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**Losers of Modernization.**  
**The Decline of Burgher Shooting Societies in**  
**Hungary,**  
**1867–1914**

ALIAKSANDR PIAHANAU

*Shooting societies organised by town citizens (burghers) were considered the traditional guardians of many autonomous settlements in Central Europe from the Middle Ages up to the late 19th century. In seeking to identify the causes of their decline in late Habsburg Hungary, this paper draws attention to a variety of modernising drives that undermined the stability of burgher marksmanship. One was the emerging Hungarian nation-state, which hindered the development of paramilitary citizen groups by limiting local self-governance and freedom of association. Another was the modern appeal to ethnic homogenisation in the form of Magyarisation. It aroused hostility towards the burgher riflemen because of their frequent use of the German language and loyalty to the Habsburgs, and not to the Magyar nation. Although the surviving burgher shooting societies had espoused Magyar nationalism by the early 1900s, they nonetheless maintained their elitism, excluding the growing urban populations from membership. At the same time, the burgher riflemen failed to engage sufficiently actively in rifle training to secure the support of the Defence Ministry and the radical Magyar nationalists. Instead, they remained traditional venues for socialising and networking for the increasingly isolated ennobled petty bourgeoisie. All this created a situation where the burgher marksmen became marginal players not only in urban political life but also in Hungary's rapidly developing paramilitary culture. The story of the decline of the burgher shooting societies sheds new light on the ambiguities of modernisation, but also demonstrates weakness of the societal militarisation in the pre-1914 Central Europe*

When in March 1876 flooding threatened the city of Hódmezővásárhely in Southern Hungary, its municipal council was unusually alarmed. Not only was the flood powerful and had already devastated Budapest, but unknown saboteurs had tried to destroy the local dam protecting the community. The city's mayor, István Pokomándy, made an urgent appeal to the president of the burgher shooting society to bring his men with firearms to guard the dam day and night and repulse any further attack.<sup>1</sup> This case illustrates how local authorities in Hungary, lacking sufficient security forces, would turn to civil society for support in emergencies. In this regard, rifle associations were highly effective helpers. Providing citizens with firearms training and gun camaraderie, these clubs were unique in Hungary and were the only civil alternative to the sparsely-stationed military squads. Unlike the army and gendarmerie, citizen sharpshooters were independent of the state and, theoretically, represented the native population. Enjoying high social prestige and embodying the virtues of public order and civic morality, marksmen groups played a significant role in community life. The Magyar press eulogised them for their contribution to community life, and the leading newspaper, *Pesti Hirlap*, even claimed in 1879 that the Buda Burgher Shooting Club simply 'governed Buda,' the western part of the Hungarian capital.<sup>2</sup> But while the country was urbanising and modernising, burgher shooting societies were closing their doors. Arguably due to a lack of public interest, the Hódmezővásárhely shooting society was dissolved in 1896, by which time the city had grown to become the fourth largest in Hungary.<sup>3</sup> Around 1890, the kingdom had 91 official burgher rifle societies, but their number had shrunk by the Great War.<sup>4</sup> The main storyline of this paper is the gradual decline of burgher shooting clubs in dualist Hungary, but the main question it addresses is – why did it happened?

Armed, cohesive, publicly active and recognised by local authorities, burgher shooting societies may be considered 'war-related' or paramilitary associations.<sup>5</sup> While many see paramilitarism in Europe as an interwar phenomenon,<sup>6</sup> recent, ground-breaking papers have analysed the pre-1914 period in greater depth and have shown that legal armed groups,

such as civic patrols and strikebreaking brigades, were instrumental in mediating and framing social tensions in *belle époque* Europe.<sup>7</sup> The development of an active, modern paramilitary did not, however, prevent the disappearance of many traditional civil armed institutions in modernising communities (especially in industrialising and urbanising cities).<sup>8</sup> Paramilitarism in Central Europe, whether in the pre- or post-WWI periods seems to be a complex, contradictory and under-researched topic.<sup>9</sup> This paper, therefore, seeks to offer an overall assessment of *fin de siècle* paramilitary culture by analysing the burgher shooting organisations in late Habsburg Hungary, which have so far received little scholarly attention. Unlike those researches that have emphasised the importance of the then recently-established, mass-oriented, nationalist paramilitary initiatives (such as the Garibaldi shooting societies in Italy, the school battalions in France; or the veteran societies, youth sports groups and such radical groups as the *National Falanx* in Hungary),<sup>10</sup> this paper focusses on the century-old, elitist war societies as a means of documenting the vulnerabilities and challenges of traditional civil institutions in a time of accelerating modernisation.

Modernisation is a disputed, but fundamental, concept in 19<sup>th</sup> century historiography.<sup>11</sup> In its broadest sense, it encompasses the profound transformations in the social, political, cultural, economic and technological structures and habits that accompanied the establishment of industrialised, urbanised and globally-connected societies under the rule of nation states. Nineteenth-century modernisation in Hungary is usually interpreted as a range of top-down projects, realised mainly by land-owning or embourgeoisied nobles. But modernising changes were not universally welcomed. Rejecting rapid social mobility and tough competitiveness, the marginalised gentry and state officials, small artisans and traders increasingly turned to conservative fundamentalism. Prior to 1914, racially defined nationalism and anti-Semitism became the main ideological expressions of the frustrations felt by the 'losers of modernisation'.<sup>12</sup> This paper examines modernisation in dualist Hungary and discusses its impacts on burgher associationism and the declining shooting societies. More particularly, it addresses such crucial 19<sup>th</sup>-century

innovations as the centralising (and nationalising) state, ethnic homogenisation, the emergence of a middle class and mass militarisation.

### *Decay of the Burgher shooting societies in post-1867 Hungary*

Rifle clubs appeared to be the oldest type of citizen association in dualist Hungary (1867–1918). Claiming to have been established in 1510, the Késmárk Shooting Club was considered the oldest extant civil association in the entire kingdom.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the first known sharpshooter societies had appeared in Central Europe, including Hungary, in the Middle Ages. Generations of full-rights citizens from self-governing towns, usually called 'free men' or 'burghers,' had fulfilled their obligation (and right) to form city guards. Such societies offered military training and free-time activities, provided police services, and sent the burghers into combat in times of war. At the same time, they were one of the main civil urban institutions representing local citizens.<sup>14</sup> Like other important institutions of public interest, marksmen societies were the only civil groups repeatedly exempted from paying rifle taxes during the dualist years.<sup>15</sup>

Most marksmen societies were 'urban societies', meaning formalised groups of citizens located in a town, city or other big settlement, hence the frequent epithet 'citizen/burgher' (*polgári* in Hungarian, *Bürger* in German). While their official designations were diverse – 'societies', 'clubs', 'bodies', 'unions', 'leagues', 'troops' or 'ensembles' (*egylet*, *egyesület*, *társulat*, *szövetség*, *csapat* and *kar*) – they were similar in essence: formal, hierarchically-structured, voluntary groups organised around shooting practice as preparation for the defence of their communities in case of threat. Most marksmen societies also took part in religious celebrations and local festivals, and held parades, balls, drinking sessions and dances.

Despite their professed credo of traditional values and maintenance of order, the rifle associations of dualist Hungary underwent a profound internal metamorphosis from exclusive paramilitary societies of burghers to all-inclusive sports clubs. The change was gradual, making it sometimes difficult, if possible, to distinguish shooting societies from sports clubs.

There are, nonetheless, certain dissimilarities. Firstly, burgher societies were regarded as 'historical' or traditional institutions related to the local community, while sports clubs were a new form of socialisation for the middle and upper classes. Secondly, the ultimate goal of sharpshooters, in the Middle Ages and modern times, was linked to defence (of their communities, country or monarch) should the need arise, while the sportsmen instead strove to improve their individual physical fitness (although many justified it in the name of military preparedness). However, the distinction between traditional burgher rifle societies and modern urban shooting clubs was in degree rather than in kind.

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, burgher rifle clubs were widespread in Hungary. Although in that period the Viennese court had successfully used Hungarian civil riflemen in the war against the French, following the defeat of Hungary's War of Independence of 1848–49 it closed down almost all the burgher rifle societies in the kingdom. In 1862, central Hungary (without Transylvania and Croatia) had only 18 burgher rifle associations with over 2,500 members.<sup>16</sup> However, after the 1867 Compromise, which transformed the Habsburg Empire into the dual Austria-Hungarian monarchy, the situation changed. In united Hungary-Transylvania, there were 82 officially registered shooting clubs with a total membership of over 9,000 in 1880,<sup>17</sup> and 91 registered clubs in 1890.<sup>18</sup> The exact number of Hungarian rifle clubs in the last years before the First World War is unknown, but the pre-1914 press estimated it to be under 50.<sup>19</sup> If correct, it would mean that by the Great War they had halved in number since 1878/1890.

Compared to all registered associations in Hungary, the burgher rifle movement would seem to have been in a much stronger decline: sharpshooting societies represented around 3% of registered associations in 1862, 2% in 1880, and less than 0.5% prior to WW1.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, it should be borne in mind that a registered association did not mean a functioning association as many shooting clubs ceased their core activities soon after registration without officially disbanding. Testifying to the crisis in the civil rifle movement at the turn of the century, one provincial Hungarian newspaper compared the shooting clubs with medieval witches

– ‘we talk about them, but they don’t exist’.<sup>21</sup> In 1912, another newspaper, this time from the capital, lamented that ‘on paper, there are 209 rifle clubs and other societies exercising shooting with registered bylaws. However, the greater part of them have quietly dozed off, some others are falling asleep, and in reality, there are barely twenty working clubs’.<sup>22</sup>

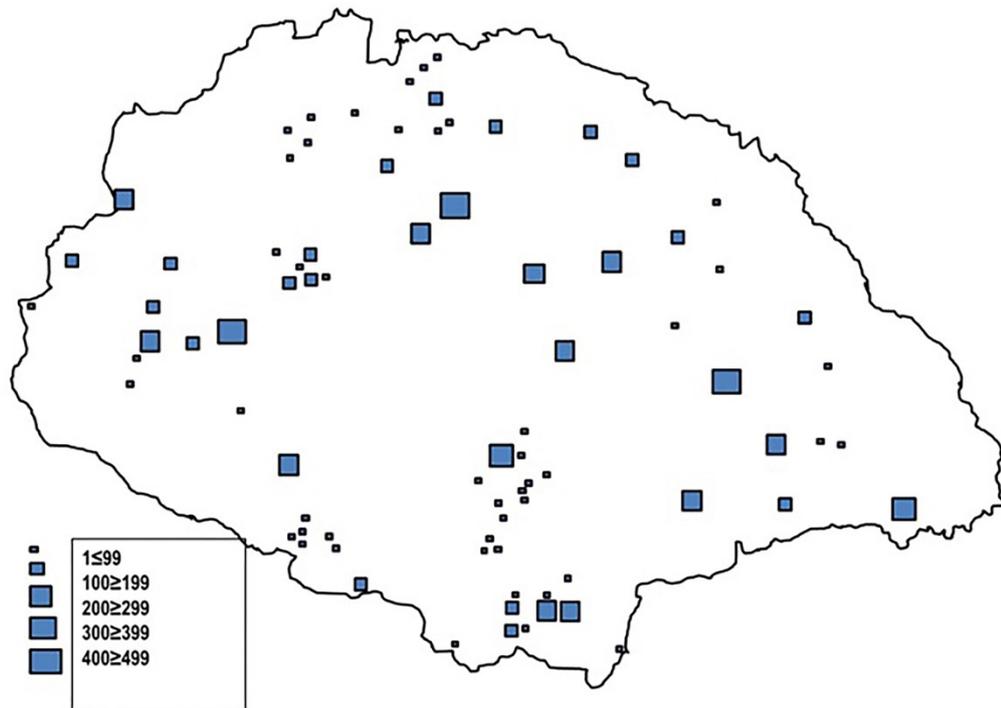


Figure 1. Officially-Registered Shooting Societies in Hungary in 1880 and their membership. Sourced on: Gyula Vargha, *Magyarország egyletei és társulatai 1878-ban*, Budapest, 1880.

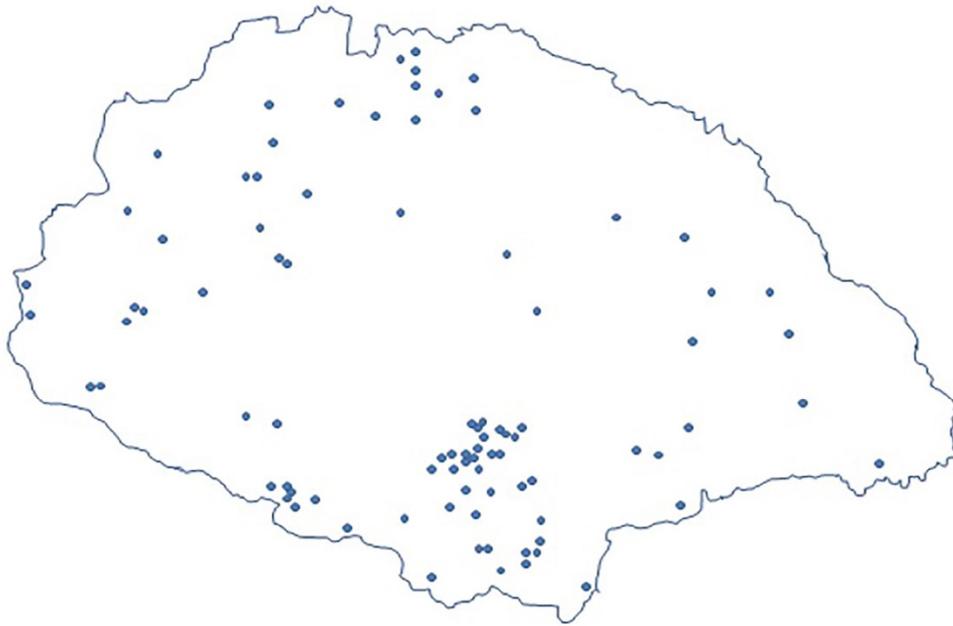


Figure 2. Officially Registered Shooting Clubs in Hungary in 1890. Sourced from: *Magyarország tiszti cím- és névtára. 1890.* Budapest, 1890.

The burgher shooting movement in dualist Hungary advanced geographically unevenly (Figures 1 and 2). Clubs were relatively numerous in peripheral regions, i.e. in the south – the Banat and Bácska regions and Transylvania near the border with Romania; the north-western and central Upper Lands (particularly the Szepesség (Zips) micro-region); and to a lesser extent between Debrecen and Kolozsvár. Most of these areas had high percentages of German speakers. Central Hungary, on the other hand, where the majority of Magyar-speakers lived, seemed devoid of shooting societies.

The burgher shooting clubs varied considerably in size. The smallest had fewer than 20 members, the largest over 400 in 1862 and 1880, and as many as 1,000 in 1896. The statistics, however, show that a high proportion of clubs tended to become smaller with time. Less than half of all rifle associations had fewer than 100 members in 1862, but the figure was almost 60% in 1880; 30% of clubs had more than 200 members in 1862, but only 15% did in 1880. An average club lost a quarter of its members between 1862 and 1880 (from 149 to 112), and the median

membership dropped from 145 in 1862 to 71 in 1880. However, the longer-lasting clubs tended to have a larger and more stable membership. The 16 clubs registered in both 1862 and 1880 had a stable average membership of 151, with a stable median of 145.<sup>23</sup> The 6 clubs registered in 1862, 1880 and around 1890 had an average membership over this period of about 170, with the median close to 145.<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, the statistics also illustrate the ongoing decline of rifle societies. The median growth of the selected 16 and 6 clubs was 2% from 1862 to 1880, but -4% from 1880 to around 1890, and -7% from 1862 to 1890.

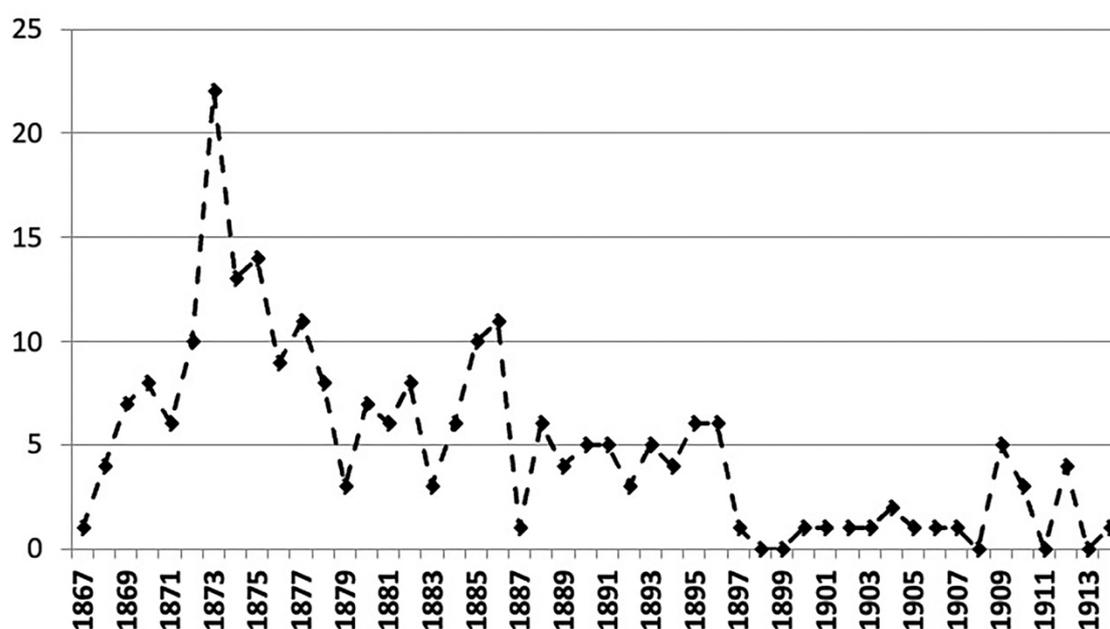


Figure 3. Registration of burgher shooting societies bylaws in Hungary by the Interior Ministry, 1867–1914

Weakening of collective burgher marksmanship is also visible from the dynamic of the registration granted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to their societies (Figure 3). Between 1867 and 1914 the Ministry registered 234 rifle association bylaws: around 100 were registered in the 1870s (22 club statutes were approved in 1873 alone), over 60 in the 1880s, a further 34 up to 1896, but only 8 between 1897 and 1908, then another 13 up to 1914.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, the decline of the burgher rifle movement may be illustrated by the many versions of the Hungarian National Shooting Federation (*Magyarországos Lövész Egyesület*). Established in 1871, 1885 and 1896, respectively, none lasted much more than a decade and each new one attracted fewer clubs to join it. The 1871 federation united 39 of Hungary's rifle associations (Figure 4),<sup>26</sup> its 1885 successor 19,<sup>27</sup> and the 1896 federation drew 15. After a period of struggle, this institution was re-established in 1906 as the Hungarian Sharpshooting Alliance (*Magyarországos Céllövő Szövetsége*), but only 8 associations joined.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, from 1906 its leaders were not burgher riflemen, but instead advocates of the sports (athletic) shooting movement who were trying to increase its membership beyond the old urban elites.

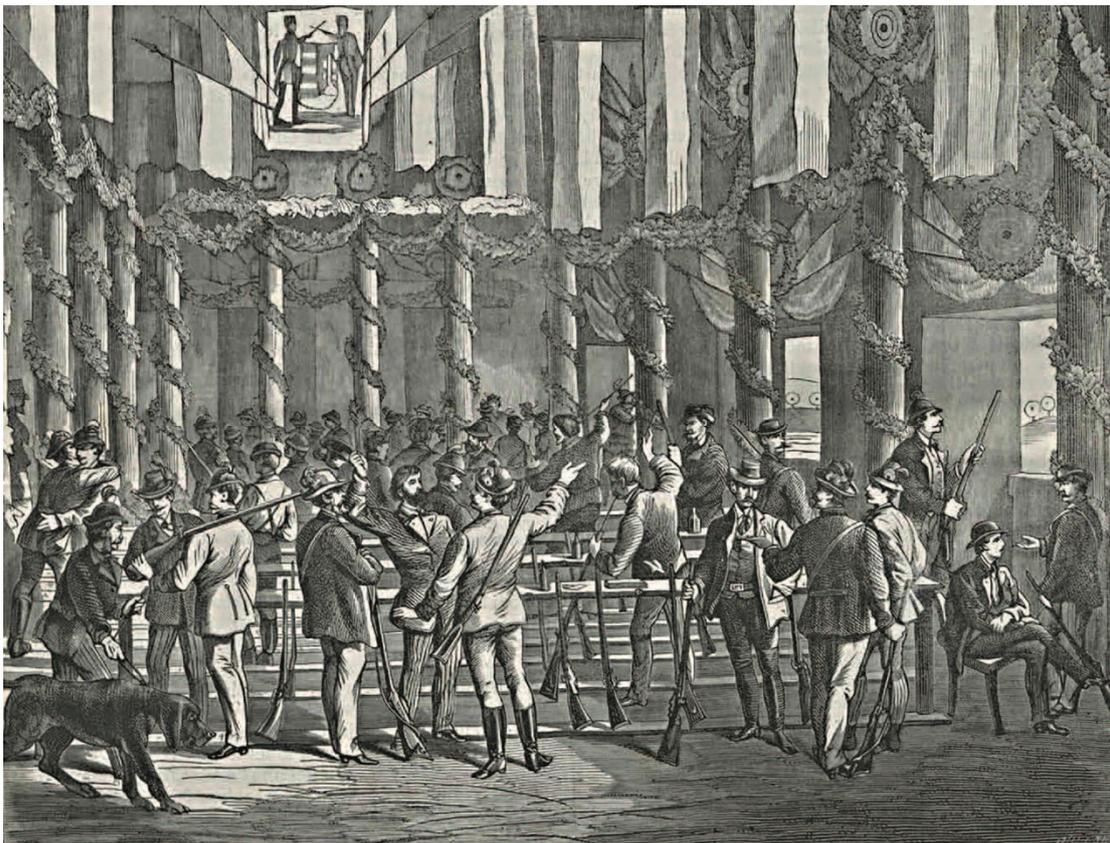


Figure. 4: Shooting competition in Buda in August 1871 followed by the establishment of the Hungarian Shooting Federation. Image from: 'Az országos lövész-ünnepély', *Vasárnapi ujság*, 3 September 1871, p. 452.

While the decline of burgher shooting clubs in Hungary is evident,

its causes are not. It seems especially surprising in the context of the pan-European proliferation of military or gun culture in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>29</sup> Hungary was not an exception in this regard. Prior to the Great War, a third of men had access to the guns throughout the country, and two thirds in Budapest.<sup>30</sup> In this paper, I consider four social-political trends which may help to explain the decline of burgher paramilitarism in dualist Hungary. The first two sections deal with top-down perspectives related to the emergence of a modern state and its professional army. The opening section discusses the increasing grip of the nationalising state over its citizens and their associations, while the next draws attention to the Habsburg military's diminishing interest in the burgher marksmen's combat potential. The third and fourth sections, on the other hand, provide bottom-up perspectives. The third deals with the burgher riflemen's social exclusivity, while the fourth draws attention to the Magyarisation of the allegedly German-dominated burgher shooting societies as another crucial factor in their decline. The paper concludes with a brief discussion of whether the burgher riflemen might be considered 'losers of modernisation' and what it indicates about the militarisation process prior to the World War 1.

### *Facing the centralizing state*

A crucial by-product of 19<sup>th</sup> century modernisation is the centralising (or nationalising) state (or empire), i.e. a system of governance that combines the centralisation of power, legal unification and cultural homogenisation. Compared with premodern polities, the nationalising state is almost omnipresent (totalitarian in some cases) and much more powerful.<sup>31</sup> This section analyses how the nationalising Habsburg empire reframed associated riflemen activities, especially after its transformation into the Dual Monarchy in 1867. The main argument of this section is that state actors strove to restrict traditional forms of armed groups, such as burgher shooting societies, even though these acted mainly on the side of law and order.

The Habsburgs had been progressively building a modern state since the rule of Maria Theresa (1740–80). Alarmed by the French

revolution of 1789, the Viennese court started to see in free associations a vast potential for rebellion.<sup>32</sup> A long and complicated registration procedure for official associations was therefore introduced, with final approval reserved to the Emperor himself.<sup>33</sup> Armed citizen groups, such as the burgher shooting societies, which could have opposed the growing state power, were perceived as a significant internal danger. During the neo-absolutist rule of Franz Joseph following the suppression of the 1848 revolutions the state expropriated the societies' weapons and shooting ranges, and introduced licences for the civil possession of firearms. Nonetheless, in the 1850s some Hungarian clubs reopened. Furthermore, by a decree of October 24, 1852, Franz Joseph gave officially-recognised shooting associations authorisation to possess weapons with exemption from the applicable taxes.<sup>34</sup> Although loyalty to the Habsburgs predominated in the reopened burgher marksmen clubs, their relations with the state apparatus were not always smooth. The leaders of some official shooting societies in central Hungary had an 1848 revolutionary past.<sup>35</sup> The Eperjes shooting club, which apparently brought together the 'champions who took an active part in former political fights', was closed by the authorities in the summer of 1862,<sup>36</sup> its fate a warning sign to Hungarian shooters. Two decades later the Eperjes case was still remembered as an illustration of the narrow space the modern state accorded to civil marksmen.<sup>37</sup>

Direct rule of Hungary by Vienna, loosened in the 1860s and finally ended in 1867, brought many changes to the situation of the burghers and their riflemen. Under the so-called Austro-Hungarian compromise of 1867, the 'constitutional rights' of the Lands of the Crown of Saint Stephen were restored. Hungary, enlarged by Transylvania and Croatia, had her own sovereign government and parliament. Within this new state, frequently referred as to Transleithania, the former trends of increasing state power continued (but ruled henceforth from Budapest). The Transleithanian authorities' first aim was to restrict the self-governance of local communities, especially in the so-called 'free royal towns.' The cities lost their privilege in deciding alone about forming their own defence forces. In 1878, the national parliament adopted the first Hungarian criminal code,

more commonly known as the *Csemegi kódex*, where its §161 forbade assembling a group of people, providing them with firearms and training without an official permission issued by the law or by the government. Such transgression was punishable by 5 years imprisonment and a fine of 400 forints.

Furthermore the state gradually constrained local freedoms, and transferred taxation, the judiciary, and police and military powers to the national government. In 1877, the government abolished self-government in 54 of the 81 free royal towns and integrated them into its county system. By 1914, the autonomy of most towns and cities had become purely symbolic.

As civil sharpshooters were considered to be part of the town guard (*Bürger Milize* in German or *polgárőrség* in Hungarian), the state's absorption of the towns directly affected the burgher rifle societies. From 1880 to 1890 the number of shooting clubs in the royal free towns fell from 19 to 17. No further clubs were registered in the western Hungarian town of Sopron nor in the former Hungarian capital, Pozsony (now Bratislava). Not only were there fewer shooting societies in the autonomous towns in general, but fewer new ones were opening there. Of the urban rifle clubs registered in 1890, only 1 was not also registered in 1880, whereas 2/5 of the provincial clubs registered in 1890 did not exist in 1880.

While suppressing local government freedoms, the dualist state was also taking stricter control of civil society by issuing new regulations on public organisations. The first of these (1873 and 1875) outrightly forbade workers' organisations and restricted minority-language associations to only cultural and educational activities. There are also many indications that the primary objective of the Hungarian state administration was not to expand, but rather to control the citizens' rifle movement.

The decreasing numbers of shooting club bylaws approved by the Ministry of Interior Affairs shows the growing difficulties these associations faced to obtain official recognition. Between 1880 and 1890 the number of registered burgher clubs decreased in almost every part of Transleithania except the southern region of Banat, neighbouring the Balkans. This exception may well be related to the region having been incorporated for

two centuries into the so-called Military Border (German *Militärgrenze*), which was dismantled in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>38</sup> Although the border troops (*Grenzer*) had fought on Franz Joseph's side against the rebellious Hungarians, their local freedoms were nonetheless gradually abolished; the Magyars, whose parliament and government had been suppressed after their 1848 rebellion, saw the border troops' adversity in a somewhat ironic light: 'What we received as punishment you got as recompense.'<sup>39</sup> The demilitarisation policy continued after 1867 when the region came under the direct rule of Budapest. The last *Grenzer* regiments were dissolved in 1881. This may suggest that the active creation of shooting societies in Banat in the 1870s–1880s was a local attempt to preserve some of the traditions of collective marksmanship, a view reinforced by the fact that the majority of societies registered in the 1880 census were recent formations. But it appears again that the state was rather unhappy with these bottom-up initiatives, which clearly undermined its demilitarisation programme. Unlike in the rest of Hungary, many of the Banat shooting societies stated their official objectives to be participation in religious celebrations, not the practice of marksmanship.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, Banat shooting societies frequently had to wait more than a decade before they were finally officially registered, and many of them (maybe a quarter) never obtained official recognition.<sup>41</sup> All in all, the problematic development of shooting clubs in Banat serves as an illustration of the restrictive policies of the nationalising state towards paramilitary formations.

### *Military dissatisfaction*

The making of the centralising state went hand in hand with the creation of large, professional and technically-advanced armies.<sup>42</sup> This section deals with the impact of the modernisation of the Habsburg army on the burgher shooting clubs in dualist Hungary. It argues that most of the efforts undertaken by Habsburg loyalists and Magyar nationalists to militarise Hungarian society bypassed the burgher rifle clubs. Once the conscription-based Common Army of Austria-Hungary had been established in 1868, the decline of the paramilitary groups' war potential would seem to be expected. Nevertheless, this was far from being evident at the time.

Hungarian patriots and Magyar nationalists frequently viewed armed citizens as a complementary (or even alternative) force to the Common Army, mocking the latter as 'Austrian and Imperial.'<sup>43</sup> Even though Hungary had acquired its own military forces after the 1867 reforms, on their own these so-called '*Honvéd*' ('Home Defence') units were barely able to protect the country. They had neither artillery (until 1912) nor headquarters and were subordinate in military affairs to the Common Army. Their potential was also very unequal in manpower: while the former received 80 % of the Monarchy's recruits, the *Honvéd* got only 10 %.<sup>44</sup>

Dualist Budapest made constant demands for extension of the *Honvéd*'s capabilities and independence on the one hand, and more Magyar presence in the Common Army on the other. As László Péter asserts: if, after 1869, the debates on defence were regarded as 'political and temporary', from 1889 they were considered 'structural and permanent.'<sup>45</sup> Appeals to create an alternative national army comprised of Hungarian citizens with marksmanship skills continued to be vigorously pursued.<sup>46</sup> In 1903–4, at a time of especially high tensions over the 'army question', Magyar nationalists began a campaign for the creation of 'a people's army' or 'a militia in every village' formed of young men trained in shooting from an early age, and the introduction of shooting lessons in schools.<sup>47</sup>

In dealing with the burgher marksmen, Budapest also had to deal with the difficulties posed by the distrust that both the Habsburg military and the Magyar nationalists had of them. The former suspected the burgher shooters of revanchist plans against the Habsburgs in the wake of the 1848 defeat, while the latter saw in the military supervision of marksmen associations an attempt to use them as army auxiliary forces against Hungarian independence.<sup>48</sup> In an attempt to secure government support, the pre-1914 chief rifle activist, Miklós Szemere, argued that the monarchy should not be afraid of arming compatriots: 'any disciplined army could perform gendarmerie duties to ensure internal peace, but to defeat an enemy country, the entire nation needs to be trained in fighting.'<sup>49</sup>

The Habsburg military remained essential in supervising the burgher shooting societies and occasionally provided them with money and

weapons. The long-serving commander of the Hungarian home troops, Archduke József Habsburg (1867–1905), held the title of ‘permanent highest chief shooting master’ (*örökös legfőbb főlövészmeister*) of the Budapest Burgher Shooting Club (*Budapesti Polgári Lövész Egyesület* – hereafter BPLE) and was the ‘protector’ of multiple Hungarian shooting associations. In the early dualist years, the Defence Ministry cherished hopes in the combat potential of the burgher riflemen, and from the 1870s provided them with guns and carbines. The Ministry also encouraged the creation of burgher shooting societies in places where *Honvéd* battalions were stationed, and instructed officers and lower ranks to join them. On January 17, 1872, the State Secretary of Defence, Ernő Hollan, announced in parliament that 32 joint civil and *Honvéd* shooting clubs had been established.<sup>50</sup> As one MP argued in 1884, promoting civil shooting associations would not only increase the military’s strength, but would also keep costs down, as the rifle clubs could train citizens more cheaply than the army could.<sup>51</sup> Despite public goodwill, the Home Defence troops seemed not to have had sufficient resources to offer support to the marksman movement. In 1880, Hungary had only two formal ‘Burgher and *Honvéd* shooting clubs’ (in Miskolc and Veszprém).<sup>52</sup> By 1890, these clubs were no longer in existence, but there were two new similar clubs (in Léva (Levice) and Balassagyarmat).<sup>53</sup> By the turn of the century, attempts to achieve greater union between the burgher riflemen and Habsburg military officers had met with little success.

By financing (and supervising) the marksmen clubs, the *Honvéd* Ministry had in mind to use them to give shooting instruction to military reservists. Results however were mediocre. Under the aegis of the Defence Ministry, the Buda Shooting Club ran shooting courses for 300 military reservists in 1885, but only a fifth graduated.<sup>54</sup> In the early 1890s, the BPLE, aiming to broaden marksmanship in the society, started campaigning for the introduction of youth shooting classes. Although the club’s ostensible motivation was the need to increase the ‘national defence forces,’ it also had its own interests in mind: at its own suggestion its shooting ranges would host the classes for a ‘moderate fee’. The Defence Minister, Géza Fejérváry, welcomed the plan, but provided no money nor

backing for it.<sup>55</sup> As Fejérvári acknowledged in 1903, the civic marksmen societies disappointed the army. He pointed out that not only were the riflemen unpopular and expensive, but they damaged the guns the army provided them with by sloppy handling.<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, activists like Szemere complained that the *Honvéd* Ministry was spending merely thousands of forints in assisting the rifle associations, when the movement needed millions.<sup>57</sup> When the Defence Ministry started to promote shooting among the general male population in the early 1900s, its main efforts were concentrated on schools. Most civilian shooting classes were held at youth or sports associations, and only a tiny minority at shooting societies.<sup>58</sup> Of the 141 shooting classes for youths in Hungary in March 1909, only 6 were held at shooting clubs, while 10 were held at sports clubs, 22 at youth sports clubs, and the rest at educational institutions.<sup>59</sup> Two years later, out of 204 shooting classes, 36 were held at youth associations and only 3 at rifle clubs.<sup>60</sup> Clearly, it was increasingly hard to see the burgher societies as major players in Hungarian paramilitary training.

Positioning burgher shooting clubs as centred mainly on propagating marksmanship among the civil population would also be incorrect. The clubs were also a hub for socialising and public representation, and for organising festivals, banquets and balls. Of the 84 rifle clubs registered in Hungary in 1880, 15 declared 'socialising' (*társalgás*) as their primary objective.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, only a minority of burgher riflemen were trained in marksmanship. In 1871, the chief master of the Pest club noted that only 20 of its 450 members were 'practising shooters'.<sup>62</sup> The situation seems not to have changed in the *belle époque*. In 1909, the newspaper *Magyarország* reported that 90% of the individuals joining the BPLE did so in order to 'enjoy its benefits' (such as participation in festivals), rather than for shooting training.<sup>63</sup> It would seem, then, that the Hungarian shooting clubs' military demeanour was merely a show, and many individuals were joining them for the social networking opportunities and entertainments they offered.

Finally, as the burgher rifle societies were disappearing throughout the country, citizens were sponsoring other types of association to perform

basic security duties. Among these, the voluntary firefighting associations were rapidly becoming the most widespread throughout dualist Hungary. They numbered 246 in 1880,<sup>64</sup> 545 in 1890, and 2,451 in 1914.<sup>65</sup> Although the core activities of these two types of organisation differed, they both usually embraced patriotic (or nationalist) ideologies, endorsed the need for military preparedness, and provided civilians with physical training.<sup>66</sup> They were even frequently led by the same people and organised joint festivals, including shooting competitions.<sup>67</sup> Interestingly, as the firemen's associations were regularly subsidised by their communities, the rifle societies increasingly turned to fire fighting. By the 1870s, a few clubs in some small towns were effectively mixed shooting and firemen's associations (*lövész és tűzoltó egyesület*). By the turn of the century, these mixed clubs seemed to be gaining in popularity.<sup>68</sup> At the same time, some firefighters' associations started to form their own shooting subdivisions.<sup>69</sup> By the Great War, firefighter associations had become the main providers of civil security in Hungary. This could explain why in September 1914 the Pest county authorities decided to base their newly-organised citizen guards on the firemen associations rather than on the burgher shooting societies.<sup>70</sup>

### *Social exclusivity and restricted membership*

Modernisation brought more rapid social mobility and new social structures. In abolishing town autonomy and citizenship, the state undermined the unity of the burghers as a specific polity. In addition, the rural exodus gave rise to a massive new group of Magyar-speaking urban dwellers, who out-numbered the traditional German-speaking burgher families. Most Germans in Hungary (with a notable exception of the Saxons in Transylvania) adapted to the new situation by learning the Magyar language and acquiring a Magyar identity, which opened the doors to civil service careers for them.<sup>71</sup> At the same time, the burghers tended to merge with the urbanised nobility into a new gentlemen middle-class, but kept their distance from the urban proletariat and Jewish intelligentsia. The ennoblement of the burghers and their anti-Semitic stances resulted in an 'awkward if incomplete transition into modernity' for Hungary.<sup>72</sup> This

section takes a closer look at social exclusivity to examine how the connection between the reinforcement of national and class divisions may have contributed to the gradual decline of shooting societies in dualist Hungary.

First of all, the dramatic migration of rural people to cities led to a relative decrease of the burghers share among city dwellers, accompanied by a depreciation of the burgher status. In parallel, the formal relations of burgher riflemen with the town councils weakened. Until the turn of the century, there were still evident links between the burgher shooters and municipalities, and town mayors were frequently also formal shooting club leaders.<sup>73</sup> But this tradition was disappearing. Following Károly Ráth's lengthy tenure at the head of the Budapest municipality and the Pest Citizen Shooting Society from 1873 to 1897, the capital's next mayor, József Márkus (1897–1906), headed the BPLE only at the beginning of his municipal mandate. No further Budapest mayors occupied a similar post. With time, it became increasingly rare for the mayors of Hungarian towns to also preside over the local shooting clubs.

The rifle clubs' financial links to the towns were weakening. In the early dualist decades, towns often sponsored their rifle clubs, providing them with finance, materials and/or public spaces. This was something of a security investment as it was frequently implied in the shooting associations' bylaws that should they be disbanded their property would go back to the town. When the rifle association of Vásárhely asked the town council for 10,000 bricks to repair its shooting ranges in 1883, their request was granted, even though 'the shooting club did not exist anymore in reality.' The mayor argued that the building would become the town's property if the association were to definitively close.<sup>74</sup> On the other side, by pledging its property to the town, a shooting club also secured its potential restitution. Many bylaws stipulated that if a new shooting club were established in the same area as a disbanded one, as a successor society it could claim ownership of the former club's properties ceded to the town.<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, this economic relationship also seemed to be weakening, and some municipalities started requisitioning the spacious burgher shooting ranges in their town centres for alternative urban projects. This

forced the rifle societies to move to the peripheries where they were less visible.

At the same time, the state was creating its own gendarmerie and increasingly deploying it in the towns, rendering the riflemen's services dispensable.<sup>76</sup> When the private Budapest voluntary guard (*Önkentes Órsereg*), formed under the leadership of Count Gyula Andrássy the Younger in autumn 1914, asked the Budapest municipality to sub-finance its activities, the request was initially turned down. It was being argued that the capital city was under the protection of the army and did not need any voluntary guards.<sup>77</sup> As this case demonstrates, by the Great War the city's administration saw little reason to finance citizen paramilitary groups, preferring to rely instead on state security forces.

Modern, inclusive, egalitarian functioning was alien to the elitist burgher shooting societies. Until the turn of the century, membership was an indication of belonging to the upper social strata. *Vasárnapi Újság* reported in 1903 that the chief masters of the Buda Shooting Club had come from the 'city's most respected families' since the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and the club had 'always played a leading role in the social life of the capital'.<sup>78</sup> It was stipulated in the various clubs' bylaws that they were open to any 'individual of irreproachable reputation.' This restricted membership to adherents of the so-called chivalric code, inherited from the Middle Ages. People who were not considered 'honourable', such as Jews, manual workers (and peasants) and women, were more or less excluded. Some bylaws added that shooters should be men who were 'independent' and/or over 24 years of age (the age of majority).<sup>79</sup> Citizenship seemed less important: some associations agreed to recruit only Hungarian citizens, while others were also open to foreigners or made no mention of citizenship. Ultimately, it seems that the conclusion reached regarding access to burgher rifle clubs in Wilhelmine Germany – which 'claimed to be socially more open, but was in reality mostly confined to persons who could be regarded as *Bürger*,<sup>80</sup> – also applied to the burgher rifle clubs in dualist Hungary.

Interestingly enough, despite the masculine character of the

discourse around the burgher marksmen milieu, women routinely participated in many of their public events, such as street processions and balls. Sources also occasionally mention women taking part in shooting festivals from as early as the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>81</sup> From 1889, the BPLE regularly included 'ladies' shooting competitions' in its programmes,<sup>82</sup> and by the Great War women were on rare occasions also allowed to become members. Nevertheless, dualist shooting clubs were generally almost exclusively male associations. Men constituted their target membership and club leaders and managers were always men.

Religion and ethnicity played another prominent role in maintaining social exclusivity. All shooting societies can be considered Christian groups. As a later commentator acknowledged, 'Everywhere, they stood in close relation to the Church'.<sup>83</sup> In 1880, 7 of the 84 registered shooting societies cited 'honouring God' or participation in 'church ceremonies' as their *raison d'être*.<sup>84</sup> According to its 1872 bylaws, the Óbuda Roman Catholic Burgher Shooting Society accepted only 'respectable men, who act in the interest of the church', and would exclude shooters who 'betrayed the Holy Cause'.<sup>85</sup> As Christian societies, the burgher riflemen usually did not welcome Jews, one of the fastest growing urban communities.<sup>86</sup> But not all Christians were equal when it came to forming or joining shooting associations. The German shooting societies of Budakalász and Szentendr , near Budapest, did not accept the local Greek Orthodox Serbs,<sup>87</sup> while the nationalist newspaper *Pesti Hirlap* argued vehemently against the creation of an 'Orthodox Romanian shooting club' in the Torontal county village of Gy lv sz in 1910. The newspaper was alarmed that 'arming Romanian bands thirsty for Magyar and Swabian blood' would undermine the integrity of the Hungarian state.<sup>88</sup> Similarly, when some of the Catholic and Calvinist high schools were offered shooting training in the 1900s,<sup>89</sup> the offer was not extended to the Hungarian Greek Orthodox youth. The Banat region, where there were traditionally German- and Serb-speaking shooters, seems to be the only exception in this regard. Nonetheless, after the creation in 1913 of the South Hungary's Shooting Union (*D lmagyarorsz gi L v szsz vets g*), whose organisers were free to speak Hungarian, German and Serbian in

public, the Magyar press needed to remind them that this institution's 'first obligation is a Magyar sensibility'.<sup>90</sup>

High social standing was another key requisite for entering the burgher rifleman milieu. In addition to following the association's rules, members needed to pay the fees, a sum that varied from association to association, and often constituted an additional barrier to less wealthy individuals. According to the 1880 catalogue, the annual fees for the majority of associations were between 1 and 3 forints, but in Pest they were as much as 10 forints, in Székesfehérvár 13 forints and in Oraviczabánya 36. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century there were frequent discussions on opening shooting clubs to less privileged individuals. Criticising social exclusion in the shooting movement, in 1891 the State Secretary for Forests, Jenő Belházi, bemoaned that only well-off landowners, state officials and wealthy citizens could practice shooting, as high fees and the custom of using expensive weapons ('the cost of which fluctuated between 80 and 150 forints') made it unaffordable for the youth. Belházi advocated transforming the shooting movement from a socially-restricted leisure pursuit to a mass activity aimed at providing military training to young citizens.<sup>91</sup> Abandoning 'social exclusivity' was a key element in Alfonz Szávost's 'reform programme' of 1891 aimed at reviving the BPLE.<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless, this and similar attempts within the burgher clubs failed spectacularly. The exclusivity of Budapest's shooting clubs seemed unchanged or even greater at the turn of the century. While there were indeed fewer aristocrats,<sup>93</sup> the proportion of shooters with doctoral degrees increased from 8% of BPLE members in 1894 to 13% ten years later and almost 15% in 1914. Thus, the percentage of members without an aristocratic or academic title decreased from around 95% in the years around the 1867 Compromise to slightly over 80% by the Great War. This trend towards increasing numbers of members with a university degree seems to be one of the major signs of the social separation being built between the *Bürgertum* and the remaining, less privileged, section of the population.<sup>94</sup> This social exclusion was however accompanied by mocking of shooters by outsiders. Satirical press, such as *Borsszem Jankó* or *Bolond Istok*, regularly ridiculed burgher rifleman as pretentious drinkers

and unpatriotic Magyars (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Mocking of Hungarian shooters at the Vienna's Shooting Festival in July 1880 in the satirical journal, *Borsszem Jankó*. The chief of the Hungarian delegation (left) says to an Austrian shooter: 'Bruder! There is no difference between us, and nothing is (better?) for a Magyar than to be an Austrian', Image from *Borsszem Jankó*, 25 July 1880, p. 3.

#### *Doubts about political loyalty*

Modernisation advanced hand in hand with the ideological triumph of the

nationalist worldview that equated language groups with ideal political entities (nations). Embracing ethnic nationalism, the dualist Magyar elites viewed the 'Magyar nation' as the only legitimate leader of Hungary's multilingual population. Largely supported by the Magyar-speaking middle class, the Budapest government encouraged other linguistic groups to abandon their mother tongues and think of themselves as Magyar. German, spoken by a tenth of the country's population, was much better tolerated than the Slavic languages or Romanian, but its spatial distribution was slowly narrowing.<sup>95</sup> Even though the Germans were considered a 'model minority' and assimilated more quickly than other ethnic groups,<sup>96</sup> speaking German in public had become stigmatised by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in Hungarian cities, including Budapest.<sup>97</sup> This section shows that the burgher shooting clubs, many of which had historically operated in German, adapted to the nationalist imperative by switching to Hungarian and espousing Magyar nationalism.<sup>98</sup> It argues that this metamorphosis was, nonetheless, painful and produced internal conflicts, which some rifle societies did not survive.

It was far from evident in the early dualist decades that the Magyarisation of Hungary's burgher shooting societies had been successful. Nineteenth century German Hungarians were usually more inclined than other political activists to favour 'inclusive, multi-ethnic national concepts' that defined the Hungarian nation as the entirety of the country's inhabitants regardless of their ethnic or linguistic backgrounds.<sup>99</sup> This open patriotism was still strong among the members of the BPLE, even at the turn of the century. Its president in 1894, Alfonz Szávoszt, made it known that the burgher shooters were 'trustworthy citizens of the Magyar house' regardless of their mother tongue, religion, partisan and political affiliations.<sup>100</sup> In the same vein, his deputy, Antal Nemei, was of the view that marksman clubs should contribute towards the unification of the country by fostering relations between the different 'nationalities' living in Hungary.<sup>101</sup>

However, the broader, pan-Habsburg notion of self-identification promoted by the dualist burgher riflemen contrasted with the state-endorsed idea of Magyar supremacy. When, in July 1880, word got round

that the Saxon shooting clubs from Transylvania had wished to be considered Austrian on the occasion of a shooting festival in Vienna, *Pesti Hirlap* called for their societies to be dissolved and their properties requisitioned.<sup>102</sup> Nevertheless, as late as June 1896, amidst the pompous nationalist 'Millennium' celebrations marking one thousand years of Magyar presence in Europe, the BPLE organised a nine-day Hungarian rifle congress, which appealed to Hungarian-Austrian friendship.<sup>103</sup> In 1898, however, the BPLE had to withdraw from the pan-Austrian celebrations for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Emperor Franz-Joseph's coronation following attacks in the press from Magyar nationalists.<sup>104</sup> The decision was taken after the president of the Shooting Federation, Ödön Gajári, reminded members that no 'good Hungarian citizen' nor any club could take part in a celebration that might render them liable to accusations that they lacked patriotic spirit. Gajári also encouraged the BPLE to oppose 'placing Hungary among other Austrian provinces' and to resist any attempt to merge Hungary within Austria.<sup>105</sup> Some months later, another prominent BPLE member, Agriculture Minister Ignác Darányi, publicly apologised for 'petty human offences, mistakes that no one is immune from making', referring to the society's German past.<sup>106</sup>

Magyar intolerance of other national or ethnic groups grew steadily from 1867. The first attempt by the Buda burgher shooting society to create a Hungarian Shooting Federation in 1871 provoked a negative reaction from the Magyar nationalists. The latter did not want to recognise the 'national' character of the federation, arguing that the majority of its members came from 'German-speaking towns' in Hungary.<sup>107</sup> Following the introduction of the 1873 regulations, which allowed only cultural associations to operate in non-Magyar languages, using the German language brought the burgher shooting societies to the edge of illegality. The German-speaking burgher shooting club of Brassó, which even officially was called 'Saxon', drew especially strong criticism. In 1874, the Magyar press reported that the Brassó riflemen had resolved to defend their language rights against Magyarisation, with weapons if needs be. Pointing to their sympathies with Prussia, one newspaper argued that these 'traitors to the motherland' would be inclined to support Germany

should a new war with Austria-Hungary break out.<sup>108</sup>

To the Magyar nationalists' delight, German was slowly disappearing from the shooters' communications.<sup>109</sup> While some provincial clubs did not survive the language switch,<sup>110</sup> others adapted to the new situation. As one Magyar nationalist-minded author noted in 1910 regarding the Újvidék Civil Shooters Association, 'Before, you could hear only the German language here, it was dominant. The proceedings were conducted in German, the regulations displayed in the shooting range were also in German. But everything has changed over the last decade: the administrative language is purely Magyar and anyone who has not been here for a decade can now enjoy beautiful Magyar conversation in this place'.<sup>111</sup> All in all, by 1914 Magyar nationalism became the undisputed dominant ideology in the remaining burgher rifle clubs.

Apart from their use of the German language, the burgher riflemen's alleged devotion to the ruling House of Habsburg also attracted criticism within Hungary. Local nationalists were of the view that loyalty towards this 'foreign (Austrian or German) dynasty' contradicted their loyalty to Hungary and the Magyar nation. In the early dualist decades, declaring allegiance to the Habsburgs was indeed a key element in public speeches at burgher shooter meetings. The birthdays of Franz Joseph (18 August) and of his family members were justifications to organise rifle competitions, and toasts were regularly raised to the monarch at banquets organised by rifle clubs. The king's rare visits to the shooting ranges were celebrated as landmark events. One such visit to the Buda ranges on 24 June 1888 was commemorated every June thereafter with 'royal shootings' organised by the local club. The BPLE, established in 1889, chose as its motto the appeal to 'Learn to defend your homeland and your King here.'<sup>112</sup> It is therefore not surprising that the Hungarian shooting associations were regarded as 'active instruments in the defence of the dynasty' and it was thought 'that the shooters, especially those from the German-speaking towns, may be useful for the good of the entire monarchy.'<sup>113</sup>

While Hungarian was increasingly spoken by the shooters, Habsburg loyalty was reframed in a Magyar nationalist perspective. On the eve of the celebrations for Franz Joseph's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1900, the

editorial in the BPLE monthly newsletter acclaimed the monarch as an exceptionally good Habsburg king. Reproaching the previous Habsburgs for being ‘only legal, but not real kings of Hungary,’ the newsletter praised Franz Joseph for forming the Budapest government exclusively from Magyars, thereby uniting Hungary (in 1867), sanctioning Magyarisation and making Hungarian the official language. The article’s author, Ferenc M. Szabó, even predicted that Hungary would become the ‘natural centre of gravity’ of the Habsburg monarchy.<sup>114</sup> On another occasion, Szabó praised the BPLE’s ‘perpetual highest chief shooting master’, Archduke József Habsburg, as being ‘such a member of the Magyar nation as would befit a direct descendant’ of the medieval royal Árpád dynasty.<sup>115</sup> The discourse around the Habsburgs’ Magyarisation efforts was in contrast to a supra-national image of the ruling dynasty, but helped the BPLE to smooth over the contradictions between Magyar nationalism and the Habsburg loyalty.

Loyalty to the Habsburgs usually co-existed with other political loyalties, especially to the Budapest government and the legacy of the 1848–9 revolution. In the main hall of the Buda Shooting Club, alongside a portrait of Franz Joseph hung images of Kálmán Tisza (PM of Hungary 1875–90), the siege of Buda Castle in 1849 by Hungarian revolutionary troops, and Lajos Kossuth, leader of the 1848–9 revolution and a staunch critic of the Habsburgs in his exile.<sup>116</sup> Following Kossuth’s death in Turin in March 1894, the BPLE organised a special meeting in his honour,<sup>117</sup> while a rising star of the club, vice-mayor of Budapest, József Márkus, presided over the city’s delegation to Kossuth’s funeral in Italy and was charged with transporting his body back to Hungary.<sup>118</sup> Although Franz Joseph had forbidden official ceremonies in honour of Kossuth, his ‘private funeral’ in Budapest organised by the municipality drew a million people.<sup>119</sup> A year later, the BPLE steering committee unanimously elected Márkus as the new club president and welcomed him as a man who would strive to spread the Magyar culture and language.<sup>120</sup> In 1914, the BPLE officially adopted Magyar as its working language, although German had not in any case been used for years.<sup>121</sup>

Embracing both Magyar nationalism and Habsburg loyalty, the

burgher riflemen sought to maintain their neutrality in the repeated political crises of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century arising from the dualist compromise. During the 1905–6 constitutional crises in Hungary, when Franz Joseph was facing a united Hungarian opposition which had won the 1905 parliamentary elections, the chief master of the BPLE, András Járity, happily declared that the political tensions were unfolding outside their club.<sup>122</sup> However, their noncommittal position satisfied neither the Magyar nationalists nor the Habsburg loyalists. The new ‘shooting apostle’ of Hungary, wealthy, nationalist politician Miklós Szemere, took control of the waning Hungarian Shooting Federation from the BPLE in 1906. Closely connected to ultra-right circles, Szemere attempted to make the Federation the basis for an independent Hungarian army that would ensure the dominance of the ‘Magyar race’ in the country.<sup>123</sup> Under Szemere, memories of the 1848–49 War of Independence against Austria were accorded greater importance in the marksmen milieu, while the Federation’s motto was reformulated as a call to ‘learn to defend your country here!’ – not, as under the BPLE, to defend the king. All in all, Magyar radicalisation of the marksmen movement continued outside the burgher milieu (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Shooting competition at Miklos Szemere's estate near Budapest in 1903. Image from 'Nemzetközi czéllövő-verseny Pusztá-Szent-Lőrincen', *Vasárnapi ujság*, 3 May 1903, p. 305.

### *Conclusions*

Modernisation is generally associated with progress, making the world a better place. However, not everybody benefitted equally from its promises. Multiple social actors, labelled the 'losers of modernisation,' found their situation deteriorating in many ways. Some adapted to the new circumstances, while others turned to conservative politics and called for the previous 'normality' to be restored.<sup>124</sup> In dualist Hungary, Péter Hanák finds the core of anti-modernisation actors among the marginalised gentry, unsuccessful public officials and businessmen.<sup>125</sup> All these groups were active in the burgher marksmanship movement, and one of their loudest anti-modernisation spokesmen in pre-1914 Hungary was Miklós Szemere – a dynamic rifle movement reformer. Under his guidance, those clubs which were still in existence in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century were increasingly permeated by nationalist sentiments and anti-Semitism. As this paper has argued, there were plenty of parallels between modernisation and the decline of burgher marksmanship. To a certain extent, the former may be seen as a precondition for the latter.

Between 1867 and 1914, the Hungarian state and society came to see burgher shooting associations as politically undesirable, militarily ineffective, socially unpopular, ideologically alien and financially unsustainable institutions. The slow decline of the citizen rifle associations ran in parallel with the ongoing Magyarisation and the consolidation of power in the hands of the Budapest government. Many burgher shooting clubs were German-speaking and loyal to the Habsburg dynasty, although they later placed greater emphasis on their loyalty to the 'Magyar nation.' However, the clubs remained socially exclusive, which hindered them from increasing their membership. From the early 1900s, they were not only in decline numerically, they were also losing their role as the most dynamic sector of the civil paramilitary movement to mass sports and youth

associations.

The example of the Hódmezővásárhely burgher shooting society, mentioned in the introduction is illustrative of the failure to comply with modernisation. Although in the 1870s the society led the 'champagne life,' the local intelligentsia ceased to visit its ranges in the 1880s. Not only was shooting less appealing to citizens, the town's reliance on the burgher riflemen was also dwindling. They were no longer needed to protect the dam, as the centralising state had taken environmental safety more seriously after 1879, when spring floods destroyed neighbouring Szeged (the second largest city in Hungary). By the end of the century, the authorities had brought the rivers under control with a modern drainage system<sup>126</sup> and deployed private – but armed – dam keepers (*gátőrek*) to guard them.<sup>127</sup> In other security matters, the municipality of Hódmezővásárhely could rely increasingly on the local firemen (who received an annual grant of 200 forints)<sup>128</sup> and above all the gendarmerie and Common Army. When Hódmezővásárhely became the national centre of the violent agricultural strike movement at the turn of the century, portrayed by the Magyar press as the potential beginning of a 'socialist revolution' against the 'burghers',<sup>129</sup> the city's sharpshooters were nevertheless not re-mobilised. Indeed, how effective would they have been against mobs of discontented peasants if only 10 to 20 riflemen came regularly to the shooting ranges?<sup>130</sup> In many respects, professional forces were the most reliable guardians of the local bourgeoisie. Faced with the decline in the burgher rifle society, its chief master proposed dissolving it in 1889, although the decision was postponed until 1896.<sup>131</sup> In short, modernisation of the state, and of social structures and habits rendered the shooting society obsolete.

As in dualist Hódmezővásárhely, the burgher shooting movement grew sporadically in other Hungarian locations in the 1870s, but had lost much of its popularity by the end of the century. Nevertheless, its decline did not imply the disappearance of armed citizen groups from Hungary. The idea of the citizen-soldier continued to burn brightly. After the First World War, when the state apparatus was in ruins, local militias and citizen

patrols – self-appointed community guardians – re-emerged in the Central, Southern and Transdanubian regions of Hungary. In the rural areas surrounding Budapest, most were formed by former members of the defunct burgher rifle clubs and shooting training groups.<sup>132</sup> Like their dualist predecessors, the social core of these patrols consisted of aristocrats, landowners and middle-class war veterans, mostly Hungarian and German speaking. The post-war militias, however, differed hugely from their pre-war counterparts in that they committed many violent acts against the local civilian population, particularly the Jews.<sup>133</sup>

What does the story of shooting societies tell us about the societal militarization in pre-1914 Hungary? Juxtaposing the burgher riflemen with other war-related associations, such as the army veterans clubs, reveals a pattern of lame paramilitarism. The veteran associations, formed by ex-servicemen and armed with cold weapons, were similar to the burgher shooters in many respects, particularly in their failure to propagate their movement. They were mostly concentrated in the Magyarising German speaking areas of Hungary and suspected for being ‘Germanising’ institutions; likewise they struggled to keep a dual loyalty towards the Habsburg dynasty but also towards the Hungarian (or later – Magyar) nation; finally, as well as the burghers, the veterans lacked serious political or social support, and were targets of public mocking. But the burgher shooters, despite their decline, were more influential than the veteran clubs. The latter were less numerous; they failed establishing any continuous press, neither formed an umbrella federation and attracted much smaller public attention.<sup>134</sup> Their members held lower social status and their societies were poorer.<sup>135</sup> Taken together, the problematic development of both types of associations (as the most prominent paramilitary groups) suggests that the societal militarization in pre-1914 Hungary was of limited importance.<sup>136</sup>

Comparison with Habsburg Austria downgrades further Hungarian paramilitarism. At the turn of the century, the cumulative weight of under 150 shooting and veteran societies in Hungary appear pale compared to Austria’s 3,000 veteran and over 200 burgher shooting societies.<sup>137</sup> But was this weak societal militarization in Hungary a sign of the local

peacefulness? Or, rather, it reveals a lower level of trust between the state and populace in Hungary? The second option seems more plausible as Hungary was an area of a deadlier state violence (from gendarmes on the streets and courts in-door), of a more restricted electoral system, and of higher rates of emigration compared to Austria.<sup>138</sup> All these phenomena might suggest that not only the Hungarian state was highly suspicious of its citizens, but also that the latter were more pessimistic about their chances of decent life at home. From this perspective it appears that a larger spectrum of society in dualist Hungary, beyond burghers, might be regarded as losers of modernisation.

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<sup>1</sup> László Nagy, *A 1876 évi árvizek. Forrasok a vízügy múltjából*, Budapest, 2007, pp. 259–60.

<sup>2</sup> 'Fővárosi választások', *Pesti Hirlap*, 27 November 1879, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> György Talmácsi, 'Gondolatok egy emléktábla kapcsán a vásárhelyi Polgári Lövész-Egyletről', *A Hódmezővásárhelyi Szeremlei Társaság Évkönyve 2009*, Hódmezővásárhely, 2010, pp. 197–99.

<sup>4</sup> My calculation based on *Magyarország tiszti cím- és névtára. 1890*, Budapest, 1890.

<sup>5</sup> Rachel Chrastil uses the term 'war-related associations' to describe the voluntary organisations of *belle époque* France, which held the view that war was 'extraordinary yet expected'. See Rachel Chrastil, *Organizing for War: France, 1870–1914*, Baton Rouge, LA, 2010. According to Ümit Üngör, paramilitary groups are bottom-up (local vigilante) or top-down (professional military) initiatives, with many in-between possibilities (such as neighbourhood patrols), which maintain close relationships with the state or political elites. See Ugur Ümit Üngör, *Paramilitarism: Mass Violence in the Shadow of the State*, Oxford, 2020, pp. 6–9.

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<sup>6</sup> Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War*, Oxford, 2012. Although Gerwarth and Horne examine post-First World War violence, they acknowledge that ‘paramilitary formations have a much older history, whether as local militias, guerrilla movements or armed adjuncts to the forces of order’, going back to the early nineteenth century (p. 2).

<sup>7</sup> Matteo Millan, ‘In Defence of Freedom? The Practices of Armed Movements in Pre-1914 Europe: Italy, Spain and France’, *European History Quarterly*, 2016, pp. 48–71; Romain Bonnet, ‘The Making of Counter-Internationalism. Political Violence, Strikebreaking and the Yellow movement in pre-1914 Europe’, *Partecipazione e Conflitto. The Open Journal of Sociopolitical Studies*, 13, 1, 2020, pp. 740–71.

<sup>8</sup> A brilliant account of a disappearing traditional society in turn-of-the-century Europe is offered by Eugen Weber in his *Peasants Into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914*, Stanford, 1976.

<sup>9</sup> On pre-1914 paramilitarism in Austria, see: Laurence Cole, *Military Culture and Popular Patriotism in Late Imperial Austria*, Oxford, 2014; Claire Morelon, ‘Respectable Citizens: Civic Militias, Local Patriotism, and Social Order in Late Habsburg Austria (1890–1920)’, *Austrian History Yearbook*, 2020, pp. 1–27.

<sup>10</sup> Gilles Pécout, ‘Les Sociétés de tir dans l’Italie unifiée de la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle’, *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée* 102, 2, 1990, pp. 533–676; Dualist Hungarian militarism is analysed in: Balázs Tangle, ‘Katonai nevelés es militarizmus kérdése a dualizmus-kori Magyarországon’, *Aetas*, 32, 1, 2017, pp. 45–67; Tamás P. Miklós, ‘A magyar gyermek és ifjúsági szervezetek a dualizmus-kori Magyarországon, 1867–1918’, *Neveléstörténet* 2, 1–2, 2005, pp. 23–48; Balázs Tangle, ‘Military Veterans' Associations in the Kingdom of Hungary, 1868–1914’, *Hungarian Historical Review* 11, 1, 2022, pp. 71–104.

<sup>11</sup> For the range of meanings of ‘modernisation/modernity’ in relation to Austria-Hungary, see: Andras C. Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary, 1825–1945*, Princeton, 1982; András Gerő, *Modern Hungarian Society in the Making. The Unfinished Experience*, Budapest, 1995; Ian D. Armour, *History of Eastern Europe, 1740–1918. Empires, Nations and Modernisation*, London, 2012; Ivan T. Berend, *An economic history of nineteenth-century Europe: diversity and industrialization*, Cambridge, 2013; Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* Harvard, 2016.

<sup>12</sup> Péter Hanák, ‘Társadalmi struktúrák a 19. századi Közép-Európában’, *Történelmi Szemle* 39, 1997, pp.159–77.

<sup>13</sup> Of the 83 shooting clubs functioning in the late 1870s, 10 claimed to have been operating before the 19th century (see Gyula Vargha, *Magyarország egyletei és társulatai 1878-ban*, Budapest, 1880).

<sup>14</sup> Ann B. Thursty, *The Martial Ethic in Early Modern Germany. Civic Duty and the Right of Arms*, Basingstoke, 2011; Maarten Roy Prak, *Citizens without Nations: Urban Citizenship in Europe and the World, c.1000–1789*, Cambridge, 2018, pp. 140–60.

<sup>15</sup> Act 21 of 1875 on the taxation of hunting weapons; and the similar Act 23 of 1883.

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- <sup>16</sup> ‘Magyarország különböző egyletei’, *Sztatisztikai közlemények* 4, 1863, pp. 246–65.
- <sup>17</sup> Vargha, *Magyarország egyletei*.
- <sup>18</sup> *Magyarország tiszti cím- és névtára*.
- <sup>19</sup> ‘Az oláh veszédelem’, *Pesti Hirlap*, 25 December 1910, p. 129; ‘Olimpiai céllövés’, *Budapesti Hirlap*, 31 March 1912, p. 52.
- <sup>20</sup> In the 1850s Hungary had only 50 officially registered associations, but almost 600 in 1862, 4,000 in 1880 and 10,000 prior to 1914.
- <sup>21</sup> ‘Magyar lövész-egyesületek’, *Pecsi Napló*, 10 May 1901, p. 1.
- <sup>22</sup> ‘Olimpiai céllövés’, *Budapesti Hirlap*, 31 March 1912, p. 52.
- <sup>23</sup> These 16 clubs were in Arad, Baja, Besztercebánya, Breznóbánya, Eger, Késmárk, Körmöcbánya, Nagy-Bánya, Nagyvárad, Pest, Pozsony, Szatmár-Németi, Székesfehérvár, Szepes-Béla, Ujvidék, Vác.
- <sup>24</sup> These 6 clubs were in Arad (1862: 160 members; 1880: 284; and 1895: 435), Késmárk (1862: 85; 1880: 71; 1888: 78), Pest (1862: 350; 1880: 177; 1889: 163), Pozsony (1862: 245; 1880: 290; 1889: 180), Szép-Béla (1862: 54; 1880: 60; 1888: 50) and Vác (1862: 130; 1880: 121; 1886: 120).
- <sup>25</sup> The database ‘Civil Societies, 1867–1918’: <https://adatbazisokonline.hu/adatbazis/polgari-kori-egyesuletek>; *Belügyi Közlöny*. Budapest, 1897–1914.
- <sup>26</sup> Károly Kimnach, *Jelentés a budai polári lövész-egylet által 1871-ben tartott százados ünnepélyről*, Buda, 1872, pp. 12–13.
- <sup>27</sup> ‘Országos diszlövészet’, *Vadász-Lap*, 5 June 1885, pp. 213–15.
- <sup>28</sup> A Magyar Országos Czéllövő-Szövetség közgyűlése, *Sport-Világ*, 7 July 1907, p. 254.
- <sup>29</sup> The pre-1914 years saw the spread of mass-oriented sports shooting clubs, the establishment of military drills in schools and universities, and the proliferation of gun culture. See: Jakob Vogel, ‘Military, Folklore, Eigensinn: Folkloric Militarism in Germany and France, 1871–1914’, *Central European History* 33, 4, 2000, pp. 487–504; Ute Frevert, *A Nation in Barracks. Conscription, Military Service and Civil Society in Modern Germany*, Oxford, 2004; Dagmar Ellerbrock, ‘Old Games–New Meanings? Understanding Modern Gun Violence in the Light of Nineteenth Century Habits’, *Miscellanea Anthropologica et Sociologica* 15, 2, 2014, pp. 56–70.
- <sup>30</sup> Using such proxy of the gun availability as the proportion of firearm suicide to all suicides (known as FS/S method), it may be concluded that 30% of men in Hungary and 65% of men in Budapest had an easy access to firearms in 1909. My estimation is based on data sourced from: *Budapesti Statisztikai Közlemények*, 51, 1916, pp. 64–65; *A Magyar Szent Korona Országainak 1909, 1910, 1911 és 1912 évi népmozgalma*, ed. László Buday, Budapest, 1916, p. 753. The efficiency of the FS/S was tested by Deborah Azrael, Philip J. Cook and Matthew Miller, ‘State and local prevalence of firearms ownership measurement, structure, and trends’, *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 20, 2004, pp. 43–62.
- <sup>31</sup> Recent studies argue that separating modern ‘empires’ from ‘nation-states’ is problematic. See: Stefan Berger and Alexei Miller, eds. *Nationalizing Empires*, Budapest, 2015. Dualist Hungary also possessed many features of an empire. See: Ignác Romsics, *A múlttól a mának. Tanulmányok és esszék a magyar történelemről*, Budapest, 2002, pp. 121–59.

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<sup>32</sup> Pieter Judson, *Exclusive Revolutionaries: Liberal Politics, Social Experience, and National Identity in the Austrian Empire, 1848–1914*, Ann Arbor, 1996, pp. 18–20.

<sup>33</sup> Some associations in Hungary, even important ones such as the prominent Pest National Casino, deliberately operated without registering, arguing that there was no Hungarian law prohibiting the freedom of assembly. Robert Nemes, ‘Associations and Civil Society in Reform-Era Hungary’, *Austrian History Yearbook*, 32, 2001, pp. 25–45.

<sup>34</sup> Iván Moskovitz, ‘A kbttk. 34, 61 és 115 §-aihoz’, *A Jog*, 10 November 1907, pp. 1–3.

<sup>35</sup> Veterans of the 1848 Hungarian revolution led the burgher shooting societies in Eger (Sándor Csiky; the largest in Hungary with over 400 shooters), Arad (Baron Lajos Simonyi), and Körmöczbánya (Sándor Campione). See: ‘Magyarország különböző egyletei’, pp. 246–65. All the leaders were politically active and became city mayors or MPs.

<sup>36</sup> Sándor Bujanovics, ‘A bajnokok, kik a mult politikai harcaiban’, *Pesti Napló*, 11 July 1862, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> Sándor Oswald, ‘A magyarországi lő-sport és különösen a pesti-lövész egysület’, *Vadász és Versény*, 3 May 1871, pp. 105–06. The 1880 association catalogue makes no mention of a shooting club in Eperjes.

<sup>38</sup> Gunther E. Rothenberg, ‘The Croatian Military Border and the Rise of Yugoslav Nationalism’, *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 100, 1964, pp. 34–45; Gunther E. Rothenberg, ‘The Struggle Over the Dissolution of the Croatian Military Border, 1850–1871’, *Slavic Review* 23, 1, 1964, pp. 63–78.

<sup>39</sup> Oscar Jaszi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*, Chicago, 1929, p. 101.

<sup>40</sup> Vargha, *Magyarország egyletei*.

<sup>41</sup> There were 43 officially registered and at least 14 ‘unregistered’ shooting societies in dualist Banat, my calculation based on Lajos Kakucs, ‘Polgári fegyveres alakulatok a Bánságban, 1717–1919’, *A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve 2016*, Szeged, 2016, pp. 105–30.

<sup>42</sup> Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500–1800*, Cambridge, 1999.

<sup>43</sup> Instead of its official ‘Imperial (and) Royal’ or unofficial ‘Austrian-Hungarian’ designations. See, ‘A bécsi hadügyérség csak javíthatlan’, *Politikai Ujdonságok*, 4 October 1882, p. 550; ‘A ketrec’, *Pesti Hirlap*, 21 February 1903, p. 1; ‘Az osztrák tükör’, *Pesti Hirlap*, 28 February 1903, p. 1; MPs Rákosi Viktor on 28 February 1903 (*Képviselőházi napló, 1901. XII. Kötet. 1903. február 17–márczius 7*, Budapest, 1903, p. 215) and Károly Eötvös on 16 June 1904 in parliament (A képviselőház ülése június 16-án, *Budapesti Napló*, 17 July 1904, p. 3).

<sup>44</sup> Istvan Deak, *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848–1918*, Oxford, 1990, p. 56.

<sup>45</sup> László Péter, ‘The Army Question in Hungarian Politics, 1867–1918’, *Central Europe* 2, 4, 2006, p. 93.

<sup>46</sup> Gunther E. Rothenberg, ‘Toward a National Hungarian Army: The Military Compromise of 1868 and its Consequences’, *Slavic Review* 31, 4, 1972, pp.805–16.

<sup>47</sup> Statements made by the leading ‘Forty-Eighter’ Gyula Justh and his fellow partisan Béla

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Mezőssy on 13 June 1904. See ‘A honvédelmi budget. A pénzügyi bizottság ülése’, *Budapesti Hirlap*, 14 June, 1904, p. 4.

<sup>48</sup> Tangle, ‘Katonai nevelés es militarizmus’, pp. 46–49.

<sup>49</sup> ‘Szemere Miklós beszéde’, *Magyarország*, 28 February 1903, pp. 4–5.

<sup>50</sup> *Képviselőházi napló, 1869. XX. kötet (1871. december 21–1872. január 23)*, Budapest, 1872, p. 255.

<sup>51</sup> See the speech by the Parliamentary Defence Committee rapporteur, Vincze Tischler, in: *Képviselőházi napló, 1884. XI. kötet (1886. március 30–május 7)*, Budapest, 1886), p. 336.

<sup>52</sup> Vargha, *Magyarország egyletei*.

<sup>53</sup> *Magyarország tiszti cím- és névtára. 1890*.

<sup>54</sup> Lakner, ‘Egyesületünk története diohejben’, pp. 14–15.

<sup>55</sup> ‘A lövészet terjesztése’, *Budapesti Polgári Lövész Egyesület Hivatalos Értesítője*, 1 August 1894, p. 1; ‘A junioroknak’, *Budapesti Polgári Lövész Egyesület Hivatalos Értesítője*, 1 November 1894, p. 1.

<sup>56</sup> ‘Vélemények a czellövő versényről’, *Vasárnapi Újság*, 3 May 1903, p. 306.

<sup>57</sup> *A közös ügyek tárgyalására a magyar országgyűlés által kiküldött s Ő Felsége által 1907. december 20-ára*

*összehívott bizottság naplója*, Budapest, 1908, pp. 70–71.

<sup>58</sup> Tangle, ‘Katonai nevelés es militarizmus kérdése’, 50.

<sup>59</sup> ‘Az ifjuság katonai lövészete’, *Magyarország*, July 2, 1909, 11.

<sup>60</sup> See MP Ferenc Bolgár’s speech of 13 May 1911, in: *Képviselőházi napló, 1910. VII. kötet (1911. április 25–május 22)*, Budapest, 1911, pp. 351–54.

<sup>61</sup> Vargha, *Magyarország egyletei*.

<sup>62</sup> Oswald, ‘A magyarországi ló-sport’, pp. 105–06.

<sup>63</sup> János Remetei Kővári, ‘Fél aczéburholata golyó’, *Magyarország*, 15 July 1909, p. 10.

<sup>64</sup> Vargha, *Magyarország egyletei*.

<sup>65</sup> József Imre, ‘Gondolatok a hazai önkéntes tőzoltóságok első világháború tartó történetéhez’, *Védelem Tudomány* 2, 4, 2017, p. 266.

<sup>66</sup> In 1871, there was even an attempt to launch a joint firemen, athletic and shooting journal in Pest, called ‘*Pesti általános torna-, lövész és tűzoltó-ujság / Turn -, Schützen- und Furerwehr-Zeitung.*’

<sup>67</sup> ‘Lövész-egylet’, *Borsod-Miskolci Értesítő*, 12 August 1875.

<sup>68</sup> There were 4 rifle-firemen associations in the 1880 catalogue of Hungarian associations, and 2 in 1890 (see Vargha, *Magyarország egyletei* and *Magyarország tiszti cím- és névtára. 1890*). A list of registered dualist Hungarian association bylaws includes 14 rifle-firemen associations, 6 of which were registered in 1896–1907 (see the database ‘*Civil Associations, 1867–1918*’: <https://adatbazisokonline.hu/adatbazis/polgari-kori-egyesuletek>; and the *Belügyi Közlöny*, Budapest, 1897–1914).

<sup>69</sup> ‘Lövész-egylet alakulás Vajszlón’, *Sikló*, 4 April 1914, p. 2.

<sup>70</sup> ‘Polgárórség szervezése’, *Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun vármegye hivatalos lapja*, 17 September 1914,

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pp. 1–2.

<sup>71</sup> The number of public sector jobs in Hungary grew from 16,000 in 1867 to almost 400,000 in 1914, and perhaps as many as 70% of them were filled by the Magyarised ‘erstwhile German bourgeoisie’. See, Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness*, 111.

<sup>72</sup> Balázs A. Szelényi, *The failure of the Central European bourgeoisie: new perspectives on Hungarian History*, Basingstoke, 2006, p. 139.

<sup>73</sup> The 1875 regulations of the Temesvár Burgher Shooting Society made explicit that the post of shooting master was reserved for the town’s chief administrator. See: ‘A lövészársulat felosztása’, *Temesvári Városi Közlöny*, Január 1906, pp. 123–25.

<sup>74</sup> ‘Törvényhatósági közgyűlésről’, *Vásárhely és Vidéke*, 10 May 1883, p. 1.

<sup>75</sup> János Korponay, *Abaujvármegye monographiája, 1866-1870*, Kassa, 1870, pp. 583–87; *A Budapesti polgári lövész-egyesület alapszabályai*, Budapest, 1889, p. 13.

<sup>76</sup> Aliaksandr Piahanaou, ‘The Hungarian Royal Gendarmerie and Political Violence in ‘Happy Peaceful Times’ (1881–1914)’, *Crime, History and Societies* 25, 1, 2021, pp. 85–100; and Csaba Csapó, *A magyar királyi csendőrség története, 1881–1914*, Pécs, 1999.

<sup>77</sup> ‘A pénzügyi bizottság ülése (1915. évi május 7-én)’, *Fővárosi Közlöny*, 14 May 1915, pp. 920–24.

<sup>78</sup> Miklós Markó, ‘A Budapesti polgári lövész ünnepe’, *Vasárnapi Újság*, 21 June 1903, pp. 406–07.

<sup>79</sup> ‘Budapesti Polgári Lövész Egyesület jóváhagyott alapszabályai’, in: *Budapesti Polgári Lövész Egyesület Hivatalos Értesítője*, 1 May 1914, pp. 17–23. The 1914 list of BPLE members included three women, who joined the club between 1910 and 1911. *Ibid.*, 13–16.

<sup>80</sup> Christiane Eisenberg, ‘The Middle Class and Competition: Some Considerations of the Beginnings of Modern Sport in England and Germany’, *International Journal of the History of Sport* 7, 1990), p. 273.

<sup>81</sup> ‘Hírvásár’, *Nővilág*, 30 August 1857, p. 539.

<sup>82</sup> ‘Zárólövészet díjkiosztással’, *Pesti Hirlap*, 2 October 1889, p. 6.

<sup>83</sup> Jenő Bonomi, ‘Német lövészegyletek a budai hegyvidéken’, in: ed. József László Kovács, *A céltáblákat szőlő díszítse! Szőlő- és lövészünnepek Magyarországon a 16-19. Században*, Budapest, 2009, p. 205.

<sup>84</sup> Vargha, *Magyarország egyletei*.

<sup>85</sup> ‘Az Óbuda római katolikus polgári lövészegylet rendszabályi’, in: *A céltáblákat szőlő díszítse!*, pp. 221–23.

<sup>86</sup> Jews were given equal status to other Habsburg subjects in 1867, but even in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jews were not accepted in many sports associations, most notably the aristocratic athletic clubs. See: Miklós Kondrád, ‘Sport-egyletek és anti-szemitizmus – a magyar zsidóság aranykorában’, *Szombat* 5779, 2019, pp.4–7. But there were exceptions as well. The burgher shooting society of Vác started accepting Jews already in 1851, but only those who were self-employed. See, Lajos Frejsinger, ‘Emlékezés a váczi lövész-egylet száz éves életéből’, *Herkules*, 15 November 1893, p. 178.

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- <sup>87</sup> Bonomi, 'Német lövészegyletek', p. 205.
- <sup>88</sup> 'Az oláh veszedelem', *Pesti Hirlap*, 25 December 1910, p. 129.
- <sup>89</sup> Tangle, 'Katonai nevelés', p. 354.
- <sup>90</sup> 'Magyar lövészek ünnepe', *Budapesti Hirlap*, 16 August 1913, pp. 4–5.
- <sup>91</sup> Jenő Bölcsházai Belházy, 'Néhány szó polgári lövöldéink átalakításának szükségéről', *Vadász-Lap*, 15 February 1891, pp. 68–69.
- <sup>92</sup> 'Reform programme', *Herkules*, 5 April 1891, p. 6; 'A polgári lövész-egylet', *Fővárosi Lapok*, 25 March 1890, p. 609.
- <sup>93</sup> The proportion of aristocrats in the Pest rifle club dropped from 5% in 1859 to under 2% in 1889. My calculation based on: *A Pesti Polgári Cél-Lövész-Egylet névkönyve 1859-dik évre*, Pest, 1859; *A Budapesti lövész-társulat évkönyve 1889. évre*, Budapest, 1889.
- <sup>94</sup> Szelényi, *The failure of the Central European bourgeoisie*, p. 139.
- <sup>95</sup> Between 1850 and 1910, when the population of Hungary grew from 13 to 20 million, the number of Magyar speakers rose from 4.5 to 10 million. The number of native German speakers increased from 1.3 to 2 million in 1900, but dropped to 1.8 million in 1910.
- <sup>96</sup> Ágoston Berecz, 'Top-down and bottom-up Magyarization in multi-ethnic Banat towns under dualist Hungary (1867–1914)', *European Review of History* 28, 3, 2021, p. 424.
- <sup>97</sup> Péter Maitz, 'The death of Standard German in 19th-century Budapest. A case-study on the role of linguistic ideology in language shift', in: Stephen Elspass, and Nils Langer (eds.), *Germanic Language Histories 'from Below' (1700–2000)*, Berlin-New York, 2007), pp. 407–09.
- <sup>98</sup> The rifle clubs' bylaws generally made no mention of the language officially adopted for their procedures.
- <sup>99</sup> Alexander Maxwell, 'Hungaro-German Dual Nationality: Germans, Slavs, and Magyars during the 1848 Revolution', *German Studies Review* 39, 1, 2016, pp. 17–39.
- <sup>100</sup> 'A budapesti polgári lövész egyesülete tisztelt tagjaihöz', *Budapesti Polgári Lövész Egyesület Hivatalos Értesítője*, 1 May 1894, p. 1; 'A budapesti polgári lövész-egyesület rendes évi közgyűlése', *Pesti Hirlap*, 9 April 1894, p. 4.
- <sup>101</sup> 'A budapesti polgári lövész egyesülete közgyűlése', *Herkules*, 15 April 1894, pp. 61–62.
- <sup>102</sup> 'Lövészünnep Bécsben', *Pesti Hirlap*, 19 July 1880, pp. 1–2.
- <sup>103</sup> 'Díszlövészet', *Fővárosi Lapok*, 11 May 1896, p. 7; '200 esztendő. A budapesti polgári lövészegyesület jubileuma', *Pesti Hirlap*, 14 June 1896, p. 7; 'A céllövők ünnepe', *Budapesti Hirlap*, 14 June 1896, p. 4; 'A lövészegyesület ünnepe', *Fővárosi Lapok*, 15 June 1896, pp. 4–5; 'A lövészek napja. A kongresszus', *Pesti Hirlap*, 14 June 1896, pp. 2–3; 'A céllövők kongresszusa', *Budapesti Hirlap*, 15 June 1896, p. 4; 'A budapesti lövészegyesület bucsuünnep', *Fővárosi Lapok*, 22 June 1896, pp. 2–3.
- <sup>104</sup> *Magyarország*, the mouthpiece of the Hungarian Independence Party, asked rhetorically whether 'the Budapest shooters would go as colonial curiosities to the Austrian celebration, where no Magyar ... will take part'. The newspaper urged the BPLE to 'decide as Magyars'. See 'Magyarok a császár-jubileumon', *Magyarország*, 22 May 1898, p. 8.
- <sup>105</sup> 'Nem megyünk Bécsbe', *Budapesti Polgári Lövész Egyesület Hivatalos Értesítője*, June 1,

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1898: 5-6; *Magyarország* gladly approved the BPLE's determination not to go to Vienna ('A lövészek nem mennek Bécsbe', *Magyarország*, 25 May 1898, p. 7), but was also watchful that the decision be respected. The newspaper reported that three unknown shooters from Hungary – described as 'national traitors' (*gyázmagyarok*) – did indeed take part in the Viennese festival on June 26, 1898. See 'Az osztrák lövészek diszfelvonulása', *Magyarország*, 27 June 1898, p. 5.

<sup>106</sup> 'Jubileumi lakoma', *Budapesti Polgári Lövész Egyesület Hivatalos Értesítője*, 1 March 1899, p. 11.

<sup>107</sup> Kálmán Törs, 'Országos lövöldözés', *Vasárnapi Újság*, 27 August 1871, p. 442.

<sup>108</sup> 'Bir-e ezekről tudomással Magyarország kormánya?', *Nemere*, 26 August 1874, p. 1.

<sup>109</sup> For example, an article in *Pesti Hirlap* on the shooting festival in honour of Archduke József Habsburg in June 1903 pointed out that 'conversations were in Hungarian except on one occasion when Archduke József exchanged some words in German with the Duke of Lobkovitz. See 'Lövész-ünnepély', *Pesti Hirlap*, 8 June 1903, p. 5.

<sup>110</sup> The rifle club of the settlement of Nagyösz/Triswetter in the Banat region used German until it disbanded in 1902. See Kakucs, 'Polgári fegyverkezett alakulatok', p. 119.

<sup>111</sup> *Bácska társadalmi élete. Ezer arcképpel*, ed. Gáspár Csoór, Budapest, 1910, pp. 247–48.

<sup>112</sup> 'Budapesti Polgári Lövész Egyesület jóváhagyott alapszabályai', p. 17. The same emphasis on Habsburg loyalty could be found among the shooting societies in Austria, where the aim of their state-wide federation formed in 1910 was 'to foster and exercise a dynastic-patriotic feeling among its members and to disseminate it among the population'. Cited from Morelon, 'Respectable citizens', p. 5.

<sup>113</sup> 'Célre ügyely! Lövészet a középkor módjára', in: *A 50 éves Pesti Hirlap jubileumi albuma, 1878–1928*, Budapest, 1928, pp. 831–32.

<sup>114</sup> 'Igen tisztelt lövésztarsak!', *Budapesti Polgári Lövész Egyesület Hivatalos Értesítője*, 1 July 1900, p. 1.

<sup>115</sup> 'Királylövészet', *Budapesti Polgári Lövész Egyesület Hivatalos Értesítője*, 1 September 1898, p. 4.

<sup>116</sup> János Lakner, 'Egyesületünk története diohejben', *Budapesti Polgári Lövész Egyesület Hivatalos Értesítője*, 1 March 1896, p. 14.

<sup>117</sup> Lakner, 'Egyesületünk története diohejben', p. 16.

<sup>118</sup> 'Budapest küldöttsége a halottaskázban', *Pesti Naplo*, 27 March 1894, p. 2.

<sup>119</sup> Alice Freifeld, 'Kossuth: the hermit and the crowd', *Hungarian Studies*, 16, 2, 2002, p. 206.

<sup>120</sup> 'A budapesti polgári lövész-egyesület', *Pesti Hirlap*, 11 March 1895, p. 4.

<sup>121</sup> 'Budapesti Polgári Lövész Egyesület jóváhagyott alapszabályai', p. 17.

<sup>122</sup> András Jaritz, 'Jelentés az egyesület 1905. évi működéséről', *Budapesti Polgári Lövész Egyesület Hivatalos Értesítője*, 1 March 1906, p. 3.

<sup>123</sup> Miklós Szabó, *Az újkonzervativizmus és a jobboldali radikalizmus története, 1867–1918*, Budapest, 2015, pp. 320–22.

<sup>124</sup> The losers of modernisation, such as the discontented petty bourgeoisie in Weimar Germany or the populations of de-industrialising areas across Europe, supported ultra-right movements. See

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Hans-Georg Betz, *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe*, Basingstoke, 1994, pp. 24–25; Michael Minkenberg, ‘The Renewal of the Radical Right: Between Modernity and Anti-modernity’, *Government and Opposition*, 35, 2, 2000, pp. 170–88.

<sup>125</sup> Hanák, ‘Társadalmi struktúrák’, p. 174.

<sup>126</sup> Robert Nemes, ‘Ravaged Empire: Water and Power in Prewar Hungary’, in Marijeta Bozovic and Miller Matthew, eds., *Watersheds: Poetics and Politics of the Danube River*, Boston, 2016.

<sup>127</sup> In the early 1900s, 4,000 dam keepers were protecting more than 6,000 kilometres of dams in Hungary. Like the burgher shooters, dam keepers were exempt from paying taxes on firearms.

<sup>128</sup> Vargha, *Magyarország egyletei*, pp. 412–13.

<sup>129</sup> ‘Magyar szocialisták zendülése’, *Pesti Napló*, 23 April 1894, pp. 1–2.

<sup>130</sup> Talmácsi, ‘Gondolatok egy emléktábla kapcsán’, pp. 197–79.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*; ‘A lövész-egylet felosztása’, *Hódmezővásárhely*, 6 September 1889.

<sup>132</sup> ‘Észak-Pest vármegye területén megszervezett polgárőr osztagok’, in: János Suba, ‘Polgárőrség szervezése, 1919–1921’, *Rendvédelem történeti füzetek*, 26, 56, 2018, pp. 141–42.

<sup>133</sup> Béla Bodó, ‘The White Terror in Hungary, 1919–1921: The Social Worlds of Paramilitary Groups’, *Austrian History Yearbook*, 42, 2011, pp. 133–63.

<sup>134</sup> Tangl, ‘Military Veterans' Associations’.

<sup>135</sup> 13 veteran societies (with 3,000 members) were registered in the national association catalogues in 1880 and 39 societies in 1890, while there were 82 (with over 9,000 members) and respectively 91 burgher shooting societies. In 1880, an average burgher shooting society was twice richer than a veteran society, and had 7 fold more assets per member. See, Vargha, *Magyarország egyletei*, and *Magyarország tiszti cím- és névtára. 1890*.

<sup>136</sup> A similar argument that the absence of veteran societies hampered the societal militarisation in the late tsarist Russia is made in: Jörn Leonhard and Ulrike von Hirschhausen, ‘Does the Empire strike back? The Model of the Nation in Arms as a Challenge for Multi-Ethnic Empires in the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century’, *Journal of Modern European History*, 5, 2, 2007, p. 216.

<sup>137</sup> Cole, *Military Culture*; Morelon, ‘Respectable citizens’.

<sup>138</sup> Piahana, ‘Hungarian Royal Gendarmerie’; Alice Velková and Klára Hulíková Tesárková, ‘Criminals condemned to death in the lands of Cisleithania in 1882–1911’, *Střed/Centre*, 12, 1, 2020, pp. 40–79; Annemarie Steidl, *On Many Routes. Internal, European, and Transatlantic Migration in the Late Habsburg Empire*. West Lafayette, 2021.