Introduction

On 30 April 1958, while on trial for his life for his role as the president of the Újpest Revolutionary Committee during the turbulent events of October and November 1956, Pál Kósa was asked to explain the sources of his "dissatisfaction" with the social and political order in Hungary during the early 1950s.[1] He responded, as someone "who had always worked with my hands, with my wife working as well, we and our two children often found ourselves in difficult situations." He continued: "I never had the opportunity to express my opinions about the mistakes. . . . In the factory I participated in mass meetings, but they always discussed production, rarely social issues."[2] Despite the attempts of the political department of the Budapest police and the prosecutors to prove that his role in the events was motivated by "counterrevolutionary" ideas, Kósa had been far from unsympathetic either to socialism or to the regime. During the late 1940s, while working as a joiner in one of the largest of Újpest's textile factories, he had joined the Hungarian Communist Party (Magyar Kommunista Párt, or MKP), eventually leaving the shop floor to become a propagandist paid by the Újpest Party Committee in 1947. "At that time," recounted Kósa during a police interview following his arrest in November 1956,

"I spent a lot of time among the workers and I had a good knowledge of the mistakes that were committed during the building of the people's democracy." These he blamed for the creation of a dictatorship over the workers in which "those in leadership positions separated themselves from the masses, and paid more attention to their own welfare, than to solving practical problems. . . . They ran roughshod over internal democracy in the party and in the end could not explain . . . why the state security services arrested many in the party and on factory committees."[3]

Expelled from the party with the consolidation of outright socialist dictatorship in 1948, he spent the early 1950s as a skilled worker and then as an artisan. Propelled by the crowd in October 1956 to a leadership role, he used his authority as a working-class former communist disillusioned with the regime to found the local revolutionary committee in industrial Újpest.[4] Arrested and imprisoned in November 1956 after the arrival of Soviet troops, then indicted for his role in the revolution, he was tried, convicted, and eventually executed in the summer of 1959.[5] While he had been placed at the forefront of the local events of the revolution by the working-class crowd, by the time of his trial and execution, many of the same workers had begun to forget the political goals they had supported in 1956. So silent were they about political demands that party officials were able to write in February 1958 that "in general workers are satisfied with the work of the party and the government," a conclusion that reflected the growing focus by workers on exclusively material issues.[6]

Legitimacy and the Socialist State

In the months and years that followed the suppression of the 1956 Revolution, representatives of the reconstituted ruling party—the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt, or MSzMP)—were deeply worried by their relationship with industrial workers. In early 1957, party officials commented with dismay that among the thousands who left the western county of Győr-Moson-Sopron for Austria, there were many "workers from traditional working-class families."[7] With the regime's consolidation, party officials underplayed the role and extent of worker participation in the revolution, arguing that the majority simply remained "passive" in the face of "counterrevolutionary" mobilization, but they were worried by the shallowness of their support in industrial communities. They explained this by maintaining that, before 1956, "the working class was primarily disappointed in the party leadership and did not see the party as the true representative of their class."[8] As a result of this concern, the MSzMP placed "improving the relationship between the party and the working masses" and "further increasing the living standards of the working class" at the heart of its program.[9]

While such concern among the apparatus was in part motivated by the desire to buy off the substantial discontent among workers that had been clearly visible

during the revolution, it had much deeper roots.[10] The notion of Hungary's postwar state as the natural representative of the country's working class was fundamental to the sense of purpose of many of its leaders; this was apparent in their shock at the breadth of worker participation in the revolution, as many recognized that "the mistakes that were committed, oppositional elements in the factories, the remnants of right-wing social democracy, revisionism, and the spread of nationalist ideology ensured that during the counterrevolution considerable sections of the workforce, especially young workers, took up arms against the people's democracy."[11] The sense of shock, the centrality of the notion of being the representative of the working class to the self-image of the regime, and its desire to repair its shattered links to industrial workers shift focus to consideration of the nature of Hungary's postwar state, the extent and nature of its embeddedness in society, and the sharply contested nature of its legitimacy.

Most analysis of the postwar Hungarian state, and by extension the socialist regimes that came to power at the same time in Hungary's Central and Eastern European neighbors, has assumed not merely the autonomy of the state from society but also its effective dominance over it. State socialism, especially its early phase, has often been interpreted as a period of overbearing restriction in which social actors were subordinated to overriding attempts by the state to direct social process.[12] Increasingly, however, historical research has expanded our awareness of how social actors were able to place limits on and thus to circumscribe state action. This shift in focus from the exploration of the extent of state power toward consideration of the limits of dictatorship has tended to qualify, rather than to challenge directly, notions of state dominance. Furthermore, it has avoided the issue of what was specifically socialist about socialist states and how they were embedded in the societies that they ruled.[13]

Discussion of the socialist state has often concentrated on its despotic nature. It has either focused on the state security agencies and the pervasiveness of political surveillance and repression or, alternatively, on the power exercised by state agencies to deploy considerable coercion and force to effect social transformation. It also assumes—in contrast to much recent writing about states—that the socialist state was a monolithic entity. This work has drawn attention to the state's dual nature. On the one hand, states consist of a concert of institutions that are social actors in their own right, populated by different groups and pursuing agendas that can be both complementary and contradictory. On the other hand, these institutions enter the social realm projecting an appearance of both unity and of being above society. This appearance, or state effect, is produced through the projection of a myth of the state as a unified whole.[14] This state effect is fundamental, for it shapes and is also shaped by what Michael Mann has termed the "infrastructural" power of the state—namely its ability to enforce its will on an everyday level, through the mobilization of certain social groups to populate its institutions and thus assert

its authority.[15] The production of the state effect and the acquisition by the state of infrastructural power is connected too to the issue of legitimacy. This emerged in especially stark form in a state like postwar Hungary, where the concert of state institutions was radically remade by the traumas of war, occupation, and regime change, in a context in which many of the forces that had enabled the production of a state effect prior to 1945 were destroyed and replaced by a new political project that sought to recast the authority and legitimacy of the Hungarian state on an entirely new basis.

At first sight, the issue of legitimacy seems to be a strange one to raise in the context of the postwar Central and East European socialist state. Socialist regimes could not be regarded as legitimate if measured by the most common criteria for judging the legitimacy of a political regime—that a regime conformed to given legal and social rules, if those rules could be justified in terms of the belief systems of both the dominant and subordinate, and then, if the subordinate consented to the exercise of power.[16] But the concept of legitimacy, when applied in this sense, appears both descriptive and static; as such, it has little potential for interrogating historically the social roots of the socialist state. There is much, therefore, to be gained from a more historically contingent definition of legitimacy, as a state of affairs in which a given regime's claim to rule met with a sufficient degree of acceptance to ensure that it was able to acquire the necessary degree of "infrastructural" power to rule on a day-to-day basis and thus appear as a coherent, unified actor ruling above the rest of society. According to this historically contingent reconceptualization of the concept, legitimacy has always been a fluid and contested state, defined by the relationship between a given regime's construction of its own claim to legitimacy and the constellation of values and cultural and political identities among those it attempted to rule. The legitimacy of a given regime was thus often claimed, established, contested, and undermined, "as a dynamic reality which existed in the critical space between the rulers and the ruled."[17] Furthermore, because of its centrality to the acquisition of "infrastructural" power by any given state and to the generation of the myth of the state as a unified and coherent actor, the achievement of a sufficient degree of legitimacy among enough of the ruled has been a central aspect of state formation.

Within the everyday practice of socialist regimes, repression and legitimacy were linked closely. Certain legitimacies enabled regimes to pursue policies of severe repression against some of those they ruled. Yet these legitimacies also placed hidden limits on the ability of a state to rule through repression, for it could not deploy violence in ways that undermined the regime's legitimacy, as this, in turn, undermined the regime. This observation is of relevance to Hungary, for acceptance of the socialist state among many though not a majority of the ruled in the Hungarian case suggests that for certain social groups it possessed a degree of legitimacy. Although such groups could see the state as legitimate, even if at the same time the

members of such groups were simultaneously victims of state coercion, the paradox of the socialist state followed from the fact that, at least in Hungary, perceptions of its legitimacy among the social groups that supported it were never shared by the majority who opposed it. As far as many Hungarians were concerned, socialist rule did not depend merely on forms of coercion that could coexist with perceptions of its legitimacy but also on naked force and the fear of force. Among these groups, this reinforced the perception of the state as illegitimate. This led the state, in turn, to use repression increasingly as a strategy of government as it came to believe that it faced politically motivated "enemies." This reliance on repression blinded the state to the way in which its infrastructural power was embedded socially. As discontent spread to groups that had been prepared to offer conditional support to the early socialist state, Hungary's rulers responded with force, thus laying the foundations of an outright crisis of the regime.[18]

Using the prism of legitimacy to examine how the infrastructural power of the socialist state was embedded socially in the changing circumstances of the fourteen years between 1944 and 1958 shows not only how legitimacy was always sharply contested but also how it was established and then eroded under different sets of circumstances. The political actors who played leading roles in the process of postwar state formation sought to construct their legitimacy with reference to the social by seeking to define their state-building project as a means of transforming class relations within Hungarian society. As early as 1943, Hungarian communists who would later play a central role in postwar state building laid the ideological foundations of their later claim to political legitimacy; Mátyás Rákosi argued that the state they sought to build would be a "democracy" committed more to reversing class-based inequalities than any notions based on the rule of law or representative government. In rural areas, he argued, "the acid test of the new democracy is the land question. He who does not want land given to the peasants, who wants to retain the system of great estates, is an enemy of Hungarian democracy." In industrial areas, "the basic demand of Hungarian democracy is the immediate abolition of any obstacle to the full economic and political realization of the power of the working class."[19]

With the formation of the new state in late 1944 and early 1945, the MKP and its allies believed that they had liberated Hungary from not only the Nazi-affiliated Arrow Cross Party but also twenty-five years of what they labeled "tyranny," "fascism," and "reaction" that had followed the defeat of the Soviet Republic in 1919.[20] In agriculture, they argued that "liberation" and the consequent "land reform opened a new era in the development of the country."[21] In addition, one "inescapable condition" of the consolidation of the "new" state was the improvement of "the situation of the working class."[22] While in keeping with the rhetoric of the "popular front" the MKP and the Left insisted that they stood for the creation of a "national unity" above classes, much of its rhetoric—of leaders and rank-and-file alike—assumed

that industrial workers formed the social cornerstone of the left-wing democracy.[23] This meant that they were expected to develop a "new" working-class consciousness. This amounted to a demand that workers take responsibility, under the leadership of the MKP, for the reconstruction of the country.[24] Workers would exercise "discipline" and "restraint" in the pursuit of the reconstruction effort; in the words of one senior MKP ideologist, they should "abandon the kind of behavior that big capital expects of them."[25]

Calls for restraint and moderation from the MKP's leadership underlined one of the central contradictions at the heart of the party's class-based construction of the legitimacy of its project. In order to demonstrate "that the Communist Party is a workers' party" and that its subject, and that of the state it was building, was the "working class," workers had to support party policies actively in the workplace and community.[26] This brought the party and workers into conflict as early as 1945, with waves of unofficial strikes sparked by the consequences of hyperinflation.[27] The contradiction at the heart of the emergent state's claim to a class-based legitimacy was that its policies often clashed with the aspirations, cultures, and political identities of "actually existing" industrial workers. Although this contradiction emerged as early as the summer of 1945, it became more serious during the years that followed. In part, this had to do with Hungarian communism's increasing emphasis on its claim to rule primarily on behalf of the working class. With its election defeat in November 1945, its earlier emphasis on the cross-class dimensions of "national unity" became subordinated to a conception of the nation in which the industrial working class was placed at center stage. Increasingly, social groups such as smallholders were defined as too culturally "backward," too much under the influence of notions of hierarchy and organized religion to be central to the Left's claim to legitimacy.[28] Such perceptions led many in the MKP leadership to argue that, in the "democracy," "only one class could assume the leading role, namely the working class."[29] These sentiments became stronger as overt dictatorship was constructed during 1948 and 1949, as the MKP effectively took over Hungary's Social Democratic Party (Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt, or MSzDP) in June 1948 to become the Hungarian Workers' Party (Magyar Dolgozók Pártja, or MDP). Rákosi himself, when introducing the constitution of the new socialist state to parliament in 1949, commented that while industrial workers' "consciousness has begun to change, because the country is theirs, they build it for themselves," but among "the peasantry, progress is slower."[30]

With the creation of overt dictatorship, the goals of the MDP shifted from building a "democracy" to the "construction of socialism." With the central goal of the "construction of socialism" being "the speeding up of the industrialization of Hungary, in the first place the development of heavy industry and machine manufacture," the regime promoted a vision of socialist industrial modernity.[31] It combined this goal with a rhetorical celebration of productive labor, especially the labor of the

male skilled workers in the heavy industrial sectors that were identified as being at the forefront of the "construction of socialism."[32] At the same time, the opening of the "new Communist working class" to social groups outside the industrial workforce was promoted as one of the means through which a genuinely socialist society would be born. In the words of one party secretary, taking work on the construction site for which he was responsible would form the means by which "fearful, passive, insecure village laborers" would "be transformed into class-conscious, fighting workers."[33] While productive manual labor in industry was celebrated and taking work in industry was proclaimed as a gateway to full citizenship in the emerging socialist state, Hungary's rulers sought to create a new "Communist working class" from the collective of actually existing industrial workers who would be capable of acting as the subject of their vision of revolutionary transformation. Consequently, they defined much of preexisting cultural practice in workplaces as part of the "damaging legacy of capitalism in the thinking of workers"; they sought through the introduction of labor competition, new wage systems, and management structures to create workers who were aware that "from one day to the next that we have to produce more."[34] Furthermore, they were "responsible for the fate of their country, for the victory of socialist construction."[35]

The socialist industrialization drives of the early 1950s brought out in especially stark form the contradictions that lay at the root of the socialist state's claim to legitimacy. The regime failed to create its new "Communist working class" as state socialist economic institutions allowed class identities to reproduce themselves among workers, and those identities were situated as antagonistic to the socialist state. This problem was exacerbated by the extreme conditions the implementation of the first five-year plan created. The intensification of labor, the reductions in wage levels, and the severe material shortages that resulted from the socialist industrialization drive created a gulf between workers and the socialist state that represented the root of a deep crisis of legitimacy for the regime. As discontent and social protest built up, the state responded with repression. Meanwhile, it papered over its legitimacy deficit by arguing that those protesting did not identify with their new "Communist working class" and that their protest was therefore illegitimate. Labor mobility and absenteeism were blamed on rural, agricultural elements who did not wish to accept assimilation into the socialist industrial proletariat.[36] Skilled worker opposition was frequently attributed to the machinations of "right-wing Social Democrats," who sought to undermine "socialist construction" for political reasons, or worker opposition was blamed on "enemy elements" more generally.[37] While such a process of attribution intensified the legitimacy gap in industrial communities, it contributed to the development of a "common sense" among the apparatus, embodied in internal reports and discussion of the situation on the industrial front right up until the outbreak of the 1956 Revolution. This "common sense" rested on an illusion that as much as resistance was the work of a

politically motivated minority, the majority supported the regime and thus understood "unpopular measures." As late as the imposition of production or "norm" increases—which were effectively state-mandated wage cuts—in the heavy engineering sector in late spring 1955, which provoked massive discontent on factory floors, officials of the National Council of Trade Unions (Szakszervezetek Országos Tanácsa, or SzOT) prefixed their descriptions of unrest with the astonishing statement that "most of the workers understand the need for norm revision."[38]

Contingent State Legitimacy in Context

The contradictory policies pursued by Hungary's Soviet occupiers suggest that they had little in the way of a coherent plan for the country's future in early 1945. While the country's smashed economy and devastated agricultural sector were bled dry to support the material demands of continued conflict and the troops stationed in the country, the Soviets pursued policies of retribution through an insistence on reparation, radically antifascist political justice, the semilegal deportation of thousands of male civilians, and the expulsion of ethnic German minorities.[39] Formal retribution was bolstered by semiofficial violence against people and property by the occupying forces, who often instituted waves of terror characterized by rape, looting, and random murder. The cumulative effect of such practices on a population who had been warned that the Soviets were mortal enemies in a war of national survival ran counter to the occupiers' policies that aimed to create a legitimate, yet pliant, political order.[40]

That pliant political order was not, at least at the turn of 1945, an overt socialist dictatorship; Soviet intervention in Hungarian politics was limited, and the postwar government rested on a multiparty system based on the principles of a "popular front," whose rule would be legitimized through free elections. While the MKP was "first-among-equals" in the postwar multiparty coalition government and enjoyed a key role in the security services of the new state, "dictatorship of the proletariat" was firmly off the agenda.[41] This policy of limited Soviet intervention clashed, however, with the more radical goals of the MKP itself, which dreamed of revolutionary transformation. Its leaders built their organization and base of support in preparation for an eventual "dictatorship of the proletariat" and saw initial Soviet moderation as a tactical and, above all, a temporary step—so much so that, at times, they had to be restrained by the Soviets.[42] The radicalism of the MKP was even greater at its grassroots. Many of the Communists it recruited in late 1944 and early 1945, motivated by the memory of the Soviet Republic of 1919 and expectations of wholesale revolution, found the moderation of the party leadership and the Soviet occupying forces difficult to understand. Some engaged in their own spontaneous acts of revolutionary violence.[43] Although such voices could be cowed by party discipline, the MKP was driven by the radicalism of much of its natural working-class

constituency—a radicalism often fueled by frustration that the MKP and the unions it dominated in 1945 had failed "to defend the interests of the workers."[44]

This constellation of forces was partially the product of but also coexisted with the political dynamics of a deeply polarized society, one sharply divided and traumatized by the human tragedy of World War II. The 1930s had witnessed a turn in the nature of the country's interwar authoritarian regime, presided over by the regent, Admiral Miklós Horthy. It gradually marched through Hungary's institutions of representatives of radical-right groups, which had played a central role in the defeat of the Soviet Republic in 1919.[45] By the end of the decade, Hungary's governing elite, albeit under pressure from the growing influence of Nazi Germany abroad and domestic national socialist mobilization at home, was committed to the reshaping of the country as a "national Christian" society, which entailed, among other things, increasingly radical anti-Semitic measures and aggressive territorial revision. This resulted in a political culture characterized by the hegemony of an association between the "Christian" and the "national"; a deeply antisocialist climate in which the labor movement was stigmatized as unpatriotic; hardening divisions between Jews, along with other perceived "outsiders," and the rest of the population; and the mobilization by the state of the population behind the goals of territorial revision.[46] Furthermore, this political culture drove the complex process by which Hungary became entangled in World War II on the side of Nazi Germany by the second half of 1941.[47] Hungary's involvement in Hitler's war against the Soviet Union—justified internally as a struggle between "civilization" and "Bolshevism"—was deeply traumatic and marked first by military and, consequently, human catastrophe on the eastern front in early 1943 and then continual reverses, mounting casualties, and the specter of eventual Soviet occupation of the country itself.[48] An ever more brutal conflict was presented by the state and interpreted by the population as a struggle to ensure "the survival of the Hungarian people in the terrible storm of the war."[49] With a political elite increasingly split between those who sought a way out of the conflict through rapprochement with the allies and those who advocated unequivocal support for Nazi Germany, the population became ever more fearful and polarized. Economic hardship and air attacks on urban centers met with national socialist agitation. Social tensions mixed with both popular and official anti-Semitism to further harden the divides between Jewish Hungarians and the rest of the population. Meanwhile, increasingly despotic policies toward the working-class and rural poor, necessitated by the dynamics of Hungary's war economy, combined with the growing specter of defeat and anger at mounting casualties to produce left-wing mobilization.[50]

Germany forced a resolution of the political conflict within the elite over continuing the war when it invaded in March 1944, and it represented a new stage in Hungary's involvement. Germany's most ardent Hungarian sympathizers among the governing elite were brought to power. Political opposition was repressed severe-

ly, while, most significantly, occupation enabled the deportation of the majority of the Jewish population. Between mid-May and the end of July, more than 430,000 Jews—in actions that took place throughout the country, save the city of Budapest—were deported, of whom the overwhelming majority were murdered.[51] The growing proximity of the front drove renewed political conflict that culminated in the German-supported Arrow Cross coup, which brought Hungary's radical national socialists to power in October. With the Red Army marching across Hungary, the country's fascist rulers intensified their drives against remaining Jews and initiated party-directed campaigns of murder against political opponents, both real and perceived. As the east of the country was occupied by the Soviets and the remainder became the theater of a bloody conflict, the Arrow Cross implemented plans to evacuate the country's bomb-damaged industry and its starving urban population to Germany. By early 1945, with Arrow Cross–ruled Hungary restricted to a portion of the west of the country, residents were hungry and cold and lived in considerable fear—both of their immediate rulers and their German patrons, as well as their likely Soviet "liberators."[52]

The combination of the actions of Soviet troops, the radicalism of the social base of the MKP and the Left more generally, the legacy of polarization and fear left by Hungary's experience of war, genocide, multiple occupation, and the parlous state of the shattered economy generated a climate deeply unfavorable to the consolidation of "popular-front" rule in 1945. The creation of the "popular-front" regime was accompanied by a widespread belief that the end of the war was only temporary and that renewed military conflict between the victors would bring further political upheaval.[53] Postwar Hungary was not only deeply tense; it was also a state in which there was no majority for either the MKP's or the Red Army's state-building project. The MKP and its left-wing allies proved unable to win support beyond the substantial but restricted ranks of industrial workers, the rural poor, and the smaller group of left-wing intellectuals. Most of the rural majority, those who attended church, and the urban middle class rallied behind a more conservative vision of a parliamentary state that protected private property, defended the family, and asserted Hungary's national independence from the Soviet occupier. In the first postwar national elections, in November 1945, the Independent Smallholders' Party (Független Kisgazdapárt, or FKgP) appealed successfully to this political constituency in order to win a substantial majority of votes, thus ensuring that the MKP's vision of the postwar state could not be legitimated through democratic means. Trapped by the rejection of its vision by a conservative majority and by its own desire for outright social transformation, the fear among many of its activists and supporters of a return of the prewar regime, and their frustration with the party's moderation, the MKP responded by intensifying political polarization. Defining its enemies as "reactionaries," mobilizing its supporters, using its control over the police and emergent security forces, and drawing in Soviet support, it pro-

gressively destroyed the FKgP as an organization capable of realizing the aspirations of the majority during 1946 and 1947 as part of its bid to reverse the results of the 1945 elections and assert its vision of the postwar state.[54]

The MKP's success in imposing its vision of the postwar state, cemented by the rigged parliamentary elections of August 1947, was one that occurred in a society characterized by considerable political polarization and where its legitimacy was deeply contested. Supporters of a more conservative vision of the country's future, despite their numerical weight in society, were excluded from any political influence. This state-building project depended for its legitimacy on social groups like industrial workers and the rural poor, who were socially excluded yet politically central. This dependence created a dynamic of radicalization that interacted with the international pressures created by the onset of the cold war to shape the social bases of an emerging dictatorship. By late 1947, with the breakdown of the wartime alliance internationally and the defeat of its political enemies at home, the MKP was able to press ahead with the construction of dictatorship, swallowing its MSzDP allies to form the MDP in June 1948 and dispensing with all other parties during 1949.[55]

The debt of the emergent dictatorship to the practice of Soviet Stalinism was quickly visible in its institutions and its practice; the last years of the 1940s witnessed a substantial expansion of the state security apparatus and its scope for repression and surveillance. At the same time, the state divided Hungarian society into its allies and "enemies of socialism," as the state attributed social tensions and everyday protest to political malcontents and blamed "western, imperialist agitation" in the cold war climate for domestic political conflict. This message was underlined by a series of show trials, beginning with that of László Rajk, a Communist Party member who served as minister of the interior for much of the "popular-front" period. The trials were designed to spread the message that "enemies" could be found everywhere. Yet when "enemies" were identified outside the ranks of the MDP, it was clear that the practices of the emergent dictatorship represented an adaptation of Stalinist techniques to the polarized climate of postwar Hungary. Individuals, organizations, and social groups that had sustained political cultures antagonistic to the MKP in the "popular-front" years were targeted. Those with close personal connections to the political institutions or security services of Hungary's interwar regime faced particularly intense persecution. The churches, especially the Catholic Church, were subjected to outright attack, as their leaders, clergy, and believers were stigmatized as part of what the regime termed the "clerical reaction."[56] This was tied to an "intensification of the class struggle" as the regime implemented policies of radical nationalization and a redistribution of wealth toward working-class wage earners. In agriculture, it entailed the spread of methods of class-based taxation that underpinned the attempts of the state to organize the rural poor into agricultural collectives.[57]

Consequently, large sections of society saw the dictatorship as an attack on their very way of life. This was particularly marked in conservative, rural Hungary, where attacks on both religious belief and landownership through the collectivization drive placed the state and its representatives on a collision course with the moral economies of village communities.[58] Yet the regime's relationship with those in whose name it claimed to rule was also tense. Representatives of the regime claimed, as did the MDP's secretary, Mátyás Rákosi, in 1949, that they were the political representatives of the "worker-peasant alliance" and that, as a consequence of their actions, "the vast majority of the proletariat, exploited by the capitalists[,] has turned into the working class serving the construction of socialism."[59] This required that industrial workers and the rural poor outwardly demonstrate their support for the goals of the regime. These goals, however, clashed sharply with both the cultures and aspirations of the rural poor in agriculture, as well as the expectations of those living in industrial communities across the country. This contradiction was brought to the fore by the forced industrialization drives mandated by the regime in the first five-year plan, begun in 1950, and the ever more intense collectivization drives combined with the compulsory requisitioning of agricultural produce to feed the industrial centers. These measures created a climate of material penury that left the regime bereft of any real legitimacy among those it claimed as its supporters by 1952. To ensure compliance with its goals, the regime fell back on the repressive apparatus it had established in the late 1940s—a strategy that risked the explosion of the social tensions into an open crisis for the socialist regime.[60]

The catalyst for the open crisis was the decision of the MDP's Soviet patrons to rein in Rákosi following the death of Stalin in 1953, through the appointment in June of Imre Nagy, a reformer, as prime minister. Relaxation in the cultural, industrial, and agricultural spheres followed; the power of the repressive apparatus was curtailed as political prisoners were freed.[61] Yet the attempts at reform were botched. The economy continued its slide into shortage-induced chaos, which combined with tensions between urban workers and those in agriculture, exacerbated by Nagy's relaxation of pressure on rural dwellers, to produce discontent.[62] This situation was used by opponents of reform who rallied around Rákosi, who retained his power base as secretary of the MDP, initiating a power struggle within the elite, which finally removed Nagy in 1955. The turn away from reform produced a growing revolt within the party and among left-wing intellectuals, who were unprepared to tolerate the abandonment of reform, given impetus by the moves toward de-Stalinization initiated by Nikita Khrushchev during 1956, which served to weaken Rákosi and his allies at the head of the MDP.[63] Yet, outside the party, with renewed collectivization drives provoking open revolt in rural areas and forced industrialization leading to new attacks on working-class living standards, which met with considerable protest from a workforce less willing to be cowed than during the early 1950s, the regime faced outright crisis by mid-1956.[64]

Given the almost complete lack of legitimacy enjoyed by the regime, it was unsurprising that the convergence of mounting social tension produced by halting reform, followed by restriction, a power struggle in the party that led to Rákosi being replaced by his economic policy mastermind Ernő Gerő, pressure from the Soviet Union for de-Stalinization, and demands from left-wing intellectuals for outright democratization produced a revolution in October 1956. The speed with which the institutions of the state collapsed, the breadth of popular mobilization, and the rapid transfer of the locus of political legitimacy to the revolutionary crowd were testimony to the depth of popular anger and the desire for change. When the Soviets intervened on 4 November to install János Kádár and his "Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Government," it seemed that the creation of a stable, socialist political order would be all but impossible; it was an impression underpinned by the scale of the antigovernment strike, the sporadic armed resistance, and the flight of tens of thousands from the country.[65] Yet the defeat of the revolution and the swift consolidation of the Kádár regime in the years immediately following 1956 laid the foundations for stable socialist rule over the course of the following three decades. This stability was not merely the product of the suppression of the revolution and the campaign of judicial retribution that followed it. Retribution was often selective, directed at specific, prominent targets, and was as much about affirming the official myth of 1956 as a "counterrevolution" as it was about ensuring stability.[66] The defeat of the revolution produced an enforced peace within Hungarian society; among opponents of socialist dictatorship, defeat and the lack of Western intervention led to a climate of resignation and acceptance that ensured their selective incorporation into the political system during the 1960s.[67] Yet among other groups, especially among industrial workers and to some extent among the rural poor, Kádár's consolidation rested on a different social base. While there remained an awareness that the regime was a government imposed by the armies of foreign power, it was able to generate a degree of popularity and acceptance in the late 1950s on the grounds that it distanced itself from the practice of the early 1950s by seeking improvement in the standards of living of its constituency and through a greater rhetorical privileging of industrial workers.[68]

Real and Imagined Working-Class Identities

Faced with mobilization among industrial workers during the 1956 Revolution, many officials in the MSzMP after its suppression interpreted that workers' protest through Stalinist lenses and concluded that the workforce had been so "infected" with alien elements and so influenced by the politically motivated that its "working class," envisaged as the collective subject of socialist transformation in 1950, had all but ceased to exist. For Lajos Kelemen, first secretary of the MSzMP in the industrial Budapest district of Kőbánya, the revolution proved that the time had

come to accept that "part of the working class simply doesn't agree with us. They just do not accept this system." This view had deep roots, for "there were twenty-five years of Horthy fascism, which corrupted a large section of the working class politically and morally." Prior to the onset of socialism, he argued, many skilled workers "were particularly well paid; now they are not rewarded as highly, and therefore stand against us." Socialist industrialization, instead of creating "a new Communist working class," had, according to Kelemen, created a situation in which "there are large numbers of the de-classed, who are now found in our factories."[69]

The national party leadership was never prepared to go so far as Kelemen and instead maintained a variant of the myth that the disappearance of active support for the system during the revolution was from the impact of the activities of the "Rákosi-Gerő clique" on the morale of a basically loyal working class.[70] The policy of the MSzMP was based on the notion of addressing the justified grievances of industrial workers, and, by paying close attention to them, it assumed a basic unity of interest between the party and those within the working class it regarded as being its most "class-conscious members." It asserted that workers automatically "recognized and appreciated the benefits of socialist society."[71] It also suggested that they were fully aware and grateful to the state because "the workers in general live much better, and much more securely[,] than they did in the Horthy era."[72] Yet the tension between official evaluations and the pessimism of an observer like Kelemen was revealing of the way in which the MSzMP replaced the MDP's project of transforming workers into a "new Communist working class" with a claim to rule in the name of a "working class" as it existed within the Hungarian social imaginary.

This imagined "working class" rested on notions that presented certain actually existing industrial workers as representative of the workforce as a whole. These belonged to the skilled, urban elite centered predominantly in the industrial suburbs that surrounded Budapest or to the most industrial of provincial centers in which heavy industry was concentrated, among whom socialist trade union and other labor movement activism had been concentrated prior to the onset of socialism.[73] While this imagined "working class" was conceived as a unified social body, industrial workers' identities and attitudes had been, even prior to the advent of socialist dictatorship, highly diverse. The uneven pattern of Hungarian industrialization, shaped by its peripheral capitalism, had created an industrial workforce that was highly segregated spatially.[74] The industrial districts of Budapest itself, together with the working-class towns that lay adjacent to the capital and several larger industrial cities, for example Győr, formed predominantly industrial communities on the eve of World War II. In these areas, relatively large factories in light and heavy industry alike were embedded in industrial districts together with smaller, often artisan-owned and run industrial enterprises that shaped one particular kind of working-class community.[75] Yet equally important were the industrial company towns, like Ózd or Salgótarján, relatively isolated from other major urban centers

and dependent on either a single industry or an enterprise, where most workers lived in housing at the company-run colony, while a minority commuted from their rural hinterlands. Claustrophobic, relatively isolated, and characterized by both overbearing management control and poor housing, such communities tended to be breeding grounds for class tension.[76] While large numbers of industrial workers commuted from rural areas, rural Hungary itself was also the location of significant industrial communities. These varied from those located around establishments like sawmills or brick factories, which had been mainstays of the earliest phases of Hungarian industrialization, to more substantial enterprises like the most isolated coal mines or southwestern Hungary's oil industry, which began production in the late 1930s.[77]

Cutting across the distinctions and identities generated in different kinds of industrial community were those produced by hierarchical gradations between workers. Dominant discourses of working-class culture placed a skilled elite at the apex of a set of hierarchies that also played a considerable role in shaping workers' identities. These notions had material roots, tied to the limited supply of highly skilled industrial labor, their preferential position in wage bargaining, and the division of labor in many industrial enterprises. Yet these material factors interacted with a bundle of cultural practices and notions in which discourses of gender, generation, and the rural-urban divide were embedded. Highly skilled workers, and their attributes of mastery of machinery, trade, and dexterity, were frequently labeled as masculine. Notions of "respectability" were tied to discourses of gender both within and beyond the workplace. Such notions were used to exclude female workers from access to jobs that were defined as both highly skilled and remunerated.[78] Discourses of generation were embedded in rites of passage in industrial workplaces, into institutions such as apprenticeship and into prevalent cultures of seniority.[79] Discourses of the urban and rural were deeply embedded within workers' cultures and interacted with the position of rural commuters within the divisions of labor of many factories to segregate rural dwellers in peripheral positions within the labor process.[80]

While patterns of settlement interacted with cultural notions of hierarchy and other distinctions such as sector-based occupational cultures and identities that related to religious observance to produce a complex spectrum of worker identities, the formation of political identities reinforced divisions that socialist state formation was forced to negotiate. Socialist political identities had considerable influence on industrial workers; during Hungary's early industrialization, the country had imported its skilled workers from other parts of the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy and its Central European neighbors, bringing the ideas of the developing European labor movement to new industrial centers. The development of friendly societies, trade unions, and socialist political activism culminated in the formation of the social democratic MSzDP in 1890. The growth in the organization and militancy of

the labor movement quickly brought it into conflict with the liberal, dualist state, driving further radicalization, which culminated in working-class mobilization that led first to democratic revolution and then to the foundation of the brief Soviet Republic in 1919.[81] The defeat of revolution left Hungarian socialism marginalized and split, between a "legal" social democratic MSzDP, which sought an accommodation with the hostile interwar regime, and an "illegal" Communist tradition, driven underground and motivated by the memory of the Soviet Republic.[82] With the Soviet Republic and by extension socialism's "internationalism" blamed for Hungary's losses of territory in the Treaty of Trianon, socialist politics were branded as unpatriotic within hegemonic discourses of national identity. In the 1930s, this led the country's ruling parties to make limited incursions into industrial communities, winning support, albeit highly restricted, among small segments of the workforce.[83] Hegemonic discourses of antisocialism and nationalism combined with social radicalism and popular anti-Semitism to produce a more populist, working-class fascism, which generated considerable support for Hungary's national socialists in industrial communities at the end of the 1930s.[84]

The plural nature of workers' identities interacted within different industrial communities to produce cultures that were far more diverse than the discourses of political actors allowed, especially with regard to the various parties implicated in Hungary's postwar state-building project. Patterns of conflict, consent, and accommodation to the various stages of the MKP and its successors' state-building project varied considerably across different industrial communities and groups within the workforce. In considering the relationship between industrial workers and socialist state formation in postwar Hungary, therefore, due attention must be paid to the differing nature of the experience across a range of industrial communities at the local level. It is for this reason that this book concentrates on the experience of state formation in three distinct industrial communities in Hungary; while none provides the scope for a fully comprehensive account of what occurred in working-class Hungary between 1944 and 1958, they are representative of certain kinds of communities, and a comparison among all three allows for generalization.

Introducing the Case Studies

This book draws its evidence from three very different industrial communities. Újpest, an administratively independent city in the industrial suburbs of greater Budapest prior to 1950 and, since then, the fourth district of the Hungarian capital, lies on the eastern bank of the Danube in northern Pest. Tatabánya, a predominantly heavy industrial city formed in 1947 as the result of a merger of four villages fifty-five kilometers west of Budapest, is the second case study. The third is made up of the cluster of villages in the Letenye district of Zala County, in the far southwest of the country, where economic structures were transformed by the discovery of oil

in 1937. All three industrial communities were different in terms of their patterns of industrialization, occupational structures and cultures, local identities, and political outlooks.

Újpest's formation, industrialization, and growth were closely tied to the industrialization of Pest from the early nineteenth century. Originally part of the manor of the Károlyi family, the land that constitutes modern Újpest was parceled out by the landowner and offered for rent in 1831. The largely vineyard-cultivating tenants were joined over the following decade by several industrial entrepreneurs attracted by the closeness of the area to commercial Pest. Later arrivals were artisans, many from the Czech lands and Austria, who initiated the first wave of industrial development. With the completion of Hungary's first railway line between Pest and Vác in 1846 and the proximity of the Danube, Újpest grew; it had a population of only 12 in 1832 but of 6,722 by 1870.[85] The following thirty-five years saw Újpest's transformation into a major industrial center; the late nineteenth century saw an extension of leather working and the furniture industry, large textile plants that had consolidated by 1887 into the Magyar Pamutipar cotton factory, a more diverse machine-manufacturing sector, and an electrical goods industry, fronted by the United Incandescent Lamp and Electrical Company, founded in 1896.[86] By 1910, it had a population of 55,197, of whom 35,909, or 65.1 percent, were economically dependent on industrial employment. Consequently, it was a center of the emergent socialist labor movement and a site of considerable strike activity during the first decade of the century.[87] The strength of the local labor movement made the town a center of support for the revolutionary upheavals at the end of World War I and during the brief Soviet Republic, and it ensured that a strong and militant socialist subculture persisted in many of the town's factories into the 1920s.[88]

With the spread of the textile industry in the town, by 1930 twelve textile plants operated locally, joined by further light industrial enterprises. With other sectors hit by the depression, the predominance of light industry was reinforced.[89] On the eve of Hungary's entry into World War II in 1941, Újpest remained a predominantly working-class town; of a population of 76,000, 46,334 were dependent on industrial employment.[90] With the turn of national policy toward increasingly institutionalized anti-Semitism, the large Jewish population—10,882, according to the 1941 census—was placed under greater pressure.[91] Újpest had not been immune from the mobilization of the working class by national socialist parties at the end of the 1930s; indeed, the Arrow Cross won 43.44 percent of the vote in the city in 1939, easily outpolling both the MSzDP and the conservative governing parties.[92] Yet Újpest's relative autonomy as a county borough and the rootedness of notions of civic independence in local identities from both neighboring Budapest and the surrounding Pest County insulated it to some extent from the full consequences of national trends. Following the restoration of local administration in 1922, a cross-class left-of-center alliance of liberals and the MSzDP kept control of the city coun-

cil throughout the interwar years and, pursuing policies of public works, limited housing improvement, and modest social reform, were able to repel the attempts of the right-wing governing parties at the national level to dislodge them, right down to World War II.[93]

While Újpest was a working-class town with considerable municipal autonomy that pursued left-of-center policies of social reform and was part of a major conurbation, the villages that later made up Tatabánya had an entirely different character. Its story as a community began in 1896, when geologists working for the Hungarian General Coal Mining Company (Magyar Általános Kőszénbánya Rt., or MÁK Rt.) discovered large coal deposits on the estate of the Eszterházy family close to the multiethnic villages of Alsógalla, Felsőgalla, and Bánhida, only six hundred meters from the Budapest-to-Vienna railway line. Given its good transport links and the ongoing process of industrialization across Austria-Hungary, the mine expanded quickly, meeting the rising demand for coal from the Austrian capital.[94] The growth of the mines transformed patterns of population and settlement; in the 1880s, the three villages where mining began were small multiethnic communities. Two, Alsógalla and Felsőgalla, were populated largely by German speakers, while the other, Bánhida, had a Slovak majority population. The combined populations of the three communities increased from 3,255 in 1880 to 9,657 in 1900; their ethnic composition also changed. Most of the new labor attracted to the mines was Magyar speaking, but the population retained its multiethnic nature.[95] While issues of ethnicity represented an undercurrent in the formation of working-class identity, more important was the role that MÁK's policies played. Most "key" workers were settled in company housing known as "colonies," which the employers used as a tool of discipline and supervision over the core of the workforce. These colonies formed the basis of the settlement of Tatabánya; by 1941, Tatabánya itself had a population of 7,312, while industrialized Bánhida's was 11,763, Felsőgalla's 17,110, and Alsógalla's 1,770.[96]

Despite the fact that around a third of all mine workers were rural commuters by the mid-twentieth century and that there were other substantial industrial establishments in the Tatabánya area—two major power plants, a cement factory, an aluminum smelter, and a quarry—coal mining and thus the culture of the mining colony played a central role in the determination of local identity. In 1941, of the 37,955 people who lived in the four communities that later formed Tatabánya, 19,024 were economically dependent on employment in mining; only 10,687 had employment in industry or construction.[97] The lack of independent city government above the level of the four villages gave large local employers, especially those that provided company housing in the colonies—most significantly, MÁK Rt.—extensive power over the lives of their workers. In MÁK Rt.'s colonies, access to housing and social benefits was determined by status-based lines of demarcation, often referred to by workers as the "caste system," which reinforced hierarchies of class and rigidly

separated workers, office staff, engineers, and managers. Workers reacted strongly against this "caste system," and it became one of the significant points of reference in the construction of identities among Tatabánya's miners.[98]

Given the claustrophobic nature and the culture of status-based distinction in the mining "colonies," as well as the misery for those urban workers who were excluded, the district became fertile ground for the growth of a militant labor movement. In 1919, Tatabánya was a stronghold of the Soviet Republic; its suppression locally was violent, with gendarmes shooting at demonstrating mine workers. The consolidation of the interwar regime was accompanied by a restoration of the power of MÁK Rt. over the mining community. During the interwar years, there existed a widespread subculture of protest that most frequently manifested itself in "go-slow" or wildcat strikes that occasionally erupted into more serious unrest, including the bitter and unsuccessful ten-week miners' strike in 1925. The moderate MSzDP proved unable to represent this militancy adequately, and it rapidly lost support among the local workers, some of whom turned to "illegal" Communist activity.[99] The discrediting of the legal labor movement and the obstacles to Communist political activity combined with the radical mood to produce space for Arrow Cross mobilization in the district in the late 1930s. In the 1939 parliamentary elections, the Arrow Cross took 38.98 percent and the MSzDP 11.47 percent in the Tatabánya parliamentary constituency, while national socialist activity led the district to become a center of the Arrow Cross–incited miners' strike in 1940.[100]

While Újpest and Tatabánya were very different kinds of industrial communities on the eve of World War II, the villages in the south of Zala County, between Letenye and Lenti, that formed the site of the oil fields were hardly industrial communities at all. When the social observer Róbert Páldy visited the region in 1938, he found isolation along the border with Yugoslavia where "the area was almost half forest and the population live, practically speaking, almost exclusively from tilling the land in tiny hamlets." He recorded that "most of the population are without any spiritual or physical support in the closed villages," an isolation reinforced by the distance of the railway, the expense of the bus services, and the poor roads; it was a place where "rainy weather" cut off some of the villages entirely from the outside world.[101] The transformation of the region came with the discovery of oil at Budafapuszta, near Bázakerretye, in 1937 by the European Gas and Electric Company, a subsidiary of Standard Oil. The find led to the creation of a substantial drilling operation supervised by a new subsidiary company—the Hungarian-American Oil Industry Public Company (Magyar Amerikai Olajipari Részvénytársaság, or MAORT) in June 1938. With the discovery of further substantial oil and gas deposits close to the villages of Kútfej, Lovászi, and Tormafölde, MAORT's operations expanded with a new drilling plant, which started production at Lovászi in December 1940. After extraction began at nearby Pusztaszentlászló in 1942, the region became a site of significant oil production, just four years after the start of oil drill-

ing.[102] In this poverty-stricken, isolated agricultural region, labor was not hard to recruit; MAORT was flooded with applicants, even from the families of landholders attracted by the promise of relatively high wages and income security. Although the skilled work, so crucial to the labor process in oil drilling, was initially performed by foreign workers, with locals taking the unskilled positions, MAORT quickly sought to shape a local workforce. It did this by insisting that its skilled foreign drilling masters train local skilled workers. The company also sought to use its position of power in the local labor market to insist on strict work discipline, and it imposed a one-year probation period on all its recruits. As early as 1940, local residents made up 94.6 percent of all manual workers.[103]

Before oil production was taken over by the state after the United States entered World War II in 1941, MAORT had created a distinctive culture among the oil workers. The American owners insisted on a flattening of cultural distinctions between the white-collar employees and the manual workers, something almost unheard of in status-obsessed Hungary, and the model of workplace cooperation that was created even attracted comment in the postwar years.[104] This practice was reinforced by the high pay, status, and skill levels of many of the manual workers; 75.87 percent of the company's 4,202 manual workers were skilled workers in 1943.[105] Yet the practice was also a product of the creation of a distinctive rural working-class culture among oil workers. In a poor, agricultural region, many saw working in the oil industry as a chance to gain a degree of financial security and prosperity not guaranteed by meager smallholdings, allotments, or gardens, yet the arrangement also allowed most oil workers to retain land and their families to acquire wealth to support their small-scale agricultural activities or their subsistence plots. Men went to work in the oil industry, leaving women to manage agricultural activity. With few workers living in the company housing adjacent to the plants and many commuting from neighboring villages, employment in the oil industry was an extension of a rural, conservative, smallholder culture.[106] This culture, combined with high pay and a strong company-based identity that transcended many of the divisions of status at the plants, created a climate in which the labor movement was unable to make any inroads, something that was ruefully noted by representatives of the MKP in the postwar period.[107] Yet in their own ways, all three industrial communities posed challenges for Hungary's postwar would-be state builders in the decade and a half that followed the end of World War II.

The first of this book's eight chapters concentrates on the beginnings of postwar state formation in Hungary's industrial communities. Against the background of the military victory of the Soviet Union and the Red Army occupation of Hungarian territory at the end of World War II, the MKP and its allies worked to build a state that was able to effect radical and lasting social transformation. They argued that the end of the war had brought a "liberation," which enabled the reshaping of

the Hungarian state and nation around industrial workers and the rural poor. Yet, as this notion of "liberation" became the founding myth of the new postwar state, it failed to secure the legitimacy of the MKP's state-building project in industrial communities. War and the regime change that followed were experienced as a period of trauma, fear, and penury by workers. Consequently, only certain sections of the industrial workforce constituted a reliable social base for this state-building project, and these groups often demanded more radical and immediate change than the party was prepared to offer. This precarious position was underlined when the MKP attempted to legitimate its state-building project through elections in autumn 1945, which resulted in defeat by the most conservative of the legal antifascist parties.

Electoral defeat led to a withdrawal of trust among the MKP's working-class supporters amid the mobilizing Right and penury induced by hyperinflation, forcing the Left to shift to a strategy that rested on intensifying the political polarization of Hungarian society. This allowed the MKP to reconstruct its own legitimacy among left-wing workers by presenting itself as their best defender against the threat of "reaction." Chapter 2 explores the MKP's construction and limits, arguing that the organization was rooted specifically in those local working-class cultures, where left-wing political identities were most deeply embedded. Support for the political goals of the Left did not, however, translate into unconditional support for the productivist policies of the MKP in the workplace; patterns of support and opposition were instead bought through a series of informal bargains at the local level, where responses were often rooted in the everyday cultural practices of the communities concerned. The scope of these bargains was circumscribed politically; right-wing workers found themselves less able to buy in, while their opposition in production met with repression. As popular-front politics were undermined by the atmosphere of polarization and the MKP's politics of confrontation, the limited postwar democracy broke down, and the victorious Communists constructed an overt socialist dictatorship.

In this situation, the partial and uneven legitimacy established by the MKP in 1946 and 1947 evolved; no longer able to so credibly deploy the threat of "reaction" as a tool to mobilize workers, Hungary's "new" rulers built support by offering tangible material improvement or the promise of future improvement to their supporters. As chapter 3 shows, this stored up problems for the regime as support among workers was bought at the price of the subversion of labor policies that prepared the ground for economic planning in the future. The new state's stance toward areas that opposed it, characterized by escalating repression, anticipated its response to widespread discontent when it emerged later.

The newly merged MDP in 1948 had little intention of respecting the social dynamics that had enabled the creation of socialist dictatorship. It instead sought to forge from the actually existing industrial workforce a new "Communist working class" that would act as the collective subject of its project to transform Hungary

into a socialist society. Chapter 4 analyzes the outright failure of this project of transformation, as it foundered on its failure to persuade workers to identify with this new "working class." This problem of identification rested on both the persistence of preexisting identities among workers and a deeper reproduction of class identities enabled by the subjective experience of implementing economic planning in workplaces. Planning rested on commodified, fragmented labor, while the state's attempts to industrialize brought wage cuts, increased work intensity, and provoked protest, which in turn brought repression.

Meanwhile, this cold war industrialization drive forced an expansion in the workforce, the impact of which is considered in chapter 5. Hierarchies based on gender, generation, or rural-versus-urban dynamics within the workplace were challenged as the state combined the introduction of new groups to industrial labor with its program of creating a new "working class," while many of the "new" workers themselves were deeply antagonistic to the regime. Furthermore, their integration into production, dictated by increasing bottlenecks and shortages that combined with discontent to produce chaos in mines, at factories, and on construction sites, generated endemic informal bargaining between lower management and workers, in which hierarchies were reproduced and a discontented elite within the workforce pushed "new" workers to an alienated periphery.

The industrialization drive of the early 1950s was not merely accompanied by failed transformation in workplaces but also produced penury, which was exacerbated by severe shortages of basic goods. By 1953, the regime had lost all legitimacy, which forced the party leadership, under Soviet pressure, to make limited changes in personnel and policy that initiated a three-year power struggle. Chapter 6 concentrates on this retreat, which brought the regime no respite as political dynamics in industrial communities crystallized. These were dynamics that had been shaped by the conflicts through which class identities had been reproduced through the contradictions between the regime's attempts to constitute actually existing industrial workers as a new "Communist working class" and workers' everyday experiences of alienation in both workplace and community. Thus, the stage was set for the revolution that erupted in October 1956 and revealed the regime's crisis of legitimacy by demonstrating the lie that the actually existing industrial workforce was in any sense the subject of the regime's political project. Instead, as chapter 7 shows, worker participation in the revolution brought the submerged social conflicts that had characterized the early 1950s out into the open in the public realm.

As chapter 7 also shows, alongside the emphatic anti-Stalinism and the flowering of democratic patriotism during the revolution, the events of October and November 1956 were marked by political ambiguity about goals and the revelation that political attitudes, cultures, and divisions from the late 1940s had been reproduced in the 1950s. After the Soviet intervention in November, the newly installed Kádár regime was able to play on these phenomena in order to win support in some

industrial communities for its argument that, in fact, a "counterrevolution" had occurred in autumn 1956. The consolidation of the Kádár regime among industrial workers, as chapter 8 shows, was as much about winning acceptance for its myth of 1956 as "counterrevolution" by meeting many of the social and economic demands advanced during the revolution, while closing the door firmly on its political goals. Thus, paradoxically, while the events of the revolution underlined the absolute lack of legitimacy of the regime by the autumn of 1956, its social and political defeat proved fundamental to the consolidation of a socialism whose hegemony, while not uncontested, was nevertheless considerable. This was because of a further paradox in that the consolidation and thus the strength of the regime rested on radically moderating its goal of transforming workers and coming to accept that the working class as it "actually existed" was the subject of its rule.