

Hungary and the West: heralding the new normal

Norbert Szári

February 2025

Index

Page 1	Index
Page 2	Introduction
Page 3	The strategic heritage of the Carpathian Basin
Page 3	Hungary's dual identity: balancing East and West
Page 4	Region of conflict: from the Roman Empire to the modern age
Page 5	Turbulent path of world war experiences
Page 6	The Soviet time and its enduring consequences
Page 7	Influence current international relations: historical memory
Page 8	Cultural contexts: the clash of interpretative frameworks in Hungary and in the West
Page 9	Bridge between historical legacy and contemporary politics
Page 10	A vision for renewal
Page 11	Endnotes

Introduction

"He is looking for dictatorship," declared US President Joe Biden during a campaign event, while Viktor Orbán met Donald Trump in Florida[1]. In addition, a significant part of the European Union, including the Commission, continues to view Hungary as a "black sheep"[2], a sentiment openly expressed by the prime minister himself in an interview with the Italian newspaper *Libero*[3]. But why has this persistent tension developed between Hungary and its Western allies? Why does the Hungarian position, the Hungarian way of thinking, often seem incomprehensible to Western partners?

The persistent tension between Hungary and its Western allies has become a defining feature of European politics. Hungary has found itself in the crossfire of numerous international criticisms in recent years. The accusations span a wide spectrum: from the state of the rule of law, through restricting the operating space of civil organizations, to fostering relations with Russia and China. In the context of NATO, energy policy and ties with Russia frequently provoke sharp criticism.

On the contrary, the Hungarian government tries to justify its position by claiming that there is nothing at the centre of its actions other than a merely pragmatic approach: the preservation of Hungarian sovereignty, the preservation of foreign policy space, the constructive reaction to the shifting power balance in the world and the exploitation of economic benefits.

The perception of Hungary's activities in the international arena remains extreme. However, recent events have given rise to an interesting development. Hungary's approach to governance and international relations increasingly anticipates a shift in Western political thinking. At least in an increasing number of cases.

The convergence of Hungary's historical experience and nowadays political approach has positioned the country as a herald of emerging political trends in the West. Hungarian exceptionalism, once considered, is now more and more a template for political movements all across Europe. Once seen as controversial, Hungary's strong devotion to what it calls "common-sense politics" – stated in its "No War, No Migration, No Gender" stance[4] - has started to be more common in Western political discourse. This shift is especially interesting since these roles correspond closely with the policy directions suggested by the incoming Trump government, long supported by Hungary.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the country's poor reputation remains largely unchanged and the relationship with both the EU and NATO continues to be characterised by significant contradictions, which require detailed examination.

This complex link with the West is the subject of the study and the aim is to attain a more thorough knowledge of it. The aim is not just to list criticisms and replies but to understand the underlying motives and historical-cultural forces that have defined Hungary's unusual position.

The next analysis looks at why this tension lingers and the parties cannot find resolution. It seeks to provide an unbiased view of Hungarian incentives and Western expectations, therefore stressing the points whereby conflicting interpretive paradigms and interests generate conflict.

The strategic heritage of the Carpathian Basin

By examining the patterns of historical experiences, it is possible to gain a more in-depth understanding of a nation's decisions and policy responses. Anthony D. Smith defines the ideal type of the nation as the cultivation of shared memories, symbols, myths, traditions and values, or, as he sees it, which is particularly relevant to our case, "inhabit and are attached to historic territories or 'homelands,' create and disseminate a distinctive public culture"[5].

Over the centuries, these experiences have left an imprint on national memory and shaped the collective mindset of the community. As John Lukács asserts "the existence of historical knowledge, the inevitable presence of the past (is) in our minds"[6].

For Hungary, its geographical location – right in the heart of the Carpathian Basin – has always been and still is of great importance. Located at the crossroads of Eastern and Western cultures, the Carpathian Basin has been of great strategic value to neighbouring states or empires over its long history. The historical development of this region is significantly influenced by the stage it allows for different powers to pursue their program. The ancient crossroad of empires, the Carpathian Basin, situated at the intersection of Western and Eastern civilizations, has changed from cause of strategic value to a complicated legacy that contemporary Hungary must negotiate in its foreign policy.

Due to the region's status as a natural meeting point between different parts of Europe, Hungary could not stay neutral in major regional conflicts. The convergence of mountain passes, rivers, and plains in the Carpathian Basin meant that any major European power seeking to project force across the continent needed to either control or neutralize this territory. The geography of this region has driven Hungary into sophisticated political and diplomatic interactions with neighbouring powers, frequently demanding tough decisions between conformity (*or alignment*) and opposition.

We will examine how these geopolitical circumstances, past events and historical experiences have shaped Hungarian political philosophy, with reference to the custom of balancing between great powers.

Hungary's dual identity: balancing East and West

The history of Hungary has been characterized by a continuous tightrope walk between major powers, particularly during the last five centuries since the country's division into three parts in 1541. However, this two-fold attitude has been present in the national conscience since Hungary's era in the Carpathian Basin, when we stood bridging two cultures with one foot in Asia and the other in Europe[7]. Hungarian society embodies a special link to Eurasia and its soul. One could argue that Hungary is the living Eurasian idea itself[8]. Sándor Karácsony the famous 20th Century educator, and an excellent expert on the Hungarian folk spirit knew that we came from the East and arrived in Europe. "It is a fact that the 'Hungarian' endeavour, the more than thousand-year-old historical shared destiny spread across the geographical space on both banks of the Danube, is dual in nature: European and Asian."[9] This particular duality is deriving from the mixture of Eastern roots and Western Christian values sets Hungarian cultural and social identity apart most obviously. Considering the subject through the lens of the writer and poet Dezső Keresztury: "Its discipline and insight are Christian and European, but its memory and desire seek alliance with forces that exist before or beneath European culture; with its literacy, it feels at home in the West, but in its instincts, feeling of loneliness and being lost stir restlessly."[10]

This particular mixture, the dual identity (*sentiment*), gave rise to the feeling of ‘we are alone’: “During the process of self-realization, one of the most shocking experiences of the Hungarian nation was that of abandonment, the absence of kinship, and a sense of national solitude.”[11] It was a group experience reinforced by the linguistic cultural isolation and the harsh historical experiences – that formed an integral part of Hungarian political thinking and identity.

The defining freedom battles in Hungarian history help to further strengthen a tradition of striving for independence and a strong national identity, which is closely connected with this ‘sense of loneliness’. Not just a historical memory, the narrative of "freedom fighter" is also an energetic shaper of present political dialogue: the theme of resistance to outside forces and fight for self-determination recur frequently in public discussions and legislative rhetoric. This complex legacy also helps account for the odd duality of Hungary's concurrent western integration efforts and its often harsh opposition to popular Western ideas.

Region of conflict: from the Roman Empire to the modern age

The region naturally connects western and eastern Europe, as well as northern and southern territories. It is interesting to note that this area has been a clashing zone between empires throughout history. In ancient times, the Roman Empire and the "Barbaricum", the borderland of the various nomadic peoples, were both located in this area. Within the Danube line (*Limes Danubius*), there was the Roman province Pannonia in the western basin, and Germanic and Sarmatian tribes were responsible for controlling the lands beyond, with whom the Romans had to engage major battles. In the final decades of the Empire, King Attila set his seat here and the basin became the centre of the Hun Empire.

From the end of the 8th century onwards, it also became a border area between the Avar Empire and the Frankish Empire. Later on, there was a big battle at Pozsony (A.C.907) between the Kingdom of the Eastern Franks, particularly the Bavarians, and the recently established pagan Grand Principality of Hungary. The Hungarian victory brought peace to the region for more than a century. After the establishment of the Kingdom of Hungary (A.C. 1001), it came into a more intensive contact with the Byzantine sphere of interest. This resulted in several conflicts between the two countries, mainly in the context of the struggles for influence in the Balkan Peninsula.

But the Hungarians must continue to fight not only the Byzantine Empire, but also the Holy Empire. Despite the adoption of Latin Christianity, the Holy Empire made several attempts to conquer the area for another 150 years, and waged some 5-7 campaigns against the Kingdom of Hungary.

During the 13th century, in the context of the Mongol invasion, Hungary emerged as a significant stronghold of Western Christianity. A notable period in this history was the expansion of the Ottoman Empire, during which Hungary served as "the bulwark of Christianity" for centuries, initially operating independently and subsequently as part of the Habsburg Empire.

During the 19th century, although not as a direct conflict zone, it was located at the intersection between the spheres of interest of the Habsburg and Russian Empires. Indeed, there was even an instance in which the Habsburg Empire, as the swan song of the Holy Alliance, was able to defeat the 1848 Revolution and War of Independence in Hungary with the assistance of the Russian Tsardom.

This vulnerability to the historical interplay of imperial powers foreshadowed Hungary's similarly precarious position in the 20th century. The Carpathian Basin's strategic position made Hungary a crucial chess piece in the great power politics of both World Wars. During WWI, as part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Hungary found itself caught between the expanding Russian Empire from the east and the growing influence of the Second Reich from the west. The natural fortress-like geography of the Carpathian Basin, which had historically served as a defensive advantage, became a crucible of conflicting imperial ambitions.

Turbulent path of world war experiences

The aftermath of WWI was particularly transformative for Hungary. As a consequence of the defeat in the war the Treaty of Trianon in 1920 dramatically redrew Hungary's borders, reducing its territory by approximately two-thirds and leaving significant Hungarian populations outside the new national boundaries. This further serves to reinforce the distrust and vulnerability towards great powers and the feeling of 'being on our own'. The territorial reorganization reflected the broader collapse of traditional empires and the emergence of nation-states in Central and Eastern Europe, fundamentally altering the power dynamics in the Carpathian Basin.

In the period leading up to WWII, this geopolitical determinism became particularly acute. Hungary found itself in an increasingly precarious geographical and political situation. Initially, Hungary attempted to stay out of the European conflict, but revisionist ambitions and the region's shifting power dynamics gradually pushed the country toward an alliance with Nazi Germany. The Third Reich appeared to be the only power that could support Hungarian territorial revision claims, particularly regarding the territories lost after WWI. However, this decision proved fatal: when German defeat became apparent, Hungary found itself unable to break free from this alliance system.

It is particularly noteworthy that cooperation with the Soviet Union was never considered a viable alternative by the Hungarian political leadership. This was largely due to the traumatic experience of the 1919 Hungarian Soviet Republic, which left deep scars in Hungarian society and political thinking. The resolute rejection of Bolshevik ideology was so strong that it effectively made any eastern orientation impossible to consider, even when the German alliance had clearly become a dead end.

As the war progressed, Hungary attempted to negotiate a separate peace with the Allies during 1943, primarily with the British. This led to German occupation in March 1944. In October of the same year Hungary's unsuccessful attempt to exit WWII was followed by a period of several months of significant bloodshed, which ultimately resulted in complete military defeat and Soviet occupation, as the Red Army advanced westward through the Carpathian Basin. Consequently, the country fell into the Soviet Union's sphere of interest.

The Soviet time and its enduring consequences

After World War II, the Soviet occupation followed up another traumatic period in Hungarian history that fundamentally transformed the political, economic, and social landscape of the country. Hungary was incorporated into the Eastern Bloc under Soviet influence, which led to the formation of socialist government run by the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP), and closely supervised from Moscow. Rampant political repression, social terror, economic constraints and restricted rights defined this age and therefore greatly shaped the national psyche (*psychology*). Living under communist rule was oppressive, generating a rising feeling of displeasure that exploded in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

The revolution made clear the long-held need of the Hungarian people for independence, reform, and the recovery of their national identity. At first a peaceful protest against the Soviet-imposed government, it grew into a national revolt. Demanding political freedoms and democratic reforms, people tried to escape Moscow's grip. The revolt, nevertheless, was stopped by brutal Soviet forces storming Budapest, putting down the revolution and reestablishing control. The bloody crushing of the revolution of the “lonely” (*left-behind*) Hungarians generated deep sense of grief and betrayal by the West, intensifying their corporate will to oppose outside control and supporting the story of Hungary as a country of freedom fighters against repressive foreign forces – all this, of course well after the events.

Afterwards Hungary caught in the crossfire of great power games. The country found itself once more in a buffer zone during the Cold War, belonging to the Eastern Bloc while also maintaining ties with the West. In essence it functioned as a kind of mediator between the two world orders.

The revolutionary events of 1956 framed the contrast between the people's wish for self-rule and the oppressive character of the dictatorial regime. The general secretary János Kádár who came to power with the help of the Soviets was aware that he could not continue the communist rule by means of Stalinist terror, and that he had to find new ways to secure the support of society. As a result, the government felt driven to recalibrate its strategy. The regime accepted the need for reform to deal with general discontent in answer to the changed public mood and took a more elastic approach: 'goulash communism' or 'refrigerator socialism'.

During the 1960s, a time when the MSZMP and its general secretary János Kádár held power under strict Soviet control, the idea of 'goulash communism' emerged – a somewhat more liberal version of state socialism within the Soviet Bloc that permitted some small economic reforms and relative openness to the West. This led to the formulation of the standard of living policy.

However, the necessary resources were lacking to create material prosperity, and what was required was a boost to Western economic relations, an influx of capitalist capital and cutting-edge technology. At this point, Soviet and Hungarian interests converged. Hungary's task became to neutralise the West, that is, to influence democratic societies; 'to sensitise the free world to communism'[12]

Though closely managed under rigorous party supervision, this deliberate balancing act presented once again Hungary's historical tendency to negotiate between great powers – however this time in a very low-key way – while remaining somewhat self-sufficient. In this situation, it is right to talk about certain internal changes. These changes gave the impression that living conditions were improving. On the whole, however, we cannot speak of real autonomy, nor of a lasting and real improvement in living conditions; rather, the focus is on the facade of autonomy and improvement. With this, The Party tried to silence any criticism of the

system. The bitter pill[13], the price of improvement and relative freedom, the Hungarian society had to swallow came after the regime change (1989).[14]

Influence current international relations: historical memory

The Soviet years and their after effects have greatly shaped Hungarian ideas of government and Hungarian identity. The present political environment of the nation as well as diplomatic ties with other countries are really influenced by these historical experiences. Balancing the benefits of Western integration with a strong wish to preserve its national interests and identity, Hungary still negotiates the complexity of its geopolitical position. This dynamic has been a constant thread throughout its turbulent history.

The experience of foreign rule confirmed the historical narrative of Hungary as a nation caught between great powers, always struggling to preserve its independence. This has contributed to a deep-seated skepticism towards external influences[15] and a strong emphasis on national sovereignty in modern Hungarian politics.

Also, the memory of the 1956 Revolution has a big influence on the political discourse in Hungary. It acts as a potent representation of resistance against tyranny and a reminder of the nation's ability to rise against great odds.[16] Modern political language frequently appeals to this historical legacy, especially when supporting ideas that differ from conventional Western perspectives (*view*).

In this narrative, the violent quashing of the revolution combined with the perceived lack of Western assistance[17] underlined both a feeling of abandonment and the need for practical self-sufficiency. This experience created a lasting template for Hungarian strategic thinking: *while seeking integration with the West, maintaining sufficient independence to protect perceived national interests*.

Knowing this historical backdrop is absolutely necessary for understanding present Hungarian policy alternatives and choices. Rather than taking a straightforward opposition towards Western values, Hungary's sometimes contentious positions usually show profoundly embedded strategic culture that emphasize national autonomy and practical interest-based (foreign) politics over ideological conformity - although ideology plays a significant role in modern Hungarian politics and is frequently the source of friction with the European Union. This produces a unique view of international affairs: one that is dedicated to Western institutions but one that allows for independent endeavours when they are seen necessary for national interests.

Cultural contexts: the clash of interpretative frameworks in Hungary and in the West

Modern Hungarian politics mirrors this difficult legacy. Though membership in the EU and NATO keeps the nation strongly tied to Western organizations, it often follows policies that diverge from Western consensus. This is obvious in many major respects:

- In reaction to EU policy initiatives especially, national sovereignty is claimed.
- A practical attitude to international politics that occasionally runs counter to Western ideas
- Precise calibration of NATO obligations to balance military responsibilities with national independence
- Sustainment of vivid diplomatic and economic ties with non-Western powers declared autocratic

These conflicts have their roots in very different interpretative systems that define how each side views international relations, sovereignty, territoriality and political legitimacy as much as in policy differences alone. Whereas Western countries usually address these tensions via the prism of liberal democratic norms and institutional conformity, Hungary's viewpoint is strongly based on its historical experience of negotiating between competing power centres and maintaining national autonomy, mostly on conservative ideas and values, often branded illiberal by Western critics.[18]

The failure to resolve these conflicts shows a more fundamental discord between Western expectations and Hungarian motives, which arise from their different methods of global affairs and government. Western allies often see Hungary's behaviour in terms of democratic backsliding as well as departure from settled European standards[19]. From the Hungarian point of view, on the other hand, these very activities reflect reasonable application of national sovereignty and sensible response to shifting global dynamics as well as hard-learned historical lessons on the need of preserving control over opportunities for movement in power politics. This basic variance in understanding sets up a cycle whereby efforts at settlement generally serve to fortify rather than alleviate frictions.

First and major in fundamentally different interpretative frameworks for grasping sovereignty and international cooperation. Although institutions of the West typically work under the idea that closer integration and shared decision-making benefit all parties, Hungary's past experience has resulted in a strong conviction in keeping maximum national autonomy, even within alliance systems. This sets up a basic conflict whereby Hungary might regard what Western allies view as typical coordination in an unfavourable light as external coercion.[20]

Another important factor is the different interpretation of past events. Hungary's history as a crossroad between empires, especially its experiences under control from the Soviets and the trauma of the 1956 Revolution, has given rise to a strategic culture that stresses preserving flexibility for maneuver between major powers. This is quite different from the post-World War II integration as a route to peace and prosperity seen in Western Europe. These several historical experiences produce opposite opinions on the right balance between national independence and international cooperation.

A third major factor is the clash between different conceptions of pragmatism in international relations. Shaped by centuries of negotiation between rival powers, Hungary's

strategy highlights the need of being adaptable and advancing national goals through several global contacts. Especially in relation to interactions with non-Western states, this can contradict Western ideals of institutional unity and ideological compatibility.[21]

Divergent opinions on the nature of democratic legitimacy make the situation even more complex. Although Western institutions generally value institutional checks and balances and liberal democratic rules, Hungary stresses national sovereignty and popular mandate as the main basis of political legitimacy. This presents scenarios under which the same actions can be seen very differently by each side, that is, as valid expressions of democratic will or as worrying breaks from democratic standards[22].

These core worldview discrepancies imply that efforts at resolution frequently miss one another since each side works on different fundamental beliefs about the nature of international relations, sovereignty, and legitimate political activity. As disagreements are not only about particular policies but about the fundamental ideals meant to steer international cooperation and national administration. This makes finding common ground especially hard.

Bridge between historical legacy and contemporary politics

The composition of Hungary's historical experience with its modern-day political stance has made the country a harbinger of a possible political change in the Western world. Once seen as an oddity within European politics, Hungary's unique political philosophy has become a powerful model that appeals to political groups across the continent and beyond.

The Hungarian model has become especially significant in recent times due to the EU's urgent need to act in a unified manner and demonstrate strength. This requires a solid and coherent ideological foundation. Hungary does not aspire to a dominant role within the EU, nor does it wish to be a roadblock for the Union. The essence of the model is to provide inspiration for the EU on how to recalibrate its intellectual compass, on how to renew its policy, thereby transforming Europe into a resilient geopolitical actor again. Under Viktor Orbán's leadership, Hungary has recently shown a remarkable ability to understand the signs of the times and adapt as best as possible to changing world order.

Hungary's small-scale achievements highlight the need for the EU to adopt a similarly independent and pragmatic approach on the world stage. The EU should urgently develop a distinctive foreign policy; one open to negotiation, prioritizing peace, does not categorize based on ideology, i.e., free from Western universalism, and independent of external pressures such as NATO.

Internationally, the Hungarian government is getting more and more credit for its emphasis on pragmatic government methods. Although the country is still often the target of criticism from the EU or other left-wing, liberal, and in some cases, center-right forces, the country's political model — centered on national sovereignty, border security, traditional social values, anti-woke rhetoric, and the principles of an ideology-free economy — is gaining a significant traction within Western political discourse. This change in attitude is especially noteworthy since these longstanding Hungarian policy stances now seem to closely match the expected policy direction of the incoming Trump administration, pointing to a major shift and realignment in the North-Atlantic hemisphere, and even in the world[23].

The country's historical past as a midpoint between the East and West has specially qualified the nation to see and adjust for shifting worldwide forces. Hungary's present attitude toward foreign affairs is a mirror of these well-entrenched strategic thought habits. The nation will retain its Western institutional affiliations even as it adopts policies that occasionally

deviate from Western consensus[24], thereby showing a sophisticated awareness of the evolving world scene.

This strategic positioning has its origins in centuries of negotiations amongst conflicting hierarchical structures. Hungary's focus on preserving national sovereignty while engaging in worldwide organizations shows a careful balancing act – one that resonates more and more with other countries confronting comparable issues in a changing global environment.

Given the present worldwide environment, the skepticism of the country toward external powers' guarantees and its practical attitude toward global affairs have shown to be especially important. Hungary's continuous effort to make room for flexibility inside alliance systems, while still having independent policies even in the face of EU criticism, has set precedent other countries are starting to find worth investigating.

A vision for renewal

Hungary's geographical location in the Carpathian Basin still influences its strategic posture. The fact that the region is a natural geographical unit together with Hungary's central location offers both possibilities and obligations. The way the nation approaches regional development and cross-border cooperation shows an awareness of challenges and chances beyond national boundaries.

The growing influence of Eurasia and its major powers is bolstering Hungary's position as a bridge between East and West. The most recent defining geopolitical approach of the country, which adopts a strong Eurasian perspective, acknowledges that the next century is going to see a major change in world power dynamics[25]. Hungary's proactive efforts to establish diplomatic and trade relations with numerous nations[26], particularly in Asia, including China, South Korea, Japan, India, Vietnam, the Organization of Turkic States or even Russia (though the relationship has waned lately owing to sanctions) demonstrate a forward-looking approach. While it keeps Western institutional connections, this reorientation is a refined solution to developing worldwide conditions. For other countries wishing to negotiate a progressively more difficult worldwide environment, Hungary's approach of diversifying its international relationships while still grounded in Western institutions offers a possible model[27].

In order to achieve success, it is imperative to possess a comprehensive understanding of historical and geographical realities. Furthermore, the establishment of strategic alliances with natural partners is essential for the development of independent capabilities in key areas. In addition, it is crucial to demonstrate resistance to subversive ideologies and movements, while also cultivating authentic cultural traditions. Finally, practical steps must be taken in military, economic, and technological spheres in order to ensure success.

This vision provides a practical roadmap for 21st-century European renewal, grounded in historical understanding, strategic foresight and concrete actions. These actions would enable Europe to restore its civilizational strength and cultural self-esteem, achieve genuine independence in key strategic areas, form alliances with natural civilizational partners, and contribute to a more stable multipolar world.

Fundamentally, Hungary's unique historical background and geographic location account for its being a herald of these fresh geopolitical guidelines, political standards or new norms. The country's pragmatism in international relationships and capacity to preserve its strategic autonomy while still engaging with world bodies provide important inspiration for countries negotiating the challenges of modern global politics.

This shift from anomaly to front runner (*from black sheep to a black swan*) shows how much current political policies can be informed by long-learned historical lessons on defending national interests in a geographically sensitive zone. Hungary's skill in juggling national sovereignty and overseas participation gives ideas that are more and more pertinent to the EU or other countries dealing with comparable issues as the worldwide political scene keeps changing.

Endnotes

- [1] Bayer, Lili, 'Furious Hungary summons US envoy over Biden's 'dictatorship' comment', *The Guardian* (12 March 2024) <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/12/ambassador-biden-viktor-orban-dictatorship-hungary> accessed: 8.1.2025.
- [2] De La Baume, Maia, 'Black sheep in the European Parliament', *Politico* (25 September 2015) <https://www.politico.eu/article/black-sheep-in-the-european-parliament-viktor-orban-epp-mep/> accessed: 9.1.2025.
- Bremmer, Ian, 'Viktor Orban Is Turning Into Europe's Black Sheep', *Time* (17 April 2017) <https://time.com/4737948/viktor-orban-hungary-europe/> accessed: 9.1.2025.
- Crisp, James, 'The black sheep of the EU head for crisis as Brussels cuts off lifelines', *The Telegraph* (26 October 2022) <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2022/10/26/eus-black-sheep-head-crisis-brussels-cuts-lifelines/> accessed: 9.1.2025.
- [3] Senaldi, Pietro, 'Viktor Orban, la rivelazione: „Perché l'Europa mi tratta da pecora nera”, *Libero* (16 June 2023) <https://www.liberoquotidiano.it/news/esteri/36112711/viktor-orban-intervista-perche-europa-tratta-pecora-nera.html> accessed: 9.1.2025.
- [4] Orbán, Viktor, 'Speech by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán at the opening of the CPAC Hungary Conference', *miniszterelnok.hu* (5 May 2023) <https://miniszterelnok.hu/en/speech-by-prime-minister-viktor-orban-at-the-opening-of-the-cpac-hungary-conference/> accessed: 11.1.2025.
- [5] Smith, D. Anthony, 'The Cultural Foundations of Nations. Hierarchy, Covenant and Republic', *Blackwell Publishing* (2008)
- [6] Lukács, John, 'At the End of An Age', *Yale University Press* (2002)
- [7] Györfy, György, 'A magyarság keleti elemei', *Gondolat* (1990)
- [8] Orbán, Viktor, 'Speech by President Orbán Viktor at the opening of the V. Eurasia Forum', *miniszterelnok.hu* (21.11.2024.) <https://miniszterelnok.hu/orban-viktor-beszede-az-v-eurazsia-forum-megnyitojan/> accessed: 11.1.2025.
- [9] Karácsony, Sándor, 'A magyar éjszárás', *Magvető* (1985)
- [10] Keresztury, Dezső, 'A magyar önismeret útja', *Magvető* (1985)
- [11] Ibid.
- [12] Borvendég, Zsuzsanna, 'A Cég megnyertjei – a megnyertek cégei', *Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága* (2018)
- [13] Dwight D. Eisenhower used this very phrase – „it was indeed a bitter pill us to swallow” – to describe the non-interventionist American position regarding the Hungarian Revolution at a national security meeting on November 8th 1956.
- [14] Borvendég, Zsuzsanna, 'Az Impexek kora', *Kárpátia Stúdió* (2024)
- [15] Csurka, István, 'Nemet a NATO-ra', (1997) In Szócs, Zoltán, *Minden, ami van*, III. vol. (pp.:1360-1363), *Püski* (1998)
- [16] Schmidt, Mária, '1956 jelentősége és üzenete a feltétlen szabadságvágy – beszéd a Magyar Politikai Foglyok Szövetségének megemlékezésén' *schmidtmaria.hu* (18 October 2024) <https://www.schmidtmaria.hu/eloadasok-beszedek/v/1956-jelentosege-es-uzenete-a-feltetlen-szabadsagvagy--beszed-a-magyar-politikai-foglyok-szovetsegenek-megemlekezesen/> 18.1.2025.
- [17] Jeszenszky, Géza, 'A Nyugat cserbenhagyott minket?' – a lecture in the conference: Ikerválságok – Szuezi és a magyar forradalom 1956-ban. *mult-kor.hu* (18.11.2016.) <https://mult-kor.hu/ikervalsagok-szuezi-es-a-magyar-forradalom-1956-ban>

[20161118?fb_comment_id=1196581233765288_1196812557075489&fbrcMR=desktop&pxIdx=2&openImage=10099](https://www.facebook.com/1196581233765288/1196812557075489/?fb_comment_id=1196581233765288_1196812557075489&fbrcMR=desktop&pxIdx=2&openImage=10099) accessed: 17.1.2025.

[18] Gostynska-Jakubowska, Agata, Bond, Ian, 'Hungary And The West: We need to talk aboutt Viktor', *Centre for European Reform* (26 November 2014) <https://www.cer.eu/insights/hungary-and-west-we-need-talk-about-viktor> accessed: 15.1.2025.

[19] Press release of the European Parliament: 'Hungary can no longer considered a full democracy', *European Parliament* (15 September 2022) <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20220909IPR40137/meps-hungary-can-no-longer-be-considered-a-full-democracy> accessed: 22.1.2025.
Benson, Robert, 'Hungary's Democratic Backsliding Threatens the Trans-Atlantic Security Order', *Center for American Progress* (22 January 2024) <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/hungarys-democratic-backsliding-threatens-the-trans-atlantic-security-order/> accessed: 23.1.2025.

[20] Gát, Ákos Bence, 'Brüsszel tönkretenné Magyarországot?' *Ludovika* (15 February 2024) <https://www.ludovika.hu/blogok/ot-perc-europa-blog/2024/02/15/brusszel-tonkretenne-magyarorszagot/> accessed: 25.1.2025.

[21] van Elsuwege, Peter, 'How Viktor Orbán Challenges the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy', *Verfassungsblog* (9 July 2024) <https://verfassungsblog.de/how-viktor-orban-challenges-the-eus-common-foreign-and-security-policy/> accessed: 26.1.2025.

[22] Press release of the European Parliament: 'The Hungarian government threatens EU values, institutions and funds, MEPs say' *European Parliament* (18 January 2024) <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20240112IPR16780/the-hungarian-government-threatens-eu-values-institutions-and-funds-meps-say> accessed: 26.1.2025.

[23] Omeed, Bashira, 'Emerging Multipolarity: Critical Analysis of a Shifting Global Order', *Centre For Strategic And Contemporary Research* (22 October 2023) <https://cscr.pk/explore/themes/politics-governance/emerging-multipolarity-critical-analysis-of-a-shifting-global-order/> accessed: 27.1.2025.

[24] Matrascelli, Carlo, Gijs, Camille and Haeck, Peter, 'Hungary is flirting with China – at what cost to the EU?' *Politico* (24 June 2024) <https://www.politico.eu/article/hungary-flirt-china-cost-eu-trade-foreign-direct-investment/> accessed: 28.1.2025

[25] Sahakyan, Mher (ed.), 'China and Eurasian Powers in a Multipolar World Order 2.0.' *Routledge* (2024)

[26] Xinhua News Agency: 'China top investments in Hungary as Asia leads FDI', *Belt and Road Portal* (10 January 2025) <https://eng.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/p/03SQK62V.html> accessed: 28.1.2025.

[27] Orbán, Balázs, 'Hussar Cut: The Hungarian Strategy for Connectivity', *MCC Press* (2024)