

**Béla Bodó**

**THE *NUMERUS CLAUSUS* LAW OF 1920:  
ASYMMETRICAL DEPENDENCIES, AND THE  
“TWISTED ROAD” OF HUNGARIAN JEWS TO  
AUSCHWITZ**

Working Paper, ISSN 2747-9331  
Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies  
University of Bonn  
Niebuhrstr. 5  
53113 Bonn  
Germany  
Editors: Abdelkader Al Ghouz/Jeannine Bischoff/Stephan Conermann

Working Paper 2022/08  
© August 2022, by the author

*Béla Bodó*  
Department for Eastern European History (OEG), University of Bonn

The *Numerus Clausus* Law of 1920: Asymmetrical Dependencies, and the “Twisted Road” of Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz

Download  
<https://www.dependency.uni-bonn.de/en/publications/bcdsss-publishing-series/working-papers>

.....  
"Gefördert durch die Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) im Rahmen der Exzellenzstrategie des Bundes und der Länder – Exzellenzcluster Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS) EXC 2036/1-2020, Projektnummer: 390683433"

"Funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) under Germany's Excellence Strategy – Cluster of Excellence Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS) EXC 2036/1-2020, Project No.: 390683433"

Contact:  
Dr. Abdelkader Al Ghouz  
Niebuhrstr. 5  
53113 Bonn  
Germany  
Email: [publications@dependency.uni-bonn.de](mailto:publications@dependency.uni-bonn.de)  
Web: <https://www.dependency.uni-bonn.de/en>

## Abstract

This working paper examines the impact of the infamous *numerus clausus* legislation of 1920, which limited the share of Jewish students at institutions of higher learning to their proportion of the population, on incoming students, the position of Jewish graduates in the labor market, and the changing status of Jews in Hungary in the interwar period. It argues that the law not only reversed the process of Jewish emancipation in Hungary, but it also paved the way for the rise of a new form of relationship characterized by strong asymmetrical dependence, between the Hungarian elite and middle classes and their Jewish counterparts in the interwar period. The essay focuses on agency, the elimination of “exit strategies,” social marginalization, and the fate of university graduates during the Shoah.

## Table of Contents

I. Introduction.....	1
II. The Assimilationist Social Contract .....	4
III. The Numerus Clausus Law.....	8
IV. Agency, Student Resistance and Strong Asymmetrical Dependency .....	9
V. Strong Asymmetrical Dependency as a Process .....	15
VI. Conclusion .....	19
Bibliography.....	22

## I. Introduction

After a few weeks of intense debates, the Hungarian parliament passed Act XXV, better known as the *numerus clausus* law, in September 1920. The new legislation sought to restrict the share of the incoming Jewish students to the share of Jews in the country's total population. After Russia, which had passed a similar legislation in 1887, Hungary was the first country in Europe to limit the access of Jewish youth to secondary and higher education by federal law. The legislation was put in practice in stages. At provincial schools and in certain faculties, such as the humanities, the share of Jewish students continued to exceed the quota set in 1920 well into the 1930s. On the other hand, at the institutions of higher learning in Budapest and at the more prestigious faculties of medicine, law and engineering, the ambitious goal set by the legislators was achieved, thanks to zealous university administrators and radical students, within a decade, and in some cases, in a few years. The *numerus clausus* law was accompanied by the purging of the civil service of Jews, and the reduction of the Jewish share in a handful of non-academic occupations, such as tavern keepers and operators of movie theaters. However, to the disappointment of radical antisemites, the *numerus clausus* legislation did not lead to the full expulsion of Jewish students from the universities. Neither was the measure extended to the job market, especially to private firms. Thus, the so-called Jewish Question continued to preoccupy and divide Hungarian public opinion in the next two decades. Only on the eve of the Second World War, in May 1938, did the parliament pass the next antisemitic legislation, the so-called First Jewish Law (*első zsidótörvény*). Modeled on the *numerus clausus* legislation of 1920, the First Jewish Law limited the shares of Jews in various professions and in commercial enterprises to twenty per cent. This, by Nazi measures, rather lenient legislation was soon followed by more restrictive measures (the so-called Second and Third Jewish Laws). These legislations, and the executive decrees that accompanied them, defined Jews as a race; forbade marriage and sexual relations between the "races"; expelled them from most professions; destroyed Jewish livelihood and socially marginalized the members of the same religious minority.

By the spring of 1944, when Nazi Germany occupied Hungary, Jews had become an impoverished and barely tolerated minority. Yet, unlike the governments of the neighboring Croatia, Slovakia and Romania, not to mention France, the Netherlands, and most states in occupied Western Europe, the conservative authoritarian regime of Regent Miklós Horthy and his conservative Prime Minister, Miklós Kállay, refused to be drawn into the genocide.<sup>1</sup> Only after the Nazi occupation of the country did Regent Horthy concede to the deportation of Hungarian Jews. Admittedly, the occupiers did not find it difficult to find collaborators. Indeed, without the active participation of the organs of the Hungarian state, especially the rural police, the army and provincial administrations in the registration, collection and deportation of Jews, the Gestapo could not have accomplished its task. By the time the Red Army liberated the country in early April 1945, more than 600,000 Hungarian Jews, that is about three quarters of country's Jewish population, had perished in the killing fields of Ukraine; were gassed or worked to death in camps in Poland, Austria and Germany; or were murdered by Hungarian Nazis at home.<sup>2</sup> The *numerus clausus* law seems to have put the country on a fateful

---

<sup>1</sup> Béla Bodó, "Caught between Independence and Irredentism: The 'Jewish Question' in the Foreign Policy of the Kállay Government, 1942–944," *Hungarian Studies Review* 43, no. 1–2 (2016): 83–126.

<sup>2</sup> Götz Aly and Christian Gerlach, *Das letzte Kapitel. Der Mord an den ungarischen Juden 1944–1945* (Munich and Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlag-Anstalt, 2002); Götz Aly and Christian Gerlach, *Das letzte Kapitel. Der Mord an*

path to war, collaboration with Nazi Germany and to Hungarian participation and complicity in the Jewish genocide.<sup>3</sup>

This essay re-tells the story of the *numerus clausus* legislation, its origins, short and long-term impacts and its significance, from a new and different perspective. It applies the paradigm of strong asymmetrical dependency, as it has been developed by the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies in the last two years, to the history of Jewish emancipation in Hungary before 1914 and to its reversal in the interwar period. The paradigm of strong asymmetrical dependency has been widely used in slavery studies in the last two decades to map out the dynamic relationships between slave and slave owners, shed light on the gray zones between resistance and compliance, and explain resilience strategies among slaves and the oppressed in the pre-industrial or/and extra-European world. More recently, the same concept has been applied to the examination of social practices, inequalities and the exercise of power in post-colonial societies and, in the European context, to the study of peasants' lives after the abolition of serfdom in Eastern Europe after 1849.<sup>4</sup> My essay is part of this effort to transcend geographical and temporal boundaries and find and explain parallel strong asymmetrical dependencies in the heart of Europe in the twentieth century. Finally, this essay takes into account the achievements, and seeks to make a contribution to the work, of a new generation of Holocaust historians who seek to establish a causal relationship between imperialism, racism and the mistreatment of indigenous populations in the colonies before 1914 and the Jewish genocide during the Second World War.<sup>5</sup>

The paper is primarily concerned with the relationship between the Jewish middle class and the Hungarian social and political elite between 1848 and 1945. Its second concern is the link between modernity and strong asymmetrical dependency. The goal of this essay is to refine Rudolf Stichweh's thesis about the incompatibility of capitalist modernity with strong and stable asymmetrical dependencies. Stichweh perceives modernization as a dual process in which economic, technological and social developments, on the one hand, and cultural, ideological and psychological changes, on the other hand, run parallel to, interact and reinforce, one another. Economic modernization and technological innovations in the last two hundred years, he argues, have led to the decline of "function systems." Before the onset of

---

*den ungarischen Juden 1944–1945* (Munich and Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2002); László Karsai, *Holokauszt* (Budapest: Pannonica Kiadó, 2001).

<sup>3</sup> On the link between these two events, see Randolph L. Braham, *The Politics of Genocide: The Holocaust in Hungary*, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981): 29–31; on the *numerus clausus* law, see Katalin N. Szegváry, *Numerus clausus rendelkezések az ellenforradalmi Magyarországon* [*Numerus clausus Provisions in Counterrevolutionary Hungary*] (Budapest: Akadémia Kiadó, 1988); Mária M. Kovács, *Törvénytől sújtva. A numerus clausus Magyarországon* [*Struck by the Law: The Numerus Clausus in Hungary*] (Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 2012); Judit Molnár, ed., *A numerus clausus 90 év távlatából* [*The Numerus Clausus from the Perspective of 90 Years Later*] (Budapest: Holocaust Emlékközpont, 2011). The latest summary of the literature is Rudolf Paksa, "A numerus clausus és módosítása [*The Numerus Clausus and its Modifications*]," in *Gróf Bethlen István és kora* [Count István Bethlen and his Times], ed. Zsenke Nagy (Budapest: Osiris, 2014): 137–57, here 137–38. Victor Karady and Peter Tibor Nagy, eds., *The numerus clausus in Hungary. Studies on the First Anti-Jewish Law and Academic Anti-Semitism in Modern Central Europe* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Julia Winnebeck, Ove Sutter, Adrian Hermann, Christoph Antweiler, and Stephan Conermann, "On Asymmetrical Dependency," BCDSS Concept Paper 1 (Bonn, 2021): 9.

<sup>5</sup> Sybille Steinbacher, "Sonderweg, Kolonialismus, Genozide. Der Holocaust im Spannungsfeld von Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten der deutschen Geschichte," in *Der Holocaust. Ergebnisse und neue Fragen der Forschung*, ed. Frank Bajohr (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag GmbH, 2015); Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory. Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Globalization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

industrialization, the place and value of the individual was defined by his or her membership in one, or at best a handful, of stable social groups and relations, which provided “organic solidarity.” In modern society, one is no longer dependent on the “organized solidarity” of his or her primary group alone, but is free to exit and join other (and thus draw support of potentially all) groups and relationships. Modernity in Stichweh’s definition is about individualization, functional differentiation and drastically increased social and political participation. The political manifestation of modernity is “self-organized democracy,” which, Stichweh believes, is by its very nature inclusive because it “embeds of possibilities of participation in social relations and dependencies.” People in modern societies strongly prefer equality over inequality, freedom and solidarity over dependency and independence over submission and blind obedience. Modern mindsets and values cannot tolerate the existence of stable and strong asymmetrical dependencies.

Nevertheless, as Stichweh notes, two types of strong asymmetrical dependencies can and occasionally do emerge in modern societies. The first type, which Stichweh calls “including exclusion” refers to the treatment people who, because of their real or perceived disabilities, deficiencies or deviant behavior, are first labeled by experts (such as medical professionals, psychologists and judges) as outsiders, and then excluded from normal social exchanges. Their exclusion from mainstream society, Stichweh continues, is normally followed by an act of inclusion: the pariahs then become patients in a hospital, students in special schools, or prisoners. The second type of exclusion in modern society is “excluding inclusion.” By this term, Stichweh refers to the adoption of marginalized individuals into religious sects, criminal gangs, terrorist organizations, and other social groups which offer the uprooted, disoriented and the culturally homeless “a membership in a total way of life.” By entering such organizations, the new members automatically cut their ties with mainstream society. Modernity promotes both individualization and formation of new communities with rigid boundaries; both solidarity and alienation, and the splitting of humanity and society into who “are thought to be a danger to the social order and those who pretend to defend and sustain it.” The minority groups live under the threat of being perceived and treated like criminals. Yet political polarization often heightens the “reciprocal fear of exclusion or reciprocal fear of being made stranger,” even among the members of the majority. Under stress, such as wars or economic crises, majority society can disintegrate into subcultures and political sects, often masquerading as legitimate political organizations. Afraid of “becoming stranger in their own land,” a small minority then can fall victim to the “seductive inclusion of deviant and organizations, such as terrorist groups”; others are likely to join extremist political parties, which promised to heal the division in the nation via violence: by eliminating others and “other hood” altogether.<sup>6</sup>

This essay applies Stichweh’s thesis about the incompatibility of modernity and strong asymmetrical dependency to the study of Jewish history in Hungary between 1867 and 1945. I am interested to know whether the reversal of Jewish emancipation and the development of a more exploitative and one-sided relationship between the Jewish middle class and the Hungarian social and political elite was an accident, or the logical outcome and predictable result of capitalist modernization. I also want to establish a link between the changing attitude

---

<sup>6</sup> Rudolf Stichweh, “How Do Divided Societies Come About? Persistent Inequalities, Pervasive Asymmetrical Dependencies, and Sociocultural Polarization as Divisive Forces in Contemporary Society,” *Global Perspectives* 2, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1525/gp.2021.25658> [accessed 28.01.2022].

of the majority society (particularly the dominant social groups) and the policies of the state towards Jews, on the one hand, and political events and economic and social developments, on the other hand. More specifically, I am concerned with the question whether strong asymmetrical dependencies were rooted, as Stichweh's suggests, in individualization and functional differentiation, as well as in people's reaction to these trends (i.e. they had mainly in social and psychological causes) or whether strong asymmetrical dependencies in the modern world have their origins, similarly to earlier slaving societies, in the economic realm: in the intense competition between ethnic and social groups over jobs, social status and life chances. The changing status of Jews also raises a question about the social hierarchy and the web of unequal relationships in which strong asymmetrical dependency represent only a variation (of the most extreme form) on the same theme. Finally, the paper touches on the issue of values and norms and their connection to capitalist modernity: whether, as Stichweh suggests, modernity promotes certain values and norms (such as independence in thought and action) over others (such as submission and blind obedience to authorities) or whether modernity is value-neutral. Whether modernity follows a single path or we should talk about "multiple modernities," each moving in a slightly different direction and towards a different goal and ideal, is the subject of this essay.

## **II. The Assimilationist Social Contract**

Jewish emancipation took place simultaneously with the liberation of the serfs in Central and Eastern Europe; the abolition of slavery in the Americas; the introduction of welfare legislation, which was meant to improve the lives of blue-collar workers; and the gradual extension of the franchise to the middle and lower classes and women before 1918. From a distance, it looked as if all these liberation movements were part of a single development; that they not only ran parallel to, but also interfaced with and reinforced, one another; that the victory of any of these groups ensured the success of every movement. In Hungary, too, the struggle for liberty and equality went hand-in-hand, and promised to bear fruit approximately at the same time. Like Prussia and other German states, the emancipation of Jews in Hungary began during the Enlightenment and the rule of Joseph II in the late eighteenth century; the process shifted into a higher gear after the defeat of the Revolution of 1848 and compromise with Austria in 1867 and was finally completed with the so-called Reception Law of 1895, which recognized Judaism as a "received religion" (it separated church and state, made marriage between Jews and Christians possible, and provided Jewish organizations with state support). The process of Jewish emancipation in all these countries was similar: yet, Jews came to occupy a different position in Hungarian society and had to live up to different expectations than their coreligionists in Western Europe. In contrast to German Jews, the high majority of Hungarian Jews in the mid-nineteenth century were recent immigrants. The political and social elite permitted, indeed encouraged, their entry for economic and political reasons. An immigrant country since the late seventeenth century, Hungary imported peasants in large numbers in the eighteenth century both from the neighboring countries and distant lands, such as Württemberg. A relatively backward country, too, Hungary also invited skilled workers, engineers and financiers from the Czech and German states provinces of the Empire in the nineteenth century. The traditional middle class in Hungary was small and was made up mainly by nobles, who regarded modern professions, such as medicine, with a mixture of indifference and contempt, and, when forced to earn a living, gravitated towards high-status jobs in the civil service. The open-door policy of the Hungarian government towards Jews both from the

Western part of the Habsburg Monarchy (Bohemia, Moravia and Lower Austria) and its eastern parts (Galicia) followed the same logic: the newcomers were meant to fill important gaps, provide badly needed skills and take up jobs such as merchants, doctors, dentists, journalists, which nobles were either unwilling or unable to do. The political elite also supported Jewish migration for political reasons. They also hoped that Jews, who did not have a state, would quickly assimilate into the Hungarian nation, and the newly assimilated and their descendants would not only improve statistics (Hungarians still constituted less than half of the population), but would also strengthen Magyar hegemony in the Carpathian Basin.

On the basis of perceived and mutual advantages, the historical elite and middle class (nobility) and their Jewish counterparts concluded what Hungarian historians call an unwritten “gentlemen’s agreement” or “assimilationist social contract” in the mid-nineteenth century. The contract was concluded between two parties of unequal power; it was the stronger party that is the traditional social and political elite, who set the terms of the agreement; they also maintained the right to change the terms of the contract when and where they saw fit. According to this unwritten deal, Jews were permitted to enter the country in large numbers; they were encouraged to set up businesses and become modern professionals, such as bankers, doctors and lawyers and journalists. In return, Jews were expected to change their language from German and Yiddish to Hungarian, shed their ethnic characteristics, reform their religion, and internalize Hungarian nationalism. In return, the Hungarian political elite promised protection, as well as (explicitly) legal and (implicitly) social equality and full acceptance.<sup>7</sup>

The modernization of Hungary took place on the basis of this unwritten gentlemen’s agreement after 1867. The deal produced quick and significant results and proved to be advantageous to both parties. Industrialization and modernization, thanks in part to the influx of immigrants, proceeded by leaps and bounds in the Dual Monarchy. Prosperity benefited every social group from peasants to merchants and the members of the “leisure class.” It also benefited Jews, who had come to occupy important positions in the economic, social and cultural life of the country, their influence far outweighing their numerical strength. Unlike the United States, immigration in Hungary transformed not only the ethnic make-up of the lower classes; it changed the composition of the middle and upper strata of society, as well. The late nineteenth century witnessed the rise of a “dual society” divided along ethnic and religious lines in Hungary. This process led to the formation of new elite and middle-class groups not only of different ethnic and religious backgrounds, but also of slightly different norms, values, lifestyles and political orientations. The traditional elite, the “aristocracy of blood,” which was of Catholic and Magyar background, was complemented by a new group, the “aristocracy of money,” which was almost exclusively of Jewish origins. On the surface at least, the boundaries between the two groups were permeable. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, 364 Jewish families were lifted into the nobility (no other country in the world had so many Jewish nobles as Hungary); between 1870 and 1917, 26 Jews (bankers, industrialists, civil servants and scientists) received the title of a baron (the lowest rank in the world of the Hungarian aristocracy).<sup>8</sup> The two segments of the social elite also regularly interacted with each other in the economic and political realms; their members sat on the boards of the same companies

---

<sup>7</sup> János Gyurgyák, *A Zsidókérdés Magyarországon: Politikai Eszmetörténet* [The Jewish Question in Hungary: A Political History of Ideas] (Budapest: Osiris, 2001).

<sup>8</sup> See William O. McCagg, *Jewish Nobles and Geniuses in Modern Hungary* (Boulder: Eastern European Monographs, 1986).



and banks, entered and funded the same political parties and pressure groups to protect their interests. Yet the two groups never became one; deep friendship and family ties remained exceptions even at the height of the liberal era in the 1870s. After 1880, with the crisis of liberalism and the rise of antisemitism, the emotional and cultural gaps between the two groups not only remained but widened. The “aristocracy of blood” continued to self-segregate: its members continued to live in different parts of Budapest, had slightly different consumption patterns, and had friends and acquaintances from different social groups (the old aristocracy from gentry, the new aristocracy from the Jewish bourgeoisie). The relationship between the two groups remained unequal; the “aristocracy of money” (and the Jewish community as a whole) was more dependent (especially for protection) on the old social and political elite and the state than the old elite needed the Jews.

Dualism was not limited to the elite, but also included the middle classes. The influx of workers, capital and know-how moved into the higher gear after 1867. As a result of immigration and natural growth, the size of the Jewish population tripled in Hungary the nineteenth century. In Budapest, Jews made up about 23 per cent of the total population in 1910 (roughly the same as in New York City), making the Hungarian capital the third largest “Jewish city,” in the world, after New York and Warsaw. The Jewish community had become solidly middle and lower middle class by the outbreak of the First World War. Jews were strongly overrepresented among the wealthiest taxpayers in the capital; Jews lived in the better neighborhoods of the towns and owned or rented larger and more apartments than their Christian counterparts. More than half of the large industrial enterprises and fourth-fifths of banks were in Jewish hands. Although Jews were underrepresented among peasants, Jewish aristocrat and commercial farmers owned one-fifth of the country’s large estates. At least fifty per cent of doctors in the capital, and one-third in the provinces, had come from Jewish background; while Jews made up about five per cent of the total population in the country in 1910, their share among lawyers, journalists, engineers, architects and actors and dentists hovered between 25 and 40 per cent on the eve of the war. The majority of printing houses, theaters and cinemas were Jewish-owned; although the Christian socialist printed media was on the rise, the majority of newspapers and periodicals continued to be owned, edited and partially written by Jews in 1914. More than half of white-collar workers employed by private firms (in the banking sector about three-quarters), and between twenty and sixty per cent of printers, tailors, tavern keepers, bakers and butchers came from the same background. At the same time, Jewish men and women made up about one-quarter of the high-school and university student population before the war, and held about one-fifth or one-quarter of the national wealth and income.<sup>9</sup> Jews both benefited disproportionately from, and made a much larger contribution than their share in the population to, the modernization of the country and its capital. Jewish investors, construction companies and architects helped to build the cities, bridges and the railroads and laid the foundation of urban infrastructure. Jews not only fulfilled their side of the bargain by learning Hungarian and assimilating culturally into the Hungarian nation. By excelling in almost every field from natural sciences, engineering and architecture to literature and sports, they left an indelible mark on the cultural development of the country in the dualist period. With very few exceptions, both reformed (Neolog) and Orthodox Jews

---

<sup>9</sup> Yehuda Don and George Magos, “The Demographic Development of Hungarian Jewry,” *Jewish Social Studies* 45, no. 3–4 (1983): 189–216; Mária M. Kovács, “The Hungarian *numerus clausus*: Ideology, Apology and History, 1919–1945,” in *The numerus clausus in Hungary. Studies on the First Anti-Jewish Law and Academic Anti-Semitism in Modern Central Europe*, ed. Victor Karady and Peter Tibor Nagy (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012): 27–55, here 39.

had come to fully identify with the land, especially with its capital, Budapest, which many endearingly called the second Jerusalem.<sup>10</sup>

Until the war, modern professions, such as medicine, law, engineering and journalism, exercised a greater attraction on young Jewish men, and later on Jewish women, than on their Christian counterparts. On the other hand, the middle and upper echelons of the state continued to recruit their employees from the nobility and, after 1870, from the peasantry and the urban lower middle classes. These newcomers tended to be of Magyar, German or Slavic origins. While legal barriers had fallen, informal discrimination against Jewish candidates in the civil service, the army, public industries and the bourgeois political parties (with the exception of Budapest, which even had Jewish mayors before 1914) persisted.<sup>11</sup> Still, the non-Jewish segments of the middle class were dissatisfied with the outcome of modernization. First, there were relatively few civil service jobs available to them as modernization and the expansion of public sector proceeded at a slower pace than those of the private sector. Dual society implied not only different life chances but also different social values and norms. Corruption, especially nepotism at the county and municipal levels, remained rampant in public life in Hungary in the late nineteenth century; the members of the declined gentry, who found jobs and refuge in the public sector tended to embrace the atavistic values, such as wastefulness and hedonism. Worse, the commoners, who had entered the civil service, often imitated the behavior and internalized the values, such as haughtiness and contempt for the poor, of *déclassé* nobles. While the majority of middle and high-ranking civil servants continued to support the mainstream conservative liberal parties, a significant percentage of public employees had switched their allegiance to the right-wing (Christian socialist, agrarian and antisemitic) parties and pressure groups before the First World War. Beside *déclassé* nobles and the non-Jewish members of the urban lower middle class, it was civil servants that constituted the social basis of political antisemitism after the 1870s. The hostility of these groups had to do with resentment and competition over jobs and social status.<sup>12</sup> Yet, anti-Semitism in Hungary, as in Russia and Germany, also functioned as a “cultural code”: as a vehicle of protests against capitalism, globalization, political and cultural modernity as well as a means of communication, a sign of recognition, political mobilization and alliance-building.<sup>13</sup>

The two elites and the two middle classes did not simply live in parallel universes; they regularly interrelated with, and remained economically, culturally and politically dependent on each other. The dependence of the two groups on each other remained asymmetrical, as the reigns of political power (and with it, the ability to change the stipulations of the assimilationist social contract), remained in the hands of the Hungarian social elite and middle class. The relationship between the two groups was thus “asymmetrical,” but not yet “strong” (displayed no resemblance to serfdom or slavery, for example): there were high legal, moral and cultural barriers as to the exploitation (and abuse) of the weaker party, which still had the option and the opportunity to exit the relationship. This discrepancy between the legal and

---

<sup>10</sup> Géza Komoróczy, ed., *Jewish Budapest: Monument, Rites, History* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999); Mary Gluck, *The Invisible Jewish Budapest: Metropolitan Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2016).

<sup>11</sup> István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism. A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848–1918* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

<sup>12</sup> Miklós Szabó, *Az újkonzervativizmus és a jobboldali radikalizmus története (1867–1918)* [A History of Neo-Conservatism and Right-Wing Radicalism, 1867–1918] (Budapest: Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó, 2003).

<sup>13</sup> Shulamit Volkov, “Antisemitismus als kultureller Code,” in *Jüdisches Leben und Antisemitismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Shulamit Volkov (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1990): 13–36.

economic, on the one hand, and social and cultural/political realms, on the other, underscores De Vito's, Schiel's and van Rossum's argument that the "social relations of asymmetrical dependency emerge at concrete sites and in specific economic sectors or other social and political realms," and that the "sometimes contradictory concurrence of political, economic and social forces," makes the evaluation of the nature of the relationship between the parties, and the behavior of the individuals and groups locked in the relationship of asymmetrical dependency, difficult.<sup>14</sup>

A quick look at the modernization of the educational system in Hungary underscores the validity of De Vito's, Schiel's and van Rossum's argument about unpredictable outcome of economic and social developments. University students counted among the most fanatical troops of liberalism and had strongly supported Jewish emancipation and social equality in Hungary between 1815 and 1882. That this trend had been broken in the final decades of the nineteenth century was paradoxically the product of the very success of the emancipation. The strong overrepresentation of Jews in the student population (about 25 per cent of the university students before the war came from this background) was the result of natural developments rather than bureaucratic intervention on the behalf of a religious group: a product of higher literacy rates and levels of urbanization among Jews, the more elevated social status of parents and the traditional high regard among Jews for cultural and for intellectual achievements. The much smaller share (about 8 per cent) of Jews in the teaching staff, including university professors, however, mostly likely could attribute to informal discrimination in the academic market place.<sup>15</sup> While hiring decisions were normally made behind the scene, and academics were able to conceal their thoughts and true emotions more, Gentile students had neither the reason nor the talent to hide their frustration and prejudices. The university campuses, particularly in Budapest, thus had become a hotbed of antisemitic agitation by 1900. Like their Austrian counterparts, elite student fraternities began to bar Jews from admission; physical attacks on Jewish students, too, became more common in the early 1900s, and students put pressure on university administrators and politicians to limit the enrollment of Jewish students. Although neither group responded positively to outside pressure, and no *numerus clausus* law had been passed before 1920, agitation by students and free professionals did leave an impact on the operation of the liberal state. Around 1900, officials began to collect and publish data on Jewish presence in higher education and the liberal professions. The data gathered by the state bureaucracy on Jewish students were used by antisemitic authors to prove that Jews were unfair and dangerous competitors. The practice and the information that it produced provided the scientific foundation both for the *numerus clausus* legislation of 1920 and the antisemitic laws of the late 1930s and early 1940s.

### III. The *Numerus Clausus* Law

The First World War put an end to the existence of the Dual Monarchy and historical Hungary. As a result of the lost war and the highly punitive Treaty of Trianon of June 1920, Hungary lost two-thirds of its pre-war territory and one-third of its Magyar-speaking population. Whereas

---

<sup>14</sup> Winnebeck et al., "On Asymmetrical Dependency": 15.

<sup>15</sup> Kovács, "The Hungarian *numerus clausus*: ideology, apology and history, 1919–1945": 40–42; Victor Karady, "The Restructuring of the Academic Market Place in Hungary," in *The numerus clausus in Hungary. Studies on the First Anti-Jewish Law and Academic Anti-Semitism in Modern Central Europe*, ed. Victor Karady and Peter Tibor Nagy (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012): 112–35; here 112–13.

the Magyar population had constituted only a bare majority in historical Hungary, the rump state became one of Europe's ethnically most homogeneous countries. With the disappearance of historical Hungary, the political weight of the Jewish community declined, as Jews were no longer needed to improve the ethnic balance in favor of the majority population. The democratic revolution, the Soviet Republic and the Red Terror traumatized the liberal and conservative middle and upper classes. Since Jews played an important role in the democratic revolution and the Communist experiment, they became automatic targets of reprisals after August 1919. Like their fellow European and North American counterparts, the Hungarian middle classes and elites not only believed that Jews had been behind the two revolutions in Budapest; they were also convinced that Jewish-Bolsheviks tried to grab world power in 1919.<sup>16</sup> The war and the post-war crisis destroyed the livelihood of millions, and had a negative impact on the lives of almost every social group. Yet the middle class, particularly of civil servants, who lived on fixed incomes, such as pensions, suffered disproportionately from galloping inflation. They were also overrepresented among the desperate refugees, who tried to escape from the invading Romanian, Czech and Serbian armies or were forced to leave their homes by the new authorities in the soon-to-be detached territories after the war.<sup>17</sup> Civil servants in particular tried to find work and start a new life in the rump state. The universities in inner Hungary faced special challenges after the war: they not only had to accommodate discharged soldiers whose studies had been interrupted by the war, but provide places for refugee students from the lost provinces, as well. To add insult to injury, war veterans faced competition from female students, whose numbers had increased by leaps and bounds during the war. A high percentage of female students also came from Jewish background. Since the connection between the two revolutions and Jews had already been made, the political elite, under pressure by the student paramilitary groups and nationalist fraternities, decided to act. With the explicit support of the Christian churches and the cultural elite, including some of the best-known writers and poets, the parliament passed the *numerus clausus* legislation in September 1920.<sup>18</sup>

#### **IV. Agency, Student Resistance and Strong Asymmetrical Dependency**

The BCDSS Concept Paper defines social order as “any system of institution, social relation and value orientation and practices and the structuring and structured processes of social reality.” It regards asymmetrical dependency as the key element in social structure, the main source of social, cultural and political change as well as individual and group identities. Asymmetrical dependency is created not only by institutions or norms; rather, it is best described, according to the paper, as “a flexible product of human exchanges”; of the dynamic relationship between the rulers and the ruled; multiple form of “saying” and “doing” which can both challenge and defend the existing social order and political system; not only of the changing forms of

---

<sup>16</sup> Paul A. Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe. The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism* (Harvard: Belknap Press, 2018); Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, “Bolshevism as Fantasy: Fear of Revolution and Counterrevolutionary Violence, 1917–1923,” in *War in Peace*, ed. Robert Gerwarth and John Horne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012): 40–51; Péter Csunderlik, *A Vörös Farsangtól A Vörös Tatárjárásig, A Tanácsköztársaság a Korai Horthy Korszak Pamflet és Visszaemlékezés Irodalmában* [From the Red Carneval to the Red Mongol Invasion. The Image of The Republic of the Councils in the Pamphlets and Memoirs of the Early Horthy Era] (Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 2019).

<sup>17</sup> Imre István Mócsy, “Radicalization and Counterrevolution: Magyar Refugees from the Successor States and Their Role in Hungary, 1918–1921” (PhD diss., University of California, 1973).

<sup>18</sup> Karady, “The Restructuring of the Academic Market Place in Hungary”: 114–16

exclusion but also kinds of autonomy and resistance at the individual and communal levels, as well as the strategies and techniques of accommodation. All these interactions can “actively and practically contribute to the reproduction of the social relationship of asymmetrical dependence and the associated order of knowledge that legitimize it.”<sup>19</sup>

Strong asymmetrical dependency, according to the BCDSS Concept Paper, “is based on the ability of one actor to control the actions and the access to resources of another”; it is normally “supported by an institutional background” in such a way as to ensure “that the dependent actor normally cannot change their situation by either going away (‘exit’) or by articulating protest (‘voice’).”<sup>20</sup> In regards to Jews and partially Jewish students in Hungary in the interwar period, “exit,” or types of “voices” still existed, even if they did not necessarily change the agents’ situation or even more importantly lead to the transformation of the entire system. Between 1920 and 1939, exit from the system of strong asymmetrical dependence could take many forms. The most drastic form was suicide. Although we have no reliable statistic as to the number of suicides among young Jews in the interwar period: yet the frequent report in Jewish and liberal publications about such tragedies shows that it must have become a serious threat and social problem during the counterrevolution. Suicide seems to have been more common among Jewish boys than girls; lower middle-class students, whose parents could not afford to finance their studies abroad, than upper middle-class students; among students from Budapest, where the *numerus clausus* law was strictly enforced early on, than the more lenient provincial universities. Suicide was clearly a form of resistance and exit; the agents were prepared to end their lives rather than comply, or live, with the rules and accept their place in the system of strong asymmetrical dependence. On the other hand, suicide, while certainly an embarrassment for the regime, did not pose a real threat to the new social order: many antisemites, and the supporters of the *numerus clausus* legislation, either simply ignored or welcomed such tragedies. The suicide of agents was a form of exit desired by the perpetrators and carried out by the weaker and abused party in the relationship of strong asymmetrical dependency.

Emigration represented another, milder, form of protest and exit from the system of strong asymmetrical dependency. Emigration did not necessarily lead to a change in one’s national, ethnic or religious identity and to the cutting ties with family members, friends, colleagues and acquaintances. Between 1919 and 1921, tens of thousands (perhaps as many as 100,000) people left the country for political reasons: either because they feared prosecution because of the role that they had played in the democratic and Communist experiments, or, frightened by the pogroms and angered by increased discrimination, they thought that they had no future, as Jews, in Hungary any more. Many of the refugees had already made a name for themselves before their emigration; others achieved fame and fortune in their chosen homelands.<sup>21</sup> Emigration normally took place in stages: the refugees first remained in the

---

<sup>19</sup> Winnebeck et al., “On Asymmetrical Dependency”: 6–8.

<sup>20</sup> Winnebeck et al., “On Asymmetrical Dependency.”

<sup>21</sup> The famous exiled included, just to name a few, the future Hollywood star Béla Lugosi, remembered primarily for his role in *Dracula*; the film directors Mihály Kertész and Michael Curtiz of *Casablanca*, *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, and *White Christmas*; the philosopher Georg Lukács, the author and future film theorist Béla Balázs, the social scientist Oszkár Jászi, art historians Frederick Antal, Arnold Hauser, the sociologist Karl Mannheim, the economic historian Karl Polanyi and his brother, the physical chemist turned philosopher Michael Polanyi; the painter László Moholy-Nagy, the conductor Joseph Szigeti. See Tibor Frank, “‘All Modern People Are Persecuted’. Intellectual Exodus and the Hungarian Trauma, 1918–1920,” in *The numerus clausus in*

neighboring states and cities, such as Vienna and Prague; only after 1921, as the counterrevolutionary regime had consolidated and the refugees' dream about a regime change had slowly petered out, did a small minority, mainly those associated with the Communist experiment, made their way to Moscow for permanent exile. Many of these idealists would fall victim to Stalin's purges in the 1930s; those who had survived the Soviet exile and the war would return and play a major role in the country's history as rulers after 1945. The majority of the exiles either remained in Western Europe or immigrated to the United States. The émigrés not only preserved their identity as Hungarian Jews in exile; they also relied, beside their professional networks, on established ethnic and religious organizations for social support, such as finding accommodation and applying for financial aid and getting jobs. The strength of their sense of community and network ties, particularly in Hollywood, was legendary. Allegedly around 1940, there was a billboard in Hollywood which warned job applicants, "it is not enough to be Hungarian; you also need to have talent, too," a line attributed to the fellow Hungarian film director Alexander Korda."<sup>22</sup>

Like the refugees after 1919, Jewish students abroad rarely changed or gave up their national and ethnic/religious identity. Like refugee scientists and free professionals, students remained dependent on the support provided by charities, state institutions and student and religious organizations to survive in a strange land. Some tried to eke out an existence as barkeepers, waiters, dancers and factory workers; others found jobs as musicians and dancers in Berlin night clubs of ill-repute, or worked as extras on film sets. They turned to, and often received stipends, or at least one warm meal a week, from the Quakers, the World Student Christian Federation, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and Jewish organizations, such as the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JOINT). Some lived on the largess of private individuals, including Hungarian Jewish émigrés, such as the banker Alfréd Manovill in Berlin. In most university towns, Hungarian Jewish students set up their own associations, which organized events on Jewish holidays, and solicited money from co-religionists back home. In 1923, the Pest Jewish community founded the Central Student Aid Committee (*Központi Diáksegítő Bizottság*), which gave financial support in its first four years alone to 2,440 students in 68 towns in eight different countries.<sup>23</sup>

While the majority of students returned home, a significant minority (in my estimate between 10 and 20 per cent) either remained in Western Europe or continued their journey to North America after graduation. While their reasons to join the rank of exiles varied greatly, the fear of discrimination at home and better career prospects abroad seem to have been the key motives to not return home. Jewish graduates continued their migration in groups. They mobilized their networks, asked their colleagues and former teachers to write letters of recommendation, informed one another about job opportunities and lobbied at their

---

*Hungary. Studies on the First Anti-Jewish Law and Academic Anti-Semitism in Modern Central Europe*, ed. Victor Karady and Peter Tibor Nagy (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012): 176–205.

<sup>22</sup> Géza Komoróczy, *A zsidók története Magyarországon II. 1849-től a jelenkorig* [The History of the Jews in Hungary, vol. 2, From 1849 Until the Present] (Pozsony: Kalligram, 2012): 426–27.

<sup>23</sup> In Germany, it supported 170 students in 1923/24, 100 students in 1924/25, 70 students in 1925/26 and 39 students in 1926/27. Ákos Horváth, ed., *Tanulmányok az újkori külföldi magyar egyetemjárás történetéhez* [Contributions to the Study of the History of Student Migration from Hungary in the Modern Era] (Budapest: ELTE, 1997); Michael L. Miller, „*Numerus clausus* Exiles: Hungarian Jewish Students in Inter-War Berlin,” in *The numerus clausus in Hungary. Studies on the First Anti-Jewish Law and Academic Anti-Semitism in Modern Central Europe*, ed. Victor Karady and Peter Tibor Nagy (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012): 206–18.

institutions on the behalf of their countrymen. That the young Leo Szilard, one of the inventors of the atomic bomb, ended up on the Manhattan Project was due not only to his undeniable talent as a scientist; his career path was also smoothed by the help of his scientific advisors, teachers and colleagues, such as Einstein, Planck, von Laue and Haber. He was not alone: the physical chemist, Michael Polanyi had turned to, and received help from, the celebrated Hungarian-born professor of aerodynamics in Aachen, Theodore von Kármán, in the early 1920s, first to get a place at the school as a graduate student and later to find a job as a researcher.<sup>24</sup>

Geographical mobility was rarely about exit from the social system: in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the frontiers in the United States, for example, served as a safety valve, which, by sending the poor and the dissatisfied further west and south, helped to preserve the privileges of the elite and stabilize the political regime and social order at home. The same can be said about modern migrations – about the movement of millions of people from Eastern Europe to Great Britain and the various Western European states in the last twenty years, for example. The majority of Jewish students in Hungary, too, first chose to migrate internally to circumvent the *numerus clausus* legislation. Until the late 1930s, provincial universities, such as Szeged, Pécs and to less often Debrecen, represented an escape route for Jews impacted by the quota law. Unlike Budapest, where overcrowding was a real issue, particularly in the first half of the 1920s, these schools experienced less overcrowding in the early 1920s; after 1925, in fact, they could not recruit enough students to fill the lecture rooms and the laboratories. Since low student enrollment represented a financial concern, the provincial universities were prepared to admit more Jewish students than it had been prescribed by the law. The more relaxed admission policy of provincial schools tended to benefit lower middle-class Jews from smaller cities and villages. The middle and upper middle-class Jewish families preferred to keep their children in the capital and forced them to learn a trade or send their sons and, and less often, their daughters abroad to study. As a result of this trend, the social profile of Jewish students enrolled in Hungary under the *numerus clausus* changed drastically after 1921: it became more democratic and equalitarian (lower middle-class, less male, and more provincial) in the interwar period. The presence of more Jewish women in both absolute and relative numbers may look like a paradox: the *numerus clausus* legislation of 1920 imposed a five per cent quota not only on Jews but on the enrollment of women, as well. However, fearful of a backlash from non-Jewish elite families, universities administrators chose not to fully enforce the law. Moreover, the continued enrollment of Jewish women, many of whom studied art rather than law or medicine, was perceived a lesser threat to their Christian and male classmates (the main source of antisemitic agitation), who worried about their future careers. In spite of the loophole in the system, hundreds of Jewish women, especially from the lower middle classes in Budapest, were forced to give up their dreams to study and learned a trade to make ends meet every year after 1921. Wealthy Jewish women from Budapest tended to enroll in provincial universities: laboring under a double asymmetrical dependency (they were dependent on the state and their male family members, who preferred to invest more into their sons' education), Jewish women were rarely sent abroad to study. Thus, the fact that at many provincial universities in the interwar period the share of Jewish women exceeded that of Jewish men cannot be attributed to democratization alone; rather it reflected the

---

<sup>24</sup> Frank, "'All Modern People Are Persecuted.' Intellectual Exodus and the Hungarian Trauma, 1918–1920": 203–4.

nature of antisemitism in Hungary, and it was the produce of family strategies and the double asymmetrical dependence of Jewish women in society.<sup>25</sup>

Unlike emigration, leaving Hungary temporarily to study at foreign universities was not meant to exit the system of strong asymmetrical dependency: if anything, it was an attempt by Jews to accommodate themselves to, live with, the system by limiting the damage caused by the numerous *clausus* law. With the exception of a small but significant minority, high-school graduates who decided to attend universities abroad in the 1920s and 1930s returned to Hungary after graduation. Geographic mobility was rarely used to exit the system of strong asymmetrical dependency. Getting a foreign degree was a means to overcome the negative implications of the *numerus clausus* legislation – and not a sign of rebellion. While it did not change the system, the custom reduced the impact of the quota law: private companies generally preferred to hire candidates with foreign degrees, connections and experience. In the early 1920s, the target of peregrination was institutions of higher learning in neighboring countries (Austria, Czechoslovakia, Transylvania under Romanian rule, Croatia and Serbia). Hungarian Jews had a long tradition of studying abroad: in fact, until the 1860s, the majority had preferred German schools to Hungarian institutions. The share of Jewish students who migrated to study declined sharply after 1870, as Hungarian Jews, as a sign of assimilation, switched from German and Yiddish to Hungarian as their first, and often only, language.<sup>26</sup> Still before the war, about the half of all Hungarian students enrolled at the medical faculty of University of Vienna may have been of Jewish background. Obligated by international agreements, the Hungarian state continued to recognize foreign degrees granted in the various European countries as equivalent (via the process of *nostrification*) to a national diploma. Jewish students thus used this loophole to circumvent, or at least minimize, the impact of the quota law. Unfortunately, as the students in the neighboring countries, too, began to demand that university administrators stop the influx of foreigners, this crack in the system of ethnic and religious hatred also began to narrow. In 1923, the Polytechnic University in Vienna adopted a 10 per cent “Jewish quota”; other institutions of higher learning in Austria, including the prestigious University of Vienna, almost immediately followed suit. German universities proved to be more welcoming, at least until the rise of Nazism in the late 1920s; political insecurity and the high cost of living then led to the rapid decline the enrollment of foreign, especially Jewish, students from Eastern Europe. After the rise of the Nazism, French and Italian universities became the main destinations for Hungarian Jews seeking degrees abroad. The Italian fascist government gave a hearty welcome to foreign students by abolishing tuition fees in 1923. Italy treated Jewish students decently until 1938, when, under

---

<sup>25</sup> In 1919–1929 Jewish women made up 27,7 % of the female student body in the Budapest medical faculty as against 12,3 % of Jews among males. The comparable proportions were less dramatically diverging, but still significant in two cases out of three: 25 % and 24 % in Szeged, 16,2 % and 13,2 % in Debrecen and – exceptionally enough – 39,5 % and 57,3 % in Pécs. On the whole, with the notable exception of Pécs, Jewish women thus appeared to be relatively less severely hit by the *numerus clausus* than Jewish men. The explanation of this difference is certainly worth a more in-depth investigation. See Karady, “The Restructuring of the Academic Market Place in Hungary”: 120–29. On women’s activism, see Judit Szapor, *Hungarian Women’s Activism in the Wake of the First World War: From Rights to Revanche* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).

<sup>26</sup> Katalin Fényes, *Képzelt Asszimiláció? Négy Zsidó Értelmiségi Nemzedék Önképe* [Imagined Assimilation: Self-View of Four Jewish Generations] (Budapest: Corvina, 2010); Miklós Konrád, *Zsidóságon innen és túl - Zsidók vallásváltása Magyarországon a reformkortól az első világháborúig* [Before and After Judaism. Conversion among Jews in Hungary from the Age of Reform until the First World War] (Budapest: Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont, 2014).



Nazi pressure, Mussolini adopted some of the Nazi anti-Jewish laws. There is no reliable statistic of the size of the Hungarian Jewish student population abroad in the interwar period. The share of students of Jewish background among young Hungarians abroad clearly increased in the interwar period; as result of *numerus clausus* law, the percentage of students who chose foreign schools doubled after 1921; also four-fifths of Hungarian students at the medical faculty at the University of Vienna in the 1920s and early 1930s may have come from Jewish background.<sup>27</sup>

The majority of Jewish students did not rebel against, but tried to survive within, the system, making concessions, and adjusting to the regime of strong asymmetrical dependency in the interwar period. Leaving the country was not the only way to exit the system: assimilating culturally and ethnically into the majority promised to achieve the same end. The best travelled road, and the emotionally least costly form of assimilation to the individual and the group, was via the Magyarization of surnames. This assimilationist strategy was not new: however, in contrast to the pre-war period, when both the Neolog Jewish leaders and the state supported this type of symbolic naturalization, the majority public opinion and the state neither demanded nor desired it (the state eventually banned the Magyarization of surnames in 1938). The practice was always more popular among elite, middle-class, Reformed and agnostic Jews, than among their lower middle-class and Orthodox counterparts. The effectiveness, the cost-benefits of name change, or indeed any other assimilationist strategies, such as residential mixing, common education (even in Christian secondary schools), conversion and mixed marriages, was (is) difficult to measure. In the interwar period, the Magyarization of surnames remained a common practice among Jewish high-school graduates and university students – but not higher than in any other middle-class groups. That the high majority of students continued to keep their family names suggests that young Jewish men and women regarded family tradition, shared identity and ethnic/religious autonomy more important than any benefits, such as admission to university and a better chance to find jobs after graduation, that such an assimilationist technique entailed.<sup>28</sup>

The changing of family names to make them sound more Hungarian was a frequent measure; in contrast to baptism and mixed marriage, this practice required few sacrifices, was emotionally less taxing because it did not threaten individual and community identity. Baptism, in contrast, was more costly: for an Orthodox, it could lead, after expulsion from the community, to complete isolation and social death. Reformed Jews, too, also abhorred baptism, even though they continued to treat the rich and famous, if they had not denied their origins and supported Jewish causes and social organizations, as quasi members. The motives behind baptism varied. Some people converted out of conviction; apostasy proved particularly attractive to Jews in mixed marriages and those who planned to contract confessionally mixed

---

<sup>27</sup> The number of Hungarian students studying abroad may have almost doubled in the years 1910/11–1913/14, some 3, 5 % of the Hungarian student population was studying abroad. This figure was 5 % in 1920/21–1922/23 and 6, 5 % in 1923/4–1925/26). The proportion of Jews among students also increased dramatically before the war, about one-quarter of Hungarian students studying medicine at the University of Vienna was of Jewish origins; by 1930/31, the figure was about 90 % and 75 % in the Philosophical (Arts and Sciences) Faculty. In the interwar period, according to Karady, the Jewish share among Hungarian students abroad was about 80 %. See Karady, “The Restructuring of the Academic Market Place in Hungary”: 126–27.

<sup>28</sup> Victor Karady and István Kozma, *Családnév és nemzet. Névpolitika, névváltoztatási Mozgalom és nemzetiségi erôviszonyok Magyarországon a reformkortól a kommunizmusig* [Surname and Nation. Name Politics, the Name-Change Movement and Nationality Relations in Hungary from the Reform Era to Communism] (Budapest: Osiris, 2002).

marriages (baptism in this case served to avoid confusion about the confessional status of expected children); and those who pursued careers in public service. Others converted out of fear. That the rate of conversion (and intermarriage) increased dramatically in the post-war period was not an accident: both practices were a reaction to violence. That they declined after the onset of political consolidation in 1922, and then increased once again with the rise of the radical and national socialist Right in the 1930s and during the war, proved that ethnic assimilation was neither spontaneous nor voluntary.<sup>29</sup>

With the exception of suicide and emigration, none of these exit strategies implied complete departure: they were also more about accommodation than resistance, survival within the existing relationship of strong asymmetrical dependence than breaking completely with the system. The temptation to give in to social pressure and the desire to succeed at any price was great; yet so was the determination to preserve one's identity. The majority of Hungarian Jewish students, too, wanted to maintain their autonomy both at home and abroad: only about 13 % of the Jewish students at institutions of higher learning in Budapest, for example, changed their religion between 1931 and 1937. The pressure to convert was admittedly greater for university graduates. As a result, if we can believe contemporary statistics, as many as 28 % of lawyers of Jewish background listed as members of the Budapest Chamber of Lawyers in 1940 were converts to Catholicism or Protestantism. Urbanites and professionals were more likely to convert than provincial Jews in non-academic professions: thus, in 1941, about 12 % of Christians were, according to the new racial law, in fact, Jews living in the provinces; the figure was 17 % in Budapest.<sup>30</sup> As an exit strategy, conversion provided a high degree of protection and allowed many people to practice their professions at least until 1940 (even if, as an assimilationist strategy, it proved to be virtually useless, since the majority society no longer recognized, with a very few exceptions, the converts as ethnic Hungarians). In other words, conversion (and intermarriage) provided exit from the system of strong asymmetrical dependency only for a selected few. It did not provide protection from labor service, which cost the lives of 40,000 men of Jewish origins in the early 1940s: neither did it shield converts in the provinces from the genocide or protect Jews and converts from the murderous raids of Hungarian Nazis in the final months of the war.

## V. Strong Asymmetrical Dependency as a Process

Like every concept, the strong asymmetrical dependency paradigm leaves room for interpretation. The adjective invites comparison: strong asymmetrical dependence presumes the existence of a lesser and weaker form of dependence; the same term could also suggest that there can be stricter and more exploitative form(s) or stage(s) in the same relationship,

---

<sup>29</sup> Between 1868 and 1914, less than 2% of the Jewish population converted to Christianity. Intermarriage was also well under 10 %. Jacob Katz, "The Identity of Post-Emancipatory Hungarian Jewry," in *A Social and Economic History of Central European Jewry*, ed. Yehuda Don and Victor Karady (New Brunswick and London: Translation Publishers, 1990): 13–33. Krisztián Ungváry, *A Horthy Rendszer Mérlege. Diszkrimináció, Szociálpolitika és Antiszemitizmus Magyarországon* [The Balance of the Horthy System. Discrimination, Social Policy and Anti-Semitism in Hungary] (Budapest and Pécs: Jelenkor, 2012): 33. The number of converts: 1896: 220; 1900: 441; 1910: 504; 1917: 677; 1919: 7146; 1920: 1925; 1922: 499; 1930: 65; 1938: 8000 and 1940: 3000–3500. See Gyula Zeke, "Statistikai mellékletek [Statistics]," in *Hét évtized a hazai zsidóság életében* [Seven Decades in the History of Our Jews], ed. Ferenc L. Lendvai, Pál Horváth, and Anikó Sohár (Budapest: Magyar Filozófiai Intézet, 1990): 85–190.

<sup>30</sup> See Karady, "The Restructuring of the Academic Market Place in Hungary": 134–35.

to which the adjective “strong” no longer does justice. In brief, the concept can refer to both an ideal-type and a process. The adjective “strong” also raises the question about the stability of a relationship and its direction and purpose: does the adjective imply a state, a permanent quality, or a stage in a process, in which radicalization, transformation, destruction and self-destruction are encoded in the process? The statement in the BCDSS Concept Paper that the concept of strong asymmetrical dependency refers to a relationship in which one “controls the action and access to resources of another,” too, invites comparison. It leaves open the question about the level of exploitation and whether there are clearly set (legal, moral, customary) limits to wealth and profit extraction and physical abuse. Finally, as we have seen in the case of Jewish students, the term exit is also open to interpretation, and shows great variations from suicide and geographical mobility to social mobility and assimilation. Here too, the exit can be both an event and a process; revisable and final; some of its form indicate resistance and rejection and complete break with the system of strong asymmetrical dependency, while others fall into the category of accommodation.

What is beyond question, at least among historians, is that the *numerus clausus* law of 1920 marked a watershed in the history of Hungarian Jews and Magyar-Jewish relations. It put an end to what I have described as the period of asymmetrical dependency (please note the absence of the adjective strong). Between 1867 and 1920 the two groups were dependent on each other economically, politically and culturally. The relationship of asymmetrical in the sense that the terms of the assimilationist social contract had been set by the stronger (Hungarian) party; it was also the Magyar political and social elite who had reserved the right to the stipulation or rescind the deal. Around 1867 the two parties entered into what turned out to be a profitable relationship voluntarily. The two middle classes and elites remained social partners and political allies until 1918; they were united not only by shared social and economic interests (and mutual fear and dislike of peasants and worker) but also by the same desire to modernize the country and create a strong nation state. The weaker party to the deal, the Jews, was not oppressed or singled out for persecution: on the contrary, they were protected by the state and the political elite. Middle-class Jews were also free to articulate their grievances; initiate legislation and advocate improvement (qualities, which are absent in the relationship of strong asymmetric dependency. Their fight to achieve complete legal equality was crowned with success with the passing of the Law of Reception in 1896, which made intermarriage possible. On the other hand, informal discrimination continued and the cultural and emotional between the two groups not only failed to disappear, but became widened in the decades before the war. Exit from asymmetrical dependence was available. Jews were free to emigrate; cultural assimilation was not only tolerated but welcome and encouraged by majority population; ethnic assimilation via conversion and intermarriage, too, also remained an option and possibility.

The war and the two revolutions ended this relatively equitable relationship. With the passing of the *numerus clausus* legislation in September 1920, the relationship between the two groups entered a new phase: a period of transition from asymmetrical dependence to strong asymmetrical dependence. This transitory period lasted from 1920 until the Second Jewish Anti-Jewish Law of May 5, 1939, which, for the first time, defined Jews as a race. The later date also marked the transition from the conservative authoritarian state, which had been founded on liberal and conservative principles, to the “racial state” based on fascist ideas. In this period, the partnership which had been formed between the two groups was slowly dissolved. After 1918, with the destruction of historical Hungary, Jews were no longer needed to tilt the ethnic

balance in the favor of the Magyar population. The principle of legal equality was grossly violated by the *numerus clausus* law. During the counterrevolution, the elite and the state temporarily withdrew protection from the Jewish community exposing it to the wrath of the lower and middle-class militias. While law and order had been restored by 1921, the state failed to bring the perpetrators of hate crimes to justice. The new counterrevolutionary regime not only tolerated but, through its institutions, such as schools and the army, helped to spread antisemitic propaganda and hate in the interwar period. The pogroms and armed robberies violated the sanctity of private property. Beside naked violence, the political elite also used the legal system and new laws, such as the Land Reform Act of 1920, to confiscate Jewish property. The new counterrevolutionary regime became heavily involved in the economy (via nationalization, monetary policy and planning) and pursued a more activist social policy (the redistribution of income and life changes via progressive taxation) than its pre-war and liberal predecessor. In Krisztián Ungváry's term, the "ethnicization of social policy" was meant to improve the living standards of workers and the members of the lower middle classes, especially peasants, at the expense of Jewish industrialists and landowners.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, until the late 1930s, Jews were still able to air their grievances in the parliaments and in the liberal press. Yet, in contest to the pre-war period, the voice of Jewish parliamentarians and journalist became much weaker, and they failed to turn the tide in public opinion against the Jews. Exit from the system of strong asymmetrical dependency via emigration and assimilation was still possible until the outbreak of the war. Yet, mass emigration, as the limited success of Zionist movement in Hungary shows, was no longer a realistic choice for the high majority of culturally assimilated, relatively well-to-do and patriotic Hungarian Jews. Exit via ethnic assimilation, too, remained open (at least legally), even if both majority society and the Jewish communities resented conversion and kept their distance from converts, as well as from people who married outside their community.

Yet the greatest change came in the economic realm. The *numerus clausus* laws were introduced in against the background of political paranoia and anti-Jewish hysteria. These developments led to the almost complete removal of Jews from public service. Jewish judges, prosecutors, teachers; doctors and nurses from public hospitals; managers and white-collar workers in companies and banks which handled state investments, were dismissed from their jobs. Jewish journalists who worked for liberal and socialist newspapers often lost their livelihoods because of censorship and the selective use of state subsidies favored were normally given to right-wing and conservative newspapers only. All of these measures led to a rapid rise of unemployment among Jewish intellectuals: Jews represented 18.9 % of the "intellectual workforce" in the country in 1928; on the other hand, their share among unemployed high-school and university graduates was about 38 % in Budapest.<sup>32</sup>

The purpose of the *numerus clausus* law was to improve the career prospects and life chances of non-Jewish students. The law did destroy thousands of careers and damaged many lives. Yet the harm the law caused did not translate into more jobs and better-paying jobs for non-Jewish university graduates. Academic unemployment remained a serious problem for Jews and non-Jews alike in the interwar period. As a result of poor job prospects, the share of college graduates in the general population continued to decline for men and stagnated (or at

---

<sup>31</sup> Krisztián Ungváry, "A Szociálpolitika Ethnicizálása [The Ethnicization of Social Policy]," in *Gróf Bethlen István és kora* [Count István Bethlen and his Times], ed. Zsejke Nagy (Budapest: Osiris, 2014): 167–84.

<sup>32</sup> Karady, "The Restructuring of the Academic Market Place in Hungary": 132–33.

best only slightly increased) for women between 1920 and 1939.<sup>33</sup> The reason for this poor performance had to be sought in the economic and political fields; Hungarian economy simply did not grow fast enough to produce enough jobs to absorb recent graduates and tens of thousands of refugee students and academics from the neighboring states.<sup>34</sup> University students and unemployed and underemployed non-Jewish professional blamed their problems on the state and the competition with Jews. Antisemitic student demonstrations, which had periodically flared up between 1924 and 1935, became regular occurrences in the second half of the 1930s. The victory of Nazism in Germany, the electoral success of fascist and antisemitic parties and movements in the neighboring states, and the rise of fascist and national socialist parties in Hungary in the mid-1930s, all of which embraced the demands of the expulsion of Jews from economic and social life, favored the cause of antisemitic students.<sup>35</sup> The First Jewish Law of 1938, which reduced the share of Jews in businesses, the press as well as among liberal professionals, such as doctors, engineers and lawyers, to twenty per cent, enjoyed almost universal approval. The law was not forced on Hungary by Nazi Germany; it was not an imitation of the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, but realized the old demands of the student fraternities and professional organizations.<sup>36</sup>

The period of strong asymmetrical dependency lasted from the Second and third Jewish Laws of 1939 and 1941, which defined Jews as a race and forbade sexual relations between “Aryans” and “non-Aryans,” until the German occupation of the country and the start of the Jewish genocide in Hungary in March 1944. The two laws also marked the birth of the Hungarian “racial state.” Jews were not the only victims of these events: Serbs and Romanians in the recently re-conquered provinces were either expelled or reduced to second-class citizens with no political rights and life-chances.<sup>37</sup> By 1940, the assimilationist social contrast had expired; with the exception of a small minority, Jews were no longer needed, and the social and political elite no longer counted on them to drive the modernization of the country forward (in fact, the same groups had come to regard Jews as a barrier to progress). Jews were no longer interesting as workers, political and social allies but only as a source of wealth and booty, which could be stolen with impunity. Disguised as social reforms to benefit the poor, almost all the decrees issued in these periods served to deprive Jews of their wealth and livelihood. Once a powerful minority group, the Jews after 1939 completely lost their voice in public life; they were no longer able to articulate their interests, express disapproval and appeal to the majority’s sympathy and support. After 1939, the exit became blocked. The racial laws forbade

---

<sup>33</sup> Moving higher in the same hierarchy, the decline was visible for every subgroup in the youth population, especially for young men. Among the latter aged 18–19, the proportion of secondary school graduates was 5, 9 % in 1920, 5 % in 1930 and only 4, 8 in 1941, while among girls the comparable figures were 2, 5, 2, 3 % and 2, 8 % respectively. The figures are similar in regards to those with higher educational degrees proper, aged 25–29 (the relevant figures were successively 3, 6 %, 2, 9 % and 2,9 %, while for women 0,4 %, 0,4 % and 0,6 %). Karady, “The Restructuring of the Academic Market Place in Hungary”: 115–18.

<sup>34</sup> Andor Ladányi, “On the 1928 Amendment to the Hungarian *numerus clausus* Act,” in *The numerus clausus in Hungary. Studies on the First Anti-Jewish Law and Academic Anti-Semitism in Modern Central Europe*, ed. Victor Karady and Peter Tibor Nagy (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012): 69–112, here 111–12.

<sup>35</sup> Róbert Kerepeszki, “‘The Racial Defense in Practice’. The Activity of the Turul Association at Hungarian Universities between the Two World Wars,” in *The numerus clausus in Hungary. Studies on the First Anti-Jewish Law and Academic Anti-Semitism in Modern Central Europe*, ed. Victor Karady and Peter Tibor Nagy (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012): 136–50. Robert Kerepeszki, *A Turul Szövetség, 1919–1945. Egyetemi ifjúsági és jobboldali radikalizmus a Horthy-korszakban* [The Turul Association, 1919–1945: University Youth and Right-Wing Radicalism in the Horthy Era] (Máriabesnyő: Attraktor, 2012).

<sup>36</sup> Ungváry, *A Horthy Rendszer Mérlege*.

<sup>37</sup> Balázs Ablonczy, *A visszatért Erdély* [The Returned Transylvania] (Budapest: Jaffa Kiadó, 2015).

intermarriage and made conversion exceedingly difficult. Even before the Nazi occupation of the country in March 1944, the state increasingly withdrew protection from Hungarian Jews. In August 1941, the Hungarian authorities had deported more than 15,000, mainly foreign, Jews, to occupied Ukraine to be massacred there by the German police and SS units and their Ukrainian helpers. Hungarian army and police units killed about 3000 Jews, Serbs and Roma in Novi Sad and its vicinity in the occupied province of Bácska in Northern Yugoslavia in early 1942.<sup>38</sup> Hungarian soldiers participated in countless atrocities against the Ukrainian, Russian and Jewish population in the Soviet Union in the next two years. The regime targeted not only foreigners: between 1941 and 1944 more than 40,000 Hungarian Jewish labor servicemen were either killed by foreign troops, died of mistreatment at the hands of Magyar commanders or were worked to death by their commanders on the Eastern front.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, the majority of Hungarian Jews, more than 800,000 strong (the largest group of Jews left in Europe), survived until the German occupation of the country in March 1944. The entry of Nazi troops into the country easily sealed their fate. Still, the Nazis would not have been able to achieve their goals without the support of the Hungarian state and the participation of police and army units and local administrators, and without the indifference and occasional complicity of the local population in the genocide. The perpetrators and accomplices rightly regarded the genocide as the termination of, and exit from, an unwanted relationship; as a rational decision and a voluntary act. Jews, however experienced the German occupation and the genocide as fate and destiny – a decision and event in which they had no agency. The more religious among the survivors called the genocide a “Holocaust,” an incomprehensible and mystical event and “burned sacrifice” meant to glorify the majesty and testify to the power of God.

## VI. Conclusion

This essay has applied the paradigm of strong asymmetrical dependency, as developed by the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies, to the study of the history of Jewish-Hungarian relations between 1867 and 1945. The essay has distinguished between four stages in the Jewish-Hungarian relationship in this period: asymmetrical dependency from 1867 until 1920; a transitory period from 1920 until 1939; strong asymmetrical dependency between 1939 and 1944; and genocide from April 1944 until April 1945. The key event, which made the transition possible from the first and second stages was the passing of the *numerus clausus* law in September 1920. All four stages were connected in some way to modernity and modernization. In the first stage, asymmetrical dependency was very much the product of capitalist modernity; the assimilationist social contract between the Magyar and Jewish elites and middle classes could have been concluded between any immigrant groups and the majority society in the United States. The two parties had been free(d), thanks to emancipation, to enter into this contractual relationship, and they did so on their own volition. The contract promised advantages to both groups; the deal made the two parties mutually dependent upon each other. The dependency was admittedly asymmetrical; yet Jewish middle-class and elite groups signed a much better deal than other social groups, such as estates servants, agricultural laborers, domestic servants and blue-collar workers. Many

---

<sup>38</sup> Árpád von Klimó, *Cold Days. The 1942 Massacre of Novi Sad. Hungarian Politics and Society, 1942–1989* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 2018).

<sup>39</sup> Randolph L. Braham, *The Politics of Genocide: The Holocaust in Hungary*, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994): 1–39.

ethnic minorities, such as the Romanians, also faced more informal discrimination before 1914. The capitalist order and liberal society of Hungary before 1914 was made up by a web of asymmetrical and strong asymmetrical dependencies (the latter included the inmates of prisons, hospitals, orphanages, dormitories, military bases, etc). Jews were underrepresented in the majority of these groups.

The *numerus clausus* law was also the product of the most modern war in history; two revolutions and one counterrevolution; the disappearance of ancient empires and the creation of modern nation states; state and nation building, mass expulsion and refugee crisis, and last but not least, democratization, the introduction of universal suffrage and the arrival of mass politics. The chief agents of change, nationalist students dreamt of a new social and political modeled on the “democracy of the trenches:” efficient, free of class privileges and arrogance, hierarchical, but in which one position in the social hierarchy depended on his or her talent, drive and loyalty to the nation, rather than on titles and inherited wealth. They also wanted to live in an ethnically and culturally homogeneous state cleansed of “others’ and “other-ness.” The cleansing, they believed, had to be a violent process, because only violence, the mother of all things, could facilitate cultural and ethnic revival and lead to national rebirth.

But the main and most immediate motive behind the law was greed and competition – which are, again, highly valued in capitalist society. The law was put in practice rather quickly and efficiently: thanks in part to the modernization of the civil service. Within a few years, the Jewish share among university students had declined to their proportion on the general population; at the same time, Jews had been almost completely expelled from the civil service and experienced job losses in the private sector. Yet their losses did not translate into gain for the non-Jewish students and professionals, who, too, had to bear the burden of slow economic growth, and the long-term impact of the war and the refugee crisis. The majority saw improvement in their life only after the outbreak of the war and the creation of the racial state.

Jewish students were not only passive victims, but also active agents and shapers of their own destiny. Some used opportunities still available to them to exit from the system of what was becoming a relationship of strong asymmetrical dependency. However, the majority did not rebel, but tried to find their ways in, and adapt to, the new system. “Exit” for the majority meant cultural and ethnic assimilation, such as name change, conversion and intermarriage. These strategies proved to be partially successful: or at least successful enough to draw the anger and increase the determination of majority society to solve the so-called Jewish problems once and for all. The anti-Jewish of the late 1930s and early 1940s took Nazi precedence into consideration yet, they were also inspired by *numerus clausus* legislation of 1920; more importantly, these new laws fulfilled the old wish of antisemites both in the student body and among modern professionals who wanted to get rid of the unwanted competitors. Their time came after the outbreak of the war, which put an end to the transitional period between the two dependencies and led to the formation of the racial state. In this new era, Jews had lost almost all their exit opportunities: they became trapped in the system of strong asymmetrical dependency.

The story of transition confirms Stichweh’s argument about the dark side of democratization and modernization: in a period of social and political upheavals and moral crisis, indeed, the majority society can, and often does, resort to scapegoating and the persecution of minorities to vent frustration and live out their violent fantasies. “Including exclusion,” too, existed in this period: the so-called Jewish problem was increasingly seen as a scientific issue and security

concern: a problem best identified by biologists and solved with the help of medical professionals, criminologists and security experts. Yet the solution they offered went well beyond the boundaries of political democracy. What these experts proposed was the ultimate form of strong asymmetrical dependency: a radical state, based on networks of such extremely unequal and exploitative relationships. Stichweh considers democracy as the political expression of modernity, which he believes does not tolerate strong asymmetrical dependencies. The history of Jewish-Hungarian relationship shows that modernity can have many faces; the racial state, which emerged in Nazi Germany first after 1933, and in Hungary after 1939, represented such a variation. Modernity is an open-ended process with many paths, traps and cul-de-sacs. The racial state, which Jeffrey Herf described as the very embodiment of “reactionary modernity,” represented one of these blind alleys and nightmares in history.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich*. *Technology, Culture and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).



## Bibliography

- Ablonczy, Balázs. *A visszatért Erdély* [The Returned Transylvania] (Budapest: Jaffa Kiadó, 2015).
- Aly, Götz, and Christian Gerlach. *Das letzte Kapitel. Der Mord an den ungarischen Juden 1944–1945* (Munich and Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlag-Anstalt, 2002).
- Bodó, Béla. “The White Terror in Hungary, 1919–1921: The Social Worlds of Paramilitary Groups,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 42 (2011): 133–63.
- Bodó, Béla. “Caught between Independence and Irredentism: The ‘Jewish Question’ in the Foreign Policy of the Kállay Government, 1942–1944,” *Hungarian Studies Review* 43, no. 1–2 (2016): 83–126.
- Bodó, Béla. *The White Terror: Antisemitic and Political Violence in Hungary, 1919–1921* (London: Routledge, 2019).
- Braham, Randolph L. *The Politics of Genocide: The Holocaust in Hungary*, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).
- Csunderlik, Péter. *A Vörös Farsangtól A Vörös Tatárjárásig., A Tanácsköztársaság a Korai Horthy Korszak Pamflet és Visszaemlékezés Irodalmában* [From the Red Carneval to the Red Mongol Invasion. The Image of The Republic of the Coucils in the Pamphlets and Memoirs of the Early Horhty Era] (Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 2019).
- Deák, István. *Beyond Nationalism. A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848–1918* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).
- Don, Yehuda, and George Magos. “The Demographic Development of Hungarian Jewry,” *Jewish Social Studies* 45, no. 3–4 (1983): 189–216.
- Fényes, Katalin. *Képzelt Asszimiláció? Négy Zsidó Értelmiségi Nemzedék Önképe* [Imagined Assimilation: Self-View of Four Jewish Generations] (Budapest: Corvina, 2010).
- Frank, Tibor. “‘All Modern People Are Persecuted’. Intellectual Exodus and the Hungarian Trauma, 1918–1920,” in *The numerus clausus in Hungary. Studies on the First Anti-Jewish Law and Academic Anti-Semitism in Modern Central Europe*, ed. Victor Karady and Peter Tibor Nagy (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012): 176–205
- Gerwarth, Robert, and John Horne. “Bolshevism as Fantasy: Fear of Revolution and Counterrevolutionary Violence, 1917–1923,” in *War in Peace*, ed. Robert Gerwarth and John Horne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012): 40–51.
- Gluck, Mary. *The Invisible Jewish Budapest: Metropolitan Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2016).
- Gyurgyák, János. *A Zsidókérdés Magyarországon: Politikai Eszmetörténet* [The Jewish Question in Hungary: A Political History of Ideas] (Budapest: Osiris, 2001).
- Gyurgyák, János. *Magyar Fajvédők. Eszmetörténeti Tanulmány* [Hungarian Race Defenders. An Intellectual History] (Budapest: Osiris, 2012).
- Hanák, Péter. “Jewish Assimilation in Austria-Hungary,” in *The Power of the Past*, ed. Pat Thane (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984): 235–51.
- Handler, Andrew. *From the Ghetto to the Games: Jewish Athletes in Hungary* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1985).
- Hanebrink, Paul A. *A Specter Haunting Europe. The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism* (Harvard: Belknap Press, 2018).
- Hatos, Pál. *Az Elátkozott Köztársaság. Az 1918-as Összeomlás és Forradalom Története* [The Damned Republic. The History of Collapse and Revolution in 1918] (Budapest: Jaffa Kiadó, 2018).

- Herf, Jeffrey. *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich. Technology, Culture and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
- Horváth, Ákos, ed. *Tanulmányok az újkori külföldi magyar egyetemjárás történetéhez* [Contributions to the Study of the History of Student Migration from Hungary in the Modern Era] (Budapest: ELTE, 1997).
- Janos, Andrew C. *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary, 1825–1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).
- Karady, Victor. “The Restructuring of the Academic Market Place in Hungary,” in *The Numerus Clausus in Hungary. Studies on the First Anti-Jewish Law and Academic Anti-Semitism in Modern Central Europe*, ed. Victor Karady and Peter Tibor Nagy (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012): 112–35.
- Karady, Victor, and István Kozma. *Családnév és nemzet. Névpolitika, névváltoztatási Mozgalom és nemzetiségi erőviszonyok Magyarországon a reformkortól a kommunizmusig* [Surname and Nation. Name Politics, the Name-Change Movement and Nationality Relations in Hungary from the Reform Era to Communism] (Budapest: Osiris, 2002).
- Karady, Victor, and Peter Tibor Nagy. *The Numerus Clausus in Hungary. Studies on the First Anti-Jewish Law and Academic Anti-Semitism in Modern Central Europe* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012).
- Karsai, László. *Holokauszt* (Budapest: Pannonica Kiadó, 2001).
- Katz, Jacob. “The Identity of Post-Emancipatory Hungarian Jewry,” in *A Social and Economic History of Central European Jewry*, ed. Yehuda Don and Victor Karady (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publisher, 1990): 13–33.
- Katzburg, Nathaniel. *Zsidópolitika Magyarországon, 1919–1943* [Jewish Politics in Hungary, 1919–1943] (Budapest: Bábel Kiadó, 2002).
- Kerepeszki, Róbert. *A Turul Szövetség, 1919–1945. Egyetemi ifjúsági és jobboldali radikalizmus a Horthy-korszakban* [The Turul Association, 1919–1945: University Youth and Right-Wing Radicalism in the Horthy Era] (Máriabesnyő: Attraktor, 2012).
- Kerepeszki, Róbert. “‘The Racial Defense in Practice’. The Activity of the Turul Association at Hungarian Universities between the Two World Wars,” in *The numerus clausus in Hungary. Studies on the First Anti-Jewish Law and Academic Anti-Semitism in Modern Central Europe*, ed. Victor Karady and Peter Tibor Nagy (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012): 136–50.
- Kershaw, Ian. *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* (London: E. Arnold, 1985).
- Klimó, Árpád von. *Cold Days. The 1942 Massacre of Novi Sad. Hungarian Politics and Society, 1942–1989* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 2018).
- Komoróczy, Géza, ed. *Jewish Budapest: Monument, Rites, History* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999).
- Komoróczy, Géza. *A zsidók története Magyarországon II. 1849-től a jelenkorig* [The History of the Jews in Hungary, vol. 2, From 1849 Until the Present] (Pozsony: Kalligram, 2012).
- Konrád, Miklós. “Vallásváltás És Identitás [Religious Conversion and Identity],” *Századok* 144 (2010): 3–47.
- Konrád, Miklós. *Zsidóságon innen és túl - Zsidók vallásváltása Magyarországon a reformkortól az első Világháborúig* [Before and After Judaism. Conversion among Jews in Hungary from the Age of Reform until the First World War] (Budapest: Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont, 2014).

- Kovács, Mária M. *Törvénytől sújtva. A numerus clausus Magyarországon* [Struck by the Law: The Numerus Clausus in Hungary], 1920–1945 (Budapest: Napvilág, 2012).
- Kovács, Mária M. “The Hungarian numerus clausus: Ideology, Apology and History, 1919–1945,” in *The numerus clausus in Hungary. Studies on the First Anti-Jewish Law and Academic Anti-Semitism in Modern Central Europe*, ed. Victor Karady and Peter Tibor Nagy (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012): 27–55.
- Ladányi, Andor. “On the 1928 Amendment to the Hungarian numerus clausus Act,” in *The numerus clausus in Hungary. Studies on the First Anti-Jewish Law and Academic Anti-Semitism in Modern Central Europe*, ed. Victor Karady and Peter Tibor Nagy (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012): 69–112.
- McCagg, William O. *Jewish Nobles and Geniuses in Modern Hungary* (Boulder: Eastern European Monographs, 1986).
- Miller, Michael L. “From White Terror to Red Vienna,” in *Wien und die jüdische Erfahrung, 1900–1938*, ed. Frank Stern and Barbara Eichinger (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2009): 307–23
- Miller, Michael L. “Numerus clausus Exiles: Hungarian Jewish Students in Inter-War Berlin,” in *The numerus clausus in Hungary. Studies on the First Anti-Jewish Law and Academic Anti-Semitism in Modern Central Europe*, ed. Victor Karady and Peter Tibor Nagy (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012): 206–18.
- Mócsy, Imre István. “Radicalization and Counterrevolution: Magyar Refugees from the Successor States and Their Role in Hungary, 1918–1921” (PhD diss., University of California, 1973).
- Molnár, Judit, ed. *A numerus clausus 90 év távlatából* [The Numerus Clausus from the Perspective of 90 Years Later] (Budapest: Holocaust Emlékközpont, 2011).
- Paksa, Rudolf. “A numerus clausus és módosítása [The Numerus Clausus and its Modifications],” in *Gróf Bethlen István és kora* [Count István Bethlen and his Times], ed. Zsejke Nagy (Budapest: Osiris, 2014): 137–57.
- Patai, Raphael. *The Jews of Hungary. The Jews of Hungary: History, Culture, Psychology* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2015).
- Pelle, János. *A gyűlölet vetése: A zsidótörvények és a magyar közvélemény, 1938–1944* [The Sowing of Hate: The Jewish Laws and Hungarian Public Opinion] (Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó, 2001).
- Pók, Attila. *The Politics of Hatred in the Middle of Europe. Scapegoating in Twentieth Century Hungary: History and Historiography* (Szombathely: Savaria University Press, 2009).
- Ranki, Vera. *The Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion: Jews and Nationalism in Hungary* (New York: Holmes and Maier, 1991).
- Rothberg, Michael. *Multidirectional Memory. Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Globalization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).
- Steinbacher, Sybille. “Sonderweg, Kolonialismus, Genozide. Der Holocaust im Spannungsfeld von Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten der deutschen Geschichte,” in *Der Holocaust. Ergebnisse und neue Fragen der Forschung*, ed. Frank Bajohr (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag GmbH, 2015): 83–101
- Stichweh, Rudolf. “How Do Divided Societies Come About? Persistent Inequalities, Pervasive Asymmetrical Dependencies, and Sociocultural Polarization as Divisive Forces in Contemporary Society,” *Global Perspectives* 2, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1525/gp.2021.25658>.

- Szabó, Miklós. *Az újkonzervativizmus és a jobboldali radikalizmus története (1867–1918)* [A History of Neo-Conservatism and Right-Wing Radicalism, 1867–1918] (Budapest: Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó, 2003).
- Szapor, Judit. *Hungarian Women’s Activism in the Wake of the First World War: From Rights to Revanche* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).
- Szegváry, Katalin N. *Numerus clausus rendelkezések az ellenforradalmi Magyarországon* [Numerus Clausus Measures in Counterrevolutionary Hungary: On the Acceptance of Jewish and Female Students]. (Budapest: Akadémia Kiadó, 1988).
- Ungváry, Krisztián. *A magyar honvédség a második világháborúban* [The Hungarian Armed Forces in World War 2] (Budapest: Osiris, 2004).
- Ungváry, Krisztián. *A Horthy Rendszer Mérlege. Diszkrimináció, Szociálpolitika és Antiszemitizmus Magyarországon* [The Balance of the Horthy System. Discrimination, Social Policy and Anti-Semitism in Hungary] (Budapest and Pécs: Jelenkor, 2012).
- Ungváry, Krisztián. “A Szociálpolitika Ethnicizálása [The Ethnicization of Social Policy],” in *Gróf Bethlen István és kora* [Count István Bethlen and his Times], ed. Zsejke Nagy (Budapest: Osiris, 2014): 167–84
- Ungváry, Krisztián. *A Horthy-rendszer és antiszemitizmusának mérlege. Diszkrimináció és társadalmpolitika Magyarországon 1919–1944* [The Balance of the Horthy Regime and its Anti-Semitism. Discrimination and Social Policy in Hungary, 1919–1944] (Budapest: Jelenkor, 2016).
- Volkov, Shulamit. “Antisemitismus als kultureller Code,” in *Jüdisches Leben und Antisemitismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Shulamit Volkov (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1990): 13–36.
- Wertheimer, Jack. “The ‘Ausländerfrage’ at Institutions of Higher Learning. A Controversy over Russian-Jewish Students in Imperial Germany,” *Yearbook, Leo Baeck Institute* 27 (1982): 196–215.
- Winnebeck, Julia, Ove Sutter, Adrian Hermann, Christoph Antweiler, and Stephan Conermann. “On Asymmetrical Dependency,” BCDSS Concept Paper 1 (Bonn, 2021), <https://www.dependency.uni-bonn.de/en/publications/bcdsss-publishing-series/bcdss-concept-papers>.
- Wiesel, Elie. “Beköszöntő,” in *Hágár Ország. A magyarországi zsidóság –történelem, közösség, kultúra* [Welcome Speech. The Country of Hagar. Hungarian Jewry – History, Community and Culture], ed. Anna Szalay (Budapest: Antall József Alapítvány/Kossuth Kiadó, 2002): 6–7.
- Zeke, Gyula. “Statistikai mellékletek [Statistics],” in *Hét évtized a hazai zsidóság életében* [Seven Decades in the History of Our Jews], ed. Ferenc L. Lendvai, Pál Horváth, and Anikó Sohár (Budapest: Magyar Filozófiai Intézet, 1990): 185–90.

For further titles see: <https://www.dependency.uni-bonn.de/en/publications>



**Contact:**

**Bonn Center for  
Dependency and Slavery  
Studies (BCDSS)**

University of Bonn  
Niebuhrstr. 5  
53113 Bonn  
Germany

For more information:

Web: [www.dependency.uni-bonn.de/en](http://www.dependency.uni-bonn.de/en)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DependencyBonn>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DependencyBonn>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/dependencybonn/>

Newsletter: <https://listen.uni-bonn.de/wvs/subscribe/dependencystudies>