is halfway on the road of learning democracy, establishing a democratic tradition in a country that has got no democratic tradition or is moving loftily ahead on a dead end road – is to be seen in the future.[42] Is it a "Sonderweg" ("excepcionalism", special path) or is a typical case of all post-communist countries? Of course, further comparative studies are needed and further developments must occur. However, from the intellectual point of view, it is an interesting story[43].

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[42] The same questions arise, perhaps not so strikingly, in many post-transitional democracies. Delegitimizing the regime-change and creating an institutional and cultural framework for an illiberal democracy is a challenge for these countries: *nearly twenty-five years after the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, the transitions to and consolidations of democracy in the region remain incomplete and, in some cases, face grave threats* (R. D. Kelemen, 'Message from the Editor', *European Politics and Society – Newsletter of the European Politics and Society Section of the American Political Science Association* (Winter 2013), pp. 3-4, at <http://www.academia.edu/2773381/Reflections_on_Democracy_in_Eastern_Europe_5_author_forum_>). Jan Kubik suggests that: *In order to develop a robust theory of the illiberal and authoritarian challenge in post-communist Europe, we need to explain both the nature of the delayed popular response to the tribulations of early transformations and the success or failure of illiberal discourses* ('Poland: Illiberal Temptation Rejected (so far)', *European Politics and Society – Newsletter of the European Politics and Society Section of the American Political Science Association* (Winter 2013), p. 23, at <http://www.academia.edu/2773381/Reflections_on_Democracy_in_Eastern_Europe_5_author_forum_>).

[43] In very harsh words Kim Lane Scheppele, a Princeton legal scholar calls this story a Frankenstein-experiment in constructing a "Frankenstate": *Victor Frankenstein's monster brought fear and horror to all those who saw it. But Viktor Orbán's monster state does Frankenstein one better. Orbán has mastered the art of legal suture so well that his Frankenstate can live and work in the European Union. People can tell that there is something not normal about this state, but it is hard to say what it is. It looks like a democracy; it talks like a democracy. It doesn't look or act like your father's authoritarianism. It is the new, improved, democratic-edition Frankenstate* ('Not Your Father's Authoritarianism: The Creation of the "Frankenstate"', *European Politics and Society – Newsletter of the European Politics and Society Section of the American Political Science Association* (Winter 2013), at <http://www.academia.edu/2773381/Reflections_on_Democracy_in_Eastern_Europe_5_author_forum_>).

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