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External Influences on the Evolution of Hungarian Authoritarianism, 1920–44

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Among historians and political scientists who study the roots of dictatorial rule there is an increasing clamour to examine factors beyond domestic conditions.[1] Lamenting the isolated case-study focus of much research on fascism, for example, Constantin Iordachi has recently called for a transnational research agenda in which the 'multiple entanglements and reciprocal influences' of movements and regimes on one another is a central concern.[2] Thomas Ambrosio has proposed a research programme to study authoritarian diffusion – how the emergence of dictatorship in one country affects the probability that it will emerge in another country.[3]

The reasons for this new research agenda are not hard to discern. Although the search for the domestic roots of dictatorial rule has been incredibly fruitful, we know that, like democracy, dictatorship can also spread from abroad. Philip Morgan, for example, documents two waves of fascism in inter-war Europe. The first occurred in the chaos accompanying the end of the First World War, in which attempts to imitate the communist takeover of Russia were met with ruthless rightist repression. The second happened in the 1930s in the wake of the Great Depression and victory of Nazism in Germany, which energized radical rightist movements across Europe.[4] The wave characteristics of authoritarianism and opposition to it have been even more visible in the former communist world. There the democratic surge of 1989–91 has met with serious challenges in parts of the former Soviet Union, in which both nascent dictators and their domestic opponents have looked to transnational networks to support their respective causes.[5]

We can think of external influences as operating through two broad pathways: contagion and co-operation. In contagion, which is used here synonymously with diffusion, 'the prior adoption of a trait of practice in a population alters the practice of adoption for remaining non-adopters'.[6] This curt formulation encompasses a number of reasons why the emergence of

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authoritarian practices in some countries might prompt adoption of such practices in other countries. For example, if large influential countries (or a significant proportion of all countries) become authoritarian, it can change the prevailing norms regarding the acceptability of such rule. It proved much harder to stigmatize dictatorship once Germany joined its ranks in 1933, which strengthened the hands of would-be authoritarian actors in other states. Even where norms do not evolve, authoritarian governments can also establish dictatorial practices from which kindred groups in other states might learn. Examples would be the broader adoption of internet monitoring technology developed in China, or European admiration for corporatist forms of interest intermediation based on their perceived success in Mussolini's Italy. The distinguishing feature of the contagion pathway is that the spread of an idea or practice occurs independently of any involvement of those who have already adopted the said idea or practice.

The co-operation pathway involves modes of transmission in which foreign actors play an active role in fomenting adoption of authoritarian practices. Such activity can range from the forcible imposition of a fascist regime, as occurred in Hungary in 1944 after the Germans occupied the country, to informal and friendly communication with domestic actors that might be in a position to influence policy. Both Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy attempted to rally international support for fascism by mobilizing sympathetic groups in other countries. The same was true of the Soviet Union for communist movements through the Comintern. By the late 1930s, as we shall see, Germany made use of its enhanced economic and political leverage to influence other countries' policies in its preferred direction. What unites co-operation arguments is their emphasis on the intentions and actions of actors that have already adopted some dictatorial practice.

This chapter explores how political contagion and co-operation affects the emergence of dictatorial practices through a focus on inter-war Hungary. Inter-war Hungary is a great venue to examine this topic for three reasons. First, the literature tends to give pride of place to the reasons for democratic breakdown.[7] Although the collapse of democracy is obviously a worthy topic, we know much less about the international influences on how dictatorial rule evolves within non-democratic regimes, especially among the smaller countries of Eastern Europe. In Hungary Nazi Germany influenced events, but only after authoritarian rule had been established, and in ways more subtle than is commonly acknowledged. In some respects the most serious authoritarian departures took place after democracy had already collapsed. Second, existing research has largely neglected instances of failed contagion.[8] Although Hungary, like other countries, was ultimately swept up into the 'magnetic field of fascism', for a time in the early 1920s it was a lone dictatorship in a largely democratic neighbourhood. Why should foreign models have been

more influential when they were fascist than when they were democratic? Third, Hungary illustrates the difficulty of analytically separating domestic and international factors. Although Nazi Germany's war-time occupation and imposition of the Arrow Cross government might count as a purely international cause, in general international influences have their effect through the domestic arena. Short of open coercion from abroad, a government could always have chosen not to follow some foreign practice. Inter-war Hungary thus allows a fine-grained examination of the mechanisms by which political contagion operates.

The legal realm is not the only sphere with which one can document a regime's dictatorial character. For example, radical civil society movements and political parties grew in prominence between the 1920s and 1930s, and these organizations would ultimately become a force to be reckoned with. However, the existence of such radicalism does not in itself imply much about the nature of the governing regime. Weimar Germany was no less a democracy for having featured substantial radical movements on both the left and the right. It is when such radicalism becomes a matter of state policy that we can begin to speak of an evolution in the regime.

I focus in particular on diminishing equality before the law, as embodied in the 1920 *numerus clausus* law (restricting educational enrolment by nationality and race) and subsequent Jewish laws that were approved beginning in the late 1930s. The impetus for the *numerus clausus* can be attributed to domestic forces, at least in the sense the initial version of the reform was implemented in response to domestic concerns. But the specific details of legislation from the latter part of the 1930s belie German influence. The traditional conservative elites claimed anti-Jewish legislation would assuage the even more radical demands of the extreme right. However, many of these elites were also willing to sacrifice Jewish rights to benefit from German willingness to effect territorial revision with the Habsburg successor states in Hungary's favour.[9] The increasingly harsh discrimination against Jews is an example of an authoritarian leadership mimicking some of the practices of even more authoritarian states both to preserve its authority and ingratiate itself with other dictatorships.[10]

A hybrid regime *avant la lettre*

There is general agreement that the regime that ruled Hungary between 1920 and 1944, commonly referred to as the Horthy regime, was neither wholly democratic nor wholly authoritarian. But beyond that consensus dissolves. Inter-war Hungary did have a multi-party system with a real opposition, a functioning parliament featuring real debate and governing power, an independent judiciary and a lively opposition press. Its head of state, Miklós Horthy, ruled for the entire period as regent, but was subject to constitutional constraints.[11]

However, it is also true that the communist party was banned, the secret ballot and the activities of the social democrats were substantially curtailed, and until 1939 the franchise remained limited.[12] Restrictions on leftist activity, together with the open ballot in the countryside, meant that in practice the government could, and almost always did, engineer a sympathetic parliamentary majority, though genuine opposition voices were always present.

This truly hybrid regime has been labelled 'semi-authoritarian',[13] 'a limited parliamentary democracy with distinctly authoritarian features',[14] 'a disguised and indirect ... absolute autocracy of the one man who was [both] Minister President and party leader',[15] and, by István Bethlen, prime minister from 1921 until 1931 and the brains behind the system, a 'guided democracy',[16] something 'between unbridled freedom and unrestrained dictatorship'.[17] Even the anodyne label 'Horthy regime' has been questioned. Andrew Janos has remarked that in reality the label is appropriate only after 1935, when the locus of decision-making had shifted decisively away from the prime minister.[18]

This mixed system is at least in part a consequence of Hungary's rather tumultuous path out of the First World War. With the dissolution of the Dual Monarchy Hungary became fully sovereign for the first time in centuries, but amid economic, social and political chaos. The Treaty of Trianon that formally ended hostilities between Hungary and the Entente powers stripped Hungary of roughly two-thirds of its population and three-quarters of its territory, and stranded roughly one-third of the ethnic Hungarian population in the Habsburg successor states. The treaty would have profound direct and indirect consequences for the course of politics in the inter-war period. First, it increased anti-Semitism and contributed to the political restrictions on the left. Few if any Hungarian leaders were keen to preside over a radical and punitive dismemberment of the country. Thus, when in early 1919 the Allied plans became known, the government was offered to the social democrats, who assumed power in alliance with the communists and established a Soviet regime. Although the Councils' Republic lasted for fewer than five months, it frightened the old ruling classes with its arbitrary violence and attempts to dismantle the old order. For many it cast Jews, who were prominent among its leadership, as an anti-Hungarian force whose influence needed to be limited.

Second, it ensured that revanchism would be a cornerstone of Hungarian inter-war policy. Trianon was reviled across the political spectrum. Most obviously it dismantled historic Hungary, a territory that in the decades before the outbreak of the First World War was developing into an integrated modern economic unit. Part of the post-war chaos was a result of the disruption of economic life occasioned by the loss of what had previously been sources of raw material and agricultural products. But more profoundly, the treaty was seen as unjustly punitive, having consigned territories inhabited almost exclusively by Hungarians to neighbouring states. This created a demand for

territorial revision among refugees streaming into rump Hungary and the many who sympathized with them that would ultimately outweigh many other political concerns. Ultimately much of Hungary's foreign policy and some of its domestic policy would be dictated by its desire to regain lost territories.

For the conservative leader István Bethlen, prime minister from 1921 to 1931, the key to containing both left and right radicalism was a Government Party whose political machine could ensure the continuing influence of conservative pre-war political elites. Although the system he created effectively excluded the social democratic left from power, it eventually came under attack from the extreme right, which in the 1930s sought more radical solutions to the country's economic and political problems. The most important threat to conservative dominance prior to the war came when Gyula Gömbös became prime minister in 1932. Gömbös' desire to emulate Mussolini's fascist regime was well known by 1932, and within a couple of months of entering office he began to lay the groundwork for a one-party dictatorship.

Under Bethlen the Government Party's principal purpose had been to organize elections and deliver majorities. Gömbös wanted to reorganize the party for mass mobilization in the service of national unity, and succeeded in replacing a number of conservative army officers who opposed radical reform. He also engineered the 1935 elections to return a parliament more sympathetic to his ideas than the previous one. It is tempting to think only Gömbös' death in 1936 halted the march towards outright dictatorship, but Horthy appointed a new prime minister that stymied further radical developments.[19] Horthy would preside over feuding conservative and radical factions until being deposed by the Germans in 1944.

(In)equality before the law: Anti-Jewish legislation

The evolution of international influence on inter-war Hungarian anti-Jewish legislation can be divided into two phases. The first began with Horthy's assumption of power and lasted through roughly the early 1930s, when international norms supported policies of non-discrimination and there was no major power to provide cover to countries that dissented. This phase featured two important legislative acts: a 1920 law, the so-called *numerus clausus*, that imposed racial and nationality quotas on entrance to university; and a 1928 amendment that removed the racial language. The second phase began in the mid-1930s with the shift in international norms accompanying the rise of Nazi Germany, and led to a series of increasingly and openly discriminatory laws.

An important debate over these latter laws has revolved around the extent to which they can be attributed to German influence rather than to the fulfilment of domestic preferences as expressed initially in the *numerus clausus* restrictions. Mária M. Kovács has convincingly argued for the essential continuity

of Hungarian anti-Jewish intentions.[20] Here I wish to make a different point, that although the demand for restrictions on Jews may have been largely domestically driven, the forms such demands took as legislation reflected foreign influence and involved both the contagion and co-operation pathways.

Although popular anti-Semitism was undoubtedly widespread throughout Europe, Hungary has the dubious distinction of having been the first country in the 20th century to pass anti-Semitic legislation. Act XXV of 1920, passed after Horthy had been made regent but by a pre-Horthy democratically elected parliament, stipulated that the racial and national composition of university enrolment not exceed the proportion of each nationality and race in the general population. Although this *numerus clausus* never refers explicitly to Jews, no one disputes that it was aimed at Jews, who in 1910 comprised roughly 5 per cent of the population but nearly 30 per cent of university students, and were the only such over-represented group. The ultimate goal was to reduce Jewish influence over the commanding heights of the economy. According to the 1920 census, Jews comprised 48 per cent of salaried employees in industry, 58 per cent of small merchants, 67 per cent of those employed in commerce and 89 per cent of those in finance.[21]

Act XXV's reference to national and racial quotas represented an awkward and ultimately unsuccessful attempt to achieve national balance in the economy while conforming to international norms on discrimination that precluded targeting Jews explicitly. First, unlike Jews in Poland or Romania, Hungarian Jews as a matter of law had never been considered a separate national group, much less a distinct race. Nationality had been a matter of mother tongue, and the vast majority of Jews in Hungary had counted as Hungarian, regardless of what religion, if any, they actually practised. As the *numerus clausus* did not remedy this confusion, its application was necessarily haphazard.[22] Second, European norms no longer supported such open, targeted discrimination. Although legal restrictions on Jews had once been unremarkable throughout Europe, by 1920 that was no longer the case. The peace treaties that ushered in the Habsburg successor states included provisions for the protection of minority rights, and explicitly prohibited discrimination based on race, nationality and language. These strictures were often flouted in practice, especially after the entire post-war order began to collapse in the 1930s. But in the 1920s the League of Nations still monitored minority protections, and Hungary, financially dependent on other countries and hoping to win foreign support for a peaceful revision of borders, was in no position to flout international expectations.

Those Hungarians who supported the *numerus clausus* might well have pointed to that fact that as written the restrictions applied to all nationalities and races, not just to Jews. But the verbal sleight of hand did not fool the law's international (or domestic) opponents. In 1921 and 1925 the League of

Nations called for an investigation into the compatibility of the racial clause with Hungary's obligation to protect minority rights.[23] Bethlen chose not to be present for the original vote when he was a parliamentary representative in 1920, and had some sympathy for imposing restrictions on Jews. But he was also keen to avoid excesses. Thus, while on the one hand he strove to liquidate organized anti-Semitism, especially that emanating from the extreme right, he also systematically excluded Jews from public service.[24] Faced with the prospect of international sanction and wishing in any case to maintain Jewish financial support for state policies, Bethlen sought to change the law. A 1923 opposition motion for full repeal was handily rejected.[25] However, in 1928 Bethlen secured parliamentary approval, over the objections of extremists within his own party, for an amendment that removed the racial language.

If the 1920s were a period in which international norms served as an obstacle to institutionalized discrimination, the 1930s provided a far more permissive atmosphere. First, democracy itself was by then under sustained attack. While in 1920 Hungary was the only state that did not have free and fair elections, by 1935 no fewer than ten European states had transitioned to authoritarianism, including influential states such as Italy and Germany.[26] Dictatorial rule had become, if not quite popularly legitimate, at least accepted and in many quarters admired. Hungary itself became even less democratic in the latter half of the 1930s as power shifted from popular organs such as parliament to the government and regency.

The rise to prominence of Nazism in Germany breathed new life into anti-Jewish mobilization all over Europe. Part of this was pure contagion: groups both inside and outside government that sympathized with German anti-Jewish policy sought to emulate the German example in their own countries. This was certainly true in Hungary, where numerous Nazi-type parties emerged beginning in the early 1930s.[27] However, the co-operation pathway was also present, especially towards the latter part of the 1930s. Germany had by then become Hungary's major trading partner, the arbiter of its territorial disputes with other Habsburg successor states, and an open proponent of further anti-Jewish discrimination. According to Andrew Janos, 'German leaders did persistently, indeed obsessively, pressure Hungarian governments to seek more radical solutions to the Jewish "problem" '.[28]

Hungary did in fact adopt two major anti-Jewish laws before entering the war on the side of Germany, the first in 1938 and the second in 1939. Act XV of 1938 is known as the 'first Jewish law' despite earlier anti-Jewish legislation.[29] Act XV was similar to the *numerus clausus*, but broader in scope, more discriminatory in language, and less ambiguous in intent.[30] Whereas the 1920 legislation was confined to university admissions, this new law extended restrictions to journalism, film and fine arts, law, engineering and medicine. In each case the proportion of Jews was not to exceed 20 per cent. That this proportion

is less draconian than the earlier restrictions is less an admission of the severity of the first *numerus clausus* than recognition of the potential economic harm to Hungary a lower threshold might pose.[31] Unlike the earlier law, Act XV names Jews specifically as the target, and defines them in religious rather than racial terms.

Act IV of 1939, the second Jewish law, was detailed and draconian, and is only summarized here. It revived a racial definition of Jewishness, though with some narrow provision for Christian converts. It lowered the maximum representation in the professions from 20 per cent (in the first Jewish law) to 6 per cent, the estimated Jewish proportion in the population. It expanded the number of sectors where discrimination was legalized, which now included, among others, land holding, licences for trade, and salaries. Unlike previous legislation, it introduced outright exclusions. Jews whose families had immigrated to Hungary after 1867 no longer had the right to vote or serve in parliament. Jews could no longer serve in the upper house of parliament unless it was as one of the designated representatives of the Jewish community. They could no longer serve as editors, publishers or directors, except for exclusively Jewish publications. Finally, the law added provisions for the protection of national property in anticipation of Jewish emigration.[32]

Pathways of German influence

At one level the Jewish laws were a purely domestic matter. With the 1920 *numerus clausus* Hungary had already established the principle of anti-Jewish discrimination. Although the *numerus clausus* did succeed in reducing Jewish enrolment in higher education, it was less successful at reducing the Jews' disproportionate position in the economy and culture. Traditional conservatives and right-wing radicals differed less on the principle of affirmative action for Christians than on their reasons for support and the manner in which it would be implemented. The radicals were by no means homogeneous in their political views, but there was broad consensus that the traditional toleration of Jews was unsatisfactory and that the Jews needed to be excluded from economic and political life. The conservatives acknowledged the need to reduce Jewish influence but preferred more gradual and humane means. They acceded to the Jewish laws less out of outright enthusiasm than to dampen popular support, especially among the middle classes, for the increasingly assertive radical right-wing parties.[33] By 1938 Hungarian public opinion had moved enough to the right that the first Jewish law passed in the absence of any German pressure and with minimal opposition even from the small minority of leftist representatives.[34] The far more discriminatory second Jewish law aroused considerably more indignation and domestic opposition.[35] But the prime minister, Pál Teleki, denied allegations of German pressure, claiming instead that demand

for the legislation arose from Hungarian conditions.[36] Horthy dropped his opposition to the law once it had been amended to afford greater protections to long-resident assimilated Jews who 'were as much Hungarian as he was'.[37]

Nazi German influence was more apparent beneath the surface. One point of contact was through the radical-right opposition. Berlin was more concerned about maintaining friendly relations with Hungary than in fomenting a radical takeover, but it did view the radicals as a tool with which to influence the direction of domestic policy.[38] Concrete information on German support for Hungarian radical organizations is still scarce, but we know Ferenc Szálasi, leader of the Arrow Cross, the most important of these movements by 1937, visited Germany and likely received both advice and financial assistance.[39]

Another avenue was through contagion, in particular how the norms of what was considered acceptable legislation had evolved by the late 1930s. As noted above, in the early 1920s the international Zeitgeist favoured non-discrimination. The Minorities Treaties to which the Habsburg successor states were signatories enshrined the principle into law, and the League of Nations monitored violations. The 1920 *numerus clausus* never made reference to Jews but its adoption nonetheless provoked significant domestic and international opposition. By the late 1930s, however, it was no longer necessary to sugar-coat and water down racial prejudice. The two Jewish laws were not nearly as severe as the 1935 German Nuremberg laws, but if they bear some faint resemblance to their more famous German counterparts it is no accident: the Hungarian right-wing radicals that formulated and pushed for the legislation were emulating the German example. Thanks to Germany, anti-Jewish politics had become the new normal.

Another and more consequential point of contact was through the conservative governing elite. Here it can be said that contagion operated in the opposite way than it did in the case of the radical right. Kurt Weyland has emphasized the distinction in diffusion processes between the impetus for change and the outcome. Sometimes efforts to effect reform succeed, and other times not.[40] German fascism may have emboldened Hungarian right-wing radicals and breathed new life into popular anti-Semitism, but the conservative elite, and Horthy in particular, did attempt to stem the tide. One strategy was to persecute radical leaders. Amid rumours of German machinations and a potential coup, Ferenc Szálasi's Arrow Cross movement was dissolved and he himself was imprisoned in 1938.[41] Even prominent government officials were vulnerable. The prime minister, Béla Imrédy, had been appointed in 1938 because of his perceived moderation, but in what Janos has described as 'one of the most startling turnabouts in Hungarian history', he joined the radical camp, advocating radical land reform, harsher anti-Jewish legislation (what would become the second Jewish law) and contempt for the political system. But his domestic

enemies struck back. When he did not step down after losing a no-confidence vote in parliament, he was presented with evidence of his Jewish ancestry, and tendered his resignation.[42]

A more consequential strategy involved curtailing democratic freedoms. As noted above, although inter-war Hungary had never been a true democracy, the citizenry nonetheless enjoyed real freedoms. Left-wing parties (though not the communists) could mobilize voters, albeit within limits; opposition newspapers continued to publish and criticize the government; and the government was responsible to parliament. As the perceived threat from the radical right increased in the 1930s, however, the regent's power was strengthened. With the 1937 Regency Act the regent was no longer vulnerable to impeachment, had the right to approve draft bills before they came up for parliamentary discussion and could dissolve parliament and call new elections.[43] Even more anti-democratic was the 1939 Defence Act, which empowered the government to declare a state of emergency and arbitrarily detain individuals, curtail freedom of assembly, control wages and prices and suspend press publications.[44] Horthy never used these powers to snuff out all opposition, but for the first time had the legal authority to do so.

Such was conservative fear of popular right-wing radicalism that prominent officials opposed democratic electoral reform. Sensing popular enthusiasm for their cause, many radical political leaders favoured introducing the secret ballot in rural areas. The former prime minister, Bethlen, was publicly circumspect regarding franchise reform, but no doubt expressed the feelings of many conservatives in his suspicion that the secret ballot would 'deliver the country into the hands of provincial demagogues' and would lead 'to dictatorship or to revolution'.[45] Parliament reintroduced the secret ballot in 1938, though with further restrictions on voting eligibility.[46] Horthy could have vetoed the measure, but decided to side with the parliamentary majority, secure in his recently acquired right to dissolve parliament if he disliked the election result.[47]

A final pathway of Germany's influence on anti-Semitic legislation was not as an exemplar to be emulated (contagion), but through the political leverage Germany enjoyed (co-operation). As already noted, there is no evidence the Jewish laws were in any way a direct consequence of whatever pressure Germany may have exerted on Hungary in the 1930s to deal with its 'Jewish problem'. But the lure of lost territory proved irresistible. When the terms of the Treaty of Trianon were first made public in January 1920, three days of national mourning were declared, complete with black flags. Horthy considered the country's new borders not just a grave injustice, but a 'crime against Western civilization'.[48] Horthy had always hoped Britain could broker a peaceful revision of borders. During the crisis preceding the 1938 Munich agreement that awarded the Sudetenland to Germany he had even declined Hitler's offer of Slovakia in exchange for Hungarian participation in an invasion

of Czechoslovakia. However, Britain's capitulation to German demands and neglect of Hungary's territorial claims convinced Horthy that currying favour with Germany would serve the national interest.[49] It is in this context that Horthy's acquiescence to the second Jewish law should be seen.

The second Jewish law was enacted in May 1939, just six months after the so-called First Vienna Award of November 1938. Brokered by Germany and Italy, the agreement reassigned from Czechoslovakia to Hungary more than 11,000 km^2 land and more than one million people, the majority of whom were Hungarian. Horthy received a rapturous welcome when he entered the newly 'liberated' city of Kassa on a white stallion.[50] But the real territorial prize lay not north in Czechoslovakia, but east in Romania. Under the Second Vienna Award of August 1940 Hungary received 43,000 km^2 land and 2.5 million new inhabitants, the majority of whom were probably Hungarian.[51] Horthy was again received in these territories by the Hungarians, and probably not a few Jews who felt themselves Hungarian, with jubilation. Neither of the two agreements fully restored the territorial integrity of pre-Trianon Hungary, but they did go some way in revising what in Hungary was almost universally considered an unjust post-war peace settlement.

Although Horthy had once declared that even extraordinary methods were justified in seeking territorial revision,[52] there were limits on how much he was willing to embrace an Axis policy in pursuit of national goals. For example, against the advice of some that Hungarian failure to support a German invasion of Poland would needlessly anger Hitler, both Horthy and Teleki agreed that the best policy was strict neutrality. Just how serious they were became evident days after the war began, when Horthy refused to permit the passage of German troops through Hungarian territory, even with the promise of receiving a piece of Polish territory in return. Horthy regarded such assistance as dishonourable and a 'moral impossibility' in view of Hungary's long friendship with Poland.[53] Alas, he did not have such strong feelings for Hungarian Jews. Horthy disliked the Nazis, and deserves credit for resisting calls to implement his own 'final solution', but he was a self-confessed anti-Semite who tolerated Jews only because they controlled wealth Hungary needed. Whatever his discomfort at the 'inhuman, sadistic humiliation' they were receiving, it did not cause him to oppose the openly racist August 1941 third Jewish law, which in the name of race protection prohibited marriages or even sexual relations between Jews and Christians.[54] Nuremberg had finally come to Budapest.[55]

Conclusion

This chapter has taken up the call to examine international influences on domestic dictatorial developments. The analysis of the evolution of anti-Jewish legislation in inter-war Hungary illustrates two larger points. First, the

distinction between domestic and international factors can be more apparent than real. Although the *numerus clausus* cannot be linked to a foreign actor and contradicted then-prevailing international norms, the chaotic post-war circumstances under which Hungary ratified it were themselves created by forces beyond Hungary's control. Perhaps we should focus less on labelling and more on specifying the pathway whereby a factor operates.

Second, it can be difficult definitively to establish the links between the existence of a dictatorial practice in one state and its adoption in another. On the one hand, politicians are loath to acknowledge foreign influence when they are considering policy that is perceived to be popular. Whatever part Germany actually played, Teleki was at pains to minimize any German role in the second Jewish law. On the other hand, ex-post, politicians are just as eager to devolve onto others responsibility for policies that turn out to be disastrous. The vast majority of Hungarian Jewry perished in the Holocaust, and thus after the war it became fashionable for many to blame the Germans for legislation that was interpreted as a precursor to genocide. Navigating such shoals may not be easy, but it is a task we should be eager to take up.

Notes

1. The author would like to thank Andrew Janos, António Costa Pinto, Aristotle Kallis and two anonymous referees for their generous comments on earlier versions of this chapter.
2. C. Iordachi, 'Fascism in inter-war east central and southeastern Europe: Toward a new transnational research agenda', *East Central Europe* 37, 2010, p. 195.
3. T. Ambrosio, 'Constructing a framework of authoritarian diffusion: Concepts, dynamics, and future research', *International Studies Perspectives* II, 2010, pp. 375–392.
4. See P. Morgan, *Fascism in Europe, 1919–1945*, London, Routledge, 2003.
5. The most comprehensive review of the so-called 'colour' revolutions in the former Soviet Union remains V. J. Bunce and S. L. Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders in Postcommunist Countries*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011.
6. Cited in Z. Elkins and B. Simmons, 'On waves, clusters, and diffusion: A conceptual framework', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 33, no. 598, 2005, pp. 38–51.
7. See, for example, N. Bermeo, *Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times: The Citizenry and the Breakdown of Democracy*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2003; G. Capoccia, *Defending Democracy: Reactions to Extremism in Interwar Europe*, Baltimore, MD, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005.
8. Though for an important exception see K. Weyland, 'The diffusion of regime contention in European democratization, 1830–1940', *Comparative Political Studies* 43, nos. 8/9, 2010, pp. 1148–1176; Bunce and Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders,* passim.
9. See A. C. Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1982, p. 301.
10. These actions correspond closely to what Aristotle Kallis has identified as a dictatorial departure from liberal politics, where a democratic system is suspended to protect it

from radical domestic challengers. See A. Kallis, 'The "fascist critical mass" and the dynamics of political hybridisation in 1930s Europe', paper presented at the Lisbon workshop on fascism, 4–5 February 2011, pp. 19–20. In the case of Hungary, however, the system was already dictatorial, and the challengers may or may not have been fascist.

11. Technically Hungary was a monarchy due to elite disagreement on the desirability of establishing a republic. Horthy was thus elected regent, to serve until the throne could be filled or a republic declared.
12. I. Romsics, *Hungary in the Twentieth Century*, Budapest, Corvina, 1999, pp. 181–191 provides a concise overview of the main features of the regime.
13. See M. Mann, *Fascists*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 45.
14. Romsics, *Hungary*, p. 190.
15. C.A. Macartney, *October Fifteenth: A History of Modern Hungary, 1929–1945*, Vol. I, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1956, p. 49.
16. Cited in T. Sakmyster, *Hungary's Admiral on Horseback: Miklós Horthy, 1918–1944*, Boulder, CO, East European Monographs, 1994, p. 124.
17. Cited in Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness*, p. 210.
18. See ibid., pp. 298–300.
19. This paragraph borrows from ibid., pp. 287–290.
20. See M. M. Kovács, 'The problem of continuity between the 1920 *numerus clausus* and post-1938 anti-Jewish legislation in Hungary', *East European Jewish Affairs* 35, no. 1, 2005, pp. 23–32.
21. Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness*, p. 223.
22. See Kovács, 'The problem of continuity' and P. T. Nagy, 'The *numerus clausus* in inter-war Hungary: Pioneering European anti-Semitism', *East European Jewish Affairs* 35, no. 1, 2005, pp. 13–22. Nagy also notes (pp. 16–17) that using religious affiliation as a criterion was not feasible because that would have prejudiced the Protestants, who were overrepresented in government, the intelligentsia, and the middle classes.
23. Kovács, 'The problem of continuity', p. 24.
24. See Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness*, pp. 222–227.
25. Nagy, 'The *numerus clausus*', pp. 18–19.
26. Bermeo, *Ordinary People*, p. 23.
27. N. Katzburg, *Hungary and the Jews: Policy and Legislation 1920–1943*, Ramat-Gan, Bar-Ilan University Press, 1981, p. 90.
28. Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness*, p. 301.
29. Kovács, 'The problem of continuity', p. 30 notes that in 1937 parliament passed a special *numerus clausus* for the legal profession.
30. The text of the law may be found in *Igazságügyi Törvények Tára* XXI (1938), 3. szám, pp. 27–29.
31. Sakmyster, *Hungary's Admiral*, p. 210, notes that Horthy, who did not object to the legislation, remarked that Hungary still needed the Jews for rearmament, and if anti-Jewish legislation were too radical, the Jews might flee the country with their wealth.
32. See Katzburg, *Hungary and the Jews*, pp. 139–141; M. M. Kovács, *Liberal Professions and Illiberal Politics: Hungary from the Habsburgs to the Holocaust*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 104–105; Macartney, *October Fifteenth*, pp. 324–325. The full text of the law can be found in *Igazságügyi Törvények Tára* XXII (1939), 2. szám, pp. 81–92.
33. Katzburg, *Hungary and the Jews*, pp. 96–98.
34. See Sakmyster, *Hungary's Admiral*, p. 210.
35. See Katzburg, *Hungary and the Jews*, pp. 114–138 for reactions and details of the domestic debate.

36. Ibid., p. 135; B. Ablonczy, *Pál Teleki (1874–1941): The Life of a Controversial Hungarian Politician*, Boulder, CO, Social Science Monographs, 2006, p. 183.
37. Cited in Sakmyster, *Hungary's Admiral*, p. 229.
38. See Morgan, *Fascism in Europe*, pp. 78–79.
39. M. Ormos, *Hungary in the Age of the Two World Wars 1914–1945*, Boulder, CO, Social Science Monographs, 2007, p. 266; Kovács, *Liberal Professions*, p. 102.
40. Weyland, 'The diffusion of regime contention'.
41. See Macartney, *October Fifteenth*, pp. 188; 229–230.
42. Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness*, pp. 291–293.
43. Macartney, *October Fifteenth*, pp. 189–190.
44. Ibid., p. 324; Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness*, pp. 305–306.
45. Cited in Ignác Romsics, *István Bethlen: A Great Conservative Statesman of Hungary, 1874–1946*. Boulder, CO: Social Science Monographs, 1995, p. 326.
46. See Macartney, *October Fifteenth*, pp. 190–191.
47. See Sakmyster, *Hungary's Admiral*, pp. 210–211.
48. Ibid., p. 63.
49. See ibid., pp. 214–219.
50. Ibid., p. 220.
51. For debates surrounding the exact figures, see Romsics, *István Bethlen* pp. 198–201.
52. Sakmyster, *Hungary's Admiral*, p. 63.
53. Ibid., p. 233; 238. Quotation cited in Macartney, *October Fifteenth*, p. 362.
54. See Katzburg, *Hungary and the Jews*, pp. 158–183.
55. See Horthy's October 14, 1940 note to Prime Minister Teleki, which can be found in János Pelle, *Sowing the Seeds of Hatred: Anti-Jewish Laws and Hungarian Public Opinion*, 1938–1944. Boulder, CO, East European Monographs, 2004, p. 95.