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Socialism Goes Global: Decolonization and the Making of a New Culture of Internationalism in Socialist Hungary, 1956–1989*

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In the late 1950s, Hungarian elites stepped up their attempts to open up the country to Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia. Wishing to escape the diplomatic isolation that had followed international condemnation of the suppression of the 1956 revolt and to steer their economy away from Stalinist-era autarkic development, elites looked to develop trade links with what would later be called the “global South.”¹ This engagement was also a product of rapid Stalinist-era industrialization: it provided Eastern Bloc states with the sense of possessing a developed socialist modernity that could now be exported to countries that were throwing off European or American imperialism and choosing socialist—or at least noncapitalist—forms of development.² Warsaw Pact countries were also working within a new framework provided by the Soviet Union, where Khrushchev and a restructured foreign affairs corps were questioning both the dominant late Stalinist idea that there was only one pattern for the development of socialism and its earlier—often racially inflected—thinking that such modernization might not be possible in the less developed world.³ Led by the firm pro-Khrushchevite

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¹ On policies to break Hungary’s isolation, see György Péteri, “Transsystemic Fantasies: Counterrevolutionary Hungary at Brussels Expo ’58,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 47, no. 1 (2012): 137–60.

² For a classic statement about exporting Hungarian expertise, see József Bognár, “Science and Its Application in Developing Countries,” *New Hungarian Quarterly* 4, no. 11 (1963): 17–18.

³ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge, 2005), 166–67; Fred Halliday, “Third World Socialism: 1989 and After,” in *The Global 1989: Continuity and Change on World Politics*, ed. George Lawson, Chris Armbruster, and Michael Cox (Cambridge, 2010), 117–18; Andreas Hilger, “The Soviet Union and India: The Khrushchev Era and Its Aftermath until 1966,” in *Indo-Soviet Relations Collection: The Khrushchev Years*, ed. Andreas Hilger, Anna Locher, Roland Popp, Shana Goldberg, and Matthias Pintsch (2009), 1–14, <http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch>.

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János Kádár and foreign minister Endre Sík (1958–61), a committed Africanist of long standing, Hungary enthusiastically followed this line.⁴ In 1959–60 a Radio Free Europe research analyst, fearing communist infiltration in the developing world, counted sixty-one official Hungarian “missions” to developing countries. His list included workers installing technology in the Middle East, building factories and power stations in Egypt, sending commercial delegations to Ghana and Guinea, managing public bus traffic in Conakry, and assisting hospital work in the Arabic peninsula, as well as intellectuals and technical professionals visiting the Indian cinema industry and writers traveling to Latin America.⁵

Yet Hungary’s new engagement with an “anti-imperialist world” was not only a matter of external support. Whereas the end of empire did not become a central feature of Western European political cultures—indeed, it has been argued that the very term “decolonization” was used to hide the conflicts behind, and stress the generous nature of, the handover of power—the struggles that achieved national independence were brought to the center of elite, intellectual, and popular cultures of state socialist Eastern Europe.⁶ Over the next two decades, accounts of Third World revolutions, and Hungarians’ close connections to them, would play a major role in socialist mass culture. Most commonly crafted to appeal to a new generation, these stories related a bright global future for socialism, in which Hungarian youth could play a part.⁷ This development was not driven just by the party elite and state institutions, however: a range of other actors—from conservative populists to radical leftists to workers who volunteered to fight in Vietnam—also contributed to the construction of this new Third Worldist culture. In that sense, this story is partly illustrative of what Melinda Kalmár and András Mink have called Kádár’s late socialist “simulated public sphere,” a space where citizens were given access to more diverse political information and allowed greater leeway in political expression than had been possible under Stalinism.⁸

⁴ Endre Sík studied in Moscow in the 1920s and later taught in the African department of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East. In 1930, he published *The Racial Question and Marxism* (in Russian, translated into Hungarian in 1971). He also published the four-volume *History of Black Africa (Fekete-Afrika története)* between 1964 and 1973. These volumes were translated into English and French. For his account of Hungary’s enthusiastic support for African independence, see his professional autobiography, *Bem rakparti évek* (Budapest, 1970), 213–19.

⁵ Radio Free Europe Background Report, “Hungarian Visits to the Underdeveloped Countries,” Open Society Archives, Budapest [HU OSA] 31-1-8.

⁶ See Stuart Ward, “The European Provenance of Decolonization,” *Past & Present*, no. 230 (February 2016), forthcoming.

⁷ On the relationship between foreign policy and internal legitimacy for a socialist state, see Robert Niebuhr, “Nonalignment as Yugoslavia’s Answer to Bloc Politics,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 13, no. 1 (2011): 146–79.

⁸ Melinda Kalmár, *Ennivaló és hozomány: A kora kádárizmus ideológiája* (Budapest, 1998), 64–78; András Mink, “A kesudió ügy,” *Beszélő* 3 (1997): 7–8.

However, they argued, this occurred only insofar as it ultimately helped to reinforce official discourse, keep public opinion within tolerated limits, and, in so doing, achieve greater social integration than would be possible under a more punitive authoritarianism. Yet not all these social and intellectual contributions can be considered integrative: this culture of international connection and solidarity was also capable of sparking disruptive projects “from below” that contested the state’s readings of global revolution and domesticated its ideas in politically disruptive forms that challenged official aspirations for the future of socialism at home.

This struggle over the meaning of this new internationalism was understood by contemporaries as a generational one—even if, in reality, the intellectual positions taken by participants in these debates crossed over age-determined lines. Many of these problematic alternative readings were pinned on a younger generation’s youthful romanticism, understood by elites as a product of their lack of knowledge and experience of the everyday struggles of wartime antifascism and postwar rebuilding.⁹ By the late 1960s, institutions of the state clamped down on the use of anti-imperialist struggles abroad to generate critiques of socialism at home: the story told here is thus also illustrative of the problems an Eastern Bloc state faced policing the boundaries of this revived internationalism. The sources created by this clash of perspectives—and by the state’s near constant attempt to assess and regulate popular attitudes about the outside world, particularly among youth—provide the main evidence base for this work: these include the opinion surveys, surveillance assessments, and “mood reports” produced by institutions such as the Communist Youth League and the youth and intellectual journals where the struggles of the decolonizing world could be popularized and, in some cases, debated.¹⁰ To these are added the voices of those young activists who were shaped politically by this internationalist socialist culture, heard through their diaries and memoirs and through eighty oral history interviews conducted with those involved in official and less official political and cultural activism in the 1960s and 1970s.¹¹

⁹ For more on this generational divide, see Péter Apor and James Mark, “Mobilizing Generation: The Idea of 1968 in Hungary,” in *Talkin’ ’bout My Generation: Conflicts of Generation Building and Europe’s 1968*, ed. Anna von der Goltz (Göttingen, 2011), 99–118.

¹⁰ The main youth journals in this context were *Világ Ifjúsága* (World youth) and *Ifjú Kommunista* (Young Communist); the main intellectual journals were *Társadalmi Szemle* and *Kritika*. Third Worldist issues could also be found in many local university newspapers and journals in this period.

¹¹ These were conducted as part of the (UK) Arts and Humanities Research Council–funded “Around 1968: Activism, Networks, Trajectories” project. Interviews were carried out with eighty individuals drawn from six activist groups of the period: Maoists, members of the Communist Youth League Reform Movement, Marxist Revisionists, radical Catholics, the Balatonboglár group, and the Orfeo cultural collective.

In recent years, historians and other scholars have become increasingly interested in how, in the late 1950s, Eastern Bloc nations opened up their “mass imaginations”: how socialist culture became infused with knowledge of the wider world both to a degree and with a nuance unknown in the Stalinist period. Nevertheless, most of these investigations have focused on how newly complex images of the West were negotiated in socialist culture.¹² There has been very little interest in the role of the decolonizing world in the imagination of post-Stalinist Eastern Europe.¹³ Yet Hungary, alongside other European state socialist countries, did experience—in common with the West in this period—political, activist, and youth cultures ever more defined through contact with, and reflection on, politics and cultures from across the world.¹⁴ Direct encounters with the decolonizing and postcolonial world played a limited role: greater numbers were crossing the Iron Curtain to Western Europe in this period, but only a limited cohort were able to travel to sites of anti-imperialist revolution beyond Europe.¹⁵

¹² Ervin Csizmadia, *Diskurzus és diktatúra: A magyar értelmiség vitái Nyugat-Európáról a késő Kádár-rendszerben* (Budapest, 2001), 71–81. See, in a Soviet context, Anne E. Gorsuch, “From Iron Curtain to Silver Screen: Imagining the West in the Khrushchev Era,” in *Imagining the West in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*, ed. György Péteri (Pittsburgh, 2010), esp. 170–71.

¹³ As exceptions, see Jennifer Hosek, *Sun, Sex and Socialism: Cuba in the German Imaginary* (Toronto, 2012); Marcus Kenzler, *Der Blick in die andere Welt: Einflüsse Lateinamerikas auf die Bildende Kunst der DDR* (Berlin, 2012); Tobias Rupprecht, *Soviet Internationalism after Stalin* (Cambridge, 2015); Anne Gorsuch, “‘Cuba, My Love’: The Romance of Revolutionary Cuba in the Soviet Sixties,” *American Historical Review* 120, no. 2 (2015): 497–526. Although some have acknowledged the importance of linkages with the Third World at a political level, there has often been an assumption that this new form of communist internationalism had little social resonance. Most work on Second World and Third World linkages or transfer has concerned diplomacy, politics, or economics; see the survey in David C. Engerman, “The Second World’s Third World,” *Kritika* 12, no. 1 (2011): 183–211; see also, e.g., Oscar Sanchez-Sibony, *Red Globalisation: The Political Economy of the Soviet Cold War from Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, 2014); Ilya V. Gaiduk, *The Soviet Union and the Vietnam War* (Chicago, 1996); Maxim Matusevich, *No Easy Row for a Russian Hoe: Ideology and Pragmatism in Nigerian-Soviet Relations, 1960–1991* (Trenton, NJ, 2003); Sergey Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War: The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956–1964* (Washington, DC, 2010); Petr Zidek and Karel Sieber, *Československo a subsaharská Afrika v letech 1948–1989* (Prague, 2007); Hana Bortlová, *Československo a Kuba v letech 1959–1962* (Prague, 2011).

¹⁴ Some work compares Western and Eastern European forms of transnational youth and activist culture from the 1960s: see, e.g., James Mark, Nigel Townson, and Polymeris Voglis, “Inspirations,” and James Mark and Anna von der Goltz, “Encounters,” both in *Europe’s 1968: Voices of Revolt*, ed. Robert Gildea, James Mark, and Anette Warring (Oxford, 2013), 72–103, and 131–63.

¹⁵ It should be noted that elite politicians, intellectuals, and working-class factory and youth delegations were traveling to socialist countries outside Europe in the 1960s. Far more, however, were traveling westward as part of a policy of new economic openness

Nevertheless, the presence in the Eastern Bloc of exiles, workers, or students from other world regions was important for some.¹⁶ For the most part, however, it was socialist mass media, intellectual journals, national commemorative events, educational initiatives, and solidarity movements that most profoundly shaped this new socialist political culture—one in which the revolutions in Latin America or freedom struggles in Africa and Southeast Asia played an increasingly important role in enabling a second generation of socialist citizens to develop new political subjectivities and identities at home. Indeed, it may be that this new culture was especially powerful precisely because real encounter was so rare: thus these cultural imaginaries, distanced from the complexities of the various international socialist movements that inspired them, could be more easily accommodated to the ideological needs of domestic political or cultural projects.¹⁷

I. OPPORTUNITIES

A. *Reactivating Youth Commitment*

From the late 1950s, knowledge of the decolonizing and developing world was primarily aimed at a new generation of socialist subjects. Over the following two decades, the institutions connected with youth played the most significant roles in constructing an internationalist culture that not only communicated official

to “developed” countries. The Hungarian government encouraged study trips and scholarships for Hungarian professionals and scholars and made diplomatic efforts to institutionalize these contacts between 1961 and 1969, first with France and then with Germany and the United States. See Katalin Somlai, “Ösztöndíjjal Nyugatra a hatvanas években: Az Országos Ösztöndíj Tanács felállítása” [To the West with a scholarship: The establishment of the National Council of Scholarships], in *Kádárizmus: Mélyfúrások*, ed. János Tischler (Budapest, 2009), 273–314. On the growth of bilateral contacts and intellectual exchange with Western Europe after the 1956 revolution, see Anikó Macher, “Hungarian Cultural Diplomacy, 1957–1963: Echoes of Western Cultural Activity in a Communist Country,” in *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy*, ed. Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht and Mark C. Donfried (Oxford, 2010), 75–108. From 1964, for instance, Hungarian economists increasingly traveled to the United States on Ford fellowships. See Joanna Bockman, *Markets in the Name of Socialism: The Left-Wing Origins of Neoliberalism* (Stanford, CA, 2011), 127–29. In 1971, 1.2 million Hungarians traveled abroad, and 216,000 of those went to the West: CURT, “Hungarian Travel Opportunities to the West,” July 7, 1972 (EERA/Hungarian Unit). On the 1980s as the “true transnational period,” see Padraic Kenney, “Borders Breached: The Transnational in Eastern Europe since Solidarity,” *Journal of Modern European History* 8, no. 2 (2010): 184–87.

¹⁶ On these “domestic encounters,” see, e.g., Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham, NC, 2012); Maxim Matusevich, “An Exotic Subversive: Africa, Africans and the Soviet Everyday,” *Race & Class* 49, no. 4 (2008): 57–81.

¹⁷ This work will focus for the most part on the reception of socialist and anti-imperialist movements by Hungarians. It does not deal with this encounter from the perspective of actors from the decolonizing world.

ideological positions on a new socialist world but also nurtured a culture of transnational activist solidarity from below. At the center of this project stood the Communist Youth League (Kommunista Ifjúsági Szövetség, or KISZ): a new youth organization established after the 1956 revolution to reinvigorate the process of socializing those ages 14–30 into the norms of a developed socialist society.¹⁸ From early 1960, league-sponsored magazines such as *Világ Ifjúsága* (World youth) and *Ifjú Kommunista* (Young Communist) frequently communicated new anti-imperialist struggles to the young. In their accounts, a new generation was turning to socialist construction across the world. The Cuban revolution of 1959 had the first starring role: it was presented in numerous articles as evidence that Latin America's young would bring socialism to their continent—a struggle that Hungarian youth had a responsibility to support.¹⁹ The Communist Youth League helped build global revolution into the socialist calendar too. From 1956 onward, it took the lead in organizing, each year on April 24, the “day of anticolonialism and for struggling youth”—a major nationally coordinated event that explicitly connected youth socialization and the fights against Western imperialism.²⁰ It also helped to manage the festivities held every January to mark the anniversary of the Cuban revolution, which by the early 1960s had become a regular feature of the socialist calendar.²¹ When Che Guevara visited Hungary in December 1961, it was the annual conference of the Communist Youth in Budapest that publicly showcased him to the Hungarian population (fig. 1).²²

¹⁸ László Kürti, *Youth and the State in Hungary* (London, 2002), 102. Within five years of the league's founding, its membership had reached 708,000.

¹⁹ Moreover, developing Soviet-Cuban relations were presented as an evolving model for cooperation between Third World anticolonial movements and the Socialist Bloc as a whole. See Adolfo Rivero, “A felszabadító harcok és a leszerelés” [Wars of independence and disarmament], *Világ Ifjúsága* 9 (March 1960): 3; Luis Ortega, “A fiatal latin-amerikai nemzedék” [The young Latin American generation], *Világ Ifjúsága* 9 (July 1960): 3; “Latin-Amerikából jelentik” [Reports from Latin America], *Ifjú Kommunista*, July 1962, 31. *Társadalmi Szemle* included a comprehensive review of the first eighteen months of the Cuban revolution in its July 1960 issue.

²⁰ “Szolidaritás” [Solidarity], *Ifjú Kommunista* 18, no. 4 (April 1974): 14. In most years, *Ifjú Kommunista* included an article explaining the origins of this day. According to these accounts, it was first held on February 21, 1947, organized by Asian students in response to the Bombay navy mutiny against the British a year earlier. It was taken up in the Socialist Bloc, and then, eight years later, the date of commemoration was changed to celebrate the last day of the Bandung Conference on April 24, 1955.

²¹ To mark the third anniversary, the Cuban revolution was celebrated through public addresses and a film festival, and a Hungarian delegation was sent to Cuba to express solidarity with the revolution: Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára (Hungarian National Archive, hereafter cited as MNLOL) 288/5/253, 84, 93.

²² “Fegyver, munka, tanulás” [Weapons, work, learning], *Magyar Ifjúság*, December 24, 1960; *Ifjú Kommunista*, February 1961, back cover.

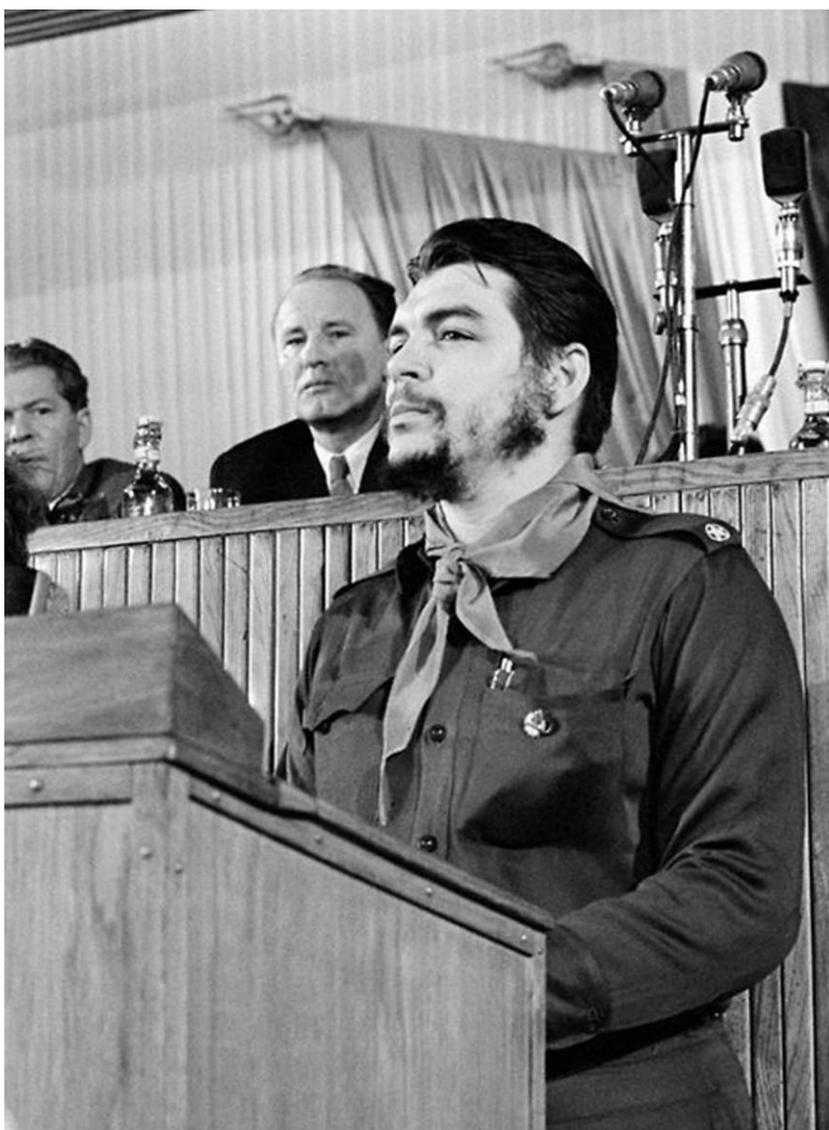


FIG. 1.—Che Guevara delivers a speech to the annual congress of the Hungarian Communist Youth League, December 18, 1960 (*Ifjúkommunista* [January 1961]: 2).

A knowledge of socialism's increasingly global reach was quickly embedded in education too. Against the background of not only the Cuban Revolution but also the independence in 1960 of seventeen states in Africa whose leaders, it was hoped, would build socialism, the Communist Youth League's internationalist educational and political work was stepped up. World Map Circles ("*Világ térképe e lőtt*" kör) became a regular feature of a new anticolonial education directed at all high school and university students. These sought to instill in youth an awareness of the geographical extent of the noncapitalist world and the belief that socialism was on its way to becoming the dominant "world system."²³ The ideological power of viewing these images of an ever-expanding red coloring on the world map was recalled in the autobiography of author György Dalos, a former Maoist who reflected from an ironic distance on how such an education in the early 1960s had given him great confidence as a young man in the future of socialism: "First of all the international conditions were conducive to the realization of our plans. In our vision the world map was adorned with little flags marking the front lines [of the socialist struggle] . . . we panned over the ever-spreading territory—from Shanghai to Plauen—and then across to the cayman-shaped 'land of the free' of the Americas [i.e., Cuba]."²⁴

For many activists, the claim that the end of Western European empires might herald the "last phase of capitalism" was not inconceivable in the early 1960s. The predictions that Lenin set out in his *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1920)—that the greatest threat to the capitalist system would come from the exploited in the colonies and semicolonies on its margins—appeared now to be taking real historical form. The Soviet leader Khrushchev in particular firmly believed that socialist revolutions, national liberation movements, and democratic revolution were merging into "a single revolutionary world process undermining and destroying capitalism."²⁵ The collapse of European empires was presented as having ushered in a new stage in world history, enabling a

²³ *Kézikönyv: A Kisz politikai körök vezetői részére 1960–1* [Handbook for the leaders of KISZ political groups]. On the role of geographers in conceptualizing this new anti-imperialist world, see Ferenc Koch, "A nacionalizmus elleni harc irányelvei a földrajzban" [The methods of fighting against nationalism in geography], *Felsőoktatási Szemle* 10, no. 9 (October 1960): 605.

²⁴ György Dalos, *Hosszú menetelés, rövid tanfolyam* [The long march: A short course] (Budapest, 1989), 29. Dalos's title refers to the fact that this is a history (a "short course," Stalin's standardized history of the communist movement) of his engagement with Maoism (hence his reference to the Chinese communists' "long march"). The author, while providing an in-depth and nuanced account of his engagement with leftist politics in 1960s Hungary, nevertheless wished to distance his present identity from his previous self. His title achieved this through ironic distance (signaled in the humorous juxtaposition of the Soviet and Chinese terms) and through emphasizing the brevity (the "short course") of his ultraradical period.

²⁵ Quoted in Alfred B. Evans, *Soviet Marxism-Leninism: The Decline of an Ideology* (Westport, CT, 1993), 73.

fundamental renewal of the traditions of European socialism.²⁶ The October revolution had come alive again in the jungles of Southeast Asia, where, the youth press explained, the Vietnamese partisans drew strength from the knowledge that they were following in the footsteps of the Soviets.²⁷ The ideas that a new era of global struggle between imperialism and socialism had begun and that a rapidly expanding socialist world could be victorious became a central part of political life.²⁸ Hungarian youth were encouraged to perceive themselves as members of a transnational army of progress and revolution that was growing in strength.²⁹

The reasons for this connection between youth and anti-imperialism can be found in a perceived crisis in, and hopes for, the education of a second socialist generation. On the one hand, elites feared that the youth had been insufficiently socialized into the traditions of struggle, had become ideologically demobilized following the experience of Stalinism and the violent suppression of reform socialism in 1956, and were skeptical about the future of the project at home.³⁰ On the other, they invested hopes in a new generation who could complete the “cultural construction” of socialism. In the early 1960s, it was commonly believed that while the first phase of the economic and political construction of socialism had been completed, cultural change had been held up: this was often blamed on the entrenched mentalities of an older generation “tarnished” in their early lives by the experience of capitalism.³¹ Many party leaders, ideologues, and

²⁶ The Soviet bloc held to the idea of the “correlation of forces,” which assumed a progressive direction for socialism in the decolonizing world; see Fred Halliday, “Third World Socialism: 1989 and After,” in *The Global 1989: Continuity and Change in World Politics*, ed. George Lawson (Cambridge, 2010), 118.

²⁷ “MG,” “November 7. ünnepén” [Celebrating November 7], *Ifjú Kommunista*, October 1966.

²⁸ For one of the first substantial intellectual manifestations of this in Hungary, see István Kende, *A gyarmati rendszer felbomlása* [The break-up of the colonial system] (Budapest, 1961). For the appeal of the “growing world system” narrative in a contemporary propaganda *diafilm* (filmstrip), see László Bácskai, *A szocialista világrendszer* (Budapest: Magyar Diafilmgyártó Vállalat, 1967), <http://dia.osaarchivum.org/public/index.php?fs=2486&search=2&page=4>. A range of terms were used in the early to mid-1960s, such as *a szocialista világrendszer* (the socialist world system) and *békeszerető erők* (peace-loving forces), which were engaged in *nemzetközi osztályharc* (international class struggle). On the rise and fall of confidence in the idea of a socialist world system, see Sara Lorenzini, “Comecon and the South in the Years of Détente,” *European Review of History* 21, no. 2 (April 2014): 183–99.

²⁹ On the idea of a global Socialist Bloc on the rise, see “A nemzetközi kapcsolatok alakulásáról” [The future of international relations], *A Jövő Mérnöke*, September 29, 1963.

³⁰ “Jelentés a diákifjúság eszmei-politikai, világnézeti és erkölcsi arculatával kapcsolatos néhány problémáról” [Report on a few problems related to the political-ideological and moral attitudes of youth], *Politikatörténeti és Szakszervezeti Levéltár* [Archives of Political History and Trade Unions, hereafter cited as PSL] 289. f. 13/1963/33.őe.

³¹ For a later reflection on the “lag in ‘cultural construction,’” see Dalos, *Hosszú menetelés*, 28–29.

intellectuals hoped that revolutions in distant lands would provide inspiring images of the future of socialism that domestic exemplars were unable to match and that these might profoundly move the ideological inclinations of a younger cohort toward a deeper cultural identification with socialism as a modern, growing, and now truly global ideology.³²

Indeed, many young activists of the 1960s remembered these struggles—and in particular the struggle in Cuba—as essential to their political socialization in a system where domestic progressive traditions appeared stale or compromised. László Trencsényi, who was to become an important figure in the KISZ reform movement in the late 1960s, recalled in an oral history interview that during

the Cuban crisis . . . there was this time when the classroom door suddenly opened, and the class above us came in through the door . . . and they said that we would go on a protest: “Stop the clocks! There’s going to be a protest against the blockade of Cuba.” And all of us young ones streamed out. At last there was some kind of revolutionary situation, there was something happening to us. Yes, I had been an upstanding pioneer in December 1957, defending the honor of my red necktie, but now, at last, here was the revolution proper! And from our language lesson we pushed and shoved our way out into the hallway, where we had to condemn American imperialism, which we did happily, clapping with abandon, “Out of Cuba, Yankees no!” as we went.³³

This new culture was also encouraged by those from other intellectual traditions whose unconventional contributions could simultaneously critique and reinforce the party leadership’s new transnational appeals. One of the first alternative promoters was Sándor Csoóri, a young populist intellectual from a peasant background who in 1961 traveled to Cuba for the first time. His account of this trip—printed in the youth, intellectual, and popular press and eventually published as his *Kubai napló* (Cuban diary) in 1965—would be influential in shaping the broader cult of the Cuban revolution in the early to mid-1960s.³⁴ Csoóri was one of the many populist intellectuals who made their peace with the regime following the defeat of the 1956 revolution. They accepted the regime’s offer to forget their involvement in the uprising, and some—such as leading populist

³² The most prominent public promoters of this new culture were, e.g., Deputy Minister and then Minister of Culture György Aczél, the young populist intellectual Sándor Csoóri, the academic/“peace researcher” István Kende, Foreign Minister Endre Sík, Communist Youth leader and writer Gábor Karczag, and political journalists and writers György Máté and György Makai.

³³ László Trencsényi, interview conducted by Péter Apor, Budapest, January 15, 2009.

³⁴ See Sándor Csoóri, *Kubai napló* (Budapest, 1965), and also the earlier serialization “Kubai útinapló” [Travel report from Cuba], published as three parts in *Új Írás* 3 (September 1963): 1030–41, *Új Írás* (November 1963): 1287–99, and *Új Írás* (December 1963), 1458–72. Csoóri had difficulties publishing the book, and he would later claim that this was due not to his political readings of the Cuban revolution, which were tolerated but rather to his overly sexualized representations of Cuban women.

writers Gyula Illyés and László Németh—made public declarations in which they acclaimed the achievements of the socialist system under János Kádár. In return, from the beginning of the 1960s, state-sponsored publishing houses guaranteed opportunities for them.³⁵ Csoóri himself viewed Western forms of individualistic capitalism as the greater threat to rural Hungary and the state socialist status quo as the lesser evil. In Cuba, he found an imaginative and inspiring space through which he could rethink the national project at home. Rejecting the party's official image of Cuba as a land of modern socialist construction, Csoóri rather represented it as an idealized peasant society in an independent country that had now chosen—through its revolution—to resist the excessive materialism of the modern world. The Cuban revolution could be celebrated as anticapitalist, free from the technological oversophistication and acquisitiveness of the capitalist West, and valuing “genuine community.”³⁶

B. Taming Anticommunist Nationalism

This internationalist culture was shaped by another fear: that of the impact of anticommunist nationalism on youth. Most of the post-1956 elite concurred that the “national communism” espoused by Imre Nagy—prime minister from 1953 and during the 1956 revolution itself—was a “bourgeois deviation” that had in effect stoked reactionary nationalist resistance to Communism and opened up the country to the influence of “counterrevolutionary forces.”³⁷ This ideology, it was commonly argued, had particularly affected youth, who, as a consequence, had taken part in the 1956 uprising in large numbers, supposedly tricked into believing that the presence of the Soviets and the Red Army was inimical to the interests of the Hungarian nation.³⁸ After the uprising's suppression, multiple surveys were

³⁵ On the relationship between populist writers and the regime after 1956, see Éva Standeisky, “Tükrök: Népi írok, parasztpárti politikusok és a hatalom, 1960–1973,” in *Múlt századi hétköznapiak: Tanulmányok a Kádár-korszak kialakulásának időszakáról*, ed. János M. Rainer (Budapest, 2003), 299–330.

³⁶ On this outlook, see Albert Tezla, *Ocean at the Window: Hungarian Prose and Poetry since 1945* (Minneapolis, 1983), 280.

³⁷ See the position of First Secretary János Kádár in MNL M-KS 288/5/113, 3–4, 5, 14. This position was established in Kádár's declaration of November 6, 1956, on behalf of a provisional central committee. It stated that the group was breaking with Nagy's government, which, “having assumed the positions of nationalism and chauvinism, have opened up the way for counterrevolutionary forces.”

³⁸ On the link between youth, nationalism, and involvement in the 1956 uprising, see, e.g., Martin Mevius, *Agents of Moscow: The Hungarian Communist Party and the Origins of Socialist Patriotism* (Oxford, 2005), 267; Nóra Dikán Némethné, Róbert Szabó, and István Vida, eds., *Vidéki diákmozgalmak 1956-ban* (Budapest, 2004); and László Eörsi, *Corvinisták, 1956: A VIII. kerület fegyveres csoportjai* (Budapest, 2001). On this connection between youth and 1956 in elite minds, see László Kürti, *Youth and the State in Hungary* (London, 2002), 100–102; Milán Pap, “‘A nép és a szülőföld igaz szeretete’—a

conducted into nationalist outlooks of youth in educational journals.³⁹ The ministry of the interior repeatedly called for special police measures to protect the young from the continued threat of this ideology—an approach that would be formalized as “antinationalist youth protection” in the 1960s.⁴⁰ From 1959 onward—evidenced in speeches of leading politicians, debates in the party journal *Társadalmi Szemle*, and the May 1959 National Pedagogical Conference—there was an increasing interest in how “bourgeois nationalism” could be countered through a reinvigorated “socialist patriotism.”⁴¹ In this conception, a true patriotism could be felt only by those who identified with working-class interests and socialism and who respected the procession of historical figures—such as peasant rebels, heroes and martyrs of the 1848 revolutions, and artists and writers—who had nursed the progressive traditions of the Hungarian people in advance of the victory of the socialist regime.⁴²

By the early 1960s, party intellectuals were arguing that Hungarian youth needed a patriotism that required them to look beyond the country’s borders to the struggles of the anticolonial world.⁴³ The party’s propaganda section, branches of the Communist Youth League, and public educational institutions began to promote a socialist patriotism that consciously linked contemporary anti-imperialist struggles to the progressive national tradition that the socialist state had been promoting in education and culture since the late 1940s.⁴⁴ It was

szocialista hazafiság fogalma a Kádár-rendszerben,” *Politikatudományi Szemle*, no. 1 (2013): 72.

³⁹ See, e.g., the bimonthly publication of the Ministry of Education (Budapest), *Történelemtanítás* 6 (1960).

⁴⁰ On the relationship between 1956 and youth protection in the 1960s, see Sándor Horváth, *Kádár gyermekei: Ifjúsági lázadás a hatvanas években* (Budapest, 2009), 65, 75–76.

⁴¹ MNLOL 288/5/118, 4, 61; “A burzsoá nacionalizmusról és a szocialista hazafiságról (Tézisek)” [Concerning bourgeois nationalism and socialist patriotism (Theses)], *Társadalmi Szemle* 14 (July–August 1959): 11–39; “A nacionalizmus elleni harc néhány kérdéséről (Tézisek)” [Aspects of the struggle against nationalism (Theses)], MNLOL M-KS 288/5/113, 42–54.

⁴² See contemporary materials aimed at the young, such as the Communist Youth League brochure *Ki az igazi hazafi?* [Who is the real patriot?] (1957). The important historical figures it lists are Dózsa, Mészáros, Batsányi, Verseggy, Csokonai, Martinovics, Hajnóczi (*sic*), Kölcsey, Petőfi, Vörösmarty, Arany, Táncsics, Vajda, Ady, and József Attila. See Pap, “‘A nép és a szülőföld igaz szeretete,’” 71. See also Ferenc Baktai, *Ki a hazafi?* [Who is a patriot?] (Budapest, 1962).

⁴³ One of most high-profile examples was a keynote speech given on February 15, 1961, by Miklós Óvári, ideologue and member of the Central Committee. It was later widely published, e.g., Miklós Óvári, “Mi a nacionalizmus és hogyan harcoljunk ellene?” [What is nationalism and how should we fight against it?], *Ifjú Kommunista* 3 (March 1961): 24–29.

⁴⁴ József Révai, *48 útján* [Following 1848] (Budapest, 1948); Mevius, *Agents of Moscow*, 111–262; Péter Apor, *Fabricating Authenticity in Soviet Hungary: The Afterlife of the First Hungarian Soviet Republic in the Age of State Socialism* (London, 2014), 34–38.

commonly asserted that Hungarians instinctively understood contemporary movements of revolutionary national liberation, as they could recognize these experiences in their own country's past. The idea of Hungary as an anti-imperialist nation long predated the communist regime. The experience of the suppression of the 1848–49 revolution by the Russians and Austrians convinced many educated Hungarians of their colonial oppression; at the turn of the twentieth century, parts of the elite viewed the Hapsburgs as a new manifestation of the Turkish oppression of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; after World War I, the nostalgic image of Austria-Hungary was often mixed with views of Austria as the colonial power that had subjugated Hungary.⁴⁵ After the Second World War, the communist regime reshaped the tradition. This outlook was now also to be understood as part of a universally applicable Marxist ideological framework in which history proceeded through a series of stages divided up by revolutionary moments; political and economic transformations that Hungary had undergone were now being replicated outside Europe. Moreover, making these comparisons could render the basics of Marxist historical teleology tangible and compelling, especially to a younger generation. Indeed, it was “youthful” Latin American revolution that was most commonly wedded to previous Eastern European experiences in both elite journals and the youth press: the progressive struggle for national independence in Cuba in the 1950s was anticipated by the revolution of 1848 in Hungary; Che Guevara was a modern day reincarnation of Hungarian romantic hero-martyr Sándor Petőfi; and the Pinochet coup in Chile was a repeat of the imperialist intervention that had brought down Béla Kun and the First Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919.⁴⁶ It should be noted that these anti-imperialist accounts usually ignored Hungary's potentially problematic history as colonizer in its own backyard, downplaying or omitting the imperialist aspirations of Austria-Hungary in the Balkans and Hungarian governments' ethnically based nation-building programs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁴⁷

In the visual depiction of Third World oppression and struggle, visual styles drawn from progressive national artistic traditions were often used. The illustrations in the poetry collection *Africa Awakes* (1961), for example, drew on a style

⁴⁵ See Tamás Scheibner, “Postcolonial Age, or Postcolonial Eastern and Central Europe? Critical Remarks from a Hungarian Point of View,” *Baltic Worlds* 3, no. 2 (2010): 41.

⁴⁶ On Sándor Petőfi as Che Guevara, see, e.g., Sándor Fekete, “Petőfi és a kommunizmus” [Petőfi and communism], *Valóság*, no. 4 (1974): 95; on Hungary 1919 and Chile 1973, see, e.g., György Aczél, speech, Hungarian television, November 6, 1973, 16:30, HU OSA 300-40-2, box 59.

⁴⁷ Note that Croatians in the 1950s did connect their experience of Hungarian imperialism in the last decades of the Austro-Hungarian Empire with the support for contemporary African independence movements. See Dubravka Juraga, “Miroslav Krleža's “Zastava”: Socialism, Yugoslavia, and the Historical Novel,” in *South Atlantic Review* 62, no. 4 (1997): 47.

of woodcut that had been repopularized in the post-1956 period to celebrate the medieval and early modern peasant precursors of the modern socialist state.⁴⁸ The woodcuts, which depicted the jailing and lynching of black Africans, the sufferings of forced labor, and the defenselessness of its rural population, evoked the famous series on the 1514 Hungarian peasant uprising and its leader György Dózsa created by leftist graphic artist Gyula Derkovits in 1928. His work—which presented the eternal oppression of toilers and represented a powerful radical leftist criticism of the interwar system—was widely popularized following 1956, when the restored communist government sought to connect the suppression of this medieval peasant uprising to the attempt to overthrow communist power in 1956, in order to construct a longer-term history of so-called counterrevolutions against the Hungarian people. Translating the style and form of Derkovits's Dózsa to the colonial plantation, these depictions illustrated the contemporary experience of Africans in a language that made their oppression and struggle more easily comprehensible for those Hungarians familiar with the visual culture of their own progressive national tradition.

Moreover, the recent national experience of “counterrevolution” in 1956 reinforced this historical link. Various officially supported texts argued that this event had further developed Hungarians' instinctive sympathies with those battling imperialism elsewhere and, moreover, had equipped them with new knowledge about counterrevolutionary tactics that could be shared with those abroad. The revolt itself was presented as the last in a series of attempts by domestic reactionaries in league with external imperialist forces, running back through the suppression of the peasant revolts, the democratic aspirations of the 1848 revolutions, and the First Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919, to thwart the progressive instincts of the Hungarian people.⁴⁹ The White Books—the official text that was used to disseminate this conception of “counterrevolution” in schools—drew direct equivalences between Hungary's experience of reactionary forces and the violence meted out to those trying to escape empires outside Europe. These texts encouraged Hungarians to regard themselves as victims of a transnational reactionary movement that had its roots in interwar fascism and was still trying to undermine progressive movements whether in the Socialist Bloc or the decolonizing world. Just as Hungarians had experienced Western imperialists' support for arms smuggling to rebels across the country's western borders in October 1956, so former Nazi officers were sent by France and the United States to

⁴⁸ György Belia, ed., *Ébredő Afrika: Néger költők antológiája* [Africa awakes: An anthology of black poets] (Budapest, 1961).

⁴⁹ See, e.g., the historical novel written to popularize this interpretation: András Berkesi and György Kardos, *Kopjások* [Pikemen] (Budapest, 1959). It was made into a film in 1975. See also András Mink, “The Revisions of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution,” in *Past in the Making: Historical Revisionism in Central Europe after 1989*, ed. Michal Kopeček (Budapest, 2008), 169–78.

Southeast Asia and Algeria to suppress new progressive movements for independence, the White Books claimed.⁵⁰

The experience of the 1956 revolt was also presented as a source of instruction for other socialist movements facing threats from reactionary political forces. Imre Patkó and Miklós Rév would become some of the best-known promoters of Vietnamese culture in Hungary and across the Eastern Bloc in the 1960s.⁵¹ In one early account they highlighted the common “counterrevolutionary menace” faced by the Hungarian and Vietnamese Communist parties in the fall of 1956. “Vietnamese patriots” who had been fighting together against their French colonizers were faced by challenges to the leading role of the party and seemed set to break apart into different political factions. The authors presented local reactions to the Hungarian counterrevolution as a central ideological dividing line: “true Communists” in Vietnam supported Soviet intervention and Kádár’s restoration of communist power in Hungary, while “revisionists” hesitated. In this account, it was the eventual realization of the horrors of “Hungary’s 1956”—the experience of bloody imperialist counterrevolution against national independence and revolution—that gave the Vietnamese the impetus they needed to resolve their quarrels and close ranks against foreign imperialists.⁵²

In connecting the decolonizing present to a domestic tradition of combating imperialists and reactionaries, party intellectuals were concerned to make socialist patriotism relevant to a new generation. Hungarians’ own historical revolutionary achievements were now closely connected to the vital new political movements springing up across the world. However, in framing the connection in this way, they were also attempting to downplay the relevance to the Eastern European present of the struggles surrounding decolonization. Certainly, connections might be made between continuing attacks on socialism in Eastern Europe and in the decolonizing world in order to reinforce the idea of an ongoing global imperialist threat that only unified communist parties could protect against. However, the potentially inspiring stories of violent struggle for national liberation in the Third World were seen as irrelevant as models for behavior in contemporary Hungary, where the communist movement had overcome its enemies, established a stable regime, and begun to pursue a modernizing and increasingly technocratic “consolidated socialism.” Yet the idea that the contemporary fights of the decolonizing

⁵⁰ *Nagy Imre és bűntársai ellenforradalmi összeesküvése* [The counterrevolutionary conspiracy of Imre Nagy and his fellow criminals] (Budapest, 1958). See especially chap. 8, which compared the “counterrevolutionary terror” of 1956 both to 1919 in Hungary and to contemporary imperialist atrocities in Cyprus, Malaya, and Algeria. It also criticized the Western press’s focus on the “excessive force” that was used in the suppression of the 1956 uprising, given the far greater violence used in Algeria.

⁵¹ See, e.g., Imre Patkó and Miklós Rév, *Vietnam művészete* [The art of Vietnam] (Budapest, 1967). It was later translated into French, German, and Polish (as *Sztuka Wietnamu*).

⁵² Imre Patkó and Miklós Rév, *Vietnam* (Budapest, 1960), 146.

world could find true equivalences only in an Eastern European past became contested. An early salvo in this challenge was fired off by Sándor Csoóri, mentioned above. In one sense, his accounts of visiting Cuba in 1961 appeared to conform to official conceptions of historical development: he placed the Caribbean's present in the Hungarian past. Scenarios and struggles that he had absorbed from progressive national histories made his firsthand experience of the Cuban revolution appear familiar:

Fidel Castro and Che Guevara were in my eyes the relatives of the young revolutionaries of 1848. The 20th century relatives of Petőfi, Vasvári, Lenkey. I met twice with Che, once in our hotel another time during the march on José Martí square. It was like being in a Jókai novel [nineteenth-century Hungarian romantic nationalist novelist] in which I was the main character. Of course we didn't have the faintest idea that the Soviet Union would entrench itself politically in this once "liberated island." . . . So I saw Cuba when it was a free, independent country, ruled by courageous young people . . . who cared about the poor.⁵³

Yet for Csoóri, these struggles also spoke to the domestic present. Like other Hungarians, he noted the relevance of movements for national independence outside Europe in relation to Soviet imperialism closer to home. From this perspective, Csoóri's response, while contributing to the growth of a more intensely internationalist mass culture, was subversive too. Cuba's contemporary struggles against the United States echoed not only Hungary's fights for independence in the nineteenth century but also, by implication, contemporary efforts to throw off Soviet dominance in the twentieth.⁵⁴ In 1961, the security services reported that the then twenty-nine-year-old József Antall, who would later become the first postcommunist prime minister as leader of the center-right Hungarian Democratic Forum, cultivated sympathies for Fidel Castro. Antall was at this time a member of anticommunist middle-class agrarian intellectual networks. For him, Cuba was inspirational as a small country fighting for independence against a great power, an idea that resonated with the anti-Soviet sentiments of the 1956er groups to which he belonged.⁵⁵

⁵³ Sándor Csoóri, "Közel a szülőföldhöz" [Close to the homeland], *Kortárs*, no. 4 (2004).

⁵⁴ In the 1960s Csoóri was critical of the Soviet "occupation" of 1945 and attempted to bring Red Army atrocities to public attention: Feljegyzés a "Tiszta Szívvel" című folyóirat vitájáról [Notice on the debate of the journal "Tiszta Szívvel"], Budapest, March 6, 1965, Gál Lajos KISZ KB Egyetemi és Főiskolai Osztály, PSL 289. f. 13/1965/53.őe. He was one of the few to criticize publicly the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia in August 1968.

⁵⁵ The security report is in Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára (Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security, hereafter cited as ÁBTL) TH O-11386, "Kátai," May 8, 1961, 193. See also János M. Rainer, "Egy 'kompromisszum' hétköznapi-jelenetek a hatvanas évekből: Antall József és az állambiztonság embere," in *Múlt századi hétköznapiak: Tanulmányok a Kádár-rendszer*, ed. János M. Rainer (Budapest, 2003), 270–98.

C. *Regulating the Image of the West*

The post-1956 political elite had come of age during the antifascist struggle of the 1930s and the Second World War: the constant fight against reaction was central to their understanding of how a socialist system was established and maintained. In the postwar period, they came to understand Western capitalism as an outgrowth of fascism: from this perspective, the defense of socialist systems was still reliant on constant vigilance in the face of “reactionary capitalist imperialism.”⁵⁶ Yet the changes in Hungary in the 1960s were leading youth to believe that distinctions between socialism and capitalism were lessening. Socialist leaders were concerned that their own support for peaceful coexistence between the capitalist and communist worlds since 1956 had led the youth to seek out similarities between these systems and to value the humanization of capitalist countries. Elites expressed fear that the class struggle in the West was not understood;⁵⁷ they also believed that the civil rights movement—supported by President Kennedy—had led to an unquestioning idealization of the United States as capable of peace and equality.⁵⁸ Young people “born into socialism” appeared particularly liable to entertain the illusions about capitalism contained in bourgeois propaganda because they had no firsthand experience of it.⁵⁹ The idea that socialism necessitated the constant struggle against “fascistic” Western capitalism no longer seemed powerful. As a Communist Youth political instructor in the capital complained in 1962, “the old comrades participating in political instruction had experienced the privation of capitalism and the horrors of fascism. The previous regime left its imprint much more deeply on them than on the young, who were only children in those years.”⁶⁰

In the context of this anxiety, the struggles of newly decolonized and independent states of the extra-European world provided stories through which the supposedly immutable differences between these ideological systems could be reaffirmed. Whereas peaceful coexistence and growing economic cooperation in Europe were considered to have hidden the realities of the differences between capitalism and socialism close to home, the Third World exposed the real distinctions between the systems that an older generation knew from its own experience

⁵⁶ István Rév, *Retroactive Justice: A Prehistory of Post-communism* (Stanford, CA, 2005), chap. 6.

⁵⁷ See, e.g., the report on a youth survey of 125 seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds in Vilmos Faragó, “A Small Country,” *Élet és Irodalom*, January 7, 1967.

⁵⁸ “Jelentés a diákifjúság eszmei-politikai, világnézeti és erkölcsi arculatával kapcsolatos néhány problémáról” [Report concerning a few problems of the political-ideological and moral attitudes of youth], PSL 289. f. 13/1963/33.őe.

⁵⁹ György Aczél’s report concerning the youth politics of the HSWP, Central Committee meeting, February 18–19, 1970 (MNLOL 288/4/104–5, 42).

⁶⁰ Ervin Várkonyi, “Forradalmi romantika a KISZ politikai körben” [Revolutionary romanticism in the Communist Youth political clubs], *Ifjú Kommunista* (December 1962).

but the young had yet to learn. The Hungarian media and party activists frequently drew attention to the excessive violence of Western powers in collapsing empires in order to undermine the capitalist world's claim to represent civilization. This reached its apogee during the "We are with you, Vietnam" solidarity campaign (1965–75). Witnesses to atrocities—including My Lai—were brought to Hungary as delegations to testify to American inhumanity,⁶¹ and the Russell Tribunal, which saw itself as a Nuremberg Trial for Vietnam, was widely reported on.⁶²

Given the generational understanding of this crisis—that a collective memory of the inherent violence of capitalism had not been sufficiently transmitted to the youth—it is not surprising that the elite's response was to construct historical arguments that presented Vietnam as a revival of Nazi barbarism in Southeast Asia.⁶³ Volumes of photo books were published that linked the atrocities committed against Vietnamese civilians to the Nazi destruction of Oradour and Lidice, alongside French colonial atrocities of the late 1950s. The official propaganda section of the party planned a series of White Books detailing violence against Vietnamese villages, imitating the volumes that had been used to publicize the cruelties of the so-called counterrevolutionaries in Hungary in 1956.⁶⁴ According to official interpretations, America had once again proved its unworthiness to represent civilization, and the Eastern Bloc was shown to be its true bearer. Strikingly, writers in these debates did often allude to the use of violence during the Stalinist period as contrary to the values of the modern world as well; nevertheless, these instances were presented as short-term aberrations that did not fundamentally call into question socialism's superior claims to represent civilization. They were much quicker to draw direct links between their struggle against Nazism in Europe and the present-day technological, medical, and economic aid they provided to the North Vietnamese in order to assert a longer-term commitment of socialism to the defense of humanity.⁶⁵

Multiple surveys were conducted in the mid-1960s to assess young Hungarians' worldviews—a phenomenon that in itself tells us much about the importance of internationalist commitments for socialist citizenship in that decade. These surveys discovered that this negative image of the United States had been

⁶¹ "Vietnam Massacre Eyewitnesses Begin Visit," Hungarian TV, January 12, 1970 (Daily report, Foreign Broadcast Information Service [FBIS], FRB-70-008). See also atrocity literature such as Miklós Zalka, *A dzsungel vére* (Budapest, 1971); Madeleine Riffaud, *Vietnam lángokban*, trans. József Román (Budapest, 1966).

⁶² *Népszabadság*, November 26, 1967.

⁶³ See, e.g., "Public Shocked by US Cruelties in Vietnam," Hungarian television, April 10, 1969 (Daily report, FBIS-FRB-69-070).

⁶⁴ See "Youth Delegation Returns from Cyprus Meeting," Hungarian television, January 27, 1966 (Daily report, FBIS-FRB-66-020).

⁶⁵ György Máté, *Vietnam: Szemünk láttára* (Budapest, 1973).

effectively reasserted: it was seen as a threat to the socialist world and to Hungary by a majority of the youth surveyed. Nevertheless, they also discovered that such a feeling was seldom accompanied by a “pro-Soviet mentality.”⁶⁶

II. THE DANGERS OF ANTI-IMPERIALISM

In early 1965, the largest solidarity movement of the entire communist period was established following the intensification of the US bombing of Vietnam. This marked the first time that the party and state officials had initiated a nationwide coordinated effort that involved a multitude of social organizations and that went beyond the youth or educational sphere to organize in the workplace. It thus penetrated the everyday lives of a much greater number of citizens than previous calls for solidarity had done. Clues to the roots of this new movement can be found in debates among various authorities over methods to control young people’s heterodox understandings of anti-imperialism. In the years prior to the movement’s establishment, ideas of transnational solidarity and the perspectives drawn from the global revolutionary struggle started to mobilize political and cultural visions among the youth, especially those who took seriously the idea of the creation a new type of socialist society. Exposure to new socialist experiments outside Europe provided activists with the ideological raw materials with which to think through their political visions. It gave them access to a range of leftist positions that were unavailable at home, where political divisions were, for the most part, kept hidden. By the mid-1960s, the political imaginations of activist youth had been quite effectively internationalized: they viewed their own domestic progressive traditions and new revolutions across the world as closely intertwined, capable of informing each other in ways that often challenged the party leadership’s attempts to control the terms of communication between these worlds. The period 1964–73 would be marked by repeated challenges to official interpretations and regular debate within elite groups over the extent to which these activities should be tolerated and the ways in which the inappropriate responses that international struggles inspired should be dealt with. In the case of Vietnam, various authorities felt threatened by the excessively leftist radicalism and the nationalist sentiment the conflict could inspire.

By 1964, the party leadership, Communist Youth, university officials, and the police were becoming increasingly worried that Maoist China was inspiring inappropriately revolutionary zeal within some quarters of elite Hungarian

⁶⁶ See Faragó, “A Small Country.” Communist Youth reports often assessed youth sentiments with regard to international affairs. See the Communist Youth Executive Committee Report of 1967 (PIL 289/3/210), which asserted that while youth were firmly behind Vietnam solidarity, they were nevertheless too easily influenced by “bourgeois propaganda” concerning Western societies.

youth.⁶⁷ Security organs were concerned with the propaganda drives, organized mainly from the Chinese embassy in Budapest, that targeted both Hungarian and foreign students.⁶⁸ Indeed, this is the period when “mood reports” focusing on the influence of foreign policy on youth started to be regularly produced by the Communist Youth League, possibly in response to this perceived threat. Chinese critiques were of particular concern because they linked the alleged limitations of Eastern Bloc socialism at home—the abandonment of true revolution and the rise of consumerism, materialism, and bureaucratization—to its failings abroad, notably its inability to express real, meaningful solidarity with a true revolutionary struggle being waged by the north Vietnamese. This position provided ideological ballast to radical youth: students at elite universities in Budapest, for instance, formed a Marxist-Leninist party devoted to rediscovering a more authentic Marxism. One of its most prominent members, György Pór, remembered in an oral history interview how Chinese criticism of the Soviets—which was widely reported in the national and university press in 1964—played an important role in the development of his group’s critique of Hungarian socialism’s conservative turn.⁶⁹ Subsequently, Pór himself sought personal contacts with Chinese students in Budapest as well as with the Chinese embassy,

⁶⁷ A year after the Sino-Soviet split, in December 1961, János Kádár criticized the Chinese rejection of peaceful coexistence, suggesting that the true interests of workers were wages, paid holidays, and social security and that socialist states had a responsibility to protect them from the “fatal consequences of war,” which was “a thousand times more important.” He continued: “Some people . . . confuse . . . civil war, the liberation struggle against colonizers and imperialist war. . . . We communists have always shown full solidarity with workers waging a revolutionary struggle against capitalist slavery, and with the oppressed peoples fighting for liberation from the colonial yoke, but we have always fought and will fight to avert imperialist, aggressive wars. . . . A change in the social system depends entirely on the will of the people of the country concerned”; speech reported in *Pravda*, December 26, 1961.

⁶⁸ Security services were particularly concerned about the infiltration of the Chinese into the African student body in Budapest: on January 17, 1966, for instance, they reported that during a commemoration of the death of Patrice Lumumba, Congolese students were shown a Chinese propaganda film; “Feljegyzés Méhes elvtárs részére a kongói diákok által szervezett megemlékezésről a Zsomolya úti kollégiumban Budapest” [Notice to Comrade Méhes concerning the commemoration organized by Congolese students in the Zsomolya Street dormitory], January 1966, KISZ KB Nemzetközi Kapcsolatok Osztálya, PSL 289. f. 13/1966/23.őe.

⁶⁹ György Pór, interview conducted by James Mark, Brussels, March 13, 2009; for this position, see also interviews with Gábor Révai, conducted by Péter Apor, October 8, 2008; with Tamás Bauer, conducted by Péter Apor, Budapest, March 5, 2009; and with György Dalos, conducted by Péter Apor, Budapest, April 17, 2009. The differences between the Chinese and Soviet positions were widely reported and discussed, even in the youth and university press; see, e.g., László Barnabás, “A kínai kérdés,” *Közgazdász: A Marx Károly Közgazdaságtudományi Egyetem lapja*, April 25, 1964, 1.

where he became a regular visitor and recipient of propaganda materials.⁷⁰ Over the course of 1964, the party leadership supervising the official youth organizations expressed increasing concern that the Communist Youth League was not working hard enough to head off the influence of the Chinese, create their own linkages with youth organizations in Southeast Asia, or make the values of official solidarity meaningful to a broader population.⁷¹

By early 1965, the central party leadership, along with leaders of party branches at universities and in districts of Budapest, was also concerned that American bombings in Vietnam were inspiring activism that was excessively nationalist and insufficiently directed by the official Communist Youth organs. On March 15, 1965, the first major demonstrations for solidarity with the struggle of the Vietnamese people were organized. Reports suggest that these started out as a call for solidarity meetings from the Communist Youth League, but enthusiastic youngsters went beyond what was officially prescribed and began to demonstrate publicly, even across provincial Hungary: hundreds of people protested in Szabolcs and Hajdú-Bihar counties, for instance, while around five hundred youths demonstrated in the northeastern town of Nyíregyháza and sent a protest letter to the US embassy. Events linking the annual March 15 commemoration of the progressive struggle of the 1848 revolutions with protests against the war in Vietnam took place at Debrecen's Kossuth University, Medical School, and Agricultural Training College.⁷² Local Communist Youth organizations were troubled by them, noting that they were often started by foreign students, who were perceived as a disruptive influence.⁷³ Reports also expressed anxiety that these events might

⁷⁰ ÁBTL V-154.419/1 21, 26, 77; ÁBTL V-154.419/2, 45. See also trial material, ÁBTL, 3.1.9. V-154419/8, Bf. V. 566/1968: "Statement concerning the Criminal Activities of the Accused," 11.

⁷¹ [Unknown author, probably first half of 1964], "Feljegyzés a KISZ külügyi kapcsolatainak és a KISZ KB Külügyi Osztálya munkájának egyes kérdéseiről" [Notice concerning a few questions of the foreign relations of KISZ and of the work of the Foreign Relations Department of KISZ Central Committee], PSL 289. f. 13/1964/27.őe.

⁷² "Információ az Észak-Vietnamot ért amerikai dél-vietnami agresszió elleni tiltakozás megnyilvánulásairól az ifjúság között (a megyebizottságok tájékoztatása alapján)" [Information concerning the manifestation of protest among youth against the US–South Vietnam aggression against North Vietnam (based on the reports of county committees)], Communist Youth Agitprop Department, Budapest, March 17, 1965, PSL 289. f. 13/1965/23.őe.

⁷³ Communist Youth mood reports often reported that foreign students were less likely to toe the ideological line, praising Chinese help in Vietnam or criticizing the Eastern Bloc's commitment to peaceful coexistence in an era of anti-imperialist struggle. This was particularly troubling as the Communist Youth League often sent foreign students to the countryside—in their hundreds—to spread the message about internationalist solidarity: "Tájékoztató a Gyarmati Ifjúság Napjának megünnepléséről" [Information concerning the celebration of the Day of Colonial Youth], Budapest, August 29, 1966, KISZ KB Agitprop, Osztály, PSL 289. f. 8/857.őe.

seem to echo the public demonstrations in front of the American embassy in Moscow that the Soviet police had deemed excessively provocative and clamped down on.⁷⁴ Linking Vietnam with the March 15 anniversary of the 1848 freedom fight was potentially threatening as well: it connected anger at contemporary US foreign policy with the historical struggle for Hungarian independence against Austria and Russia and hence could imply criticism of a revived eastern domination of Hungary.⁷⁵

In the months that followed, the Communist Youth League began to plan an official solidarity program that could capture the demonstrable anti-imperialist energies of youth but would also channel them into the more ideologically acceptable form of the state-sponsored rally (fig. 2). Other unauthorized demonstrations were soon shut down. Radical acts of solidarity were rejected: offers by industrial workers and students to go out to Vietnam to fight were refused.⁷⁶ Party officials and the media often reminded the younger generation of their obligations to demonstrate only a tempered solidarity, fearing that an excessive anti-Americanism would make it difficult to obtain Western technology.⁷⁷ Communist Youth leaders called on their members not to view the conflict in terms of radical politics, irreconcilable differences, or necessary escalation and were clearly concerned by the widespread perception that the Soviets and Hungarians were withholding proper military support and prolonging the war.⁷⁸ A commitment to a responsible and distanced solidarity in everyday professional settings was widely

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* The reports do not mention the nationalities of these foreign students; in other sources, the role of African students is highlighted.

⁷⁵ "Információ az Észak-Vietnamot ért amerikai dél-vietnami agresszió elleni tiltakozás megnyilvánulásairól az ifjúság között (a megyebizottságok tájékoztatása alapján)," Budapest, March 17, 1965, Communist Youth Agitprop Department, PSL 289. f. 13/1965/23.őe.

⁷⁶ Interview with Révai. One youth journal reported that hundreds had volunteered to go to Vietnam, claiming that this proved that KISZ was mobilizing effectively: *Ifjú Kommunista* (January 1967): 9. Potential volunteers were encouraged by government statements claiming that volunteers would be sent if North Vietnam requested them. See, e.g., "Government Statement on US War in Vietnam," Hungarian television, May 13, 1965 (Daily report, FBIS-FRB-65-093).

⁷⁷ See László Borhi, "A nemzeti külpolitika határai: Az Egyesült Államok és Magyarország 1941–1989," in *Európa, nemzet, külpolitika: Tanulmányok Ádám Magda 85. születésnapjára*, ed. László Borhi and Ádám Magda (Budapest, 2010), 38. On economic necessity and softening policy toward the United States, see Tibor Glant, "Ninety Years of United States-Hungarian Relations," *Eger Journal of American Studies* 13 (2012): 175; M. Gasiorowski and S. W. Polachek, "Conflict and Interdependence: East-West Trade and Linkages in the Era of Détente," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 26, no. 4 (1982): 713.

⁷⁸ For these fears, see Communist Youth League mood reports, for example, Hangu-latjelentés, Budapest, November 20, 1965, Communist Youth Agitprop Department, PSL 289. f. 13/1965/23.őe. On redirecting youth events away from radical anti-imperialism: "Javaslat a Titkárságnak az egyetemi KISZ-titkárok 1965/66-os tanévi országos továbbképzésének programjára, é.n. KISZ KB Egyetemi és Főiskolai Osztálya" [Proposal to the Secretariat concerning the program of the national training session for university KISZ secretaries in the academic year 1965–66], PSL 289. f. 13/1965/53.

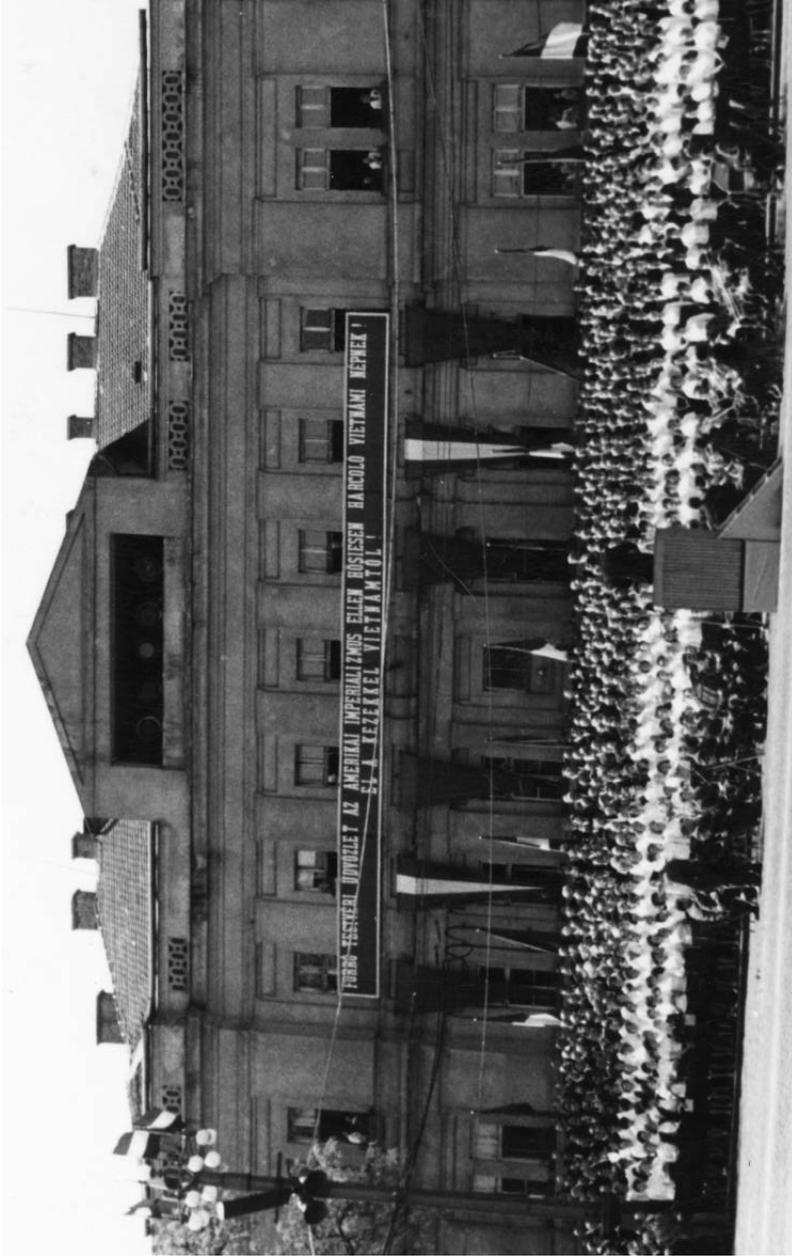


Fig. 2.—Vietnamese Solidarity Rally, Dózsa György út, date unknown. The banner reads: “Fervent Fraternal Greetings to the Vietnamese People heroically fighting against American imperialism. Hands off Vietnam!” Reproduced courtesy of the Photo Archive of the 1956 Institute, Budapest.

encouraged by solidarity organs. Simply by working in a factory in Budapest one could be contributing to the anti-imperial struggle: this idea was made most explicit in so-called solidarity shifts, during which workers would put in extra hours and “voluntarily” donate their extra wages to the Vietnamese people.⁷⁹

Nevertheless, these official movements provided space in which alternative forms of transnational identification developed. For instance, groups of radical students at elite Budapest universities such as Eötvös Loránd University and the Karl Marx University of Economics began to establish semiofficial Vietnamese solidarity groups within the official movement to express what they considered authentic solidarity. They organized unofficial Vietnamese Sundays during which students carried out construction work to earn money that would be donated through the Chinese embassy to support the struggle.⁸⁰ They took their inspiration from Moscow students who in 1961, following the landings of Cuban exiles at the Bay of Pigs to overthrow Castro’s regime, had raised funds to buy the Cubans tractors and other machinery.⁸¹ Others organized unofficial demonstrations that took place outside the American embassy on July 20, 1966, and in front of the American pavilion at the Budapest international fair in the same year. Here leaflets were distributed, slogans announcing “Hands Off Vietnam” were displayed, and images of President Johnson were daubed with paint.⁸²

Anti-imperialist ideology also opened up new links with the West. With the rise in the mid-1960s of Western student movements protesting against their own systems’ imperialism abroad and democratic deficits at home, the image of the West in Hungary shifted. While the works of New Left thinkers who argued for the collapse of distinctions between capitalism and socialism were usually placed on so-called closed circuit reading lists that only party elites could access,⁸³ Western cultural products that had an anti-imperialist outlook were encouraged. This policy reached its high point during the Vietnam War between 1965 and

⁷⁹ On the significance of solidarity shifts, see, e.g., “Összefoglaló az 1965. évi ‘Akció-program’ eszmei-politikai, nevelési célkitűzéseinek megvalósításáról, a KISZ 1966. évi politikai munkájáról” [Summary of the realization of the political-ideological and education goals of the ‘Action program’ and the political work of KISZ in 1966], PSL 289. f. 13/1966/14.őe. Their importance was emphasized by László Pataki, secretary to the central committee of KISZ, to delegates at the “We Accuse Imperialism” seminar in Budapest, April 19, 1966.

⁸⁰ ÁBTL V-154.419/1, 258.

⁸¹ “Vietnámi vásárnapok” [Vietnamese Sundays], *Egyetemi Lapok*, January 13, 1966, 4.

⁸² Ferenc Erős, interview conducted by Péter Apor, Budapest, October 9, 2008.

⁸³ Western New Left texts, such as Ernst Fischer’s *Art and Co-existence*, Herbert Marcuse’s *One Dimensional Man*, Daniel Cohn-Bendit’s *Left-Wing Radicalism* and the Italian New Left’s *Il Manifesto*, were placed on so-called closed circuit lists and were meant to be available only to party elites; Gábor Murányi, “A ‘zárt’ osztály: Könyvek kiválasztottaknak,” in his *A múlt szövedéke: Históriak a megbicsaklott 20. századból* (Budapest, 2004), 261.

1968, when Western anti-imperialist mass culture was widely reported on.⁸⁴ Readings of antiwar poetry by Western authors were organized by the Communist Youth League.⁸⁵ Even the lyrics of Bob Dylan were published with guides that translated their complex symbolism into Marxist or anti-imperialist terms.⁸⁶ These ideological imports had a dual function. On the one hand, they effectively reinforced the idea of a corrupt imperialist West, as convincingly attested to by those closest to the system. On the other, they expressed the hope that members of a new generation in the West who appreciated their system's own failings might eventually dismantle capitalism from within and bring their countries closer to the values of the Eastern Bloc.⁸⁷

Official institutions attempted to create links with Vietnam protest movements in Western countries, but only insofar as these could be harnessed to the state's own ends. The National Council of Hungarian Youth was instructed to develop links with Western organizations: some Budapest groups linked up with solidarity committees in Wisconsin, for example.⁸⁸ The Hungarian Communist Youth League presented socialist civilization as committed to peace and humanity in a manner that imperialist and capitalist countries could not claim and asserted its moral right to shape a transnational solidarity. In April 1966, the National Committee of Hungarian Student Organizations held the conference "We Accuse Imperialism!," which brought together students from fifty-four countries, including Western Europe, to discuss Vietnam. In November 1972, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and Hungarian Scientific Peace Council organized an international conference on US war crimes that sought to remind the world about the Eastern Bloc's commitment to peace and the further militarization and barbarization of America that involvement in Vietnam had brought about.⁸⁹ However, this was a very strictly controlled opening that was only encouraged as part of an official institutionalized exchange. Individualistic anti-imperialists in the West, such as Rudi Dutschke, were often criticized for their supposed anarchism, their privileging of revolutionary play over serious content, and their refusal to accept

⁸⁴ See, e.g., "Diákmozgalmak a fejlett tőkésországokban" [Student movements in developed capitalist countries], *Ifjú Kommunista* (July 1968); "Az ifjúsági mozgalmak fellendülése a tőkésországokban" [The rise of student movements in capitalist countries], *Ifjú Kommunista* (October 1968).

⁸⁵ "Merre van Vietnám?" [Whither Vietnam?], *Ifjú Kommunista*, no. 4 (1968).

⁸⁶ "Vietnikek-gítárral" [Vietnamistas-with guitars], *Világ Ifjúsága*, no. 3 (March 1966).

⁸⁷ This argument can be found commonly in KISZ reports; see, e.g., KISZ report on Western movements (November 1968), 46–47, PSL 289/3/252.

⁸⁸ "A szolidaritásért" [For Solidarity], *Közgazdász: A Marx Károly Közgazdaságtudományi lapja*, March 26, 1966.

⁸⁹ The conference followed the publication of the report of the Commission of Enquiry for war crimes in Indochina in October of that year. The proceedings were published as *Des Savants sur le Vietnam* (Budapest, 1972).

the leadership of their own national Communist parties.⁹⁰ Hence the government and its police organs were suspicious when their own citizens attempted to make connections with anti-imperialist forces in the West, and many activists reported difficulties in establishing contacts across the Iron Curtain.⁹¹ Nevertheless, Gábor Révai—a one-time Maoist who had written to the central party leadership volunteering to fight with the north Vietnamese—corresponded with Rudi Dutschke between 1966 and 1971 about effective ways of aiding the struggle of the Vietnamese people.⁹² “The friendship with Dutschke,” explained Révai in 2008, “meant that in a country beyond the Iron Curtain . . . we knew that revolutionaries with the mission to save the world thought in the same terms as we did.”⁹³

Internationalism and solidarity with the Third World that at the beginning of the decade had been seen as a cure for the ideological ills of Hungarian youth now appeared to elites to have become a problem in itself. In the late 1960s, party leaders professed themselves concerned with the growing fascination for “revolutionary romanticism” stoked by the struggle in Vietnam, the expansion of guerrilla warfare in Latin America, and increasing Western radicalism. This, they argued, had led to growing disinterest in the process of “peaceful construction” (*békés építõmunka*) at home—a fear articulated at the plenum of the Central Committee on several occasions.⁹⁴ Against this background, the party leadership and its ideological-propaganda apparatus sought to reassert the primacy of responsible revolutionary models drawn from the national past.⁹⁵ From 1965, a week-long program of revolutionary youth days—a new set of holidays for young people celebrating a socialist patriotism set free from internationalist connections—took place every March.⁹⁶ These celebrations presented earlier instances of domestic leftist radical activism in 1919 and 1945 as precursors of

⁹⁰ See, e.g., “Rudi Dutschke és a nyugatnémet ‘nyugtalan ifjúság’” [Rudi Dutschke and the western German “restless youth”], *Kritika* (June 1968).

⁹¹ Miklós Haraszti, interview conducted by Péter Apor, Vienna, April 10, 2009.

⁹² Interview with Révai; for the correspondence, see <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2009-04-23-dutschke-de.html>; “Dutschke magyar barátja: Beszélgetés Révai Gáborral” [Dutschke’s Hungarian friend: A Conversation with Gábor Révai], *2000* 20 (July–August 2008): 36–43.

⁹³ “Dutschke magyar barátja,” 39; “Dutschke’s letter to Révai 16 June 1966,” *2000* 20 (July–August 2008): 44.

⁹⁴ The most sophisticated (and resolute) critic of both ultraleftist and right-wing moderate attitudes among youth was the leading cultural ideologue of the Kádár era, (then Deputy-Minister of Culture and Secretary of the Central Committee) György Aczél. See his *Eszmék erejével* [With the force of ideas] (Budapest, 1971), 315–18.

⁹⁵ For an example of this emphasis on the homeland and its revolutionary traditions, see its promotion in 1967 in the *Young Communist* magazine: “Forradalmi Ifjúsági Napok” [Revolutionary youth days], *Ifjú Kommunista* (January 1967).

⁹⁶ PSL 289/4/250; see also the discussion in Apor, *Fabricating Authenticity*, epilogue. For more on this new March “spring festival,” see György Gyarmati, *Március hatalma—a hatalom márciusa: Fejezetek március 15. ünnepésének történetéből* (Budapest, 1998), 166–67.

the student and New Left movements that were emerging in the West—not in order to create solidarity with those movements, but to demonstrate that Hungarians had no need for radical fights in the 1960s since their forefathers had already fought those battles some twenty to fifty years previously.⁹⁷ These programs advocated the “revolution of the everyday,” a concept that acknowledged the importance of revolution to youth globally but nevertheless sought to direct young Hungarians away from the excessively confrontational or violent activist sentiments found elsewhere in the world. According to Péter Rényi, deputy editor of the party paper *Népszabadság*, the socialist state instead needed “a thoroughly systematic, durable, long-term, patient, regular activism in economics, in culture, and also in politics.”⁹⁸ According to this approach, youth should aspire to find sufficient satisfaction in the “peaceful revolutionary heroism” they performed in the everyday work of socialist construction.

From 1968 onward, the party leadership as well as police authorities moved aggressively against those who challenged official interpretations of anti-imperialism, and semiautonomous and ideologically heterodox movements were shut down. The best-known instance was the so-called Maoist trial that took place in the spring of 1968. A group of students were accused of organizing a Maoist-inspired conspiracy and an illegal party to overthrow the regime, and despite the absurdity of such charges, the leaders were jailed. While the trial received limited publicity, the official press did report that a conspiracy had been revealed and eliminated. Word spread that those convicted were intellectuals categorized as Maoist, making it clear that domesticating Chinese or other excessive forms of revolutionary behavior would not be tolerated any more.⁹⁹

III. THE CHILEAN REVIVAL

By the late 1960s, it was clear that a state-sponsored policy of anti-imperialist solidarity had exposed segments of Hungarian youth to radical alternatives that they had been able to turn against the policies of their own state. This led figures within the party leadership such as György Aczél (cultural secretary of the Central Committee), Miklós Óvári (secretary of the Committee of Education of

⁹⁷ It should also be noted that these new commemorative events were designed to downplay the “excessively” nationalist message of the 1848 revolution and to emphasize the pro-Soviet context of Béla Kun’s 1919 Republic of Councils and the Red Army’s successful campaign against the Wehrmacht in Hungary in 1945.

⁹⁸ Péter Rényi, “A forradalom, mely nem falja fel gyermekeit” [The revolution which does not devour her children], *Valóság* 13 (September 1970): 19.

⁹⁹ On the trial, see Gábor Murányi, “Tévelygők, avagy a ‘maoista összeesküvés,’” in *Beszélő évek: A Kádár-korszak története 1957–1968*, ed. Sándor Révész (Budapest, 2000), 578–81. The press communiqué was in *Népszabadság* (June 9, 1968). The defendants rejected the label of Maoism, preferring to view themselves as “authentic Marxist-Leninists.”

the Central Committee), and Béla Köpeczi (head of the cultural department of the Central Committee) to question their domestication of the Third World at home and to clamp down on some of the bottom-up activism that had sustained a meaningful culture of solidarity. Nevertheless, these official and semiofficial cultures would be revived once again when the socialist Salvador Allende came to power in Chile in 1970. This new type of socialist experiment—peaceful, incremental, and seemingly compatible with multiparty democracy and the capitalist world—appeared to answer some of the fundamental problems with domesticating global revolution that had occupied elites over the previous decade.

Throughout the 1960s, the reception of Latin American revolution was double-edged. On the one hand, Latin America probably had a greater impact as a source of revolutionary inspiration than any other region of socialist transformation. This was in part because—unlike Africa or Southeast Asia—it was imagined very early on as a site of revolutionary exchange rather than an object for revolutionary improvement: in the early 1960s, economic elites came to regard Latin America as part of an intermediate region between the developed and developing worlds whose status within the world economy bore similarities to Eastern Europe's. Thus it was not viewed simply as an area for assistance but also as a region with which ideas and programs could be exchanged and shared.¹⁰⁰ Hungarian economists started large research projects that focused on Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, and Chile. Their interest was reciprocated by Latin American socialist planners, some of whom took a strong interest in the Hungarian economic experiments with the “socialist market.”¹⁰¹

On the other hand, some aspects of Latin American revolution could be ideologically problematic. Although the Cuban revolution clearly played an important role in the politicization of young activists at home, some of its excesses seemed troubling. György Aczél, cultural impresario of the new elite and deputy minister of culture (1957–67), first visited Cuba in early 1962 and remained one of the most active official voices on Latin American affairs throughout the decade.¹⁰² He was sympathetic but also critical: in his first report of May 1962, he presented himself as unconvinced by the Cuban elite's certainty that revolution needed to be violently exported, suggesting that the Hungarian

¹⁰⁰ See, e.g., Jenő Rédei, “Változások Latin-Amerikában” [Changes in Latin America], *Társadalmi Szemle* 25, no. 5 (1970): 79, for a discussion of economic reforms and the increasing independence of Latin America from US imperialism. On the similarities between Latin America and Eastern Europe in their historical development, see Ádám Anderle, “Osztály, etnikum, nemzet Latin-Amerikában” [Class, ethnicity, nation in Latin America], in *A változó harmadik világ*, ed. István Dobozi and László Láng (Budapest, 1985), 377–85.

¹⁰¹ András Inotai, “Latin American Studies in Hungary,” in *Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe/European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 72 (April 2002): 115–21.

¹⁰² MNLOL 288/5/264, 288/5/270, and 288/5/278.

model of post-1956 pacification and integration was of greater contemporary relevance to the peaceful construction of socialism globally.¹⁰³ As the decade went on, Aczél was increasingly required to assert the inapplicability of Cuban models of revolutionary heroism in contemporary Hungary, where these romantic and heroic images appeared to have a hold on elite youth. He argued that the foundations of socialism were already laid and thus that Hungary was in a consolidated stage rather than in the first flush of heroic socialist construction.¹⁰⁴ In this context, valiant and exaggerated deeds were no longer necessary, and exemplars of heroism, militarism, or excessive revolutionary practice (*szuperforradalmiság*)¹⁰⁵ were criticized. Che Guevara in particular became a symbol of irresponsible revolution. On March 17, 1970, György Aczél, by then minister of culture, speaking at a Communist Youth central committee debate on youth politics, declared that Che “was heroic [and] demonstrated that the impossible was possible, but he could have been a bigger hero if he had devoted himself to thirty years of small-scale everyday revolutionary work (*aprómunka*).” Lenin was then presented as the real hero of socialist construction for his commitment to the slow, grinding work of building socialism.¹⁰⁶

Latin America was a region whose developmental and political proximity to Hungary had been established but whose revolutionary exemplars had hitherto been problematic. Allende’s Chilean experiment from 1970 was thus a revelation:

¹⁰³ MNLOL 288/5/264, 186–96.

¹⁰⁴ In 1962, following the collectivization drives of the late 1950s and early 1960s, the party proclaimed the first stage of the political construction of socialism complete. Hungary had now entered a phase of “consolidated socialism.”

¹⁰⁵ This term is used in the state-supported account of Che’s life: Gábor Karczag, *Ernesto Che Guevara* (Budapest, 1969), 58. Karczag presents Che as in full knowledge that becoming a guerrilla was a renunciation of responsible socialist behavior. He relates how Guevara told his mother in 1965 that he was about to cut sugar cane and direct an industrial factory in Cuba when in fact he was heading for the Congo to fight. His mother replied that he should go to Algeria or Ghana to provide economic expertise; hence, according to Karczag, Guevara fully understood what proper socialist behavior ought to be (133). Karczag then presents Guevara’s death in Bolivia as being the inevitable result of not following appropriate revolutionary methods. On the GDR’s attempts at controlling Che’s image at home, see Hosek, *Sun, Sex and Socialism*, 146–51.

¹⁰⁶ KISZ Central Committee debate on youth politics, March 17, 1970; Lajos Méhes’s report 182-3, PSL 289/2/55. Franz Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth* (*A Föld rabjai*)—which advocated revolutionary violence and rejected the role of the working class in anti-imperialist movements, claiming the peasantry to be the real revolutionary class—was not published until 1985. For early criticism of Fanon’s call for violence, see Tamás Szentes and István Kende, *Fejlődő országok nem-kapitalista útja* [Developing countries on the noncapitalist path] (Budapest, 1966), 190. These authors argued that Hungarians should support the Algerian FLN because they rejected Fanon’s ultraradicalism and incorporated the working class into the struggle. A short excerpt was published in 1976 as part of an “anti-imperialism reader”: István Kende, ed., *Fejlődő országok–haladó eszmék* [Developing countries–progressive ideas] (Budapest, 1976), 144–55.

it provided a form of peaceful, incremental, and responsible revolution whose values, if appropriately interpreted, could be seen to echo Hungary's own.¹⁰⁷ Chile was often discussed in elite party journals as the answer to the emergence from the late 1950s in Latin America of supposedly "petit-bourgeois revolutions" that were based on guerrilla warfare and ignored the "true interests" of workers.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, it appeared for a brief moment to speak powerfully to some of the central concerns of consolidated socialism in the early 1970s. First, Chile's attempts to reconcile revolution with multiparty democracy coincided with Hungary's brief experiment—from the late 1960s until the conservative backlash of 1973–74—with a limited democratization within social and political bodies, most notably universities and the Communist Youth organizations. Although Hungarian elites were never planning to give up their hold on state power, Allende's attempts to carry out socialist transformation in the context of a political coalition nevertheless became a proxy through which to discuss the limits of future democratization for state socialist systems.

Hungarian elites were also fascinated by the Chilean revolution's relationship to the global political and economic system. With the adoption of the New Economic Mechanism (NEM), the beginnings of a socialist market and a gradual opening up of Hungary to Western financial institutions in the late 1960s, elites increasingly promoted a responsible or tempered confrontation with the capitalist world.¹⁰⁹ Although the West remained officially an ideological enemy until the end of the communist period, regime intellectuals increasingly encouraged the idea that socialist and capitalist systems could integrate economically, and coexist peacefully, while maintaining their distinct social and economic systems.¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, it was difficult to communicate such a delicately balanced view of relations with the West to the young. On the one hand, the authorities were faced with those whose calls for greater confrontation might undermine their attempts at technology transfer and economic integration. On the other, they became concerned that students and working youth disregarded important ideological distinctions between economic systems. Accelerated economic integration with

¹⁰⁷ On the popular appeal of peaceful revolution, see Iván Harsányi, "A chilei és a dél-európai baloldali közti kapcsolat és kölcsönhatás," *Múltunk*, no. 4 (2008): 246–47.

¹⁰⁸ "A forradalmi harc néhány fontos tapasztalata Latin-Amerikában" [Some important experiences of the revolutionary fight in Latin America], *Társadalmi Szemle* 26, no. 7 (1971): 52–53. This article argues that Latin American revolutionaries had given up on violence in 1956 but that it was unfortunately revived in 1959 with the Cuban revolution, and that its adherents then tried to export this unrealistic model. It presents Chile, in contrast, as following a realistic peaceful road to socialism without guerrillas. See also this interpretation in István Kende, "Bevezető," in *Fejlődő országok*, 89.

¹⁰⁹ Karczag, *Che*, 163–64.

¹¹⁰ For an official late 1960s position clearly laid out, see István Kende, "Peaceful Co-existence: Its Interpretation and Misinterpretations," *Journal of Peace Research* 5, no. 4 (1968): 352–63.

the West, the socialist version of the market, the increasingly dominant position of technocrats in both East and West, and common obsessions with the technological revolution across the Iron Curtain were being marshaled as evidence of a convergence between the capitalist and socialist worlds.¹¹¹ Moreover, Marxist revisionists within Hungary (such as Ágnes Heller or the young György Bence), along with many New Left thinkers in the West, were collapsing distinctions between socialism and capitalism by arguing that these were merely two similar forms of modern industrial bureaucratic systems that both resulted in widespread social alienation and hence required a joint struggle across the Iron Curtain to reform them.¹¹² Between 1969 and 1974, multiple articles in the popular press were published that refuted the idea of convergence, for the most part arguing that the very different systems of ownership and power undercut any superficial similarities between capitalism and socialism in modern industrial society.¹¹³

Elites' concerns over the difficulties faced when communicating their nuanced positions with regard to international affairs explained another attraction of the Chilean experiment. Here was an apparently strong anti-imperialist socialist revolution that did not need radically to confront the Western capitalist world but rather sought to coexist alongside it, echoing Hungary's own ideological evolution. This did not mean that Hungarian elites always had confidence that such a project would be successful—journals in this period are full of debates over whether a socialist revolution could survive such an accommodation when it had not taken state power.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, Allende's experiment was an object of great interest because it served as a proxy for discussing the limits of tolerance that "international capitalist imperialism" would have for a socialist revolution and the appropriate limits of accommodation with the Western world.

Chile was fascinating not only to elites; it provided a model of revolution that was still capable of drawing in the young as well. Many analyses focus on the Prague Spring as the moment when a socially widespread belief in the possibility

¹¹¹ Lajos Főcze, a secretary in the Communist Youth League, noted his fears in the youth journal *Young Communist* in 1971—namely, that a large number of young technicians and economists now viewed the socialist revolution as something "merely political" and instead considered the "scientific-technological revolution" as the "chief characteristic of our age"; see Lajos Főcze, "Young Technicians and Economists," *Iffjú Kommunista* 8–9 (August–September 1971).

¹¹² György Bence, "Marcuse és az újbaloldali diákmozgalom" [Marcuse and the new left student movement], *Új Írás* 8 (September 1968): 95–102; Ágnes Heller, *Everyday Life* [originally published as *Mindennapi élet*] (1970; London, 1984), 58; HU OSA 300-40-2, box 84.

¹¹³ For two clearly argued articles in the popular press, see István Darvasi, "Convergence?," in *Magyar Hírlap*, September 27, 1970; György Fukász, "Do Differences Fade Away?," *Népszava*, December 2, 1972.

¹¹⁴ See, e.g., István Friss, "Chile útja" [The Chilean road], *Nemzetközi Szemle* 7–8 (1972): 85–93; "Változások Latin-Amerikában," 79–86.

of reformed socialism was fatally undermined. These interpretations, however, ignore the significant power that the Chilean revolution had to reactivate the hopes of a progressive wing of a younger generation.¹¹⁵ Between 1968 and 1973, in Budapest, Debrecen, and Szeged, new movements grew within the Communist Youth League that called for universities to democratize and to address the stagnation in social mobility that they blamed on the regime's abandonment of class-based university quotas in 1962. Yet in the late 1960s these movements were for the most part suspicious of the transnational models that inspired other activists around them. They still believed in the reformability of socialism and thought that the creation of the socialist market with the NEM would be the precursor of a greater political democratization. Thus they had an ambivalent attitude toward both Western and Hungarian student radicals, identifying with their criticism of authoritarianism within the university but nevertheless regarding their rejection of established Communist parties and their excessive public radicalism as signs of ideological immaturity.¹¹⁶ They held ambivalent views of the Prague Spring. While interested in its reforms, they had also been suspicious, worried that the excessive demands of the Czechoslovak reformers would undermine their own gradualist approaches in the eyes of Moscow and fearful that demands for a socialist-dominated multiparty system would not survive "predatory international capitalism."¹¹⁷ Nor did they seek to domesticate the radical heroism of the Cuban revolution, Che Guevara, or the Vietnamese struggle: none of these issues appeared relevant to their goal of responsible and sober institutional democratization of the revolution.¹¹⁸ Rather, they had looked to domestic traditions, finding particular inspiration in the brief period of progressive politics and social mobility that followed World War II before the imposition of Stalinism in the late 1940s. Chile was the first foreign revolution that really appealed to them. They promoted it at the Eighth Communist Youth congress in December 1971 as the *reményteljes út* (the hope-filled path), the lessons from which needed

¹¹⁵ For a further discussion of how it was only in the late 1970s that the Prague Spring was constructed as a symbol that represented the end of the possibility of reformed socialism, see Apor and Mark, "Mobilizing Generation," 110–11.

¹¹⁶ Interview with one-time Communist Youth League reformist leader (and later deputy mayor of Budapest) János Atkári, conducted by James Mark, Budapest, November 12, 2008. KISZ reports of student attitudes in this period also note their "realism" with regard to Western student movements; see, e.g., KISZ report, "A fejlett kapitalista országok megmozdulásairól" [Concerning the movements in developed capitalist countries], 35, PSL 289/3/252.

¹¹⁷ These reformers are quite typical in this regard. Criticism of the suppression of the Prague Spring in Hungary in the late 1960s was limited, save for a few well-known outbursts of protest.

¹¹⁸ On the failure of KISZ to integrate the radical anti-imperialist left in this period, see György Kalmár, "Az ifjúság politikai beilleszkedése" [The political integration of youth], *Társadalmi Szemle* (May 1973): 60–68.

to be incorporated into KISZ activities nationwide.¹¹⁹ It was a new form of revolution that did not rely on a violent vanguard role for the working class or peasantry, and for a short time it appeared to offer the possibility of a consensual incremental accommodation between parliamentary democracy and socialism that would be internationally recognized in an era of détente. Chile could be harnessed to reject the position of older elite conservatives that one-party centralized state socialism was the only possible model—a position that impeded their own democratizing maneuvers. According to Ferenc Redő, a member of the Eötvös Loránd University Communist Youth reform movement,

Up until that point it seemed that revolution was necessary for the victory of the working class or the peasantry—we can include Cuba in this—and then suddenly we were met with an example—also in South America—where parliamentary elections were fair, according to rules that the world accepted. That the capitalist world accepted. And so Allende could try to get on with their program—well, that was great! It was very interesting for us. Because then I imagined that there wouldn't have to be “world revolution”—this was clear for everyone! [laughs]. That a majority of [the Chilean] people had voted for change . . . and had been able to create their socialist change of direction in this way—that was very inspiring, and it brought out the fight in me, that perhaps you could do something successfully “by the rules.”¹²⁰

The Chilean revolution was also received positively among more radical activists. It drew in ultraleftists such as Orfeo, the Maoist-influenced theater, puppetry, and music collective that played a prominent role in the experimental artistic scene of 1970s Hungary.¹²¹ Their musicians had discovered the Chilean road first; their group was founded after experiencing a performance by the radical Chilean folk group Quilapayún at the Berlin political song festival in February 1971. The group's initial repertoire included Chilean music from Quilapayún's repertoire alongside working-class, New Left, and Hungarian folk and regional music.¹²² Unlike the communist youth reformers discussed above, these activists were much more interested in radical left figures such as Che Guevara, Angela Davies, and the Black Panthers. After the Chilean coup, some members produced a film about the fall of Allende; when the Pannónia film

¹¹⁹ “Nyilatkozat a latin-amerikai ifjúság harcával vállalt szolidaritásról” [Statement on solidarity with the struggle of Latin American youth], Eighth KISZ Congress, December 8, 1971, Budapest. The declaration gave its support to all progressive forces in Latin America, but it dealt mostly with Cuba and Chile. There were also demonstrations of Latin American solidarity at the local level; see, e.g., “Székesfehérvár gyűlés: Latin amerikai népek melletti szolidaritás” [Meeting in the city of Székesfehérvár: Solidarity with the peoples of Latin-America], PSL 289/1/88.

¹²⁰ Interview with Redő.

¹²¹ For background, see Orsolya Ring, “A színjátszás harmadik útja és a hatalom: Az alternatív Orfeo Együttes kálváriája az 1970-es években,” *Múltunk*, no. 3 (2008): 233–57.

¹²² Orfeo Dokumentumfilm, <http://www.orfeocsoport.hu/zenekar.html>.

company pulled it due to its ultraleftist political content, production continued at the more experimental Balázs Béla Filmstúdió.¹²³

IV. THE END OF THE WORLD

The year 1973 was the high water mark for this internationalist anti-imperialist culture. It was the year of the last great victory over Western imperialism, as the Paris Peace Accords marked the beginning of the American withdrawal from Vietnam. On November 6, 1973, on Hungarian television, Minister of Culture György Aczél could still declare, in a rhetorical flourish, that, “historically speaking only yesterday, that is forty-two years ago, the Hungarian poet Attila József still described the world as a place where ‘the colonizing empires are devouring and tearing up Asia, Africa . . . and the gaping yellow mouth of capital is breathing down upon the small, cowering countries.’ Yet today the small cowering states have become heroic and victorious Vietnams. . . . ‘The ten days that shook the world’ unleashed a landslide that destroyed the imperialist colonial empires once thought impregnable and prepared the historical ground for the establishment of a new world.”¹²⁴

Yet it was also the beginning of the end. Elites slowly lost faith in the idea that these struggles represented a victorious future for socialism that could be inspire youth and activist cultures. Solidarity with Chile only lasted as long as it appeared that the junta might be overcome peacefully; by the late 1970s, as Pinochet’s grip on power tightened, a nationwide campaign that had mobilized very effectively earlier in the decade went into rapid decline.¹²⁵ Nor was there confidence that struggles against imperialism and reaction—especially after the collapse of right-wing dictatorships in Greece, Spain, and Portugal had led to liberal democracy—would necessarily lead to socialism anymore.¹²⁶ Nor were new anticolonial movements deemed relevant to the future of Hungarian socialism: struggles in Yemen,

¹²³ Interviews with Péter Fábry, conducted by James Mark, Budapest, January 23, 2009, and with Anna Komjáthy, conducted by James Mark, January 22, 2009.

¹²⁴ György Aczél, speech given on the forty-second anniversary of the Russian Revolution, broadcast on Hungarian television, November 6, 1973.

¹²⁵ James Mark and Bálint Tolmár, “Connecting the Peaceful Roads to Socialism? The Rise and Fall of a Culture of Chilean Solidarity in Socialist Hungary, 1965–1989,” in *European Solidarity with Chile: 1970s–1980s*, ed. Kim Christiaens, Idesbald Goddeeris, and Magaly Rodríguez García (Bern, 2014), 318.

¹²⁶ Jerry F. Hough, “The Evolving Soviet Debate on Latin America,” *Latin American Research Review* 16, no. 1 (1981): 138. In September 1974, around the first anniversary of the Chilean coup, Kádár linked the role that the Communists were playing in overthrowing a right-wing dictatorship in Portugal with the role their brethren might play in returning Chile to socialism. Before it became clear in the late 1970s that the southern European transitions would result in liberal democratic systems, it was much easier for Hungarian elites to argue that state socialist democracy in “Latin countries” might have a future. See the September 2, 1974, speech by János Kádár, “Beszéd a Politikai Főiskola fennállásának

Mozambique, and Angola were often led by violent radical movements and thus had less appeal as appropriate socialist exemplars for a regime that celebrated “responsible revolution.”

This shift was also a result of the fact that Hungarian socialism’s legitimacy was being built less on the basis of political ideology and more on the grounds of technocratic and economic competence. From the mid-1970s, international links were imagined far more in terms of responsible economic exchange and development. From 1974, the leading theoretical journal of the party, *Társadalmi Szemle*, focused increasingly on the prospects for socialist economic integration, economic collaboration with the European Economic Community and the United States, and international security cooperation.¹²⁷ Discussions of what was now increasingly called the “Third World”—a Western term whose usage, even within scare quotes, signaled an increased mental distancing of this “world” from the Eastern Bloc—were now taking place mainly in elite economic and diplomatic journals. Here, the inspiring language of struggle was replaced by a technocratic vocabulary of responsible exchange and economic integration and by discussions over how development in postcolonial countries affected the economic world system and the prospects for global international cooperation.¹²⁸

A decline in Third Worldism also needs to be understood “from below.” Some activists traced their declining interest to their abandonment of the struggle for a socialist future. The defeat of Allende’s revolution abroad, and the clampdown on nonconformist politics at home with the rise of the hardline “Workers’ Opposition” in the Hungarian Central Committee, appeared in late 1973 to mark the end of the road for a democratized socialism. József Sipos, one of the leaders of the communist student reform movement in Szeged, remembered how events in both Budapest and Santiago led to the withdrawal from meaningful political

25. évfordulója alkalmából rendezett ünnepségben” [Speech delivered at the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the Political Teaching College], in *A fejlett szocialista társadalom építésének útján* (Budapest, 1975), 14–15.

¹²⁷ See, e.g., János Berecz, “Az európai biztonság és a genfi konferencia” [European security and the Geneva Conference], *Társadalmi Szemle*, no. 4 (1974): 79–88; Sándor Pirityi and Péter Vajda, “Leszerelési fórumok, tárgyalások, kilátások” [Disarmament forums, meetings, outlooks], *Társadalmi Szemle*, no. 5 (1978): 63–72; Ferenc Nagy, “A szocialista gazdasági integráció fejlesztésének fontos állomása (A KGST XXXII. ülészakáról)” [An important milestone in the development of socialist economic integration (32nd session of the CMEA)], *Társadalmi Szemle*, nos. 8–9 (1978): 46–54.

¹²⁸ See, e.g., Ferenc Mádl, “A szocialista országok és a fejlődő országok gazdasági együttműködésének (jogi) formái” [(Legal) forms of economic co-operation between socialist and developing countries], *Allam és jogtudomány* 25, no. 4 (1982): 677–719; András Balogh, “A Harmadik Világ válsága és a nemzetközi kapcsolatok” [International connections and the crisis of the Third World], *Külpolitika* 11 (1984): 3–14; György Tolnai, “A szocialista fejlődés elméletének és gyakorlatának jelentősége a ‘Harmadik Világ’ előrehaladásában” [The significance of the theory and practice of socialist development in the advancement of the “Third World”], *Közgazdasági szemle* 31 (1984): 129–40.

engagement for many in his generation, who were then absorbed by “the system”:¹²⁹

The '60s, the period until '73–'74, was a progressive period, and afterwards it was not. . . . “The system” was then to integrate our generation in their hundreds of thousands. Meanwhile it all got worse, with the strangling of the New Economic Mechanism and political democracy, the clamping down on the Marxist Renaissance [i.e., the Budapest School around György Lukács], and with Chile and Pinochet, even in an international context, there wasn't democracy. It then [began to] seem that it was only possible to get [socialist] power through proletarian dictatorship, that one had to fight in the jungle. . . . It made me feel terrible, but that was how I felt, on September 11, 1973 [the date of the Pinochet coup], that was how we felt, in the new Szeged Communist youth group.¹³⁰

Other former Third Worldists, such as Miklós Haraszti, moved away from leftist radicalism and toward liberalism and human rights, as did their counterparts in Western European countries.¹³¹ In so doing, they gave up on the struggles of the extra-European world.

Global socialism and Third Worldist revolutionary radicalism had little impact on a new generation of activists in the late 1970s and 1980s. Student groups, civic organizations, and nonconformist intellectuals no longer criticized official representations of the Third World, nor was their dissent shaped by such concerns. This was partly because the Communist Youth League, which had played a leading role in promoting this culture in the 1960s, no longer acted as an incubator for this ideology. It shifted its attention away from international agitation and, in becoming a party cadre school rather than a political movement, lost the influence it had once had over some segments of youth.¹³² Reporting and commentary on anti-imperialist movements in party and youth publications—a phenomenon that had been so important for sustaining an anti-imperialist culture—went into decline. New critical movements of the 1980s—such as environmental and peace activism—did not emerge from its structures, as earlier nonconformism had.¹³³

¹²⁹ There were many examples of this in the oral history testimony we collected. Some sought to find careers free from politics; others sought out professions (e.g., as psychoanalysts, in rural education and development, or in economics) where their socially progressive instincts could still find expression.

¹³⁰ Interview with József Sipos, conducted by Péter Apor, Budapest, October 21, 2008.

¹³¹ A story well told in Kristin Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago, 2002), 158–60.

¹³² László Kürti, *Youth and State in Hungary: Capitalism, Communism and Class* (London, 2002), 170, 179.

¹³³ See, e.g., Eszter Zsófia Tóth, “A szombathelyi Dialógus békemozgalom,” http://www.boldogsag.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=21788:a-szombathelyi-dialogus-bekemozgalom&catid=1099:joevronto-koezelmult&Itemid=721. See also the dominance of noninstitutional oppositional activity related in Padraic Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe 1989* (Princeton, NJ, 2002).

Moreover, the international imagination of both elites and critics of the regime shifted. From the mid-1970s onward, major party and Communist Youth League publications focused on European issues, particularly the necessity for economic and political cooperation. Such discussions repositioned Hungary in the international system as a responsible partner in the maintenance of European security. Student activist groups, civic organizations, and nonconformist intellectuals frequently challenged the party leadership and the government's claim to represent Hungary in Europe, claiming that the country had been snatched away from the continent's traditions by an alien Eastern communist experiment. The idea of a "return to Europe" became the rallying cry that brought together a broad spectrum of cultural, political, and social criticism of the communist state.¹³⁴ Yet an interest in global revolutionary confrontation did not disappear entirely: solidarity movements supporting causes in places such as Nicaragua, Grenada, and southern Africa continued throughout the 1980s. Nevertheless, these had an increasingly marginal position for elites, took on increasingly routinized and empty forms in practice, and had less and less real meaning for intellectual and political cultures.

These internationalist political subjectivities that had been forged in the 1960s did not disappear overnight, however. The values of anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism that had been crucial in generating a fascination with the Third World were instrumental in framing new political and cultural objectives for some activists in the 1970s and 1980s, albeit in revised forms. Some who had initially embraced Third Worldism as an expression of sympathy with small nations against Great Powers transferred their support to "the oppressed" closer to home. From the late 1970s, the populist intellectual Sándor Csoóri took up the cause of Hungarian minorities in neighboring countries, encouraging the communist leadership in Budapest to represent their interests more forcefully in the face of nationalist discrimination, particularly in Transylvania.¹³⁵ He framed his advocacy in terms of the protection of defenseless peoples against the destructive might of an imperialist will to rule.¹³⁶ The necessity of protecting national peasant cultures—an interest that had once taken him to Cuba—led him, following the collapse of state socialism, to play a role in populist politics as an influential

¹³⁴ See, e.g., Csizmadia, *Diskurzus és diktatúra*, 71–81.

¹³⁵ The route from Third Worldism to the protection of Hungarian minorities and marginalized peasant culture abroad was shared by a number of interviewees—for example, József Sipos, once a great supporter of Allende's peaceful revolution, who became one of the most important defenders of the rural working class in postsocialist Hungary as both president of the nongovernmental organization the Imre Nagy Society and as a member of parliament (interview with Sipos); see also József Sipos, "A polgári demokráciát én mindig is igeneltem," *Egyetem 7* (March 2005): 1–3.

¹³⁶ Csoóri still spoke out against great power imperialism. On a panel at the forty-eighth PEN congress in New York in March 1986, he found himself with on a panel with a Nicaraguan leftist discussing the impact that the imperialism of the Soviets in Eastern Europe and of the United States in Central America had on the growth of "authentic" national identity. It is not recorded whether they agreed with each other.

intellectual within the Hungarian Democratic Forum, the conservative party that won the first free elections in 1990.¹³⁷

By the late 1970s, in the midst of a serious debt crisis, reform-minded elites became interested in the economic transformation of so-called semiperipheral countries that had seemingly effectively responded to an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world order—evidence itself of the shift away from the Manichean construction of a capitalist versus socialist world order that had sustained an earlier anti-imperialist engagement.¹³⁸ Reformists such as Iván Berend argued that politicians needed to look to the way in which Spain and the East Asian “tigers” had successfully effected the transformation of their economies by opening up to the pressures of the world market.¹³⁹ For Károly Grósz, who became prime minister in 1987, the South Korean model of authoritarian state-centered “guided” capitalism was particularly appealing as he sought economic reform while maintaining the hegemony of the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party.¹⁴⁰ In spring 1988, reform-minded Communists such as Rezső Nyers, who advocated a limited pluralism and were considering further market reforms but had yet to accept liberal constitutionalism, were investigating the performance of “medium-developed” countries “like us” who had recently “extricated themselves from their previously difficult situations.” In this regard, he referenced East Asia and the Latin American success stories such as Brazil, Argentina, and Chile.¹⁴¹ Another reformer, Imre Pozsgay, admitted that some right-wing authoritarian regimes, such as those of Franco or Pinochet, had survived because of their

¹³⁷ See Csoóri’s collections of essays *Nappali Hold* [Diurnal moon/Moon of the day] (Budapest, 1991), and *Elveszett utak* [Lost roads] (Budapest, 2003).

¹³⁸ It was in 1977 that János Kádár and top economic elites finally accepted this new model of engagement with a broader world economy and began to view the idea of fealty to a socialist world as having less and less substance: Pál Germuska, “Failed Eastern Integration and a Partly Successful Opening Up to the West: The Economic Re-orientation of Hungary during the 1970s,” *European Review of History: Revue européenne d’histoire* 21, no. 2 (2014): 278. For interdependence and reform-minded intellectuals, see, e.g., József Bognár, *The Global Problems in an Interdependent World* (Budapest, 1984).

¹³⁹ On the idea of semiperipheries and integration in Europe, see Iván T. Berend and György Ránki, *The European Periphery and Industrialization 1780–1914* (Cambridge, 1982), especially the introduction. On how Hungary could integrate into the world economy on the basis on these historical lessons, see Iván T. Berend, “Mai gazdaságpolitikánk történelmi összefüggésben” [On the historical context of our economic policy today], in *Öt előadás gazdaságról és oktatásról* [Five lectures on economics and education] (Budapest: 1978), esp. 210–25.

¹⁴⁰ Stephen Kotkin, “The Kiss of Debt: The Eastern Bloc Goes Borrowing,” in *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective*, ed. Niall Ferguson, Charles S. Maier, Erez Manela, and Daniel J. Sargent (Cambridge, MA, 2010), 92.

¹⁴¹ Rezső Nyers, “Assesses Current Policy Tasks,” *Népszabadság*, January 21, 1989, 5. In the same interview, he advocated setting up, within the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, a central European “Benelux-type group” with Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia,

economic achievements.¹⁴² As socialist elites slowly accepted the necessity of multiparty democracy and a liberalized economy during the course of 1989, they began asking whether dictatorship might eventually act as a brake on economic development. Such ideas could be more easily articulated through discussions about right-wing authoritarian regimes in Latin America, but they had equally clear implications for one-party rule at home.¹⁴³ Members of the democratic opposition, who had appealed for a return to Europe for most of the decade, also looked further afield in 1989. In their samizdat periodical *Beszélő*, they argued that the economic success of East Asia in general, and of South Korea in particular, could be a model for the transformation in Hungary. Downplaying the authoritarianism of South Korea before 1987, they tried instead to connect the contemporary economic successes of the country with its recent experience of democratization and argued that Hungary had much to learn from this model.¹⁴⁴ Various groups were now framing democratization as a necessity for economic progress, drawing examples from world regions that in previous decades had been central to the country's anti-imperialist imagination.

V. CONCLUSION

An anti-imperialist internationalism played a large role in elite, intellectual, and everyday socialist culture of the 1960s and 1970s. From the late 1950s, state-sponsored public media, educational institutions, and publishers promoted the struggles of the decolonizing world to communicate an important set of internationalist values that could, they hoped, inspire a commitment to socialism among a new generation and build an outward-looking socialist patriotism that would counter the effects of so-called bourgeois nationalism. Yet this late socialist transnational imaginary cannot be reduced to the mere tool of state institutions.

and possibly Poland. He believed that market socialist ideas were already more advanced within this group and that broader solutions drawn from the world economy could be realistically considered. South Korea as a model for economic transformation was considered in the early 1980s by the Institute for World Economics, and it emerged in more developed projects toward the end of the decade; see, e.g., Sándor Sipos, *Small and Medium Enterprises in Industrial Development: A Comparative Analysis of Hungary and South Korea* (Budapest, 1988). It was a model of successful authoritarian modernization and integration into the global economy that appealed to those hardline communist reformers, such as Károly Grósz, who wanted economic revitalization without democratization. See, e.g., Kotkin, "Kiss of Debt," 92.

¹⁴² Imre Pozsgay, "The Chances for Freedom," *Március Tizenötödike*, March 15, 1989, 1–2.

¹⁴³ "Officials Discuss Foreign Policy Re-orientation," *Magyar Nemzet*, March 18, 1989, 4–5.

¹⁴⁴ László Zuglói, "Mit tanuljunk Ázsiától?" [What should we learn from Asia?], in *Beszélő összkiadás*, ed. Fanny Havas (Budapest, 1992), 722–23.

Groups with a variety of ideological outlooks also contributed to the rise of this new culture, with visions that were often critical of the socialist status quo in Hungary. The capacity of foreign revolutions to offer politically inappropriate and disruptive exemplars was a matter of great concern to the socialist authorities throughout this period and required regular work of interpretation, criticism, and—at times—punishment in order to mitigate its potentially harmful effects. From the mid-1970s, however, this elite-led promotion of global revolution went into decline as the extra-European world failed to produce models that spoke to the future of Hungarian socialism and as elites turned to technocratic arguments to legitimate their power. A broader social and cultural fascination was on the wane too: in the last decade and a half of state socialism, Third World issues played very little role in the generation of new critical cultures.

After 1989, postcommunist governments turned their attention toward gaining membership in European and Atlantic organizations and toward improving relations with neighboring countries. Hungary withdrew from areas such as sub-Saharan Africa where it had maintained a presence. Domestically, extra-European internationalism was often negatively associated with the leftist engagement of the former state socialist era.¹⁴⁵ However, from 2010, the conservative and anti-communist FIDESZ administration adopted a policy of “global opening” (*globális nyitás*). To balance not only declining economic growth within Europe but also a perceived Western liberal cultural imperialism from the European Union, it encouraged the intensification of educational and economic links between Hungary and East Asia and Africa—and, with that, the relationships that had been forged in the late socialist period began to be rediscovered.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ István Tarrósy and Péter Morenth, “Hungarian Africa Policy,” *African Studies Quarterly* 14, nos. 1–2 (November 2013): 77–78, 81.

¹⁴⁶ As the African Union Commission chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma noted at the Budapest Africa Forum in June 2013, “Hungary and other Central and Eastern European countries played an important role during our anti-colonial struggles and our early years of nation formation and state building in the development of African human capital, with many of our leaders and professionals passing through your universities” (*ibid.*, 89). On the revived fascination with authoritarian modernization and its links to the earlier interest in the East Asian statist tiger models, see, e.g., András Mink, “A felfüggesztett alkotmány,” *Beszélő* 16, no. 4 (April 2011), <http://beszelo.c3.hu/cikkek/a-felfueggesztett-alkotmany>; Chris Moreh, “The Asianization of National Fantasies in Hungary: A Critical Analysis of Political Discourse,” *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, March 13, 2015, <http://ics.sagepub.com/content/early/2015/03/12/1367877915573781.refs>.