‘It is not often that we have the opportunity to see how theory emerges from lived experience, but this is what this book offers. Three women have gathered here to tell us about the confluence of their personal and psychoanalytic journeys from post-WWII Hungary to the West; stories that are then reflected upon by two other women psychoanalysts. These are stories of hope and action, of potential and the ability to realize it, but also of deep awareness of the burdens of history and of the political and social forces that drive our lives through it. Ultimately, this is a book about the power of ideas, and of making sense of life’s overwhelming riddles together to keep us going. A deep reading, and psychoanalytic adventure.’

**Eyal Rozmarin** is a co-editor of the book series *Relational Perspectives in Psychoanalysis*, and associate editor of the journals *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* and *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*

‘Three women in three voices present their remarkable journeys from Budapest to psychoanalysis. This original book has the texture of a fabric woven with different threads. History with a capital “H” has impacted their individual and generational trajectories. They journey through different countries, as well as through languages. Their ability to mobilize themselves towards singular and creative orientations is a testimony to their perseverance and vitality. In the background, psychoanalysis proves to be an endless resource.’

**Armelle Hours** is a psychiatrist, psychoanalyst and member of the SPP IPA and GLPRA

‘This is an enthralling book that has emerged from a dialogue between three classmates from Budapest who became psychoanalysts in three different cultures. In addition to being drawn into the personal journeys of each of the three women, the book also reflects developments in contemporary psychoanalysis that are at once diverse and overlapping. The three essays address the role of the tragic history of the Hungarian Shoah in the formation of the writers’ identities, their struggles to come to terms with the traumatic past of their families and their process of mourning. The essays illuminate
the psychoanalytic identity of each, revealed in their theoretical and clinical approaches. This is a remarkable contribution to the field and is likely to be of interest to clinicians and the general public alike.’

**Anne Patterson** is the editor of the New Library of Psychoanalysis book series, Routledge

‘Budapest, along with Vienna and Berlin, was a centre of psychoanalysis from 1900 until the Second World War, when many psychoanalysts managed to escape to Britain, America and France. These are the countries where the three authors of this book – all second-generation survivors of the Shoah in Hungary – practice today. Nearly half a million Hungarian Jews were sent to be murdered in Auschwitz, and antisemitism has continued to mark the recent history of Hungary. The authors, who met as students in grammar school in Budapest, all went on to become psychoanalysts. This deeply moving book is a celebration of their capacity to survive intergenerational trauma and migration and of the role that psychoanalysis has played in their blossoming.’

**Rosine Perelberg** is the president of the British Psychoanalytical Society; she has published Psychic Bisexuality: A British-French Dialogue; Murdered Father, Dead Father: Revisiting the Oedipus Complex; Sexuality, Excess, and Representation; and the podcast ‘The Shoah and Contemporary Antisemitism’ for the International Psychoanalytic Association

‘Three Hungarian immigrant women recall and examine their personal and psychoanalytic journey in this stimulating book of origins and on-going transformations. They movingly affirm that the making of a psychoanalyst is inseparable from personal and professional maturation. Through writing this book they re-find each other and connect with a deep understanding of themselves. The book beautifully shows the authors’ diversity and similarity, the powerful ingredients of any New Beginning.’

**Giselle Galdi** is Editor in Chief of the American Journal of Psychoanalysis and a training and supervising analyst at the American Institute for Psychoanalysis
This book follows the personal and professional journeys of three Jewish women from Budapest, originally classmates in the same high school. The book shows how they and their families were marked by the Shoah, and explores the impact of the social, cultural, and political milieu in which they travelled upon their development as psychoanalysts.

Following an introduction by the Hungarian psychoanalyst, Judit Mészáros, who gives a broad historical review of Hungarian Jewry during the Shoah and the Soviet era, the three authors provide autobiographical accounts of their own psychoanalytic evolution and interconnectedness. They describe their motivations for emigrating from Hungary, their early struggles to fit in and their eventual acculturation. The authors explore their coming of age as clinicians in their adopted homelands and explain how their theoretical orientation and clinical styles were shaped by their respective analytic environments, their training experiences, and their own personal histories. They offer clinical vignettes to illustrate their respective psychoanalytic perspective. The book closes with an afterword from American psychoanalyst, Adrienne Harris, who contemplates the authors’ immigration experiences alongside her own.

Replete with personal, cultural, and political history, this book will prove both informative and fascinating for psychoanalysts, psychotherapists as well as the general public.

Veronica Csillag is a faculty member and a training and supervising analyst at the Manhattan Institute for Psychoanalysis, a faculty member at the National Institute for the Psychotherapies, and an associate editor of Psychoanalytic Dialogues. She is the author of several psychoanalytic papers, which were published in a variety of journals. She is in private practice in New York City.

Katalin Lanczi was born in Budapest and emigrated to the UK in 1980. She is a Fellow of the British Psychoanalytical Society, a training and supervising analyst of the British Psychoanalytic Association and the co-director of the European Psychoanalytic Film Festival. She lectures and teaches widely, and is in private practice in London.

Julianna Vamos was born in Budapest and studied in Paris (Sorbonne Paris 5) for a PhD in clinical psychology and psychopathology. She is a psychoanalyst and member of the Société Psychoanalytique de Paris (SPP).
When music is played in a new key, the melody does not change, but the notes that make up the composition do change: change in the context of continuity, continuity that perseveres through change. Psychoanalysis in a New Key publishes books that share the aims psychoanalysts have always had, but they approach these aims differently. The books in the series are not expected to advance any particular theoretical agenda, although to this date most have been written by analysts from the Interpersonal and Relational orientations.

The most important contribution of a psychoanalytic book is the communication of something that nudges the reader’s grasp of clinical theory and practice in an unexpected direction. Psychoanalysis in a New Key creates a deliberate focus on innovative and unsettling clinical thinking. Because that kind of thinking is encouraged by exploration of the sometimes surprising contributions to psychoanalysis of ideas and findings from other fields, Psychoanalysis in a New Key particularly encourages interdisciplinary studies. Books in the series have married psychoanalysis with dissociation, trauma theory, sociology, and criminology. The series is open to the consideration of studies examining the relationship between psychoanalysis and any other field – for instance, biology, literary and art criticism, philosophy, systems theory, anthropology, and political theory.

But innovation also takes place within the boundaries of psychoanalysis, and Psychoanalysis in a New Key therefore also presents work that reformulates thought and practice without leaving the precincts of the field. Books in the series focus, for example, on the significance of personal values in psychoanalytic practice, on the complex interrelationship between the analyst’s clinical work and personal life, on the consequences for the clinical situation when patient and analyst are from different cultures, and on the need for psychoanalysts to accept the degree to which they knowingly satisfy their own wishes during treatment hours, often to the patient’s detriment. A full list of all titles in this series is available at: https://www.routledge.com/Psychoanalysis-in-a-New-Key-Book-Series/book-series/LEAPNKB
From Budapest to Psychoanalysis

Three Portraits and their Analytic Frames

Veronica Csillag, Katalin Lanczi, and Julianna Vamos

Edited by Veronica Csillag
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Many people contributed to the development and completion of this book and am grateful to them all. Here I will only mention those who have been directly involved.

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The editor of this series, Donnel Stern, has been a source of endless support. Without his encouragement, this book may not have ever seen the light of day. Thank you!

I am grateful to Routledge Senior Publisher, Kate Hawes and the members of her editorial and production team, most especially to Georgina Clutterbuck, who was practically holding my hand through this entire process.

My colleagues and friends at the Manhattan Institute for Psychoanalysis and in the larger analytic community, including my former analysts and supervisors as well as my own patients, supervisees, and students, all shaped me as a clinician, thinker, and writer. You have my gratitude.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to thank friends and family, especially my partner, A. L., who listened to my ideas and survived
my bad moods and limited availability without much retaliation or abandonment.

Veronica Csillag

My co-authors have stimulated my thinking throughout the writing of this chapter: I owe them a great deal as I do to my patients.

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Katalin Lanczi

In the process of contributing to this book, I received a lot of help, big and small, in direct and indirect ways. I thank Veronica Csillag for introducing the idea, and I am grateful for the extensive dialogue with my co-authors while elaborating on our professional destinies.

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Last but not least, I am indebted to my patients, both babies and adults, with whom this unique passionate analytical experience has been taking place.

Julianna Vamos
Contributor biographies

Adrienne Harris is a faculty member and supervisor at the New York University Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis and at the Psychoanalytic Institute of Northern California. She is an editor of Psychoanalytic Dialogues, and Studies in Gender and Sexuality. She is co-editor of the Book Series Relational Perspectives in Psychoanalysis, and editor of the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA) ejournal, Psychoanalysis Today.

Judit Mészáros is professor honoris causa at the Eötvös Loránd University, training and supervising analyst of the Hungarian Psychoanalytical Society (affiliated with the IPA) and staff member at the European Psychotherapy Training Institute, Budapest. She has written scores of papers, and edited and authored many books. She is curator of exhibitions on Ferenczi and the Budapest School of Psychoanalysis in London and Budapest.
The life paths of the authors begin with common historical roots formed by the socio-political events of twentieth-century Hungary – specifically, Jewish assimilation into Hungarian society, the anti-Semitism that culminated in the Holocaust, and the Stalinist and post-Stalinist periods in the countries of Eastern Europe. It is this historical fabric in which the authors’ families are embedded. It pervades the authors’ early years from their birth to their experiences in school and with their peers to their emigration from Hungary. Their lives have fateful similarities: all three authors’ mothers went to the same Jewish girls’ grammar school in Budapest before the Second World War. The three authors were classmates in the same English programme at a strongly competitive grammar school in Budapest. Despite their fundamentally different personalities, they formed a friendship and, during their university years or shortly thereafter, all three defected. All three found themselves and their chosen vocation in the same field, psychoanalysis. Today they practise and teach as psychoanalysts in three cities on two continents: Paris, London and New York. Can this all be a coincidence?

It is certainly an honour as a fellow psychoanalyst in Budapest to have been requested by the authors to write this introduction about the period before they emigrated, and I am reminded of a story that likewise ties the threads together. The Budapest-Fasori Grammar School has produced a number of world-renowned alumni, including John von Neumann, the mathematician who laid the theoretical foundations for the computer and emigrated to America, Edward Teller, the nuclear physicist and father of the hydrogen bomb, who...
also left for the United States, John Charles Harsányi, the Nobel
Prize-winning US economist, and Eugene Paul Wigner, the Nobel
Prize-winning US physicist. Is this all a coincidence? Americans have
asked, what is it in that neighbourhood that that school should have
produced so many ingenious mathematicians and physicists? So they
went there and studied the place. Perhaps it was something that they
had all eaten or drunk. Perhaps it was the water? Might there have
been something in it that affected the functioning of the brain? No –
it was not the water! It was the school’s outstanding teachers, many
of them Fellows of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, truly great
figures, who had a powerful impact on their talented students.
Beyond this, there was something else: history, which forced them to
emigrate.

The authors were born in the mid-1950s, just a decade after the
Second World War, members of the second-generation Holocaust
survivors. The war and the socio-political events in Hungary that
followed impacted the individual, including members of the genera-
tion of survivors, like a roller coaster: given the forces of the external
world, one endeavoured to control one’s own impulses, while also
maintaining a balance. Just when one thinks one has found stability,
one suddenly feels disoriented, not knowing which way is up and
which way is down, what is true and what is false, how something can
be both appealing and repugnant, at once “a left-leaning liberal,
sympathetic to socialist ideology but critical of the establishment”
(Csillag, p. 31) how to separate the negative phenomena, the ana-
chronistic contradiction of a dictatorship taking shape under an
umbrella of promising ideologies (e.g., all people are equal). One
struggles for a state of internal balance in a sphere of cognitive and
affective dissonance.

The authors were born in a period of ten years (between 1945 and
1956), which defined a total of four-plus decades (1945–1989). They
came into a world where they had to come to terms with the deep
contradictions between the informational and emotional messages
relayed in verbal communication, where the content and symbolism
of open communication differed from that of the non-verbal sort.
They were socialised in a climate in which far too much was not as it
appeared. What motives lie beneath the surface, forming and sus-
taining this double-bind communication?
Hungary was allied to the Third Reich in the Second World War. The country was occupied by the Germans in mid-March 1944 and liberated by Soviet troops little more than a year later. The liberation of the capital (in February 1945) represented a chance for survival for Budapest’s Jewry, who had lived through the threat of deportation and the mass murders committed by Hungary’s fascist Arrow Cross. Soon, however, the country’s liberators would also become its occupiers. By 1948, Hungary found itself under a Stalinist regime within the Soviet zone of occupation. The multiparty system came to an end, and, like other countries within the Soviet sphere of influence, Hungary was dependent on the U.S.S.R. from the perspective of public administration, policymaking, the economy, scholarship and culture.

All three authors are part of the second generation of Holocaust survivors. The trauma of the survivors had an effect on the following generations throughout the world, independent of the form of government – whether democratic, autocratic or dictatorial; for the most part, there were clear signs of survivor syndrome and transgenerational phenomena (Wardi, 1995). Beyond that, Hungary, a country that had joined the Soviet bloc, faced particular challenges with its origins in a mix of the historical shock people there had experienced and the pathogen of the political present. This is the main root of the authors’ common fate.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Hungary opened its doors to Jewish communities beset by the pogroms of the Eastern European region. Around the turn of the century, many Jews in Hungary, who were facilitating modernisation and the rise of the middle class there, changed their Jewish-German names to Hungarian-sounding ones to express their allegiance to their adopted country. Several decades later (from the late 1930s), however, a name change like this came to symbolise the struggle to survive. Assimilation represented hope: is there a place in this country for the Jewish diaspora. Hungary’s reform-minded, assimilationist Neolog Jews built what was then the largest synagogue in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century. It had a capacity of 3000 and even featured a traditionally Christian liturgical instrument. The violin of escape had been replaced by the pipe organ, which symbolised the intention to remain. In contrast to the houses of worship concealed in the inner
courtyards of houses, the synagogue, with its Moorish style that was visible from far off, demonstrated the wishful fantasy that those who had come here imagined their future and those of their descendants in this country. The Neolog Jewry were prepared to assimilate. Just think of the various cultural signs of this intention, e.g., the architecture, the naming practices and the bilingual (Hungarian-Hebrew) prayer books.

The political anti-Semitism that arose after the First World War was therefore incredibly disillusioning, culminating as it did in laws that deprived Hungarian Jews of their rights on both an economic and social level and, ultimately, in mass murder. Exclusionary and anti-life phenomena motivated by anti-Semitism were present in Hungary long before the German occupation in the form of the numerus clausus law in the early 1920s, which placed limits on the percentage of Jewish students at university, in the fascist Scythe Cross movement in the 1930s (Papp, 2014), in forced labour camps in the 1940s and in the mass murder of Hungarian Jews at Kamianets-Podilskyi in 1941. Like one of the authors, many have asked the question: Was assimilation an illusion? Was Hungarian society a truly welcoming one? And if so, to what extent? In terms of its world view, was this country open to accepting a value system from another culture? Or was it really only an “imagined assimilation” (Fenyves, 2010)? Did the country primarily need the adopted people’s ability to create economic value, thus resulting in a tolerant attitude among those who opened the doors in prosperous times? In contrast, in lean times and under tense social conditions, was it possible for an unreflective tension to lead to destruction in the shadow of a growing exclusionary ideology of seeking an enemy and creating a scapegoat (as expressed in such commonplaces as “this problem is somebody else’s fault” and “they’re the ones to blame”).

When the Germans occupied the country, Eichmann commandos, whose task it was to eliminate Hungary’s Jewry, numbered no more than 65, while the Gestapo in Budapest consisted of 33 men (Ungváry, 2015). It is in this historical context that the Hungarian authorities themselves (the gendarmerie, the police and public administration), with the cooperation of the Hungarian populace (neighbours reporting on neighbours), arranged or actually brought about the deportation and destruction of nearly half a million (437,000) Hungarian Jews,
along with Hungarian Roma and non-Jewish leftists, in the space of only a few months. The plundering of Jewish possessions involved active Hungarian participation. A clear example of this is the designation of “yellow-star houses”. After Jews were forcibly moved from the countryside in the spring of 1944, the Hungarian authorities set up what were called “yellow-star houses” in the capital (Nádor, 2015). One Jewish family was forced to move into one room each within 2000 designated blocks of flats. This served three aims: Jewish movable and immovable property could be immediately accessed and appropriated, deportation was made easier through collection points, and, most importantly, the “yellow-star houses” marked strategically important areas near a railway station and bridges, which, given the siege of Budapest, offered up those who were fated for destruction anyway.

While Regent Miklós Horthy suspended the deportation of the Budapest Jewry under international pressure, the fascist regime of Arrow Cross leader Ferenc Szálasi that followed Horthy’s overthrow set up the Budapest ghetto in the final days of the war (November 1944) and issued a decree that made it possible to seize all (movable and immovable) Jewish property. This occurred at a time when parts of Europe had already been liberated and the eastern half of Hungary itself was already occupied by Soviet troops, so the outcome of the war was beyond doubt.

Those who survived the Holocaust, returned and still did not emigrate had to carry on with their lives in a place from which they had been sent to their deaths, where their flats or houses had been looted and where those who were staggering home from the concentration camps were received with horror – Hungary not having sent a single vehicle to the concentration camps after the liberation (Fenyves, 2015). 1945 (Török & Szántó, 2017) is an excellent film about the Hungarian population’s fear of the return of Jewish survivors, the sense of terror that they would come back and demand what their neighbours had stolen. The film, to which Lanczi also refers, uses the power of the image and the tools of dramaturgy to enable one to experience what the word, the language of memoirs and interviews, seems to be less able to convey – at least emotionally.

It is no surprise that the surviving Jewry saw the Soviets as liberators and were filled with hope at the idea of communism, one of egalitarianism, which stood in contrast with fascism, a system of
destruction based on religion, ethnicity and/or politics. According to Lanczi, “my father … believed fervently that he was helping to build a new world, in which discrimination and prejudice will cease to exist” (p. 110). Survivors were happy to offer their skills to the Soviet-style regime, which was in dire need of people who had not compromised themselves under the previous authority. Careers in public administration and law enforcement, which had shut them out before, were thus open to them now. However, this led to unpredictable consequences (Karádi, 1992). They instantly found themselves trapped insofar as the Soviet-style dictatorship required those who joined it to completely forsake their previous life/identity, whether it be tied to religion or background (including class, nationality and ethnicity). Lanczi observes that “there was no more talk about the Shoah and the word ‘Jew’ had disappeared from the public domain” (p. 104). The communist party and the sectors of power demanded that members of Jewish descent in fact silence, deny and repress their life so far. Each attempted to satisfy this impossible requirement in their own way: through identification or through the secret and dangerous maintenance of a dual identity. This writer clearly remembers visiting her grandparents for the Jewish holidays as an elementary schoolgirl. She entered a house of worship built in the inner courtyard of a building, but then, before she opened the door, she cautiously looked around to see if anyone noticed her. Hungary was well-known as a country of neighbours reporting on neighbours. This was also observed by its occupying German commanders. Based on their accounts, there were simply no mass reports from neighbours in any other country.

The trauma of the Holocaust was therefore rendered impossible to work through because of the political consequences of the new regime. At the same time, anti-Semitism had not ended. It appeared openly in the form of incidents that flared up in the countryside in the years immediately after the war (Standeinksy, 2007), it emerged in the streets and at the universities for a few days during the 1956 Revolution, and it bubbled to the surface in the form of references and metaphors for decades like an underground stream (Mészáros, 1998). It took some time for this writer to understand why at one of the clinics at the medical university in Budapest in the 1980s certain patients were referred to as “a child of old parents”. This was a
vitriolic reference to children of Holocaust survivors who had tried again after their earlier children had been murdered. While one did not hear anti-Semitic references in everyday conversation from the 1960s to the 1980s, they were present in social situations and returned with renewed vigour as open anti-Semitism in politics and emerged in public discourse after the regime change of 1989 (Szántó, 2012). Based on the latest research, 36% of Hungary’s adult population is anti-Semitic, with anti-Semitic feelings identifiable in the thinking of over half (56%) (Hann, 2021).

**Becoming aware in several steps**

**How did I find out I was Jewish?**

The phenomenon was so common that it became the object of a study in social psychology in the 1980s (Erös et al., 1985). The trauma of the generation of survivors had been silenced for decades. Unfinished sentences, questions left unanswered, non-verbal gestures and irrational fears (of gas water heaters, gas cookers and travel by train, as we learn from the authors’ own experiences), losses that have not been worked through, “a sense of subtle gloom” (Lanczi, p. 108) and an atmosphere of secrets and taboos formed a constant in the lives of the next generation (Kestenberg, 1989; Mészáros, 1997; Virág, 1984). The social environment and the individual psychological processes were so complex and contradictory that they could only begin to be explored many decades after the Shoah.

Like so many of their contemporaries, the authors did not have the experience of being born into a religious Jewish family or even one that carried its roots naturally. Instead, they somehow found out later – between the ages of 6 and 11 in this case. There were some whose parents told them at a key moment, others who learned through their schoolmates under the influence of their parents’ prejudices and still others who came to terms with their Jewish descent in a chance situation – between two floors in the lift – as Vámos described so powerfully. All of this was independent of whether their parents came from a religious or assimilated Jewish family, whether they were atheists or not, and whether they had become party
members under the communist regime or not. There was the empty space in their families caused by the deportations – grandparents, aunts, cousins and grandchildren “did not come back” (a typically euphemistic expression for deportation) – the experience of the labour camps or the ghettos, and the powerful helplessness and vulnerability which was often intermingled with feelings of shame and guilt. The parents of those born after the Shoah attempted to protect their children. They thought there was such a thing as a tabula rasa. Meanwhile, the trauma reached their children through unconscious manifestations and societal conflicts. Csillag tells us that “at the age of six, I was searching for friends. There was this cool girl … . I asked to be friends. She said she’d think about it. The next day she told me that we could not possibly be friends because I was Jewish. I was familiar with the word but did not fully comprehend its meaning. I did realise, however, that it had to be something truly awful. When I returned home that afternoon, I asked my mother if, in fact, I was Jewish. She looked me in the eye and said ‘no’”. As Lanczi recalls, “Aged four, I become friendly with a little girl in kindergarten. For some unfathomable reason, neither her parents nor mine encourage the relationship. I feel hurt and baffled; very unusually, my parents do not give an explanation. Only many years later do I realise … There was mutual recognition between the two families: we were on two sides of history” (p. 98). Why are there no words? Why is there no one who will come out and say it?

The iron curtain

As with the other countries in the Soviet bloc, the citizens of Hungary saw the end of freedom of movement in the direction of Western civilisation as of 1949. The relationship between the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, was marked by great tension and accompanied by the division of Europe into East and West after the Second World War. Countries that had suffered losses during the war but had ended up within the Soviet power structure received no aid under the US Marshall Plan, thus slowing recovery after the war. The emergence of a Stalinist dictatorship in Hungary also changed the structure of the economy, with nationalisation launched and private property and market economy eliminated. The
state party seriously hamstrung expression of opinion and freedom of movement. It put an end to the free flow of culture and made it difficult if not impossible to maintain personal and professional ties with the Western world. The age of the Cold War had started. The authors’ generation was born into a country where, in conjunction with the bliss of free education and free healthcare, all instruction was placed under an ideological umbrella, with Russian language learning having become compulsory from primary to higher education. It was a country where the independent learning of Western languages was the only option available to most, at least until grammar school – within the confines of the contemporary environment and culture.

Many university-educated parents – and this holds true for Jewish parents in particular – placed a strong emphasis on the next generation possessing competitive knowledge and learning some world language because one never knew when medical or engineering skills or indeed any convertible knowledge or qualifications in the arts might save one’s life – and, of course, all of this had to be achieved with excellence. This notion imbued parents’ need to protect their children so deeply that it remained with them even after they had emigrated: when the university-educated mother of one of the authors learned that her daughter would become a psychoanalyst, she said, “But will you gain an internationally accepted qualification?” (Lanczi, p. 126).

**The happiest barracks – the 1960s**

All three authors started primary school in the early 1960s under a relatively soft dictatorship after the death of Stalin in 1953, the crushing of the 1956 Revolution and the retribution that followed. Culturally, it was known as the 3T period, in which creative works and their creators were classified as “támogatott”, “tűrt” or “tiltott” – that is, the authorities would either back them, abide them or ban them. These fell along a continuum between being socialist realist and/or supportive of the regime at one end and being seen as anti-Marxist and/or undermining the system at the other. The doors were thus open to a wide range of literature, theatre, fine arts and contemporary music – and this included the Beat period produced by the
Silent Generation in the West, whose music and culture eventually managed to sneak under the Iron Curtain. The number of copies of works by American, British and French authors in translation increasingly surpassed those of Soviet/Russian ones in Hungary. Kerouac’s *On the Road* and Ginsberg’s *Howl* were some of the significant works by the Beat Generation that became available in translation, while the contemporary Hungarian music scene had been infiltrated by bands not usually associated with the Beats in the West, such as the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. These books and records became symbols of an avant-garde youth in Hungary in the 1960s. The way they dressed, wore their hair and behaved in general set in motion changes whose effects could be felt for decades not only musically, but also culturally and socially. Rock and beat bands (no relation to Beat writers) often clashed with police, but they mobilised a generation of teens and twenty-year-olds. More and more bands appeared, including hard rock and even blacklisted groups among them (Romsics, 2017). Dissidents used metaphors and veiled references when they spoke in public. The metaphors in song lyrics naturally testify to this as well. Messages critical of the regime could clearly be read between the lines. In fact, this dual communication reached the level of art. As with all good jokes, it was in the tension between the dictionary meaning and the symbolic meaning that the essence of the message could be found and, indeed, where the strong dissident message of oh so innocent-sounding lyrics lay. When the most beautiful young woman in a faraway land boldly rejects the old king’s marriage proposal, adding that she would rather leave and never return in Illés and Bródy’s (1969) “Valahol egy lány” (Somewhere a girl), it was resoundingly clear to anyone truly listening what was being communicated. There were naturally consequences to these kinds of lyrics. For example, the album *Jelbeszéd* (Sign Language) was banned not long after its release and did not see the light of day until it was put out again in 1983.

Those creative works that the authorities did not “abide” were still disseminated in samizdat publications produced in ordinary flats and through avant-garde cinemas in people’s homes (cf. Csillag, p. 41), while Radio Free Europe and the Voice of America – whose broadcasts it was long forbidden to receive – reached an audience critical of the regime or simply open to the rest of the world. At the same time,
the soft dictatorship of the 1960s made it possible to produce a number of works of literature, cinema and fine art that are still considered world-class.

After starting school, the authors soon found themselves part of the Young Pioneer movement. While membership was not compulsory in principle, it was nearly impossible to avoid. Those who did were marginalised in the community of children. The movement was a significant means of instilling communist ideology, but it was also a forum for community experiences, sport and leisure-time activities (e.g., theatre groups, after-school activities tied to the arts, humanities or sciences, and summer camps), as well as for nurturing talent and forming communities. Having adopted various formal motifs from the pre-war scouting movement (e.g., the use of a uniform and the group structure), the Young Pioneer movement inculcated an ethos of country, party and proletarian internationalism. One could later move on to the Young Communist League in high school and at university. A person who wished to enter university or apply for a passport was at a disadvantage without being a member.

However, the neo-Marxist movements at American and Western European universities in 1968 also found adherents among Hungarian students. Associating with the cults of Mao Zedong or Che Guevara could even result in expulsion from university. The crushing of the Prague Spring in 1968 – when Warsaw Pact troops from the Soviet Union and its satellites invaded what was then Czechoslovakia – had a powerfully sobering effect. The only question was when one would lose the illusion of purity with regard to leftist ideology. Indeed, the authors reflect on the invasion – “I became totally disillusioned about the political system I lived in” (Csillag, p. 38) – and their personal experience – “I was, myself, going through a political crisis and a process of disillusionment in the Communist Youth movement at the school” (Lanczi, p. 24). As Rainer (2004) puts it, “What followed was the loss or emptying of a buoyant ‘critical’ thinking, a ‘primitive turn’ of leftist theory. From the perspective of a lifetime, I would say the decade can truly be characterised as follows: a ‘change’ in ‘way of life’ or ‘lifestyle’ or a cultural revolution of ‘the 1960s’” (p. 11).

Apropos of creative works that authorities banned, abided or backed, it is worth turning to the special “human view” (Ignotus) of psychoanalysis, which the authors chose as a means of self-knowledge
and later as a model for their professional life. Psychoanalysis in pre-war Hungary had the power to form the culture (Erős, 2011; Mészáros, 2014). It could be found not only in conversations in cafés among the educated public, but also in modern literature and art. However, all autocratic/dictatorial regimes, such as the Stalinist dictatorship, stood in opposition to the central message of psychoanalysis, the efforts to liberalise the individual (Damousi & Plotkin, 2012). From the late 1940s in Hungary, psychoanalysis was banned as the “home psychology of imperialism”, with the renowned Hungarian Psychoanalytical Society having dissolved itself (in 1949) and having ceased to exist as an organisation. Only a few in Budapest continued practising psychoanalysis underground during a period that lasted until the mid-1960s (Mészáros, 2012). In the late 1960s and early 70s, only the most discerning teachers raised the issue of psychoanalysis in education. According to Lanczi, “An important link with my future career choice emerged in my passion for the inter-war poet Attila Jozsef (1905–1937). It was through studying him that I first encountered psychoanalysis, which he linked in an original way with his interest in Marxism” (p. 115). Until the mid-1970s, one heard nothing about psychoanalysis in psychology training at university.

A recruitment and surveillance system

The 1960s and 1970s in Hungary was a period in which an alternative culture was taking shape, with beat and rock bands playing concerts, house parties and the samizdat literature of the counterculture. A strong identity-shaping effect was the common denominator of the various groups involved. Members of a group identified with the group norms in their outward appearance, language usage (slang) and ideals and gave voice to their world view in numerous ways. The authors also had strong ties to various alternative cultures. They found that liberation is not the same as freedom, that breaking boundaries is a source of other problems, and that simply rebelling against something is not enough. This situation is coloured by the fact that if one has an anticipatory vision, it is often idealised, leading to inevitable disappointment. Reality is already very complicated indeed if one’s idea of what is to come is not idealised. It poses enough of a challenge just to cope with obstacles for which one cannot
prepare in advance. For Vámos, the group became a source of indispensable experiences: a reference group, a “chosen family”. As Vámos describes it, “In the group, we were sometimes hard on each other, we contended with competition, rivalry, envy. But the secret of small-group dynamics, the “chosen family”, the belonging together was stronger than the pain. … We learned how to think together, to elaborate our ideas freely, even in a dictatorship. Without being aware of it, I perceived that public discussions are better avoided. I became conscious of the danger we faced from being under surveillance, as some of my friends were” (p. 171). There were groups that represented values that lasted a lifetime, such as the one surrounding Ferenc Mérei. The beginning of Vámos’s immigration story speaks to this. She chose Paris. After spending a year in America, she returned to the French capital and continued her studies at the Sorbonne, just as Mérei had once done. Mérei was a Marxist while criticising the regime at the same time (for which he was sentenced to prison). He was a social psychologist who knew about child psychology and who, after being freed on amnesty (in 1963), established a clinical workshop at the National Institute of Psychiatry and Neurology in Budapest, better known as “Lipót”. His charismatic personality enabled him to become a model with whom others could identify, and his expertise made it possible to establish links to other trends in psychology, including Moreno’s psychodrama, which he introduced in Hungary.

None of this took place under cloudless skies, however. The Ministry of the Interior established the III/III group as part of the political police, whose task it was to keep domestic dissidents under surveillance and neutralise them. They generally used blackmail to recruit their informers, who reported on groups of their own peers. A system of informants was developed, which permeated the civil sphere: it was there at the workplace, the university, rock concerts and house parties. Those who had been recruited included colleagues, friends and family members – even fathers and mothers – whose activities came to light after the regime change in 1989 (Esterházy, 2002; Forgách 2015; Ungváry & Tabajdi, 2008). No one could feel safe. The government or party headquarters would step in and force dissidents to remain silent or to leave the country, as was the case with the students of philosopher György Lukács (Ágnes Heller,
György Márkus and Mihály Vajda) in the early 1970s and with the avant-garde theatre affiliated with Péter Halász – which would later become Squat Theatre.

**Emigration**

Hungary has seen a number of noteworthy waves of emigration in the twentieth century – in 1919–1921, 1938–1941 and 1956 – where the push side in the push-pull dynamic can be attributed to socio-political factors first and foremost. On the push side of the first wave of emigration (1919–1921), we see anti-Semitism, political retribution and a post-war economic crisis (Frank, 2009). The majority of those who left the country during the two exiles (the second being between 1938 and 1941) were scientists, writers, artists and other highly educated people as well as those who wished to study. Most of them were of Jewish descent. Many later capitalised on their knowledge in other countries and on other continents, for example, members of the Budapest School that had formed around Sándor Ferenczi, whom the authors encountered in their psychoanalytical training as British, American and French psychoanalysts of Hungarian descent (Mészáros, 2014). Those who studied at universities abroad while still young naturally enjoyed greater chances of integrating. There was another characteristic of the emigration of the university-educated in the period between the two world wars after Hitler came to power: for the most part, there were supportive organisations and host institutions, universities and professional communities that aided immigrants, forced as they were to leave behind their homeland, native language and life thus far, in integrating as soon as possible into their host country.

Those in the first wave of emigration who were of Jewish descent and had resettled elsewhere in Europe were compelled to emigrate once more. The majority of Hungarians found refuge in the United States, Canada, Australia and Israel (Szondi & Seres, 2011). The literature deals more with those who were forced to leave their homeland than with those who could not leave for whatever reason – personal or professional – or who did not wish to emigrate in spite of their poor social well-being. From a certain perspective, those who left and those who stayed behind all lost out. Those who left in the hope of a better, more secure life left behind their country, native
language and culture, their relationships with family and friends, indeed, their whole social network, as well as their former lives. Those who stayed behind lost those who left, their family members, friends and professional contacts, as well as a part of their past – and soon their hopes for the possibility of a better, more secure life. All the challenges notwithstanding, those who left arrived in a more democratic, economically more stable, more prosperous world, where their individual efforts produced measurable results. Those who stayed behind found themselves under a new dictatorial regime. During and immediately after the 1956 Revolution, nearly 200,000 people left the country – for political and economic reasons – both university-educated and non-university-educated alike. They resettled in 35 countries with the aid of the U.N. Refugee Fund, the majority of them in Austria, Germany, Switzerland, France and Great Britain as well as the United States and Canada.

Writers and scholars who had emigrated for political reasons to Western Europe, the United States and Canada established significant groups and publications, with which they endeavoured to establish contact with Hungary’s democratic dissidents and to relay their views to the population of Hungary. According to Borbándi (2006), “it was refreshing to see that Hungarian émigrés do not think the same way, that numerous variations of opinions flourish, and that they succeed in resisting any efforts to unify their behaviour. It thus became a real alternative to present-day Hungary, where a central will reigns supreme and an independent way of thinking or expression of opinion or individual stance is impossible on a number of issues. The power of Hungarian émigrés is their diversity, pluralism and opportunity to make democratic choices” (p. 256).

Emigration occurred sporadically in the 1960s and 1970s, but the efforts of young university-educated people – Christian, Jewish, religious or atheist – to leave the country stood out. The winds of the counterculture movements of Western Europe and the United States could be felt here as well. The triumph of freedom – through the hippie culture from America (in the late 1960s) and the student revolts in Paris (in 1968) – represented a powerful buoyant force and a true cultural revolution. For example, in Paris, school uniforms were eliminated (while Hungary saw some passionate individual efforts in that regard – who was wearing what under their school smock?), even
as Nazism was starting to be dealt with in Germany (Mitscherlich 1975). The seeds of the counterculture found fertile soil in the socialist bloc. The winds of freedom hit the young generation in the “happiest barracks”. The push and pull forces had their effect. I believe there is no well-known high school class or university year from that time that did not produce defectors. The authors from the outstanding English programme at Fazekas Grammar School in Budapest testify to this: all three of them left the country either at the beginning of their university studies or after completing them. Importantly, all three of them were also influenced by something other than their longing for the free world conveyed to them by the avant-garde groups. This was the realisation of their parents’ unfulfilled dreams of emigration. As Vámos points out, “Before my birth, emigration was in the landscape” (p. 167). The parents’ wishes lie dormant, and their children make them a reality. There are messages and motives involved that emerge unconsciously, just as there are completely conscious manifestations. One of the author’s parents actually sent her to America, making no secret of their intention that she should “stay there”. The parents of the other two authors sought opportunities to emigrate either before or after the war but changed their minds under emotional pressure. Later, when one of the authors’ parents attempted to defect in 1949 after the borders had been closed, they were arrested and put in prison. I think that it is no coincidence that many – and two of the authors are representative of them – sought the chance to emigrate without it being classified as defection. That is, they wanted no legal consequences for those they would leave behind at home or for themselves: passports being withdrawn or a years-long ban on returning home. Despite certain divergent “technical solutions” – marrying a foreign citizen (out of love or merely out of convenience) – all three of them left the country with their parents’ knowledge, which (in conjunction with their own individual freedom struggles) represented an enormous source of psychological support. Their otherwise not particularly easy situation was therefore not further burdened by the guilt of “you abandoned your ageing parents”. At the same time, all three authors also made their parents’ unfulfilled wishes a reality. However, this is an unconscious transgenerational burden, a process that influenced self-development, with which they had to struggle