THE IDEOLOGY OF ILLIBERALISM IN THE PROFESSIONS: LEFTIST AND RIGHTIST RADICALISM AMONG HUNGARIAN DOCTORS, LAWYERS, AND ENGINEERS, 1918-45

Mária M. Kovács

In the period between the two world wars, Hungary's professions were transformed from a politically liberal and professionally oriented elite into an illiberal pressure group attracted to radical politics. This metamorphosis of the professions contradicted the expectations of many analysts of modernization from Emile Durkheim to Talcott Parsons and T.H. Marshall who viewed the professions as the most secure element of Western liberal culture. In Parson's view in particular, the professions constituted the strongest allies of the modern liberal state: they were immune to both the anti-modernistic cultural despair and the political conservatism of more traditional elites.[1]

The professional elites of Eastern and Central Europe defied this kind of sociological optimism. They increasingly turned from being allies of the liberal state into the partners of illiberal movements and governments. Already in the 1930s, this transformation gave birth to a new, more pessimistic school of thought on the professions. Despite their very different political persuasions, advocates of this pessimistic view, such as Friedrich Hayek or Michael Polanyi, anticipated the closing of open society by technocrats and painted a picture of a new despotism led by what Bertrand Russell called the "oligarchies of opinion."[2] Educated elites were no longer portrayed as symbols of liberalism or stability, let alone democracy, but rather as a new threat to freedom and political democracy.

Interwar developments in Central and Eastern Europe gave more justification to the pessimists than to optimists such as Parsons. The professionals emerged as the vanguard of politically radical elites giving new, illiberal answers to the problems of modernization. In Hungary, for instance, professionals played a key role in all illiberal movements. Not only did they provide most of Béla Kun's communist commissars in 1918 but, ironically, also played a leading role in legitimizing the interwar fascist movements. Their illiberalism manifested itself not only in national politics but also within their own professional circles. In the 1920s, doctors and engineers were the first to develop the concept of <u>Berufsverbot</u>, the

interdiction to practice one's profession. Later, in Nazi Germany, professional communities eagerly adapted to that system; what is more, important groups of doctors, lawyers, and engineers took the initiative in legitimizing the Nazis.

Some aspects of the problem of illiberalism in the professions have been well developed by historians of the German professions. Fritz Ringer, Jeffrey Herf, Konrad Jarausch, Michael Kater, and others have pointed to those German academics, lawyers, engineers, and doctors who saw Nazi-type state interventionism as a panacea to the nation's ills.[3] Illuminating as these studies are regarding Nazism and the forging of a new kind of relationship between modern science and dictatorial politics, their exclusive focus on Nazi Germany may create a somewhat misleading impression, that of a unique German development rooted in endemic German intellectual traditions and rightist political dispositions.

At least in the case of the professions, a comparative perspective does not confirm the thesis of the German Sonderweg, the uniqueness of the German experience. Illiberalism in the professions was by no means confined to Germany, nor was it merely a response to the birth of right-wing authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. For example, the first modernists among the Hungarian professionals to turn against the liberal state, the eugenists and technocrats, were radicals of the left. As for the doctrinal tenets of their movement, they drew their initial inspiration from advanced liberal societies, Great Britain and the United States. In fact, the Hungarian eugenists were the disciples of the turn-of-the century British eugenics movement. By the time World War I broke out, they were studying the United States for its unique legislation on sterilization.[4]

As for the wider political implications of illiberal professional programs such as the biomedical and the technocratic trends, some English eugenists and American technocrats also drew rather radical conclusions. By the end of World War I, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers had turned against the laissez-faire ethics of capitalist business, while in Greenwich Village, Thorstein Veblen's circle was devising the utopia of a society run by a "Soviet of Engineers."[5] During the Great Depression, some 20,000 radicals of the movement called American Technocracy Inc. displayed a different but equally radical persuasion: shouting rightist slogans, they marched in gray-and-black uniforms and denounced liberalism as a "rotten system" that feeds on the "social syphilis of business" and the "dementia of democracy."[6]

This type of political extremism was rather short-lived, however, and even while it existed its advocates never succeeded in influencing national politics in the United States or Great Britain. As was the case with so many modern illiberal

currents, biomedical and technocratic radicalism came to exert its largest impact not necessarily in the place of its genesis but in countries more severely affected by economic chaos and political disorder in the wake of World War I. Here, unlike in the Western democracies, the professional concerns and programs of doctors and engineers more readily permeated national politics and national politics in turn affected and polarized professional communities more deeply.

In Hungary, the trauma of military defeat and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in 1918 deprived the traditional elites of their self-confidence and created a vacuum in the uppermost reaches of power. This situation presented professional groups with an unprecedented opportunity to place their radical programs on the national agenda. In fact, professionals played a crucial role in formulating and executing the policies of Count Mihály Károlyi's democratic revolutionary government in 1918, and again those of the Soviet Republic in March-August 1919.

FROM THE "SOVIET OF ENGINEERS" TO THE TECHNOCRACY OF THE RIGHT

The Hungarian revolutions of 1918 and 1919 as well as the wars fought in a hopeless attempt to recover some of the territories lost to Hungary's neighbors perpetuated the war economy and full-scale mobilization and promoted an unprecedented concentration of economic and political power. The most extreme form of this concentration were the policies of Béla Kun's communist government formed in March 1919, which proceeded to nationalize the entire Hungarian economy.

The communist revolution was born during an absence of competent national leadership, aggravated by the inborn distrust by the ouvrierist-socialist movements of most educated groups. The exception were the engineers, who enjoyed the Bolsheviks' trust. This was not surprising since by 1919 about half of Hungarian engineers were members of the Socialist Union of Engineers. According to the socialist daily Népszava, "while there is no reason for us to collaborate with most intellectuals in transforming our society, because their knowledge, ideology, and mentality are founded on the capitalist world view, the technological intelligentsia is exclusively destined to collaborate with us because of its training in the natural sciences and its close ties with the world of the workers."[7]

Simplistic as this connection between scientific training and political attitudes may seem to us, the communists were in fact profiting from an upsurge of illiberal and anti-capitalistic sentiments within the engineering profession, evident already during the war. The war economy encouraged technological development and simultaneously attempted to curb the profit motive of business owners. The temporary character of these measures only increased the frustration of engineers in large

industrial firms who had come to see modern business methods as an obstacle to modernization. As commercial considerations regularly led to the intentional restriction of productive capacities, engineers came to look upon market mechanisms as irrational forces which prevented mechanization from yielding its full benefits.[8]

Out of such resentment, the first progressivist movement of Hungarian engineers was born in the early years of World War I, well before the revolution. Its founder, the future communist commissar Gyula Hevesi nourished a dream characteristic of the engineer of his era: to create a clandestine international information agency of engineers which would prevent business owners from monopolizing the innovations of their employees.[9] This agency would enhance the swift, worldwide utilization of new technologies by liberating them from the constraints of market competition.

It was this kind of early engineers' idealism that gradually predisposed Hevesi and his colleagues to activism of a more political nature. As the war dragged on and revolution swept Russia, they found themselves increasingly attracted to the new, radical cry of the day: communism. By 1918, they were ready to "destroy the barricades that have been raised by today's society in the way of all who possess nothing but their talent and their knowledge."[10]

While it might be difficult to trace the social roots of every member in the Socialist Union of Engineers, two assertions can be made with certainty. First, the majority were employees of large firms which in 1919 allowed the revolution to transfer the command of nationalized industries to the union itself.[11] Second, in conformity with the general pattern of leftist recruitment, a large proportion of progressivist engineers were Jews, including their leader Gyula Hevesi, as well as commissars of production Ármin Helfgott and József Kelen, professor of aerodynamics Tódor Kármán (later world-famous as Theodore von Karman), Donát Bánki and others.

It is important to note, against received wisdom of scholarship on the Hungarian revolution, that support for the communists was by no means confined to either the discontented substratum, the "lumpen intelligentsia" of the profession, nor to its Jewish element which made up nearly half of all engineers in the capital.[12] On the contrary, the revolution attracted a substantial following among the most innovative, academic elite of the profession, irrespective of ethnic and confessional background. To give only a few examples, Ödön Bogdánfy, the Catholic professor of hydrometry joined the progressivists after decades of unsuccessful attempts to convince the government to fight the massive emigration of the agricultural population by improving the system of irrigation. Professor Mór Tempis Hoor,

a Catholic noble, joined the radical engineers grouped around the journal Szocialis Termeles (Social production) in 1918, after failing to win the government's support for his plan for the electrification of the countryside.

The radical engineers went well beyond neutrality to become active supporters of the revolution.[13] Their attitudes were rooted in a new consensus regarding issues of both national and professional politics. They were ready to break with the liberal foundations of the prewar order and anticipated a major restructuring of society with a new form of government in which economic decisions would be entrusted to the most competent. In fact, what the Hungarian progressivist engineers were experimenting with in Budapest were not very different from what Veblen and his friends dreamed about the same year in New York: a "Soviet of Engineers." Among the many events Budapest witnessed in 1919 was the revolt of the engineers.

For a few months in 1919 the technocratic consensus to support a leftist transformation proved vital enough to supersede more conventional commitments, cultural and class affiliations. The sympathy manifested by thousands of middle-class, even upper-middle-class engineers for the revolution showed up the surprising fragility of the commitment of the educated professions to the old order. This realization was among the most traumatic and important lessons of the war that motivated some influential conservative analysts of Hungarian society, such as the historian Gyula Szekfű and the sociologist István Weis, to revise the history of Hungarian liberalism itself and put the blame for postwar social disintegration on the very conditions the liberal state had once created.

The political activism of the progressivist engineers in itself had far-reaching consequences in weakening the traditional cohesion of the professional community. In an effort to portray themselves as a potential new elite in a restructured economy, they announced their intention to rid the professional community of its "capitalist" members who had refused to subscribe to the leftist technocratic consensus as early as 1917. Opening a new epoch in the history of their profession, the Socialist Union of Engineers set out to "create a demarcation line between engineers employed by capitalists and engineers who are capitalists themselves."[14] This attempt was the first, but not the last, of its kind to introduce the notion of political allegiance as an exclusive organizational principle within the professional community.

With the collapse of the communist revolution in August 1919, the experiment of socialist engineers to transform their profession radically also ended in failure. But more than that, their political activism provoked militant reactions on the other side of the "barricade" within the professional community. If

the revolution had already dealt a severe blow to the cohesion of the profession, the purges that followed its demise created new divisions and perpetuated an overpoliticized atmosphere in the professional community of engineers for decades to come.

It was now up to the old-guard conservatives determined to curb the technocratic influence to consolidate the profession. In ideological terms, this consolidation required a reassertion of the traditional, non-technocratic values of professional existence. It required not only the reconfirmation of entrepreneurial attitudes but also a positive demonstration of the profession's place in society on the side of the business enterprise. It was no simple political matter in 1920, however, to side with the overwhelmingly Jewish industrial and financial business community. The postwar crisis not only created a deep popular skepticism about the benefits of industrial modernization but also led to violent outburst of political anti-Semitism, ranging from bloody pogroms to organized movements to exclude Jews from commercial and professional life. Despair over the collapse of the Monarchy and the prewar nation-state, together with the shocks of two revolutions, gave birth to a paranoid political atmosphere rooted in a diffuse, nativist agrarian conservatism that equated Jews with modernism, capitalism, urbanization, liberalism, and communism and held all these -isms responsible for defeat, chaos, and the revolutions.[15]

In these circumstances, the engineering profession was ripe for reorganization by a select circle of conservative engineers who had little or no ties with Jewish big business: they were non-Jewish professors at the Technical University and small-scale self-employed engineers and their colleagues employed at public utilities. Wishing to demonstrate simultaneously their attachment to free enterprise and their complete separation from Jewish business, in October 1919 they founded the first right-wing organization within the profession. The Association of Hungarian Engineers and Architects was made up exclusively of Christians. It demanded preferential treatment for Christian engineers by excluding Jewish engineers from public commissions. It even anticipated government intervention in the decisions of private enterprises regarding commissions.

Self-contradictory as their attitudes may seem, the conservative right in fact reinforced the notion of entrepreneurial individualism as the dominant ideology within the profession while attempting to isolate such market attitudes from all traditional liberal political connotations. They wished to demonstrate that a return to market practices did not necessarily mean a return to the old liberal foundations of professional life. By 1923, the Association of Hungarian Engineers and Architects had convinced the government to set up an organization called the Chamber of Engineers, with compulsory membership for every self-employed engineer. From then on, the chamber had the

power to deny access to private practice to any applicant whose political behavior was judged to have breached "loyal conduct to the national community" any time within the preceding decade. Clearly directed against the radicals, this measure delegated unprecedented powers to the autonomous organization of the profession. From this time on, engineers could be denied access to practice on political grounds, without court proceedings, on the discretional authority of the chamber. Thus, the modern concept of Berufsverbot was born.

In spite of these efforts at a conservative restoration, technocratic radicalism did not subside in the engineering profession. It was to reappear in the early 1920s in a new, hastily improvised, arrogantly anti-Semitic, right-wing variety. Its adherents came from precisely those professional circles which had given most support to the leftist technocrats in the communist revolution, namely, engineers employed by large corporations. The new technocratic organization, the Hungária was born in 1920 as a right-wing paramilitary fraternity at Budapest's Technological University. Membership could only be granted on the basis of a birth certificate proving that all one's relatives as far back as one's grandparents had been baptized. A decade later, during the Depression, the Hungária had a membership of 4,000 out of a total of 10,000 engineers. Some of its leaders became members of parliament, others were given portfolios in Gyula Gömbös' new-right government formed in 1932, and still others figured prominently in the Hungarian national socialist movement.

Interwar engineer radicalism was a result of a curious mixture of motives. On the one hand, it inherited many elements of the anti-capitalist ideology of leftist technocrats. The common fascination of both rightist technocrats and their leftist predecessors with esoteric philosophical issues such as the "pure essence of technology" as opposed to the "material spirit of capital" can only be understood as an effort to divorce the logic of industrial growth from the commercial logic of capitalism. It derived from a desire to prove that capitalism had in fact abused technology in the interest of an illegitimate capitalist elite. The leftist attacks on capitalists for misusing technology were echoed virtually unchanged by the interwar technocrats who contrasted the true "social nature" of technology with the "exploitative blindness" of finance capital.[16]

Interwar technocratic radicalism was also a defense of a profession committed to modernization against the fashionable populist or agrarian movement which made industrialization responsible for the weakening of the national community. Like their leftist predecessors, right-wing technocrats readily accepted the agrarian notion that financiers and the industrial bourgeoisie constituted an illegitimate elite, one that ranked momentary interest above the long-term interests of the nation.

But here, agrarian and technocratic logic parted ways. The agrarians, both conservative and radical, concluded that the state should stop promoting industrial development with fiscal policies. The technocrats, on the other hand, maintained that the military strength of the nation could only be secured with further industrialization. For the technocrats, the solution was not to slow down industrial modernization, as had been suggested by the agrarians, but to channel industrial development in the service of clearly defined national priorities. This not only required increased state control over the economy, but also a competent elite of engineers to exercise such control.

As for the working class, the technocrats rejected the social-democratic trade unions because of their cosmopolitan tendencies. They proposed instead a kind of rudimentary Christian socialism that asserted the shared interests of workers and engineers against the capitalist captains of industry.

Only under the impact of the Depression in the 1930s did the engineers' diffuse motives crystallize into a coherent professional ideology. The new program of radical engineers was announced at the 1933 national convention of engineers entitled "Country Building." The introductory speech was made by Péter Kaffka, responsible for coining the term "country building" (országrendezés) in a journal article in which he had cried for a Hungarian "Mussolini who would lock up all the experts, not allow them to leave until they present the modern concept of this country."[17] His program anticipated an economy purged of anarchy, overproduction and unemployment, in which the role of commerce would be reduced to a minimum and the resources allocated to a unified national program of technological modernization. Rejecting all analogy to Soviet-type planning, the program nonetheless contained a critique of the capitalist system. The social damages of industrialism, such as unemployment, poverty, displacement, and moral disintegration "do not stem from the essence of technology but from the structure in which technology operates. What is missing from our material technology is the teleology of the sublime organizing spirit."[18]

The program's fascist tendencies were unmistakable. The economy would be reorganized on a corporatist basis, parliament would be replaced with a "House of Economic Corporations." This house would use its powers to ensure that the "mechanism of the economy corresponds...to the superior political aims of the national community."[19] Rationalization of production would be delegated to an "Economic Chief of Staff" made up of engineers. In the words of the technocrats, "the technological and economic orchestration of the country is to be entrusted to a single conductor, to the synthesizing power of the science of engineering."[20]

It was during the Depression that the technocrats briefly

came close to real power. The fall of Count István Bethlen's conservative government in August 1931 disrupted the uneasy coalition between agrarian and industrial elites. This marked the beginning of social unrest and the radicalization of the populist opposition which questioned the benefits of industrialism from the point of view of the impoverished peasant masses.

The new-right government of Gyula Gömbös formed in 1932 sought to avert a political crisis with a series of corporatist reforms that would deprive the opposition of its parliamentary rights. But the Gömbös cabinet was also determined to pursue industrial growth and modernization. To neutralize the agrarian and populist opposition, Gömbös did not hesitate to turn to another group of radicals, the right-wing technocrats. He saw them as potential allies in countering not only the agrarians but also the industrial business elite which spoke up against his corporatist plans. Gömbös therefore encouraged the political activism of the radical engineers and gave important government positions to technocrats. Géza Bornemissza, a radical engineer, was entrusted to lead the newly created Ministry of Industry which was cheered by the Hungária as the first "Ministry of Technicians."[21] His colleagues Antal Kunder, Tibor Vér, József Varga, and others also began their swift political careers at this time.

Yet the technocratic hopes for an orchestrated etatist reform of the economy never materialized. With the worst years of the crisis over, and the new-right prime minister Gyula Gömbös dying in 1936, the Regent Miklós Horthy was able to resort to conservative retrenchment. With this, the technocrats also lost their bid for greater influence. Paradoxically, their brief participation in national politics did more harm than good to the prospect for technocratic reforms. Once more, just as in 1919, the technocrats allied themselves with the most radical extreme of political life, thereby depriving themselves of the opportunity to negotiate a compromise with the business world. The technocrats' political activism now backfired: owners of private industry exhibited no enthusiasm to employ radical engineers. The owners had little sympathy for technocrats imbued with anti-capitalist ambitions which threatened the very survival of the private enterprise.

With the prospect for corporatist reform vanishing, the technocrats turned more and more to the least sophisticated of their notions, anti-Semitism. After 1936, they launched a frontal attack on Jewish property and positions. In politics, the radical engineers formed a pressure group to the right of the old-right government. Their leaders joined the genuinely fascist Arrow Cross Party and made impressive gains in the 1939 elections, the year of the breakthrough of the Hungarian fascist movement. Of the 23 engineers elected to parliament in 1939,

thirteen were members of Hungária, the union of right-wing technocrats. All 23 belonged to one of the several fascist parties which called for forming a closer alliance with Nazi Germany, expropriating Jewish property, and depriving Jews of their full civil rights.

At the same time, the radical technocrats were preparing for a purge of the engineering profession of its Jewish members. The years 1937-39 were spent in feverish activity, compiling statistics on the possible benefits of such a purge. Some of these statistics grew out of individual initiatives, such as the one on Jewish role in the construction industry by Hungary's leading avant-garde architect, Farkas Molnár. (A typical radical convert from left to right, Molnár had been an activist in the communist revolution of 1919. Later, he sought refuge in Germany and became a member of the Bauhaus. His conversion to national socialism in 1938 was made public by an article furnishing meticulous statistics on the cubic meters of space covered by buildings designed by Jewish architects on Budapest's Ringstrasse.[22]) Others counted the number of bricks purchased by Jews and demanded that building materials be rationed on the basis of creed. But even more important was the organized effort of the Chamber of Engineers in 1937, a year before the parliament passed its first anti-Jewish bill, to prepare for a campaign against Jewish engineers and business owners. Hoping to force every firm to employ Gentile engineers, the chamber drew up a register of all engineers in the country, broken down according to religion, earnings, and occupation.

A treasury of sociological information, the register provides a striking example of a self-fulfilling prophecy. It is an account of how two decades of anti-Semitic policies actually shaped the community of engineers according to an image that had previously only existed in anti-Semitic phantasies. Before the restriction of Jewish enrollment at the universities in 1920, Jews were represented in every segment and cohort of the engineering profession, with the full variety of specialization and income. At the time when Jews still made up 40 percent of the profession, their professional and financial standing did not follow a clear ethnic, or racial pattern. By 1937 this was no longer the case. The Jewish engineers had by this time clearly become more successful than the Gentile majority.

How was this possible? Bewildering as it seemed to anti-Semites, it was a consequence of the anti-Semitic politics of the profession itself. First, as a result of limited Jewish student enrollment, Jewish engineers in 1937 were significantly older than non-Jews. Moreover, whereas in 1910 Jews made up 40 percent of student body of the Technical University, their share in the interwar period dropped below 10 percent. Because there were fewer Jewish students on the whole, the number of those who faced the hardships of the twenties and thirties with little

professional background and contacts was also smaller than among non-Jews.

Second, the restriction on Jewish university enrollment in 1920 had given birth to a new recruitment pattern by Jewish applicants. Because Jews had to overcome special obstacles in the enrollment process, those Jewish students who succeeded in overcoming these obstacles tended to be from families with higher social standing and better contacts than those before the war. In other words, since Jewish students after 1920 were a select group of individuals with family backgrounds of higher status than before, their prospects for economic and professional achievement were also markedly more promising than those of their average Gentile counterparts.

Third, this paradox was only reinforced by the segregation of the Jews according to specialization and form of employment, a segregation that was a direct result of anti-Semitic policies. From the early 1920s, Jewish engineers were practically excluded from the civil service, that is, from positions at public utilities. The situation was not much different in big industry. Because of the recession, industrial firms could offer very few positions: throughout the entire decade of the twenties, factories had no more openings for engineers than the annual number of university graduates. The contracting group of Jewish engineers, numbering around 2,500 in the thirties, were increasingly drawn into private practice, mostly in construction and architecture, fields in which engineers were still predominantly self-employed.

The unintended consequences of the resulting segregation became evident only after the Depression. Whereas engineers at public utilities and in state administration went bankrupt together with their employer, the state, private practitioners tended to pull through the crisis with relative flexibility. Leading to new tensions, this process only reinforced the image of the Jewish engineer as belonging to the domain of individualism and competition, a sphere fiercely rejected by the technocrats. The self-fulfilling prophecy had come true: after two decades of anti-Semitic policies, the religious split in the professional community indeed assumed a political character. Aging, socially intimidated, reduced in numbers, and withdrawn to private practice, the bulk of Jewish engineers no longer resembled the malcontents of 1919, the one-time hard core of the leftist technocratic movement. Technocracy as a form of professional radicalism had been appropriated by the right.

From 1938 onwards, the politics of the radical technocrats centered around implementing anti-Semitic legislation. But while they used up their energy to close the engineering profession to the Jews, the radicals came no closer to the realization of their real ambition, the overall etatist reform of

the economy. In the final analysis, technocratic radicalism as a form of professional reform failed for the second time in the course of twenty years. The rightist technocrats' constant allegiance or at least lip service to the radical cause, their fierce anti-Semitism, as well as their extravagant hopes to conquer new reaches of state power, prevented the technocrats from arriving at a compromise with their potential partners in the world of business or suggesting viable solutions to the crisis of modernization.

EUGENICS AND SOCIAL MEDICINE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

In the interwar period, the right expropriated another form of professional radicalism, that of medical doctors. This process was somewhat different from the experience of the engineers. Although the leftist avant-garde of the medical profession was not nearly as strong or as numerous as that of the engineers, the issues that it put on the political agenda were never to disappear out of the focus of national politics in the subsequent decades.

The doctors' avant-garde had been troubled by the social costs of industrialization. Already by the turn of the century, doctors were acutely aware of the biological dangers of modernization. Statistical evidence in all of the industrialized countries pointed to terrifying prospects for the urban working class crowded in slums which, it was assumed, were much worse than traditional rural communities. To cite only two examples, the mortality rate of the British workers was twice as high as that of agricultural laborers, and the life expectancy of a German worker was fifteen years below the national average.[23]

The first physicians to alert the Hungarian medical profession to the biological dangers of industrialization were the eugenists, a small circle of doctors with close ties to the left of the liberal political avant-garde. The followers of Sir Francis Galton's British eugenic movement in Hungary reached the wider public at the 1911 conference of the Hungarian Society of Social Sciences. However radical their conclusions may have seemed at the time, the eugenists in fact presented the blueprint for the interwar transformation of the medical profession. On the one hand, they argued that the traditional liberal concept of individual medical service would not be viable in the future. The preconditions of successful medical care in the big cities were the prevention of epidemics, standardization of dwellings, introduction of birth control, and control of industrial health damage. Prevention not only required state intervention, but it also called for equal access to medical care for all: this purpose clearly contradicted the existing concept of marketed medical services.

On the other hand, according to the eugenists, the introduction of socialized medicine posed new kinds of dangers

to society. Using relatively recent research about hereditary inheritance, the eugenists anticipated that a more generous system of medical care would lead to an ominous biological degeneration of the human race. Instead of promoting genetic improvement, socialized medicine would enhance the survival and multiplication of the "unfit": the mentally retarded, alcoholics, and other defective lineages. According to the leading Hungarian eugenist, József Madzsar, unchecked altruism in medicine threatened to become the "main source of human degeneration.... What we are doing today in the interest of biologically unfit individuals is exactly the opposite of what we should be doing in the interest of natural selection... The longer we keep these unfit individuals alive, the more damage we do to the human race."[24] Madzsar, a Jewish convert to Catholicism and a leading communist in the interwar period, condemned the liberal concept of medical altruism in a Nietzschean vein: "We have grown accustomed much too much to the Christian imperative to pity the desolate and in the meantime, we have abandoned the pagan love of the beautiful and the healthy."[25]

According to Madzsar, the medical profession was responsible for preventing human degeneration. Social medicine and equal access to preventive medical care required radically new powers for doctors over society. They were to make sure that by helping the individual they did no harm to the race. The state was to be the link between eugenics and social medicine. By intervening in genetic reproduction, the state could allow doctors to curb degeneration and contribute to the "evolution of the aristocracy of the fittest." Sterilization and the promotion of healthy physical types were among the most important means to this end put forward by the eugenist circle.

Madzsar's curious melange of motives -- social reformism on the one hand and the severe restriction of individual freedom on the other -- was something of a shock to the average doctor of the age. As a psychologist participant in the 1911 conference remarked: "If one did not know Dr. Madzsar in person and was unaware of this selfless and useful social activity one would be bound to see Dr. Madzsar as something of a cannibal."[26]

Yet despite such resentments, the star of the eugenic school was on the rise. The eugenists' preoccupation with fertility aroused the interest of Hungary's ruling circles, especially some agrarian conservatives, who were deeply troubled by the declining birth rates of ethnic Hungarians versus minority ethnic groups. By 1917, they donated sufficient funds to enable the eugenists to launch the National Institute for the Protection of Mothers and Infants, which would combine medical care with genetic research.

In addition, World War I and conscription drew attention to

the biological conditions of the masses. New efforts were required to curb epidemics and the spread of venereal diseases. The eugenists had ready-made answers: in 1917, they spelled out a comprehensive scheme of preventive medicine anchored to the introduction of mass insurance. By this time, the more conservative corporate elite of the profession had warmed up to the progressivists' suggestions and joined them in demanding a national organization of preventive care. Baron Sándor Korányi, the country's leading authority on internal medicine and a renowned old-liberal concluded: "Mere charity in medical care will no longer solve our national problems. The solution can only be to reverse the role of the state and society: leadership must be assumed by the state."[27]

The time for celebration came for the radical left once the war ended. In a matter of weeks, the University of Budapest announced the establishment of a chair for social medicine and offered it to the leader of the eugenic circle, Jozsef Madzsar. He soon rose to the post of state secretary in the new Ministry of Public Welfare.

Yet Madzsar and his colleagues were to spend no more than a few months putting their original reformist initiatives into effect. The subsequent communist revolution of 1919 attempted a more radical approach to social problems. Progressivist doctors were summoned by the revolutionary regime to assume leadership in national politics in order to carry out the revolutionary transformation of medicine and of social policy. All medical establishments, hospitals, clinics, and insurance companies, were socialized. Medical care was made free, funded by an immense medical budget. Based on the plans of prewar progressivists, the eugenic circle, an impressive amount of construction began to improve conditions of urban hygiene and wartime epidemics were successfully halted.

The logic of the revolution no longer allowed progressivist doctors to restrict their activities to medical care. Willingly or unwillingly, they were now involved in the most Jacobin and exclusionary aspects of the revolutionary dictatorship: professors who opposed communist policies were fired from clinics, nuns were dismissed from the nursing staff because of their clerical afflictions, and uneducated proletarian political officers were entrusted with a wide range of medical decisions as heads of all hospitals.

Thus, despite all improvements in health and urban hygiene, the tide of dictatorial measures disrupted the wartime consensus within the medical profession and alienated the majority of doctors from the progressivists. The progressivists came to be identified with terror, expropriation and intimidation, instead of reforms. This explains why in the last days of the revolution a clandestine right-wing group of doctors actually

succeeded in using the medical network to stage a civilian coup against communist headquarters in Budapest. This clandestine group was to become the strongest and most arrogant interwar medical association, the anti-Semitic National Union of Hungarian Doctors.

With the fall of the revolution, the union immediately initiated a political purge of the profession. Some 50 professors and hundreds of students were dismissed from the medical faculty. The purge turned into a campaign against Jewish doctors, and the union prevailed upon the government to enact the anti-Semitic numerus clausus law which limited Jewish enrollment in the universities to six percent of the student body. Although the union failed to convince the government to ban women from the universities, the medical faculty no longer accepted female applicants.

But not all of the revolution's structural changes were abolished. Following the reprivatization of medical facilities, the resourceful conservative prime minister, Count Istvan Bethlen, took up medical reform where the prewar progressivists had left off. He embarked on the large-scale development of a centralized insurance system for the urban population. In less than a decade, the proportion of urban workers benefiting from insurance plans grew from a prewar 30 percent to 80 percent.

The political circumstances of the expansion of the welfare system were, however, entirely different from those envisaged by the prewar progressivists. This welfare system was to become an organizational stronghold of the right, instead of the left. The presidency of the National Health Insurance Institute went to the leader of right-wing doctors, András Csilléry, who also headed the militant national movement of the new-right, the Awakening Magyars. Progressivists, women, and Jews were excluded from the highly valued positions offered by the state.

As the right took control over institutions of socialized medicine and eugenics, eugenics as a discipline also underwent a major transformation. The progressivist circle who had introduced the discipline in Hungary lost its influence within the profession: almost all its members were affected by the political purges and the anti-Semitic campaigns. The institutions they had established were taken over by the right. Just as their leftist predecessors, the interwar school of eugenists also proposed biopolitical answers to the nation's problems, but now the problems were being redefined by the right. From urban health issues, attention shifted to the biomedical explanation of political behavior in general, and the causes of revolution and social disintegration in particular. "The medical profession can no longer confine itself to the mere implementation of scientific knowledge,...it must become the midwife in the birth of a new political mentality which will

serve the true interests of the nation."[28] The purpose of eugenic research was to help society rid itself of aggressive, revolutionary instincts and to create a new biological aristocracy, a cooperative and homogeneous national community.[29]

The genetic ideal of the new school was diametrically opposed to that of the progressivists. The prewar eugenists regarded the genetic attributes of the lower classes as inferior, and their purpose in finding the ideal genetic type was to improve the biological standards of the masses. The interwar eugenists reversed this logic, and derived the image of the ideal genetic type from a set of moral values related to political behavior. This ideal was to be found among those least affected by the disruptive influence of the big city: the non-rebellious Hungarian peasants.[30] In the words of János Bársony, professor of gynecology and president of Budapest University, it was in remote villages that the "chromosomes of sociable human types could be found and isolated from the chromosomes of alien, politically destructive characters."[31] Consequently, the mission of the eugenists was to protect the peasants, the "healthy genetic stock" from the corrupting effect of "revolutionary hereditary lineages."[32]

It is not difficult to see how this kind of eugenic thinking placed interwar eugenists on the most radical, völkisch extreme of the political spectrum. Blinded by their anti-urban xenophobia, the right-wing eugenists devised a self-defeating professional ideology which placed them to the far right of the dominant political mentality of Admiral Horthy's regime. The idealization of the racially pure, backward peasantry offered no suggestions to the social problems of a modernizing country. This kind of populist racism could only win the sympathy of the fascist opposition to Horthy's regime.

In the meantime, the policies of the rightist doctors' union aimed at breaking away from the market and taking over the state-run medical network also backfired. Although the union was powerful enough to keep the Jewish half of the profession out of state employment, its network could only give its members financial security as long as the state itself could afford a generous medical budget. During the Depression, thousands of insurance doctors went bankrupt together with their employer, the state. At the same time, private doctors -- by now mostly Jews who had been excluded from the privilege of state employment -- suffered smaller losses and recovered much faster than their non-Jewish colleagues. Little wonder then that by the late 1930s the rightist union ended up in the mainstream of the fascist movement. Its leaders spoke up in parliament for new, more radical legislation against the Jews and demanded ever closer collaboration with Nazi Germany.

CONCLUSION

Both technocratic and biomedical radicalism were born as responses to the dilemmas of rapid modernization. Both movements rejected the laissez-faire concept of nineteenth-century liberals and invited the state to free professional services from the laws of the market. Both wanted the state to delegate new, interventionist powers to the professions. They would both no doubt have been more successful in developing and implementing their professional initiatives had the revolution of 1919 and the counterrevolution of the right not divided this etatist constituency into two political extremes, first the communist left and then the radical right. The second generation of radicals, the interwar right, attempted to adapt modernist professional ideals to the mainstream political currents of the interwar years. But they were also tempted to improvise political coalitions with other radical-right groups, which turned out to be self-defeating and could no longer serve the modernist initiatives of the engineering and the medical professions.

Given the strength of radical trends within the medical and engineering professions, it may be puzzling to find that this anti-liberal current exerted no real influence on the third major educated profession, the lawyers. The legal profession fell more in line with Talcott Parsons' optimistic expectations and by resisting the temptation to join forces with dictatorial movements or the authoritarian state. This singular behavior can be explained only in part by the intense involvement of private lawyers in the workings of the free market and the capitalist economy. The question still arises, what was it that prevented the malcontents of the legal profession from finding political allegiances on one of the extremes of the political spectrum? What prevented this profession from the kind of political fragmentation and polarization experienced by the engineers and doctors? Indeed, during the interwar period, the Chamber of Lawyers earned the reputation of being the single most cohesive and liberal professional organization which stood out in defense of civil liberties and, more generally, of the Rechtsstaat.

This unique development was at least in part the result of the particular political experience of this profession which differed from the engineers' and doctors'. The communist revolution of 1919 left a completely different stamp on lawyers than on the doctors and engineers. In 1919, the entire legal profession fell victim to the most doctrinaire treatment by the communists: because lawyers were perceived to be the defenders of the legal system which the communists hoped to abolish, the Kun regime promptly banned the profession and stripped lawyers of all professional rights and status. Rather than polarizing the professional community, the revolution had the effect of immunizing the profession against all forms of political radicalism. In the interwar years, even those lawyers who had

strong leftist or rightist sympathies became increasingly conservative in their defense of the legal system. This corporate consensus was only reinforced under the threat of contemporary legal reforms throughout Central Europe, especially in Nazi Germany, and by the rise of fascist movements within Hungary itself. The century-long association of lawyers with the world of politics sharpened their understanding of the nature of the interwar crisis and of the destructive processes threatening the Rechtsstaat. They rightly feared for the future of the legal profession itself.

Ironically, the next historical turn Hungary was to take, under its Stalinist-type dictatorship following World War II, justified these fears. The majority of lawyers were obliged to part with their profession and most of the profession's leadership was sent to forced labor camps. Those few who retained their status as lawyers were left with no choice but to assist in the destruction of the one remaining liberal professional culture. Even so, their experience stands in sharp contrast to the impressive ease with which the Stalinist state accommodated the second, interwar generation of radicals within the engineering and the medical professions.

ENDNOTES

1. Talcott Parsons, Essays in Sociological Theory, Free Glencoe, IL, 1949, p. 140. Parson's view was shared by T.H. Marshall. Arguing that professionals were the best embodiment of liberalism and individualism, T.H. Marshall concluded his 1939 essay on the professionals: "It remains with them, more than with anyone else to find for the sick and suffering democracies a peaceful solution to their problems." "The Recent History of Professionalism in Relation to Social Structure and Social Policy," The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, 1939, pp. 325-40.

2. Bertrand Russell, The Scientific Outlook, New York,1931, esp. Chapter XII. Michael Polanyi, Scientific Thought and Social Reality, New York, 1974. The chapter in which Polanyi discusses the prospects of a new role of professionals, entitled "Science and the Modern Crisis" appeared just after the conclusion of World War II. An incisive study of the new role of professionals, which appeared in 1940, was N.S. Timasheff, "Business and the Professions in Liberal, Fascist and Communist Society," The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 45, pp. 863-69.

3. Fritz K. Ringer, The Decline of the German Mandarins, The German Academic Community, 1890-1933, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1969; Konrad Jarausch, "Higher Education and Social Change: Some Comparative Perspectives" in Konrad Jarausch, ed., The Transformation of Higher Learning 1860-1930, University of Chicago Press, 1983; Michael K. Kater, "Die Gesundheitsfuhrung des Deutschen Volkes" Medizin Historiches Journal, 1983/4; Jeffrey Herf, Reactionary Modernism, Technology, Culture and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich, Cambridge University Press, 1984.

4. On the legislative successes of American eugenists, see Rudolph Vecoli, "Sterilization: A Progressive Measure?" Wisconsin Magazine of History, Spring 1960; and Michael Freeden, "Eugenics and Progressive Thought: A Study in Ideological Affinity," Historical Journal, 1979, pp. 645-71.

5. See Daniel Bell's introduction to Thorstein Veblen, The Engineers and the Price System, Transaction Books, NY, 1983. For a history of the technocratic movement in the United States, see Edwin T. Layton, The Revolt of the Engineers, Cleveland and London, 1971.

6. Henry Elsner, Jr., The Technocrats: Prophets of Automation, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, NY, 1967, p. 137.

7. Népszava, 27 March 1919, p. 9.

8. The illiberal disposition inherent in the engineering profession is described in F.A. Hayek, "Engineers and Planners" in The Counterrevolution of Science, Studies on the Abuse of Reason, Liberty Press, Indianapolis, IN, 1979.

9. Gyula Hevesi, Egy mérnök a forradalomban (An engineer in the revolution), Budapest, 1959.

10. Quoted in György Péteri, "Engineer Utopia: On the Position of the Technostructure in Hungary's War Communism, 1919," in Peter Pastor, ed., Revolutions and Interventions in Hungary and its Neighbor States, 1918-1919, Boulder, CO, 1988, p. 143.

11. József Devics, Zsigmond Károlyi, and Mihály Zádor, A magyar értelmiség és a műegyetem a tanácsköztársaság idején (The Hungarian intelligentsia and the Technological University under the Republic of Councils), Budapest, 1963. For the history of the revolution, see Rudolf Tökés, Bela Kun and the Hungarian Soviet Republic, New York, Praeger, 1967.

12. Alajos Kovács, A csonkamagyarországi zsidóság a statisztika tükrében (The Jews of truncated Hungary in the light of statistics), Budapest, 1938. For the ethnic composition of students at the professional schools, see Victor Karady,

Assimilation and Schooling: National and Denominational Minorities in the Universities of Budapest around 1900 (unpublished manuscript).

13. To name just a few leading engineers who had collaborated with the communist revolution: Kálmán Kandó, Emil Schimanek, Ignác Pfeiffer, Miksa Hermann, Elek Sigmond, and Mihály Seidner.

14. Devics, op. cit., p. 94.

15. This type of diffuse anti-Semitic feeling is described in Peter Pulzer, The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria, New York, 1964. Writing about the Christian Democrats of the postwar years, Pulzer concludes: they "neither did, nor could decide whether they hated the Jew as a capitalist or a Socialist," a phenomenon common to Austria and Hungary. Op. cit., p. 319. See also Istvan Deak, "Hungary" in Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber, eds., The European Right, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1968, pp. 364-408.

16. Géza Kolbányi, "Technika és tőke" (Technics and capital) Hungaria, June 1937, p. 9.

17. Péter Kaffka, "Országrendezés" (Country building), Magyar Szemle, 1932.

18. Az Országrendezés mérnöki megvilágitásban, (The engineers' concept of country building), Budapest, 1933, p. 202.

19. Országrendezés, op. cit., p. 219.

20. Ibid, p. 8.

21. "Itt a technikus minisztérium!" (Finally, a Ministry of Technicians!), Hungaria, 15 August 1935. Antal Kunder was to become minister of commerce and transportation in 1938, minister of industry the next year, and again minister of commerce and transportation under the Sztójay government in 1944; József Varga, professor of chemical technology and a proponent of industrialization with an autarkic concept of developing domestic energy supplies was minister of industry in 1939-43.

22. Farkas Molnár, "Modern épitészet és magyar szellem" (Modern architecture and the Hungarian spirit), Országépités, 1939, No. 2. An excellent account of the interplay of politics and strictly professional matters among architects is found in József Saád, "Épittetőre várva" (Waiting for commissions), Világosság, June 1986. For an excellent review of the interwar political scene, see Andrew C. Janos, The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary, 1825-1945, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1982.

23. Huszadik Század, (Twentieth century), 1912, p. 221.

24. Huszadik Század, 1912, p. 154.

25. Ibid., p. 155.

26. Ibid., p. 35.

27. Rudolfné Dósa, Ervinné Liptai, Mihály Ruff, A magyar tanácsköztársaság egészégügyi politikája (The health policies of the Hungarian Republic of Councils), Budapest, 1959, p. 36.

28. Egészségpolitikai Szemle, 1935, p. 192.

29. Tivadar Huzella, A háboru és béke orvosi megvilágitásban (War and peace from the medical perspective), Budapest, 1923, p. 149.

30. János Bársony, Rectori beszéd (Presidential address), Budapest, 1922, p. 18.

31. Ibid., p. 22.

32. Ibid.