

ABSTRACTS

Mariann Domokos: Propagandistic Pulp Fiction in Dualist-era Hungary: The *Históriák, Nóták* Series in the Service of Culture and Politics

This study explores the *Históriák, Nóták* (Stories, Songs) series established in 1886, highlighting the distinctive genre of popular literature and the innovative form of mass communication known as popular education fiction. Supported by Ágoston Trefort, Minister of Religion and Public Education, and his successors, this series not only aimed to contribute to the cultural education of the common people but also served as a tool for disseminating and interpreting government measures and strategies. These publications of controlled content and distribution, designed by the elite for mass influencing, were driven by both ideological considerations and genuine socio-economic needs. These booklets can be seen as popular literary representations of the social and economic issues of the time, as well as reflections of education policies proposed to solve them. Works of educational pulp fiction not only documented conflicts between peasant lifeways and a society transitioning to industrialization and capitalism, but also played a role in transforming traditional knowledge and lifestyles by disseminating ideas of modernization and bourgeois values.

Keywords: popular literature, propagandistic pulp fiction, public education, shaping mentalities, modernization and bourgeois values, state influencing

Henrik Hőnich – Ágoston Nagy: Perceptions of Society and Politics in Catholic Flag Consecration Sermons in Hungary during the Napoleonic Wars

The study examines the role of printed sermons of Catholic flag consecration ceremonies in wartime mobilization and propaganda during the Napoleonic Wars. The research corpus consists of ten texts in German and Hungarian by various authors, delivered and published between 1806 and 1814. Most of them were addressed to the civil guard, and some were sermons delivered for the feudal militia raised by the nobility (*insurrectio*) and voluntary recruits joining the regular Hungarian regiments.

The study first presents the sociohistorical and communicative context of flag consecration sermons, their place in the segmented propaganda of the Estates system in wartime Hungary, and the related ceremonial military rites.

This is followed by reconstructing the ideas that emerged in the political discourse regarding the role of the church in war, with particular emphasis on the importance of the pulpit and sermons. Subsequently, the corpus is thoroughly explored to reconstruct the normative societal and political framework of the time, especially the mutual relationship between privileges and military duty as outlined in the texts targeting regular and irregular armed forces, and the respective Estates that raised them.

Finally, the authors present the patterns of “patriotic-warrior masculinity” in the sermons, depicting the “noble insurgent,” “Hungarian warrior,” and “armed citizen” as competing models, segmented by Estate affiliation. The first two operate with and extend the dominance of a catalog of noble virtues and the concept of shared national origin. In comparison, the latter is more particular, displaying a form of local patriotism shaped by both contemporary natural law discourse and the Estates concept, strongly associated with traditional Christianity and free royal towns. The conclusion suggests that this period played a crucial role in the long-term process which, through the interaction and partial synthesis of traditional and new elements, led to the emergence of the language of modern Hungarian nationalism in the mid-nineteenth century.

Keywords: nationalism and war, nationalism and religion, collective identities, war sermon, ethnosymbolism

László Kiss: Humour as a Mirror of Public Policy: The Analysis of the Propaganda Activity of *Ludas Matyi* between 1945 and 1990

Most analyses of political cartoons as a primarily visual source focus on the characteristics of visual representation, examining the text and overall thematic content as complementary features. While the importance of visual elements is undisputable, the power of political cartoons extends beyond its visual aspects. Their message, functioning as a form of “soft” or hidden political discourse, influences the readers’ thinking through the choice of themes. The selection of themes, through the thematization of public discourse and “public hilaration” plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and can inherently serve a propagandistic purpose. This study analyses the covers of *Ludas Matyi*, a satirical weekly, between 1945 and 1990 using Comparative Agendas Project (CAP), a system primarily used in political science. The novelty of the analysis lies in using the framework of public policy codes to compare the political propaganda conveyed by *Ludas Matyi* with the general political processes of different historical periods, as well as the public policy content of various political acts and the content of the (political) press. The analysis of public policy codes in *Ludas Matyi* covers reveals the differing thematic demands of the Rákosi and Kádár eras: while the former was characterized by propaganda aimed at social mobiliza-

tion, the latter focused on pacification and consolidation by creating a distance between society and operative politics.

Keywords: classification, cartoon, political agenda, socialist system, depoliticization

Milán Pap: The Life of a Party Member: Personal Lifestyle as a Source of Propaganda in *Pártélet* in 1956

The launch of the largest-circulation party magazine of the Kádár era, *Pártélet* (Party Life), can be traced back to the end of 1955. The Central Committee of the Hungarian Workers' Party (MDP), established the journal by merging *Pártépítés* (Party Building) and *Propagandista*, upon the joint proposal from the Agitation and Propaganda Department and the Party and Mass Organizations Department. The editorial board of *Pártélet* began its operation at the beginning of 1956, placing significant emphasis on the theoretical and practical aspects of propaganda. Primarily, it served to prepare party members for propaganda work both within the party and in various segments of society. The archives of the editorial board from 1956 preserve letters in which party members and non-affiliated private individuals requested solutions to their problems from the editors. Many of these letters were reactions to published articles that truly delved into issues related to party life, such as the morality of party members, communist lifestyle, or the coherence of Marxist–Leninist ideas. Some of these letters were used in *Pártélet* to provide guidance about communist conduct and values. For example: Can a party member have a church wedding if the future mother-in-law insists? Can a party member participate in a funeral celebrated by a religious figure? Should delegates at party meetings stand or sit during the Internationale? Party propaganda sought to answer these questions during a period when the process of destalinization challenged the direction and the future of the party. The study aims to reconstruct the procedures of party propaganda, including those letters that were not published but the editorial board felt the need to respond to the senders.

Keywords: communism, propaganda, party discipline, identity, political culture

László Somogyi: The Representation of Civilian Internees in the Hungarian Press Propaganda during the First World War

At the outbreak of World War I, Hungary interned thousands of foreign nationals found within the state borders at the time of the declaration of war and deemed dangerous or suspect of espionage by the government. As evidenced by numer-

ous newspaper articles, reports, and photographs published in the contemporary press, war propaganda quickly recognized the opportunity they presented. The study explores wartime press to reveal how civil internees were portrayed in Hungarian World War I propaganda. The research primarily involves prominent press outlets (including but not limited to *Pesti Hírlap*, *Magyarország*, *Vasárnapi Újság* etc.), supplemented by local publications from towns such as Kecskemét, Vác, and Cegléd, where a larger number of internees resided in internment colonies or concentration camps. The study also covers articles in foreign (Austrian and French) newspapers related to Hungary, as well as Waldemar Hecker's 1917 German film *Die Marokko-Deutschen in der Gewalt der Franzosen*, presenting internees in Hungary and Austria in a highly propagandistic manner.

The study focuses on understanding how civilian internees fit into the propaganda machinery, as well as on the communication tools employed by propaganda and the portrayal of the interned enemy foreigners. It demonstrates how the press attempted to influence readers by tendentiously depicting not only foreign internees in Hungary but also the fate of Hungarian (and Austrian) citizens interned abroad. Building on these aspects, the study analyses the tone of the contemporary press regarding the narrative about Hungarian internees abroad and foreign internees in Hungary – including their dehumanization – and how this narrative evolved in response to unfolding wartime events.

Keywords: civilian internees, press, World War I, dehumanization

Judit Tóth: “Class struggle is raging with full force in the village, and who will defeat whom is yet to be seen”: The Impact of the 1949 Elections on Agricultural Propaganda

As the Hungarian Workers' Party (MDP) aimed to turn the May 15 parliamentary elections in 1949 into a referendum in favor of the party, it deployed a wide range of agitation and propaganda tools to persuade every social group to join their side. One of the greatest challenges was winning over the peasantry, as the marginalization and persecution of farmers labeled as kulaks had been ongoing since the summer of 1948, and collectivization was already underway. The total mobilization of the 1949 election campaign is primarily known from the works of István Feitl. He also noted that the leadership of the ruling party decided to suspend “anti-kulak” and cooperative propaganda to win over the peasantry. The first part of the present study is a quasi-snapshot, providing an overview of the character of the MDP's rural policy in the months leading up to the elections. However, the main objective is to answer how and to what extent the aforementioned suspension of previous strategy directly changed the party's policy towards the peasantry in the weeks leading up to the elections, that is, during

the campaign. In addition to archival sources, the study answers the research questions based on the contemporary press, especially the MDP's central newspaper, *Szabad Nép* (Free People).

Keywords: parliamentary election, Hungarian Workers' Party, campaign, countryside, peasantry, kulaks