'The Spanish Analogy': Imagining the Future in State Socialist Hungary, 1948–1989

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For four decades Spain played an important role in debates over the future of politics, culture and economy in state socialist Hungary, particularly for the left: first as the fascist and underdeveloped 'other' against which the state socialist regime legitimised itself, then as a similarly peripheral country that had managed to integrate into global economy, return culturally to Europe and peacefully establish democracy. Close relationships developed between the Spanish socialists and Hungarian communists in the 1980s and offered the latter the hope they would survive any political transition. This article demonstrates the importance of Eastern–Southern European connections – both concrete and imagined – in sustaining, and then overcoming, Europe's post-war divides.

Miklós Szabó, a Hungarian historian and dissident, gave a series of underground lectures between 1979 and the mid-1980s at illegal 'flying universities'. These talks would be transcribed, and later gathered together, as 'The History of the Hungarian Communist Party'. Despite their title, they were often much wider ranging discussions on the origins of the economic and political problems facing Hungary in the 1980s. In one of these lectures, given in Szeged in 1983, Szabó depicted Budapest as a 'theme park of exotic underdevelopment'. He went on to imagine the advertisements that might attract foreign tourists: 'come see Europe as it was in your grandfather's time – see the old trams still running on the streets'.[1] He then remarked on a range of other modernisation projects against which Hungary now compared badly. He drew particular attention to the way in which Hungary had fallen behind Europe's southern periphery, noting that whilst in the 1950s rapid industrialisation had ensured the swift advance of the east of the continent, his region had subsequently been overtaken by Spain. Yet he did not attribute this to the end of dictatorship in the mid-1970s. Rather, it was essentially the product of a successful

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[1] Miklós Szabó, *A Lecture Series on The History of The Hungarian Communist Party* (Szeged, 1983), unpublished manuscript. HU OSA [Open Society Archives, Budapest] 423-0-2.

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authoritarian modernisation project under Franco, during which Spain had gradually opened up to the global economy and abandoned state monopolies:

> Spain in the summer of 1956 was in a worse situation that 'late Rákosi' Hungary, but that's no longer the case . . . with respect to the Soviet system: in many places it is reminiscent of the 'Third World', where there are also military dictatorships . . . however, in these places there is at least a mixed economy, with capitalism. In many cases, military dictatorship plays the role of 'sentry' for an extreme form of market economy, as in Chile, or as it more slowly loosened up and bloomed, in Spain. . . . These liberalising economic reforms cannot be expected to occur in a dictatorial Soviet-type system, with its forced paced development. Under Franco the exact opposite occurred: around 1959 there was a change of course – but one that could be contained within the system. From one form of development, which in a certain sense resembled the Soviet, they established an entirely different form . . . before it had been an autarchic economy, with strong exchange controls. State monopolies on foreign trade, with these monstrous semi-statist building projects, this was abandoned in 1959, then there was an economic opening up.[2]

He then rounded off his comparison by indulging in counterfactual fantasy: what would have happened if Hungary's own interwar and wartime authoritarian leader – Admiral Horthy – had survived the Second World War and remained in power, just as Franco had done? Horthy had in fact fled Hungary and lived in Portugal – where he wrote his memoirs – from 1948. Would an anti-communist conservative leadership have better been able to steer a country on the periphery of Europe to the economic success that Spain now enjoyed?[3]

Szabó's fascination with Spain was not atypical. Despite the absence of links between the countries' political elites until the late 1970s, and the weakness of economic and trade connections throughout this period, the *idea* of Spain loomed large during the state socialist period (1948–1989), becoming a key point of departure in many debates about the future of Hungary, particularly on the left. It was not of course the only object of fascination: in the 1970s and 1980s both reform communists and oppositionists called for a return to Europe more generally, whilst some economists looked globally to other successful global integration projects in countries outside the core of the world economy as a model for Hungary. By the last years of state socialism, however, the appeal of Spain was paramount.

Yet the relationship between countries in Southern and Eastern Europe has seldom been considered this way. It has been in works of transitological political science, totalitarian history and memory studies that these regions' recent histories have been most commonly brought together.[4] Indeed, such approaches have played a vital role in sustaining the very concepts of Southern or Eastern Europe – areas characterised by their political or economic backwardness, whose function in rather teleological

[2] Ibid.

[3] Szabó went on to explore, in this lecture, the successes of authoritarian modernisation projects in Latin America – including those of Brazil, Chile and Argentina.

[4] The comparative literature is voluminous. For a few classic texts, see Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Democratic Transitions and Consolidation: Eastern Europe, Southern Europe And Latin America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Alexandra Barahona De Brito, Carmen Gonzalez Enriquez and Paloma Aguilar, eds., *The Politics of Memory: Transitional Justice in Democratizing Societies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

accounts of late twentieth-century European history has been to catch up with values and practices of the continent's Western core.[5] In such works, countries in either space are compared in their capacities, variously, to enact democratic transitions, to globalise or to engage in the memory work deemed necessary to overcome dictatorship. Even if the assumptions of such works have been effectively critiqued, their framing still has a powerful hold over many fields.

Yet by altering our focus from the comparative to the entangled, we can open up important new ways of seeing the transformation of Eastern Europe.[6] Spain had long been a source of historical fascination in socialist Hungary: first as a result of its civil war, the memory of which was incorporated into the regime's legitimating origin myths, and then as an economically backward 'other' against which Hungary's modernising consumerist socialism might be effectively contrasted.[7] By the 1970s, however, Spain was no longer presented as a past to escape but rather a future to emulate. Hungarian politicians, economists, political scientists and cultural actors began to reimagine the country as, variously, occupying a 'semi-peripheral' position in the global economy similar to their own, or as belonging to a common European space. In this context, and against the backdrop of its economic take-off in the 1960s, democratic transition in the 1970s and re-integration into European institutions in the 1980s, Spain was now envisaged as a guide for Hungary's own development. New links, particularly between Hungarian communists and Spanish socialists, proliferated. Nevertheless, as Szabó's lecture above demonstrated, the imagined futures that circulated between these countries were not necessarily democratic or liberal. Uncovering such stories opens up new perspectives on the transformation of Europe in the late twentieth century: they highlight the importance of East–South connections beyond the West, give leftist actors a hitherto little recognised role in this account and also bring to light the histories of possible alternative transitions which were eventually sidelined in 1989 itself.

A Socialist Future for Spain? 1948–1975

After the establishment of communist regimes in Eastern Europe in the late 1940s the economic and political distance between the region and Spain became immense. Spain gave diplomatic recognition only to Eastern European anti-communist governments *in exile* – partly in response to the invitations that new communist

[5] On such regional definitions, see Martin Baumeister and Roberto Sala, eds., *Southern Europe? Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece From the 1950s to the Present Day* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2015); Robin Okey, 'Central Europe/Eastern Europe: Behind the Definitions', *Past and Present* 137, 1 (1992), 102–33; Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[6] Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

[7] On the importance of this myth, see Péter Apor, *Fabricating Authenticity in Soviet Hungary* (London: Anthem Press, 2014), 94, 132; Josie McLellan, *Antifascism and Memory in East Germany: Remembering The International Brigades, 1945–1989* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), Chapter 3.

regimes had given to Spanish republicans to set up embassies in their countries.[8] A Hungarian 'royal' diplomatic mission that represented the pre-war state was maintained in Spain until 1970.[9]

Elites in both Francoist Spain and Communist Hungary initially understood each other through the logic of the military and political confrontation of the early Cold War: their own country's political projects were on the 'right side' of a broader battle for ideological supremacy that spanned the continent and the world. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, Franco had initially been reluctant to allow radical Eastern European anti-communists to settle in Spain – as their presence might confirm for world opinion that his was a fascist state.[10] It was only after 1948, with the intensification of the Cold War, that such exiles were more openly welcomed – now they enabled Spain to remind the Western world of her pre-war contribution to the struggle against a now expanding communist threat, and her present status as refuge and advocate for the 'enslaved' half of Europe.[11] A 'Catholic Project for University Assistance' was established to assist the education of (mainly anti-communist) refugees.[12] Radio Madrid provided airtime for exiles to broadcast back to Eastern Europe until 1975.[13] From 1948 there were plans (never realised) to enrol anti-communist Eastern Europeans into a Spanish Foreign Legion.[14] Often Eastern Europeans worked alongside each other: the 'Committee of Nations Oppressed by Communism', an organisation which publicised their region's fate in Spain in the early 1950s, was made up of representatives from Hungary, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Croatia, Romania and Poland.[15]

Representatives of old regimes came to live on the Iberian Peninsula: Archduke Otto von Habsburg settled in Madrid after the war and established, at El Escorial in 1953, the European Centre Documentation and Information (CEDI) to promote a Catholic, anti-communist vision of Europe and to publicise communist infiltration in Western countries.[16] On 4 November 1956, when Soviet troops invaded Hungary to suppress a popular uprising, von Habsburg attempted to convince the Spanish

[8] Matilde Eiroa, *Las relaciones de Franco con Europa Centro-Oriental (1939–1955)* (Barcelona: Ariel, 2000), 162.

[9] RFE [Radio Free Europe] Hungarian Situation Report, 22 Sept. 1970, 14. For background, see Ádám Anderle, ed., *A Marosy-iratok. Magyar királyi követség Madridban 1948–1957* (Szeged: Hispánia, 2002).

[10] José M. Faraldo, 'Azyl Ariberta Heima. Powojenna Hiszpania', in *Tygodnik Powszechny* 39 (24 Sept. 2006), 14.

[11] José M. Faraldo, 'Defending the Nation in a New Fatherland. Polish Émigrés in Franco's Spain (1939–1969)', in idem., ed., *Europe, Nationalism, Communism. Essays on Poland* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2008), 99–100.

[12] Ibid., 97.

[13] Ibid., 153. Paweł Machcewicz, 'Walka z Radiem Wolna Europa (1950–1975)' in Ryszard Terlecki, ed., *Aparat bezpieczeństwa wobec emigracji politycznej i Polonii* (Warsaw: Institute of National Remembrance, 2005), 11–104.

[14] Eiroa, *Las relaciones*, 117.

[15] José M. Faraldo, 'Refugees, Anticommunists, Scholars. Eastern European Émigrés in Franco's Spain' (unpublished manuscript).

[16] Matilde Eiroa, 'España, refugio para los aliados del Eje y destino de anticomunistas (1939–1956)', *Ayer*, 67, 3 (2007), 31.

military to intervene. Franco's Council of Ministers considered sending troops and weapons, and the commander of Franco's Blue Division (which had fought the Soviets during the Second World War) resigned his post with the hope that he might take charge of Spanish troops in Hungary. It soon became clear, however, that the plan was not feasible: Spain did not have aircraft that could fly without refuelling to Hungary's western borders, and their US ally opposed it.[17] Spain then offered armed forces should the UN decide that anti-Soviet intervention in Hungary was permissible,[18] and eventually accepted 5–7,000 refugees who fled Hungary.[19] Despite the impossibility of intervention, the 1956 Uprising marked a revival in Franco's pitch to Western leaders that his regime was legitimate in that it represented 'the first victory of the revolution against the Soviets'.[20] Internally, so-called 'NO-DO' documentaries presented the violence and horrors of the Hungarian Uprising as the inevitable result of a communist victory – which Spain had been spared as a result of the order kept by the Franco regime.[21] The Spanish government, alongside Hungarian exile federations there, opposed the re-entry of Hungary under a restored communist regime back into the United Nations.[22]

By contrast, for many Eastern European socialist states, including Hungary, the Franco regime became one of the most powerful illustrations of the continuation of interwar fascism into post-war Europe. Moreover, Eastern Bloc states' propaganda located their own origins in the Civil War struggle against Franco. In this reading, the battle for Spain in the late 1930s was not a distant event but rather part of a broader European struggle which had failed in Southern Europe but found its victorious realisation in the East. This connection was made tangible through the stories of citizens who had fought in Spain and then returned to bring communism to their homelands in the East after the Second World War. Compared to its fellow Eastern European states, Hungary had in fact provided few volunteers: of the 1,200 Hungarians who had fought with the republican brigades in Spain only

[17] Márta Zoltán, *A gyarmati hadseregtől a békefenntartó műveletek modern, professzionális haderejéig. A fegyveres erők szerepe, helyzete Spanyolország XX. századi történelmének fontos időszakaiban*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Budapest: Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem, 2007, 69–70.

[18] On the consideration of armed intervention, see María Dolores Ferrero, 'A 1956-os Magyar Forradalom Nemzetközi Visszhangja és a Spanyol Részvétel Kérdése', in Ádám Anderle, ed., *A magyar forradalom es a hispán világ* (Szeged: Szegedi Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar Hispanisztika Tanszék, 2007), 30–1.

[19] Ibid., 32. Initially they promised refuge only for refugee children.

[20] Luis Suárez Fernández, *Franco y la URSS. La diplomacia secreta (1946–74)* (Madrid: Rialp, 1987).

[21] Araceli Rodríguez Mateos, *Un franquismo de cine: la imagen política del Régimen en el noticiario NO-DO (1943–1959)* (Madrid: Rialp, 2008), 127–8; Araceli Rodríguez Mateos, 'The Vision of the Socialist Past. Eastern Europe Through the Newsreels in the Non-Communist Area: The Spanish Newsreel NO-DO' (paper presented at the conference 'Visions after the Fall: Museums, Archives and Cinema in Reshaping Popular Perceptions of the Socialist Past', Open Society Archives, Budapest, 8–11 June 2006).

[22] See the opposition from, for example, the Hungarian Students' Federation in Madrid. Letter to President of the UN General Assembly, 26 Nov. 1958. 'Hungarian Student Federation in Madrid to the President of the Thirteenth UN General Assembly', 26 Nov. 1958. HU OSA 398-0-1-7766; Records of the UN Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary: UN Documents; Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest.

11 per cent had come from Hungary proper (most were living in France or Canada when they volunteered).[23] Yet major figures of the post-war communist movement, including László Rajk (Minister of Interior/Foreign Affairs, executed 1949), Ernő Gerő (Rákosi's right-hand man, and briefly party leader in 1956) and Ferenc Münnich (prime minister after 1956), had been there. The absolute numbers of volunteers bore little relation to their employment in propaganda. In fact, these stories were of greatest use in those Eastern Bloc countries – such as Hungary – which had only low levels of domestic resistance against fascism, and where the Soviets played the overwhelming role in liberation. Here the stories of prominent communists' roles in Spain became particularly important evidence of a longer-term commitment of the progressive parts of a nation to the anti-fascist cause.[24] Following the 1956 revolution – when the fear of a Spanish-type 'counter-revolution' was particularly strong in Hungary – the actions of 'good communists', who had fought to defend Béla Kun's Republic of Councils in 1919, against Francoist forces in Spain in the late 1930s and then against 'counter-revolutionary forces' in October 1956, were highlighted. Such links between the 'freedom struggle of the Spanish people' of the late 1930s and the struggle against anti-communist forces on the streets of Budapest were made clear in the biography of Imre Mező, who had been a Spanish brigader, had fought in the French resistance and was then shot by counter-revolutionaries after exiting party headquarters in November 1956 with a white flag. His long-standing commitment to the defeat of counter-revolution at home and abroad was a centrepiece of public rituals held a year after the Uprising – on 30 October 1957.[25] The late 1960s saw another spike in commemorative activity. This was prompted by elite anxieties that a rebellious younger generation were insufficiently socialised into the traditions of the anti-fascist struggle. Spanish veterans, such as Prime Minister Ferenc Münnich, were encouraged to publish accounts of their Spanish pasts, aimed at schools and universities.[26] Monuments such as the 'Memorial to the Hungarian

[23] Ádám Anderle, *A magyar-spanyol kapcsolatok ezer éve* (Szeged: Szegedi Egyetemi Kiadó–Juhász Gyula Felsôoktatási Kiadó, 2006), 106.

[24] McLellan, *Antifascism and Memory*, especially Chapter 3. The histories of those Hungarians who fought on the nationalist side have received little attention.

[25] Beverly Ann James, *Imagining Postcommunism: Visual Narratives of Hungary's 1956 Revolution* (College Station, TX.: Texas A&M University Press, 2005), 69.

[26] Etelka Münnichné Berényi és Jenő Györkei, eds., *Tankok ellen, száz halálon át: Münnich Ferenc a spanyol polgárháborúban* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1976); Irén Komját, *Mező Imre* (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 1968). Ferenc Münnich, Prime Minister after the 1956 revolution, in an interview for *Élet és Irodalom* on 21 March 1958, was presented as 'hero of the three revolutions' – 1919, the Spanish brigades and then in Hungary after the war. In the 1960s his Spanish experience was most heavily emphasised point of his biography: Péter Apor, *Fabricating Authenticity in Soviet Hungary: The Afterlife of the First Hungarian Soviet Republic in the Age of State Socialism* (London: Anthem Press, 2014), 94, 132; idem. 'Immortalitas Imperator: The Birth of the Pantheon of the Labour Movement in Budapest' *AETAS* (2–3/2002), 179–205. See also the accounts of Hungarian civil war volunteers, published in 1959, Imre Kepes, ed., *Magyar önkéntesek a spanyol nép szabadságharcában* (Budapest: Zrínyi Katonai Kiadó, 1959, republished 1987).

fighters of the Spanish Brigades' (1970) in the twelfth district of Budapest were erected.[27]

By the early 1960s mainstream socialist culture in Hungary had abandoned the Stalinist-era language of military and political confrontation, emphasised the need for peaceful coexistence between the communist and capitalist worlds and re-directed its sense of ideological competition into the economic and social spheres. The authorities discovered *everyday life* as an important remaining field where the distinction between capitalism and communism could still be made powerful for communist subjects at home. Compared to the West, communist Hungary still had to 'catch up' – yet there remained a high degree of confidence, on the back of high growth rates, that state socialist economies and societies, whilst working from a lower base level of economic development, would nevertheless inevitably overtake Western standards of living at some point in the future. As Kádár noted in 1964:

> had the proletarian revolution triumphed first in the most advanced countries, it would have been simpler to demonstrate that our social system offers more. We are now being compared to empires, such as the great British Empire, which through several centuries squeezed the blood of 400 to 500 million people and accumulated the riches of vast lands in a single European country. Our peoples have to make good the lag of countries in 10 to 20 to 30 to 40 years. Medieval conditions prevailed in this part of the world, where feudalism, backwardness, feeble industry, undeveloped agriculture, illiteracy, ignorance, sickness and poverty ruined people. This is what we are forced to make good in a few decades, and I must add they are doing so at a splendid rate. We can stand the pace.[28]

Yet Spain, whose recent economic development, on the peripheries of Europe, more closely resembled Hungary's own, made for a more powerful and direct comparison.[29] Whereas Hungary had grown rapidly during the industrialisation of the 1950s, in Spain levels of production were still the same as those in the decade before its Civil War.[30] The opening up of the Spanish economy from 1959 would eventually lead to substantial economic growth – but such success was not yet visible. In the 1960s Spain, and Southern Europe more generally, became the exemplar of uneven and under- development on the European periphery. Images of Madrid slums and rural poverty were common in the popular press. The failure to defeat the Franco regime, these newspaper articles suggested, meant that Spaniards were

[27] It was commissioned by Budapest's City Council, unveiled in 1970, then in 1993 was taken to Budapest's Statue Park that 'quarantined' socialist-era monuments and replaced by a monument to the victims of the Soviet camps. Its nickname 'the bowlers' (*kuglizók*) made fun of the raised salutes of the three figures, that were thought by mischievous contemporaries to resemble the preparations necessary to throw a ball.

[28] Kádár speaks to Youth Congress, Budapest, Hungarian Television, broadcast 15.45, 12 Dec. 1964.

[29] Polish economic historians in the 1960s also compared Eastern and Southern Europe as the two underdeveloped regions of the continent. See the important work of Marian Małowist, for example his 'Eastern Europe and the Countries of the Iberian Peninsula. Contrasts and Comparisons', reproduced in Jean Batou and Henryk Szlajfer, eds., *Western Europe, Eastern Europe and World Development, 13th–18th Centuries* (Leiden & Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2009). In his account, the rise of the capitalist core of Britain, France and the Netherlands was responsible for the gradual economic marginalisation of Spain/Portugal on the one hand, and for turning Eastern European countries such as Poland into an agricultural hinterland on the other.

[30] 'A Meghosszabbított Polgárháború Spanyolországban', *Magyar Nemzet,* 14 June 1963.

now stuck with a decaying social system and feudal landowning practices. Spain had massive concentrations of wealth that were hangovers from the 'middle ages', a 'curiosity' in modern Europe, that even developing decolonising nations in Africa and Asia were leaving behind.[31] Hungarian citizens would then be invited to compare this disastrous Spanish present with their own country's escape. Such articles often ended in a series of memories of family poverty from Hungary in the 1930s – a world which its readers had now thankfully left behind under the guidance of the Communist Party, but which fascist Spain could not.[32] When Spanish goods began to enter the Hungarian market in the late 1960s they were ridiculed for their low quality. In January 1969 it was reported that soles would easily detach from imported Spanish shoes: newspaper writers joked that they were good only for the dead.[33]

It was in the context of the communist East's seeming economic superiority over Spain that the beginnings of resistance to the Franco regime in the early 1960s could be interpreted as the first promising signs of a coming communist revolution on the Iberian Peninsula.[34] This hope should also be seen in the context of a broader belief in the global expansion of communism in the wake of the acceleration of decolonisation in Africa and Asia in the late 1950s.[35] The Cuban revolution was especially important. On one hand, it increased interest in the Hispanic world in Hungary – and marked the beginning of a significant expansion in Hispanic studies and Spanish language tuition at its universities. On the other, it led to the expansion of mass routinised practices of solidarity that communist elites then used to mobilise 'for Spain' too.[36]

1962–63 saw a revival of opposition to the Franco regime: Asturian miners went on strike in protest against a reorganisation of union structures that would dilute worker representation. In the summer of 1963 the work of the Hungarian Spanish Solidarity Committee was revived. The second week of June would henceforth be devoted to solidarity with the 'freedom struggle' of the 'Spanish people'. Partisan organisations played central roles in the organisation of solidarity activities. Workers were mobilised: in Budapest's 'Red' Csepel Works alone, it was estimated that around 24,000 workers took part in meetings to condemn the Franco dictatorship that week.[37] Solidarity stamps bearing the image of the martyred communist leader Julián Grimau were issued in 1, 2 and 3 forint denominations.[38] From late 1963 an exhibition 'Hispania!

[31] Ibid.

[32] See, for example, 'Spanyolországi látogatásomról', *Népszabadság*, 21 June 1962.

[33] 'Import of Spanish Shoes', Radio Free Europe Internal Report 245/69, January 1969. HU OSA 300-40-4 Box 15.

[34] 'Az igazi Spanyolország', *Magyar Nemzet*, 9 Oct. 1963.

[35] James Mark and Péter Apor, 'Socialism Goes Global: Decolonization and the Making of a New Culture of Internationalism in Socialist Hungary, 1956–1989', *The Journal of Modern History*, 87, 4 (2015), 852–91.

[36] András Inotai, 'Latin American Studies in Hungary', in *Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe*, 72 (Apr. 2002), 115–21.

[37] 'A szolidaritási akció mindaddig tart, amíg Spanyolországban nem győz a szabadság, a demokrácia', *Népszava*, 5 July 1963.

[38] 'A szolidaritási bélyeg', *Népszabadság*, 20 June 1963.

Hispania! Spain 1936–1960' toured Hungary, exploring Hungarian participation in the Civil War, examining the oppressive practices of the Franco regime and linking the struggles of the 1930s with a new popular resistance in the 1960s.[39] For the Hungarian press, the movement was presented as the first signs of a revival of a 'true', anti-fascist Spain, led by working-class communities, headed by the Spanish Communist Party.

Thus, it seemed, Spain might now be on a path that Eastern Europe had already taken.[40] Hungarian workers were encouraged to communicate this with their Spanish comrades: in the secret telegrams of solidarity composed in factories in the early 1960s workers related their own memories of oppression and despondency under the interwar state and provided an account of what terror had meant to them – before wishing the same liberation and victory for the Spanish people that they had experienced after the war. In this reading, a struggle which had begun in Eastern Europe after the First World War, had transferred to Spain in the 1930s and then had achieved its first victories in the east of Europe after the Second World War, might now find its contemporary realisation with the victory of communism in Spain. One appeal to solidarity with the Asturian Miners in 1963 read: 'between 1936 and 1939 there were almost 1,000 Hungarians amongst the ranks of the international brigades fighting for the freedom of both the Hungarian and Spanish people. Now millions in our liberated homeland sympathise with the Spanish people – in their struggle for freedom, and for democratic rights, they are not alone'.[41]

A Spanish Future for Hungary? 1970–1994

From the 1970s onwards the roles of Hungary and Spain would gradually become reversed in the mind of some communist elites: no longer did the Eastern Bloc represent a future that Spain would follow. Rather, a new democratic, economically successful and Europeanising Spain became a model for transition away from state socialism in the East. Here we have to remember that 'system change' (*rendszerváltás*) in Hungary was elite-dominated – as it was in many countries in the Eastern Bloc. Nevertheless, we still do not know enough about the way in which late communist elites reimagined the world around them, finding in the process new political languages and arguments that enabled them to make sense of a future transition away from a one-party state.[42] Through the reception of the long Spanish transition in Hungary, however, one can begin to trace reform communists' gradual abandonment of assumptions about politics and economics that sustained their belief in their own legitimacy: most notably, that the world was naturally divided the world into fascist/

[39] 'Viva la Republika!', *Dunai Napló,* 12 Aug. 1964.

[40] 'A szolidaritási akció mindaddig tart, amíg Spanyolországban nem győz a szabadság, a demokrácia', *Népszava*, 5 July 1963.

[41] 'Szolidárisak vagyunk a testvéri spanyol néppel', *Népszabadság*, 15 June 1963.

[42] For a recent work on the importance of elites in transition, see Stephen Kotkin, *Uncivil Society. 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment* (New York: Modern Library, 2009).

anti-fascist and communist/ capitalist camps, and that a communist transformation similar to their own would inevitably spread across the European continent.

The decade between 1965 and 1975 marked a crucial transition in the relationship with Spain. Political and trade relations emerged long before the death of Franco and his regime. From the mid-1960s onwards the Spanish government attempted to develop commercial links with Eastern Europe: the first trade and consular agreements were signed with Romania in 1967 and Poland in 1969. For Spain, this opening out to Eastern Europe fulfilled two functions: first, the demonstration of other potential commercial partners could be used as a bargaining tool to press for their entry into the European Community; second, Eastern Europe was an attractive potential export market for industries which had been booming since the early 1960s.[43] Hungary, for its part, was already opening up to Western economies in the mid-1960s, seeking both export markets and to import high-end technology to modernise the economy. This was due in large part to the necessity of sustaining the relatively high standard of living seen as indispensable to the stability of communist rule following the suppression of the 1956 revolt.[44] Spain was no exception: a Hungarian Chamber of Commerce first opened in Madrid in 1964 to promote Hungarian meat, pharmaceutical and rubber-based products – although trade remained at a very low level.[45] In April 1970 Spain closed the last 'royal' diplomatic mission that had represented the pre-war Hungarian regime – such institutions were now considered obstacles to developing further relations with the East. Then in September the first consular and trade relations were established – before this trade had only been carried out on a bilateral enterprise-to-enterprise level.[46] In June 1970 Hungarian and Spanish textile firms established a joint marketing company – an initiative which gave the Hungarian partners access to new markets in South America.[47] The second rejection of Spain for admission into the European Community in the early 1970s further strengthened this aspiration to deepen trade between the East and South of the continent.[48]

[43] Iván Harsányi, 'Episodios poco conocidos del proceso de restablecimiento de las relaciones interestatales de España y Hungría', in Ferenc Fischer, Gábor Kozma, Domingo Lilón, eds., *Iberoamericana Quinqueecclesiensis 4* (Pécs: University of Pécs Centro Iberoamericano, 2006), 346.

[44] Csaba Békés, 'A kádári külpolitika, 1956–1968: Látványos sikerek – "láthatatlan konfliktusok"' in idem, ed., *Európából Európába. Magyarország konfliktusok keresztttüzében, 1945–1990* (Budapest: Gondolat, 2004), 237–56. Hungary re-established diplomatic relationship with various Western European countries in 1963–4 and with the United States in 1966, and then began negotiations with West Germany in 1967.

[45] RFE Hungarian Monitoring, 5 July 1987. HU OSA 300-40-1 Box 989. In 1962 Hungary was the lowest-level exporter of goods to Spain of any Eastern European country: *Spanyolország* (Kojunktura és Piackutató Intézet, 1964), 33. See also Annamária Kovács, 'Spanyolország külkereskedelme a KGST-országokkal', *Külgazdaság*, 21 (1977), 284–91.

[46] RFE Hungarian Situation Report, 22 Sept. 1970, 14. Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia developed trade relationships during the same year (both 1970).

[47] RFE Hungarian Situation Report, 22 Sept. 1970, 14. *Rynki Zagraniczne*, 16 July 1970, 4.

[48] Iván Harsányi, '1973, año clave en las relaciones diplomáticas hispano-húngaras', *Ayer* 67, 3 (2007), 139. See also his: 'Episodios poco conocidos', 341–3. These economic linkages strengthened after 1977, when the two countries agreed to increase cooperation between their respective agricultural and tourism sectors. Report on the Spanish Foreign Ministry Director-General of the European political affairs, Antonio Elias Martinerá, Budapest, 4–6 Oct. 1977. Then, in 1978, between chemical, pharmaceutical and railway industries. RFE Report, Hungarian-Spanish Trade, 15 Apr. 1978. HU

This shifting economic relationship was not reflected in Hungarian domestic propaganda, however. In fact, the assumption of power by a military junta in Greece in 1967, as well as the strengthening of neo-fascism in Italy, reinforced the image of a reactionary South of the continent supported by US imperialism. The expansion of right-wing dictatorships in Latin America then led communist theorists to posit the growth of a Hispanic 'zone of fascism' in Latin countries of 'middling development' that spanned the Atlantic.[49] Spain was at the centre of the most threatening rise in fascism since the Second World War. From this perspective the idea that the Communist Bloc was *the* bulwark against this development retained some of its earlier power.

Leftists of various shades noted the tension between continuing propaganda directed against Franco's Spain and the realities of increasing exchange. Santiago Carrillo, the head of the Spanish Communist Party, protested furiously at the shipping of coal by communist Poland to Spain during the strike of the Asturian miners in 1969.[50] He also fought against the normalisation of diplomatic relations between Hungary and Spain – until relenting in late 1976.[51] Leftist radicals in Hungary were also critical. Members of the cultural collective Orfeo – one of the most influential avant garde music, dance and theatre groups in 1970s Hungary – had been inspired by the songs of resistance both to Franco and to Latin American military dictatorships.[52] They disapproved of this new recognition for Franco's Spain, viewing it as a continuation of the Hungary's consumerist, materialist turn and abandonment of 'true revolution' since the early 1960s.[53] In the early 1970s their theatre group performed the play 'Étoile' based on the Spanish communist Jorge Semprún's novel, *At the End of the War*: it reinterpreted the work to suggest that resistance to Franco's dictatorship now had lessons for those wanting to take on the increasingly technocratic and conservative nature of Hungarian communism.[54]

OSA 300 2 5 Box 45. This interest in tourist links continued after 1989: the first post-communist Minister of Trade, Béla Kádár, visited Spain soon after his appointment and attempted – unsuccessfully – to bring the Spanish model of small-scale historical tourism centred on the reconstruction of historical buildings to Hungary. Interview with Béla Kádár, conducted by James Mark, Budapest, 9 Mar. 2017.

[49] Iván Harsányi, 'A chilei és a dél-európai baloldal közti kapcsolat és kölcsönhatás', *Múltunk* (2008/4), 246–7. On the fantasy of a Hispanic Bloc united by right-wing/ fascist authoritarianism in the name of spiritual renewal that spanned the Atlantic, see Daniel Gunnar Kressel, 'The Hispanic Community of Nations: The Spanish-Argentine Nexus and the Imagining of a Hispanic Cold War Bloc', *Cahiers des Amériques latines*, 79 (2015), 115–33.

[50] On this, see the contribution by José Faraldo in this issue.

[51] Ádám Anderle, 'Bevezetés. A magyar-spanyol diplomáciai kapcsolatok történetéhez', *Külügyi Szemle* (2010/30), 9.

[52] Interview with István Nemes, conducted by James Mark, Budapest, 24 Jan. 2009.

[53] See also Wolf Biermann, whose mid-1970s 'Spanish recordings' of civil war songs were a critical response to East Germany's recognition of Franco's Spain in 1973: McLellan, *Antifascism and Memory*, 141.

[54] Interview with Tamás Fodor, published in István Nánay, 'Fodor Tamás és Malgot István Visszaemlékezéséve', *Beszélő* (1998/3); Péter Apor, 'Autentikus közösség és autonóm személyiség: 1989 egyik előtörténete', *Aetas* 28 (2013/4), 34.

The death of Franco in November 1975, the dismantling of his dictatorial system and the gradual construction of liberal democracy in Spain in the late 1970s had a significant impact on debates over the future of state socialism in the Eastern Bloc – most notably amongst reform-minded communist elites. Before the outcome of the collapse of right-wing authoritarian regimes in Spain, Greece and Portugal became clear, it was much easier to argue that *socialist* democracy might have a future in Southern Europe.[55] In a speech given in September 1974, for instance, the General Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party János Kádár still had confidence that, just as progressive forces would eventually oust Pinochet in Chile, so their brethren would be able to overthrow right-wing dictatorship on the Iberian Peninsula and take power. Even Kissinger believed the Portuguese Carnation Revolution might be a replay of the Russian Revolution, with Mário Soares, the Socialist prime minister, playing the role of Kerensky by paving the way for a radical or Bolshevik takeover.[56] Yet, by the late 1970s, Southern Europe appeared to be heading towards liberal democracy. Even the Spanish communists had broken with the traditions of popular workers' democracy, become 'civilised revolutionaries' and embraced a multiparty system.[57] This led Soviet theorists to argue that the likely ends of right-wing authoritarianism in Latin America – a region which exhibited 'middle levels of capitalist development' like Spain – would result in the establishment of multiparty liberal democracy there too.[58] The idea that state socialism represented an obvious outcome of the eventual collapse of right-wing authoritarianism was rapidly receding. Such shifts bolstered the idea that Europe itself was now a place to be naturally associated with liberal democracy and the 'politics of moderation'.[59]

Of all the Southern European transitions, it was the Spanish that had the greatest impact on Hungarian political culture – partly as the result of the close relationships that were built between these countries' political leaders in the decade after the '*transición*'. It should be noted that such connections did not develop with Santiago Carrillo, leader of the Spanish Communist Party. Carrillo had distanced himself from Eastern Bloc leaders over the course of the 1970s: this was first due to their support for peaceful coexistence which he considered to have undermined the struggle against

[55] See János Kádár Speech on 2 Sept. 1974: 'Beszéd a Politikai Főiskola Fennállásának 25. Évfordulója alkalmából rendezett ünnepségen', reproduced in idem., *A fejlett szocialista társadalom építésének utján* (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1975), 14–5.

[56] This account starts Samuel Huntington's *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 4–5.

[57] László Perczel embassy report on the political situation in Spain after the elections. Madrid, 12 July 1977. MOL [Magyar Országos Levéltár, Hungarian National Archives] XIX-J-1-j 116. doboz 1977. Év. Diplomatic cables also advised Budapest that the Spanish communists had become more moderate in their aims than the PSOE. Thanks to Bálint Tolmár for his assistance in the archives of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry.

[58] Jerry F. Hough, 'The Evolving Soviet Debate on Latin America', *Latin American Research Review*, 16, 1 (1981), 138.

[59] On the lesson of Portugal as a turn to 'moderate politics', see Kenneth Maxwell, 'Portugal's Revolution of the Carnations, 1974–75', in Adam Roberts and Timothy Garton-Ash, eds., *Civil Resistance and Power Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 161.

Franco[60] and second because of their refusal to consider liberty or pluralism important values – in contrast to the Spanish Communist Party's turn to Eurocommunism and accommodation with multi-party democracy.[61] Rather, in the early 1980s it was the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español;* PSOE) under Felipe González that became the closest partner for the Hungarian communists. When González became Prime Minister in 1982 the telegrams received from the Hungarian embassy in Madrid revealed the warm relations already established and expressed their appreciation for his openness to, and interest in, Eastern Europe, and his support for East–West dialogue and a return to détente.[62] Over the remainder of that decade a PSOE-governed Spain would play a significant role in helping reform-minded Hungarian communists think through a set of issues that would be vital in bringing the state socialist era to a close in Eastern Europe: how to economically integrate a peripheral country into the Western European economy, how to reimagine a nation as part of a common European space which transcended earlier Cold War ideological divides and how to effect a mode of transition through which the party could envisage a life for itself beyond authoritarian rule.

A Semi-Peripheral Country and European Integration

From the early 1970s onwards a younger cohort of reform-minded economists congregating around the Afro-Asian Research Institute (and its successor the Institute for World Economics), together with economic historians associated with Karl Marx University, were considering the implications of Spain's increasingly visible economic success for the future of communism in the Bloc. Many of them drew on variants of World Systems' Theory – popularised by Immanuel Wallerstein – which divided the world between the capitalist 'core', which had industrialised first, 'peripheral' areas which remained subservient to the core and poor and 'semi-peripheral' regions, which had not been wholly marginalised, and had a capacity to develop and eventually join the 'core'.[63] Economic historians developed this model to explain Eastern Europe's, and Hungary's, past marginalisation from the world economy, and the necessity of accelerating the opening up of the region by abandoning autarkic import-substitution policies.[64]

They argued that Hungary had to look to the successes of other countries they now defined as 'semi-peripheral': it was this intellectual jump which took them to the Iberian peninsula. In this understanding, Spain was no longer primarily the 'fascist

[60] Interview with Santiago Carrillo, *Delo* (Ljubljana), 26 May 1973.

[61] On the distance between Eastern European parties and Southern European Eurocommunists, see the contribution by Faraldo in this collection.

[62] Discussions between Péter Várkonyi and Felipe González. Külügyminisztérium XI. Területi Főosztály. Budapest, 24 June 1984. Ádám Anderle, *A magyar-spanyol kapcsolatok*, 168.

[63] Interview with Mihály Simai, conducted by James Mark, Budapest, 19 May 2014. See this influence in Berend's account: Iván T. Berend, *History in My Life. A Memoir of Three Eras* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2009), 152.

[64] Berend, *History in My Life,* 152–3.

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other' but rather a country that shared a similar position in relation to the core of the European economy. In the historical works of Iván T. Berend and György Ránki, Hungary was placed alongside Spain as a country which had only semi-successfully coped with its peripheral status in nineteenth-century Europe compared with, on the one hand Scandinavia, which had far more effectively integrated into the Western core of the continent, and, on the other, the Balkans, which had failed to escape its marginal economic position.[65] Berend's and Ránki's historical frameworks ensured that Spain was seen as *the* comparator: a country with a similar historical location in the regional economy whose contemporary economic success needed to prompt self reflection at home. Although the work focused on the nineteenth century, Berend later admitted – in his autobiography – that he and Ránki had been concerned with providing a historical framework that would justify the quickening of the economic opening out of Hungary to the global economy – a process which had already begun in the mid-1960s.[66]

One of the first economists to address directly the challenge of the economic success of Franco's Spain was Béla Kádár, who, in 1970, published a work entitled *Small Countries in the World Economy*.[67] He noted that Spain's success lay in its economic opening up from 1959 onwards. It had successfully developed specialised industries – particularly shipping and cars – which were judged to have the potential to become competitive on the world market.[68] From this he argued that smaller countries would benefit from allowing one major enterprise that could compete globally to dominate each industrial sector. He advocated moulding the domestic economy further to 'comply with world economy' and to fit into international division of labour. In an age of increased interconnectedness, he proposed, 'extreme protectionism' led in fact to the actual 'curtailment of sovereignty'.[69]

Economists used such arguments and analogies to convince political elites to accelerate global economic integration. By the early 1980s such arguments were beginning to penetrate the world of Hungarian political elites: György Aczél, as deputy prime minister, commissioned a secret report from Béla Kádár and József Bognár at the Institute of World Economy to assess whether the successful Francoist opening out of the economy had any lessons for Hungary.[70] By the mid-1980s the idea that Hungarian economic planning could take guidance from other successful semi-peripheral integration projects started to have an audience within reforming sections of the political elite – and Spain, alongside the East Asian tigers, became a

[65] Iván T. Berend and György Ránki, *The European Periphery and Industrialization 1780–1914* (Cambridge, 1982), especially the introduction. On how Hungary overtook Spain in the years prior to the First World War, see Ivan T. Berend, 'Hungary and the Mediterranean in the Nineteenth Century', *Mediterranean Studies*, 1 (1989), 1, 31.

[66] Berend, *History in My Life*, 138–9.

[67] Béla Kádár, *Small Countries in the World Economy* (Budapest: Afro-Asian Research Institute, 1970).

[68] Ibid., 16. See also Sándor Lavinia, 'Spanyolország exportorientált növekedése', *Külgazdaság* 6 (1975), 464–70.

[69] Ibid., 21–2.

[70] Interview with Kádár.

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source of instruction.[71] When Károly Grósz became the Prime Minister of Hungary in 1987 he looked to the authoritarian models of integration of Park Chung Hee's South Korea, whilst Imre Pozsgay, a member of his Politburo, retained his fascination with Franco's earlier authoritarian modernisation of Spain.[72] Such models were attractive in part because they assured Hungarian communists that such economic transformations were still possible under one-party rule. Thus, those communists that took power in early 1988 and looked to marginalise hardliners who wished to block democratic reform found themselves reframing such models. Drawing on more recent experiences in Spain and East Asia, they made the counter-argument that the 'strong hand' always held back economic development in the end. Imre Szokai and Csaba Tabajdi, deputy directors of the Central Committee Department of International Relations, put it in March 1989 that:

> According to international experience (South Korea, Taiwan, Chile) it is possible for a while to develop and operate an efficient economy under dictatorial circumstances. After a certain point, however, the absence of democracy acts as an economic brake. . . . It is development in Spain that shows that economic growth acts to break up authoritarian systems.[73]

By the mid-1980s Spain was no longer only a *distant* source of instruction. Exchanges of experts, and then the development of personal connections between Hungarian reform communists and the Spanish socialist elite, resulted in offers of practical assistance, particularly in Spain's support for the deepening of Hungary's relationship with the European Economic Community (EEC). Madrid and Budapest did not always see eye to eye as they developed their parallel relationships with Western European countries. In the late 1970s Spain had come to be seen as an economic competitor: its export strength now threatened Comecon countries' penetration of the prized West German export market.[74] Hungarian leaders were given further anxiety by Spain's accession to the EEC in 1986, which, they feared, would erect barriers to East–South European trade and thus further weaken an already anaemic level of exchange.[75] Nevertheless, a year after Spain's membership began, Hungarian economic elites were arranging high-level talks with Madrid to discuss their closer relationship with the Community.[76] In the two years before Hungary became the first Eastern Bloc country to sign a comprehensive trade and cooperation agreement

[71] Indeed, Spain as a model for a peripheral Hungary survived long into the post-communist period. See, for example, the standard curriculum reading for tenth grade students in Hungary in 2015: *Társadalmi folyamatok a 21. század küszöbén* (Budapest: Oktatáskutató és Fejlesztő Intézet, 2015).

[72] Kotkin, *Uncivil Society*, 33. Imre Pozsgay in *Március Tizenötödike*, 15 Mar. 1989, 1–2.

[73] Imre Szokai and Csaba Tabajdi, 'Change of Hungarian Social Model = Change of Orientation in Hungarian Foreign Policy?', *World Affairs*, 51/4 (Spring 1989), 212.

[74] András Inotai, *Competition Of CMEA, Southern European And Rapidly Industrialising Countries in the West German Export Market for Manufactured Products in the Second Half of the Seventies* (Budapest, 1982), 10.

[75] 'Suggestions for themes in the Madrid discussions for foreign minister Péter Várkonyi. Dr. Tibor Melega, deputy minister for external trade', 21 June 1984, Budapest. MOL XIX-J-1-j 127. d. 1984. Év. B-Wire, 'Spain's Trade With Eastern Bloc Remains Flat', 17 Feb. 1983, HU OSA 300-20-1.

[76] Report on the first day of the visit to János Kádár with the Spanish King Juan Carlos, 6 July 1987. MOL XIX-J-1 J-118 d.

with the EEC on 30 June 1988, the Spanish Prime Minister González was the most prominent international supporter of Hungary's membership.[77] In the summer of 1989 regular delegations of Spanish socialists met the leaders of the Hungarian national bank, trade ministry and agricultural sector to advise on westward economic integration.[78]

Spanish socialists were also keen to warn their Hungarian counterparts about the dangers of the transformation ahead, which, they argued, needed to be carefully planned so as not to take place on only Western European terms. From early 1989 González, Zapatero and Semprún frequently put it to their Hungarian counterparts that they needed to develop an 'alternative socialist transition'. They emphasised that reformed communist parties in Eastern Europe should steer their countries away from the full force of the market and pay attention to the maintenance of the welfare state and social equality.[79] In this way 'transition' could assist the broader reinvigoration of the European social democratic movement. González himself argued that a transformation of Eastern European communist movements into successful social democratic parties was crucial for a broader revival of left-wing politics and economics in Europe by 2000.[80] They feared that these points were not taken with sufficient seriousness by leading Hungarian reformist political circles during 1989.[81]

A Cultural 'Return to Europe'

Cultural exchange with Spain helped Hungarian elites reimagine themselves as part of a common European space that transcended previous ideological divides. The Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) had been established in 1973 to reduce tensions and develop new forms of cooperation across the continent. In 1980 the French delegation to the CSCE process proposed a space for cultural exchange.[82] At one of the 'follow-up conferences' in Madrid Hungary took up the baton, working at the forefront of a campaign to use UNESCO and a European 'Cultural Forum', coordinated initially through Budapest, to encourage culture cooperation.[83] At its first meeting, held in the Hungarian capital in autumn 1985,

[77] RFE, B-Wire, 16 Nov. 1988. HU OSA 300 40 1 Box 59.

[78] See the visit of leading figures of the PSOE to Budapest's Social Studies Institute to advise on transition in August 1989: János Simon, 'Spanyol út - Magyar út', *Kapu* (August 1989), 23–4. Spanish support for Hungary's accession processes to the Council of Europe and the European Community continued after 1989. 'Spanyol támogatás a közösségi csatlakozáshoz', *Magyar Hírlap*, 6 Sept. 1990; 'Spanyol minister Budapesten', *Magyar Nemzet*, 29 Mar. 1991.

[79] Secret Diplomatic Cable: Details of the Ambassador of the Hungarian People's Republic in Madrid. Subject: Gomez Virgilio Zapatero, Minister's intention to visit Hungary. Madrid, 16 June 1989.

[80] Mátyás Szűrös, President of the Republic, agreed with him. Report of the Council of Ministers Spanish Prime Minister Felipe González visit. Compiled by Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, László Kovács. Budapest, 15 Nov. 1989.

[81] Telegram Details of the Hungarian People's Republic Ambassador in Madrid. Subject: Culture Minister Semprún considers the transformation of Eastern Europe. Madrid, 30 Nov. 1989.

[82] CSCE/ RM.8. Madrid, 9 Dec. 1980 (CSCE/ OSCE Archive, Prague).

[83] Hungary advocated cultural exchange in the areas of cultural radio programming, concerts, television and films – including more co-productions. Hungarian delegations also stressed the role of international

the Hungarian Minister of Culture Béla Köpeczi celebrated the idea of a 'cultural identity of Europe' which would 'improve the conditions of peaceful co-existence in this continent'. He went on to declare that 'Europe possesses a cultural heritage . . . [which] defines a specific intellectual quality – the European character'.[84] Amongst a host of suggested programmes, Spain and Hungary worked together to organise initiatives to collect European folk culture. They started the process of establishing a Béla Bártok folklore centre in Budapest to archive folk music and make it available to educational institutions and performers across the continent.[85]

These relationships helped give momentum, starting in the mid-1980s, to a series of cultural exchanges between Hungary and Spain, the character of which gave expression to a revived notion of a shared European heritage. The Hungarian National Gallery organised multiple events: exhibitions of modern Spanish painting that included works by Dali and Miró opened in May 1985, whilst a collection of American indigenous objects loaned from Madrid's Americas Museum was displayed in March 1987.[86] The 1986 Spanish Film Week in Budapest ran parallel to a Miklós Jancsó film series in Madrid and substantial Hungarian participation in San Sebastian film festival that same year.[87] A month of Hungarian–Catalan cultural exchange in March 1989 included exhibitions of fine art, song competitions, concerts at the *Mátyás templom* of Catalan church music and lectures on Catalan history.[88] In early 1989 the Spanish Minister of Culture, Jorge Semprún, visited Hungary and announced a programme to translate the literature of smaller countries of Eastern Europe, which, he hoped, would encourage a broader sense of European identity in his country.[89]

A pan-European vision replaced the earlier politically divisive vision of these countries' historical relationship. Tales of the Spanish Civil War were no longer

teaching and exchange in training young artists, advocating creative art camps and international festivals. CSCE/ CFB.48, 6 Nov. 1985. See also Johannes Sizoo and Rudolph Th. Jurrjens, *Csce Decision-Making: The Madrid Experience* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1984), 100. See also, The Concluding Document of the Madrid Meeting 1980 of Representatives of the Participating States of the Conference on Security and Co-Operation in Europe, Held on the Basis of the Provisions of the Final Act Relating to the Follow-Up to the Conference (Madrid, 1983). (available at: http://www.osce.org/mc/40871?download=true)

[84] Béla Köpeczi Speech, Opening of the CSCE Budapest Cultural Forum, 16 Oct. 1985. Cultural Forum CSCE CFB 10-11 1985.

[85] Cultural Forum CSCE CFB 10-11 1985. This centre would eventually be opened in 1996. CSCE/ CFB 47, 6 Nov. 1985. The Hungarian delegation also proposed greater support for the popularisation of 'creative folk art', including the publication of a 'European folk tale series'. CSCE CFB 47, 6 Nov. 1985.

[86] 'Kortárs spanyol festők a Nemzeti Galériában', *Magyar Nemzet,* 13 May 1985. 'Az újvilág óvilága. Kiállítás a Nemzeti Galériában', *Magyar Nemzet,* 4 Mar. 1987.

[87] RFE Hungarian Monitoring, 5 July 1987. HU OSA 300-40-1 Box 989.

[88] 'Katalán Kínálat', *Magyar Hírlap*, 8 Mar. 1989.

[89] 'Hűség és szakítás', *Magyar Hírlap*, 29 Apr. 1989. Promoting the literature of less widely spoken European languages had been a project of the CSCE since the late 1970s: Hungarian delegations had repeatedly taken leading roles in such initiatives. In November 1985, at the Budapest Cultural Forum, the two countries, together with Italy, had proposed the establishment of a European initiative to publish bilingual parallel text collections of poems from across the continent, to increase awareness and appreciation of European literatures. Report from the Working Body on Literature, Budapest Cultural Forum, CSCE/ CFB 10-11 1985, 12 Nov. 1985.

invoked in the name of the struggle between fascism and anti-fascism in which the two countries had stood on opposing sides, but rather to tell a story of common European suffering. A year before the formal end of one-party rule, for instance, the press presented Hungarian Spanish brigadiers not as heroic fighters but as victims of totalitarian power. In October 1988, in an article called 'Requiem for the Spanish Brigades' in the party daily *Népszabadság*, the stories of Russian and Hungarian brigaders' suffering in Spain, and then victimisation and deaths in the Stalinist purges of the late 1930s and early 1950s, were told.[90] Historical connections – such as those between the House of Arpád and the Iberian Peninsula from the eighth century – were emphasised. When King Juan Carlos visited Budapest in June 1987, he was taken to the sites at which Spanish troops had fought for the liberation of Buda from the Turks in 1686 – invoking a notion of a shared past for two of Europe's borderland nations which had each taken on their responsibility for defending the continent's Christian heritage.[91]

Spain as a Model of Negotiated Democratic Transition

Spain also provided a template for *negotiated* transition.[92] Yet, unlike Poland, where the model was invoked mainly by the opposition, here it was – again – reform communists who were the most vociferous advocates of drawing parallels between the political transformations of both countries.[93] The notion that Hungary was following Spain was symbolically confirmed by Hungarian Prime Minister Károly Grósz's decision to announce the end of one party rule on a trip to Madrid on 15–16 November 1988.[94] The choice of location for the first major international announcement of this transformation implied for an audience back home that reform communists could be trusted to lead their country to a European future – recast as Western European-style social democrats – just like their charismatic socialist partners in Spain had done. During the course of 1989 the biographies of those Spanish communists such as Jorge Semprún, who had undertaken the journey from anti-Francoist struggle as a member of the Spanish Communist Party to an embrace of a Europeanised multi-party party democracy were showcased in the domestic press, a message presumably directed at the communists' core constituencies who needed to prepare themselves for political change too.

[90] 'Requiem a spanyolországi nemzetközi brigádokért', *Népszabadság*, 28 Oct. 1988.

[91] 'Használjuk ki az együttműködés tartalékait', *Magyar Hírlap*, 1 July 1987. See also James Mark, *The Unfinished Revolution. Making Sense of the Communist Past in Central-Eastern Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 128.

[92] On the Spanish model's broader impact, see Gregorio Alonso and Diego Muro, 'Introduction', in idem, eds., *The Politics and Memory of Democratic Transition. The Spanish Model* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 1–3.

[93] See Dominik Trutowski, 'Poland and Spain "Entangled". Political Learning in Transitions to Democracy' (paper presented at 'Entangled Transitions' conference, University of Leuven, 2014).

[94] Ádám Anderle, *A magyar-spanyol kapcsolatok*, 169.

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From 1988 onwards, the leaders of the Spanish Socialists were regular visitors to Budapest and offered their support.[95] A week after the fall of the Berlin Wall Felipe González arrived in Budapest to advise party leader Rezső Nyers on how to effect an orderly transition.[96] Minister for Parliamentary Relations Virgilio Zapatero Gómez advised Hungarian elites on the procedural rules necessary for successful democracy. He argued that Hungary should build a parliamentary system that disproportionately rewarded winners in elections – a plan implemented during the transition in Spain – so that historical divisiveness would not lead to divided parliaments and hence a weak and fractured legislature.[97] PSOE elites also offered campaign advice to the Hungarian socialists in the first free elections and provided substantial financial backing for the transition – aid they also provided to Poland. US President George Bush praised such support and called on Eastern European politicians to embrace the Spanish model.[98]

Given that a Spanish-like transition offered communist reformers the greatest hope that they could survive politically, it is not surprising that they were its most avid promoters to the Hungarian public in 1989. The fear of a return to the divisions and violence of the 1956 Uprising in particular haunted them. From this perspective it is striking that reformers more commonly used the term the 'Spanish analogy' – rather than the 'Spanish model'. For them the Spanish transition was not only a set of prescriptions concerning how to engineer change but also a comparable historical experience which could be invoked to 'discipline' the Hungarian population: if you embrace change that was too radical, or assert too aggressively your political divisions, it suggested, you ignore the lessons of a successful and civilised transformation elsewhere.[99] In this view all parties, including the communists, had to come together in negotiation for the sake of a peaceful transition – just as former opponents had done in Spain's so-called 'Moncloa Pact', an agreement which had created the consensus that had underlain the journey to a new political system. Reform communists argued that the two countries had a shared history of violence connected to political division – but that Hungary was fortunate in that it now drew on the experience of another who had managed to avoid a return to this historical fate.[100] The 'Spanish analogy' was most commonly invoked at those moments when violence seemed

[95] On the high level of interest in the form of the Spanish transition, see András Bozóki, 'The Roundtable Talks of 1989: Participants, Political Visions and Historical References', *Hungarian Studies*, 14, 2 (2000), 251. James M. Markham, 'There's a Demand for Instruction in Democracy', *New York Times*, 16 Apr. 1989.

[96] Report of the Council of Ministers Spanish Prime Minister Felipe González visit. Compiled by Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, László Kovács. Budapest, 15 Nov. 1989. MOL XIX-J-1-j 78. d. 1989.

[97] Secret Diplomatic Cable Hungarian ambassador in Madrid. Subject: Zapatero Gómez's Opinion of the Hungarian reform process, Madrid, 19 July 1989. He noted that 42 per cent of the vote was sufficient in Spain to provide a parliamentary majority.

[98] RFE 'A-Wire', 19 Oct. 1989.

[99] Alexandra Botyánszki, 'A "nemzeti megbékélés" koncepciója és a rendszerváltás', *AETAS* (4/2013), 40–62.

[100] Iván Berend, 'Két békés Forradalom', *Társadalmi Szemle*, 45, 7 (1990), 56–61.

possible – notably in the weeks that followed the Tiananmen Square crackdown in early June 1989.[101]

This call to avoid division and conflict in 1989 soon became an appeal that the principle of reconciliation should underpin the new political system. Over the course of that year reformers were interested in reaching out to many countries that had faced questions of punishment and amnesty after the experience of authoritarianism – including Greece, Portugal, Uruguay and Brazil.[102] Yet, once again, it was Spain – and its seeming capacity to have tamed the divisive memories of its Civil War during transition – which elicited the most interest. Communists invited the president of the Spanish parliament to visit Hungary in late April 1989 to speak about the necessity of 'closing down/ finishing with the past' ('*le kell zárni a múltat*') – and the crucial role that Spain's Amnesty Law had played in binding various political forces to the new democracy.[103] Intellectuals drew on the case of Spain to argue for the necessity of a 'common national historical memory' in Hungary that should collectively embrace the million and half lost in the war, the violence of 1956 and the emigration that followed – without regard for the political identity of those who suffered. The Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party drew on such a conception in mid-1989 in their proposed 'joint national votive memorial' – which, they claimed, followed the example of a similar Spanish initiative after Franco's death.[104] Until the end of 1991 the Spanish approach was widely cited as a superior way to build a new society, compared to potentially socially and politically divisive judicial approaches to dealing with the past.[105]

Following the establishment of multi-party democracy, Spain was invoked in the name of economic transformation too. In mid-1991 six Hungarian parties came together to forge what contemporaries understood as a rerun of Spain's Moncloa Pact, in an attempt to build consensus for the economic transformation across the political spectrum. Its comparative lack of success in forging a unitary position explained the reluctance of the main players to incorporate social forces, as Spain had done. Trade unions were entirely absent from the discussions.[106] The communist-successor party, which came to power in 1994 in alliance with liberals, once again appealed

[101] Cipher Telegram details of the ambassador of the Hungarian People's Republic in Madrid. Subject: Gomez Virgilio Zapatero, the Spanish Government Relations and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister's intention visiting. Madrid, 16 June 1989. MOL XIX-J-1-j 78. d. 1989.

[102] For this story, see István Rév, *Retroactive Justice: Prehistory of Post-Communism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 195.

[103] RFE Hungarian Monitoring, 28 Apr. 1989. HU OSA 300-40-1.

[104] Rév, *Retroactive Justice*, 195.

[105] Ibid., 62; Berend, 'Két békés Forradalom', 60. See the exchanges between the Spanish Scientific Research Council and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences to address questions of national reconciliation: Berend, *History in my Life*, 225. See also on this topic: 'Felmentették a politikai elítélteket', *Népszava*, 15 Sept. 1990; László Daróczi, 'Lecsillapították a Politikát', *Pesti Hírlap*, 30 Mar. 1991, 1; Atilla Ágh, 'A demokratikus átmenet első éve', *Aula*, 13, 3 (1991), 87–95.

[106] Atilla Ágh, 'The Comparative Revolution and the Transition in Central and Southern Europe', *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 2 (1993), 77; Laszlo Bruszt, 'Transformative Politics: Social Costs and Social Peace in East Central Europe', in János Mátyás Kovács, ed., *Transition to Capitalism? The Communist Legacy in Eastern Europe* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 113.

(unsuccessfully) to 'Moncloa' as they tried to harness support for deeply needed economic reform. This plea was swiftly undermined by the introduction of the so-called Bokros package of radical economic restructuring in February 1995.[107] The 'Spanish craze' for a negotiated pacted transition, which had shaped debates across the long transformation, was falling away.

Conclusion

Hungary was not alone in the Eastern Bloc in looking to Spain; in nearby countries, however, it was the opposition who gained most from such connections. In Poland, for example, Spain's *consenso* model was important for an emerging dissident movement in the mid-1970s. Adam Michnik – who would later become one of the leaders of the left-liberal wing of the largest oppositional movement of the entire communist period, the independent trade union Solidarity (*Solidarność*) – termed the Spanish approach the 'New Evolutionism' and saw its strategy of negotiation as a way out of Poland's political impasse. This fascination fell away in the 1980s, but returned in 1989–90 with Tadeusz Mazowiecki's first post-communist government, which wished to draw a 'thick line under the past' – just as Spain had attempted to do.[108]

In the Hungarian case, by contrast, interest in the Spanish experience was most profound amongst reform-minded communists. The power of its appeal lay in the fact that it provided arguments for *multiple* pathways out of a sclerotic Eastern European present. For some the economic success of late Franco-era Spain was understood as one of a number of successful authoritarian openings to the world economy – alongside those of Chile and South Korea. Such a model inspired the hope that economic transformation was possible without jettisoning one-party rule. For others Spain's successful socialist-led transformation under the charismatic leadership of Prime Minister Felipe González provided an alternative to the neo-liberal 'Washington Consensus'. Yet in the end it was not these 'Spanish lessons' that won out. By the late 1980s reform-minded Hungarian communists who accepted the inevitability of political change came to the fore and mobilised Spain to argue the necessity of democratisation for economic growth in face of conservative forces in the party, to insist on a negotiated managed consensual transition that would ensure their political survival and to craft an identity for themselves as co-producers of a new modern European future as they prepared themselves for a new competitive politics.

[107] Attila Ágh, 'Early Consolidation and Performance Crisis: The Majoritarian-Consensus Democracy Debate in Hungary', *West European Politics*, 24, 3 (2001), 99.

[108] Trutowski, 'Poland and Spain "Entangled"'. See also the importance of Gandhi and Luther King on Michnik in Jeffrey Stout, 'Between Secularism and Theocracy. King, Michnik, and the American Culture Wars', in Kosicki and Kunakhovich, *Legacy of 1989* (forthcoming).