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Crucibles of Political Loyalty: Church Institutions and Electoral Continuity in Hungary
by Jason Wittenberg

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caust, from the communist seizure of power in February 1948 to the “Velvet Revolution” of November 1989, showing how this treatment also reflected official attitudes toward Israel. Heitlinger considers these two events, together with the August 1968 Soviet invasion to constitute decisive, external, and politically driven moments of historical consequence for the country’s Jewish community. The collective memory or collective forgetting of the Holocaust is the subject of the next chapter in which Heitlinger traces the political histories of two major Holocaust projects: the memorial to the [Czech Jewish] Victims of Nazi Persecution in the disused Pinkas Synagogue in Josefov and the National Memorial Terezín on the site of the former Nazi concentration camp. The memorial in the Pinkas Synagogue, which was completed only in 1959, was open for less than a decade. Initially closed to permit archeological research, the synagogue remained closed for “general renovation” for the rest of the communist period. The Pinkas synagogue reopened after 1989, and renovations were finished only in 1996. From the start, the communists downplayed the Jewish character of Terezín; those remembered were generically “victims of fascism.” Indeed, the Czechoslovak victims of the Nazis were generally honored on 9 May in an annual ceremony that made no mention of the Nazi genocide.

Chapters 4 and 5 focus on the Jews themselves: the parental generation of Holocaust survivors, many of whom internalized their Jewish identity as stigmatized, and the postwar generation that did not experience the Holocaust. The parental generation, many of whom were also Communist Party members, or those who sympathized with communist goals, also “practiced” passing as Czech or Slovak and other forms of “stigma management” (85). Chapter 5 discusses the postwar, or second, generation’s strategies for coming to terms with Jewishness and provides fascinating examples of both explicit and latent antisemitism in postwar Czechoslovakia, confirming that antisemitism was more prevalent in Slovakia than in the Czech lands.

Subsequent chapters address a variety of topics concerned with the Jewish experience in communist Czechoslovakia through the post-1993 division into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. They range from Jewish Youth Groups of the 1960s through emigration and a sense of place to post-1989 institutional conflict, the post-Czechoslovak reconstruction of Jewish memory, and rethinking Jewish identities. The search for a usable past, exemplified by the restoration of Josefov, has involved its transformation into a Jewish heritage tourist site and its integration into mainstream Czech culture. These memorial projects also reflect the transition to a market culture and the “commercialization” of memory.

Heitlinger argues that Czech and Slovak Jews share more similarities than differences and asserts that they were “different” not only from other Czechs and Slovaks but also from Jews in western liberal democracies. Separation from the latter was due to the stigmatization of Jewishness in both Czech and Slovak culture as well as to the communist regime. Heitlinger concludes with a discussion of the future of the Czech and Slovak Jews and of European Jewry more generally.

This clearly written book deserves the attention of anyone interested in the postwar experience of Jews in Czechoslovakia.

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Crucibles of Political Loyalty: Church Institutions and Electoral Continuity in Hungary. By Jason Wittenberg. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. xiv, 293 pp. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Figures. Tables. Maps. \$80.00, hard bound.

This work can be read on a number of different levels. From a disciplinary perspective, this book by Jason Wittenberg, an assistant professor of political science at Berkeley, is an attempt to explain the fascinating phenomenon of electoral persistence. Why, Wittenberg asks, do the social bases of political parties tend to endure long periods of authoritarian rule when the specific parties in question were not contesting democratic elections? Why are periods of redemocratization so often characterized by the same political parties that were outlawed by the intervening regime? And why do those parties often attract the votes of the very same sectors of society that comprised their support base before democracy was

suppressed. Taking postcommunist Hungary as his case study, Wittenberg argues that electoral persistence was a function of communal identities that were protected and advanced in communist-era Hungary by the Roman Catholic and Reform Churches.

To support this interesting claim, Wittenberg provides a blizzard of hypotheses and tests, all pointing to pretty powerful correlations between enduring religious vitality and persistent partisan identification. The old political parties did not rise from the grave miraculously in 1989. Rather, the communal connections and social identities that had defined those parties were defended with great effort, and at considerable personal cost, by religious leaders who resisted the imposition of the socialist system, and the creation of the "socialist man" at every single turn. My impression is that Wittenberg places too much weight on attendance at religious education classes as *the* indicator of religious persistence, at the expense of many others he might have used. But he shows admirable awareness of the potential pitfall of his method and argues that over-reliance on that indicator allows him to make comparisons across time and to delve into local circumstances where the real ties between religion and identity are forged.

At another level, this book can be profitably read by a wider audience interested in the role, more broadly conceived, of the churches (particularly the Catholic Church) in communist-era Hungary. It has long been a common assumption that the Hungarian church was more willing to come to terms with (some would say collaborate with) the communist regime, than say the Polish church was. Wittenberg's painstaking research into Catholic Hungary under communism shows that the collaborationist label may have been appropriate for the church's hierarchy (particularly once Cardinal Mindszenty had holed up in the U.S. Embassy in Budapest). But such a label, or, if you like, such a charge, would not do justice to the many local clergymen who fought tooth and nail over many decades to preserve autonomous social space, popular religiosity, and, as it turned out in the long run, rightist political parties.

This attention to the complexity of religion's role, in both communist and postcommunist Hungary, has two other salutary benefits. The first is that Wittenberg has reminded his fellow political scientists that any account of political dynamics in a place as deeply imprinted with religion and religious community as Hungary (along with most of the other postcommunist countries of east and central Europe, by the way) must afford religion a central place in the analysis or risk being sharply limited and badly distorted. *Crucibles of Political Loyalty* establishes just how important religion was to the people of Hungary and how that importance vaulted religion and religious leaders into positions of enduring and persistent political importance.

Second, this book also emphasizes the need for political observers who do take religion seriously to recognize the complexity of terms like *the church*. Newspapers these days are filled with stories revealing the clay feet of religious leaders, finally even in John Paul II's own native Poland. These stories add much-needed nuances to our understanding of religion's role in the communist era. But they should not lead us to lose sight of the efforts of clergy and laypeople whose names never made the papers, then or now. That those efforts have culminated somewhat ironically in the preservation of political parties who seek to truncate the very democratic values on which postcommunism was ostensibly built in the first place does not make that religious activism any less noteworthy, significant, or frankly, heroic.

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Romania's Tortured Road toward Modernity. By Thomas J. Keil. East European Monographs, no. 686. Boulder, Colo.: East European Monographs. 2006. Dist. Columbia University Press. xvii, 568 pp. Notes. Bibliography. \$56.00, hard bound.

Thomas J. Keil, a sociologist at Arizona State University West, has written a book that probes the legacy of Romania's "state socialism" in the post-1989 era of the "nation state" (ix). Keil begins by examining the Ottoman empire's suzerainty over Romanians in the fifteenth century, ends in 2004 in the post-Ceaușescu epoch, and covers economic and social inequal-