

## Repräsentationen / Representations



# Visual Securitisation through Sarcasm and Ridicule: National Minorities as ‘Dangerous Others’ in Hungarian Cartoons (1890–1914)

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## *Abstract*

This study analyses visual representations of national minorities in cartoons, a genre that is not normally seen as a medium of securitisation. It will look at two leading satirical magazines in Hungary, *Borsszem Jankó* and *Bolond Istók*, between 1890 and 1914. The paper starts with conceptual considerations on the entanglement between narratives of securitisation and national-political and linguistic-cultural stereotypes. It will then briefly describe the politics of difference in Hungary as a multilingual state around 1900. After a short characterisation of the two satirical magazines, the study will analyse twenty cartoons in which different national minorities are being presented as radical “dangerous others”. Finally, the analysis will show how the cartoon medium reiterated notions of cultural or civilizational hierarchies and political convictions that minorities posed a danger to the national cause. The focus on cartoons seems particularly promising due to minorities’ special media functions: Cartoons visually accentuate not only characteristics of individual persons but also reproduce and thus reiterate stereotypes that the audience of the journal could decode at a glance. At the same time, they incited political phantasies through their provocative and scandalising visual language, and discouraged alternative positions.

## *Theoretical points of departure: Security, power, linguistic and ethnic diversity*

The audiences of securitising moves are heterogeneous not only in terms of their social status and economic resources. Especially in multi-ethnic societies and federal state structures, ethnic affiliation, cultural codes, linguistic boundaries and notions of self-determination as well as mental geographies of centres and peripheries play a crucial role in pre-structuring audiences and their specific security agendas. For a long time, the fields of ethno-politics, minority/diversity issues and discourses on multiculturalism have been interlinked with security considerations, mainly in terms of fear of ethnic conflict (see for example Faure 2006). Some contributions to the field still refer to these forms of difference predominantly as a source

of conflict and therefore as an object of securitisation, even going so far as to argue that it is almost inevitable not to securitise national minorities against the background of state building and identity management.<sup>1</sup> This approach, however, fails to address the fact that ethnic or regionalist self-expression can be conceptualised as a securitising move that aims at guaranteeing collective survival and thus engaging in strategic essentialism (cf. Spivak 2008b). It also downplays the fact that in most contexts this is an open political process with no fixed set of securitising actors, referent objects and audiences (cf. Jutilia 2015).

More recently, we have seen an emphasis on the nexus of migration-based diversity and its securitisation by political elites (cf. Huysmans 2000). When describing the securitisation of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea during the so-called refugee crisis in 2015, Tugba Basaran identified a general pattern of implementing a political design that effectively limits third-party assistance to some segments of the population. She speaks of legal as well as other techniques and strategies for silencing these groups and advancing or even enforcing indifference toward them:

“[P]ublic compassion is discouraged, while collective disengagement and even indifference are encouraged. [...] Securitized populations are increasingly isolated spatially, economically, and socially from the general population [...]. A generalized form of collective indifference and societal isolation provides the possibility for governing these populations differently. [...] The central issue at stake here is to understand [...] how people are guided toward becoming indifferent to the lives and suffering of particular populations.” (Basaran 2015, p. 215)

In her argument, Basaran encourages us to look at ways in which empathy towards unwanted populations is systematically discouraged and their political activism discredited. She also recommends looking at how “social proximity and distance are produced in liberal societies so as to explain [...] the governing of indifference, and the use of differential norms.” (Basaran 2015, p. 207)

It might come as a surprise to see this longer quote from the discussion of a current security problem at the opening of a historiographical study on the mediatisation of national minorities by cartoons from more than a hundred years ago. However, in the satirical magazines of Hungary around 1900, we encounter quite similar strategies towards a part of the

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1 For reflective perspectives on this, see Bărbulescu 2012; Jutilia 2006; Kymlicka 2007; Olesker 2014; Roe 2004.

population that amounted to 49 % of all citizens according to the official census of 1900.<sup>2</sup> In order to explain the way in which national/linguistic minorities appear in the two journals, this study will look at visual discourses for the reification of political convictions and the legitimisation of actions taken by the various Hungarian governments. By analysing visual satire, this study will therefore look at what Uma Narayan calls “the creation of the radically foreign [...] by using a strategy of crystallizing the negative through the alienation of other cultural content to create an integral image of the enemy.” (Narayan 1998, p. 95)

As one of the first scholars with a background in linguistics, Rosita Rindler Schjerve combined theoretical input from conflict studies with empirical evidence from studies in multilingual societies. In her work, she holds that in this kind of societal setting, language collectives are linguistically symbolised as subcultures of unequal social status. Consequently, in the political process the status attributions to various groups are projected onto their languages. Conflicts arise wherever multilingualism is an expression of these unequal status attributions to individual language groups and the power that is attributed to them. Language as a group marker is therefore not a source of conflict per se; such conflicts are rather socially, economically and politically motivated and carried out via the secondary attribute of ‘language’ (Rindler Schjerve 2007, pp. 41–43; Rindler Schjerve 2003, pp. 47–52).

We might conclude that language issues and language politics therefore intersect directly with power constellations and concepts of society that ought to be confirmed, enforced, challenged or transformed gradually. Therefore, in multilingual societies like Hungary around 1900, the status and the applicability of languages in the administrative, economic, cultural and political sphere can also be seen as a symbolic battlefield of discourses about group-specific societal securities. As a general consequence of language-security-related discourses, more and more political issues intersect with identity claims that disseminate and reiterate messages of inclusion and exclusion. Against this backdrop, the stereotypical use of cultural codes can take the form of a securitising move: minority elites who represent subaltern groups according to the given power structure are being

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2 Among the 16,854,415 inhabitants of Hungary in 1900 (without counting the autonomous kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia), there were 51.4 % of Hungarian mother tongue (this figure had officially risen to 54 % by 1910). The official census yielded the following figures: Romanians 16.7 %, Slovaks 11.9 %, Germans 11.8 %, Serbs 2.6 %, Ruthenes (i.e., Ukrainians) 2.5 %, Croats 1.1 % (A magyar korona országainak 1900. évi népszámlálása, 16).

discredited and ridiculed by means of satire and humour — together with their political agenda and their potential sympathisers and allies within the majority population.<sup>3</sup>

*Historical context: “Dangerous others” in Hungarian political discourse around 1900*

In *fin de siècle* political life in Hungary, the securitisation of linguistic and religious minorities had been gaining momentum since the end of the 1870s. The ruling political class had developed a twofold anxiety when it came to threats to state and nation by an imagined “other”: sovereignty and the place of Hungary within the Habsburg Empire on the one hand<sup>4</sup> and national integration on the other. Hungary, with a territory of about four times the size of today, was a multi-ethnic entity, with roughly half of the population not having Hungarian as their mother tongue. While the Nationalities Act of 1868 established Hungarian as the state language and referred to a single political nation, it still granted these linguistic minorities some rights of self-government, especially in matters related to culture, religion and local administration. This changed profoundly at the end of the 1870s, also because the Nationalities Act was never actually implemented (cf. Deák 2002; Kántor/Majtényi 2005). At that point, Hungarian nation-building policies followed the model of the nationalising state as it was implemented in France or Prussia. Since the linguistic minorities settled mainly in peripheral regions of the country that were seen as remote rural and deprived areas, it was a political credo that all of Hungary would eventually become linguistically and culturally Hungarian in the course of state-driven modernisation (see among others Csibi/Schwarzwölder 2018; Mezey 2005). Especially initiatives in the field of education were designed to disseminate patriotism, foster assimilation and reduce linguistic diversity by influencing the language preference of future generations in favour of the national language, Hungarian (cf. Berencz 2013; Nagy 2020; von Puttkamer 2003).

Throughout the entire period, political power remained in the hands of the higher nobility who had excellent relations to the court. It was the middle stratum of the nobility with career options in the expanding civil services, however, that dominated the public discourse on patriotism

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3 For a more detailed explanatory model, see Haslinger 2016.

4 For the representation of Austria in Hungarian cartoons, see Haslinger 2021.

(cf. Freifeld 2000). Among this stratum in particular the conviction prevailed that individual non-Hungarian speakers had only one path toward social and cultural upward mobility: through changing their language to Hungarian and embracing the patriotic ideal that only one political nation existed in Hungary. The fact that urban minorities in Hungary, above all Germans and Jews, were ready to assimilate into the Hungarian majority encouraged politicians to pursue this kind of policy right up to the First World War (cf. Haslinger 2001/02). As a result, the official narrative towards national-linguistic minority groups was paternalistic as well as oppressive. The various governments applied a policy of structural discrimination and social as well as legislative pressure against small but active groups of well-educated minority representatives whose advocacy for their own national identity within a multilingual Hungary got increasingly criminalised with the help of press trials.

With the exception of 1905–1910, the government of Hungary was in the hands of the Liberal Party (*Szabadelvű Párt*) that dominated political life until 1905 and re-emerged as National Party of Work (*Nemzeti Munkapárt*) in 1910. The opposition parties that were also critical of the Austro-Hungarian compromise of 1867 had their strongholds in Central Hungary, especially the Calvinist communities of the Great Plain. It was in the joint interest of the higher nobility and Francis Joseph as Hungarian king to counterbalance the electoral turnout of anti-system parties by respective turnouts in the peripheries of the country with their majority of non-Hungarian speaking populations. In order to keep the political system stable, electoral districts were heavily gerrymandered (with much fewer votes necessary to win a seat in the peripheries of the country), and during election periods, manipulation, violence and fraud were rife in many regions. Franchise was comparatively restrictive, normally enabling only 5–6 % of the population to vote (peaking at 10 % only in 1905). Political representation of parties of national minorities remained minimal; in 1905, they gained a total of ten seats out of 413.<sup>5</sup> Their political credo that Hungary must recognise its minorities as constitutive elements of the state, was rejected by almost all other political parties — with the major exception being the comparatively weak Social Democrats.

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5 On the parliamentary system of Hungary, see in more detail Pap, József: Parliamentary Representatives and Parliamentary Representation in Hungary (1848–1918), Frankfurt am Main 2017; Gerő, András: The Hungarian Parliament (1867–1918). A Mirage of Power. New York 1997.

*The satirical journals Borsszem Jankó and Bolond Istók*

In Hungary around 1900, two satirical journals were among the trendsetters in the field of satire and cartoons. The most important at the time was *Borsszem Jankó* (*Johnny Peppercorn*), which is an adaptation of a famous figure from Hungarian folklore (*Babszem Jankó*, or *Johnny Bean*, who despite his small size successfully met many challenges during his adventures). Founded in 1868, it soon became the most popular satirical medium in Hungary. As regards graphical style and humour, it followed the patterns of some of the leading European satirical journals at that time, such as the British *Punch* and the Austrian *Kladderatsch* (cf. Kosáry/Németh 1985, pp. 668–670; Suppan 1991). The selection of topics suggests an urban, patriotic, non-Jewish readership. The perspective from which its humour arises is that of the urban gentry, either from the rapidly expanding capital of Budapest, where the editorial office was based, or the different regional centres in the country. In *Borsszem Jankó*'s columns and cartoons, we can find gallantries and piquancies from musical and theatrical life as well as visual narratives full of social Darwinist platitudes: rural life, the rural population and servants are equally targets of ridicule. The weekly journal contained wicked jokes that targeted, for example, the artistic avant-garde, the labour movement or the emerging activists for the emancipation of women. In contrast to the other journal analysed here, an advanced knowledge of German is needed in order to understand the cartoons (sometimes whole sentences are given without translation). In terms of its political orientation, the journal was close to the political establishment that was grouped around the Liberal Party, and was devoted to subjecting the political opposition to scrutiny (cf. Haslinger 1993/94, p. 67).

The other journal, named *Bolond Istók* (*Stephen the Fool*, after the title of an epic poem from 1850 by Hungarian poet János Arany), was more confrontational in message and tone. It also addressed the Hungarian educated middle class, which is evidenced by the use of many visual quotations and pastiches of antique or biblical subjects. In addition to the mockery of politicians and political life, the journal depicted literary and theatrical life as well; however, the audience seemed to have been located much more in the provincial centres. *Bolond Istók* appeared between 1878 and 1919 to counterbalance the pro-government *Borsszem Jankó*. It was oppositional from the outset and, in this vein, adopted a more scandalising tone with outright anti-Semitic tendencies. Its anti-clerical position was more pronounced than those of the other journal (cf. Buzinkay 1983, pp. 76–82).



Visual strategies of securitising the nation's "dangerous other(s)"

What is important at this point, however, is that despite these political differences (pro-government versus oppositional), the conceptualisation of "the dangerous other" from a national security point of view and the visual messages retrieved were largely uniform. We can speak of a consensus of opinion on the dangerousness and/or ridiculousness of national minorities.<sup>6</sup> We also see an arsenal of quite similar visual strategies for their securitisation when they addressed a Hungarian-speaking patriotic audience.

The stereotypical representation of "the Hungarian" in all cartoons is *Magyar Mihály* (*Hungarian Michael*) who is a prosperous, self-content, healthy and well-fed middle-aged male farmer. When this self-image is confronted with national minorities as "dangerous others", the latter pose a direct or implicit threat or they form a stark contrast owing to their behaviour, intentions and material as well as cultural status. The "nationalities" (*nemzetiségek*) are almost always shown in poor rural dress, with an unbridgeably large civilizational gap vis-à-vis their counterpart. This is clearly indicated by the footwear: fine and expensive leather boots for *Hungarian Michael*, poor footwear made from rags for the other nationalities (the only exception here being the German minority with carpet slippers and sometimes even boots).

Whenever *Hungarian Michael* interacts with representatives of national minorities, we encounter two constellations: the latter are either shown as brutal, uncivilised, primitive, crude, ignorant, violent and destructive, or they appear as separatist, solitary, bull-headed, perfidious and malicious. A standard setting for the first constellation is the cartoon entitled "House destroyers" (fig. 1). It shows (from left to right) personifications of Romanians, Serbs, Slovaks, and Germans destroying their common Hungarian home; the accompanying text implies that given this destructive attitude, Hungarian policies have been far too liberal: "And the Hungarian landlord does not evict the house destroyers, although they deserve it."<sup>7</sup> A second cartoon of this kind is entitled "A game of patience" (fig. 2). Following the example of the popular attraction of the *Watschenmann* in the Prater amusement park in Vienna, Hungarian Michael as the stereotypical national symbol serves as a target for the aggression of Romanians, Croats,

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6 For depictions of Austria as „dangerous other“ in Hungarian cartoons of the time, see Haslinger 2021.

7 All translations are by the author of this study.

and Slovaks as well as Engelbert Pernersdorfer (1850–1918), member of the "Reichsrat", the Austrian parliament, who represented the German national section of the labour movement in Austria. This image invites the readership to identify with *Hungarian Michael* as a helpless object of maltreatment by the minorities and at the same time suggests a policy that is designed to regain agency on behalf of the Hungarian cause.

A construction site is often the location for the second constellation, the notion of minorities as separatist, solitary, perfidious and malicious. The cartoon with the telling title "The tower of Babel" (fig. 3) points to the presumed threat of disintegration that multilingualism would allegedly pose for any society. Representatives of the Romanians (in front), the Slovaks, the Serbs and the Croats leave the construction site of the "Hungarian state" with members of the government of Prime Minister Sándor Wekerle (1841–1921) working on it. The caption reads, "Wekerle as site manager (to the strikers): It's a shame when you stop working, brothers, even if we don't understand each other's languages. There may still come a time when you too can find refuge in it, because we will certainly finish the building without you."

Another excellent example of this second pattern of confrontation is the cartoon "Separate cooking" (fig. 4), which aimed at discrediting the nationalities' congress, an assembly of political representatives of minorities on August 10, 1895, in Budapest. In this congress, Romanians, Serbs and Slovaks from Hungary complained about the failure to implement the 1868 law on minority rights and passed a catalogue of demands that included freedom of the press, universal suffrage and the adaptation of administrative borders to the geographical distribution of languages in Hungary. It was meant to be a competing event to the national festivities of 1896 celebrating the 1,000-year anniversary of Hungarian presence in the Carpathian basin which were designed as a mobilising event (cf. Weber 1997; Varga 2016). The cartoon shows *Hungarian Michael* inviting the minorities with a grand and friendly gesture to his goulash (the Millennium festivities). He says, "Brothers, do not despise my meal. You will like its taste and I look forward to seeing you", while the Romanian and the Slovak cook their own meal using frogs and snakes as ingredients in a dented cauldron that bears the label "Nationalities Congress": "Those: Eat it by yourself. We cook separately according to our own taste."

Such negative sentiments are also evoked whenever *Hungarian Michael* acts against his own interests (like the minorities cheering at him smashing

the independent coalition in fig. 5<sup>8</sup>). Under the title “Hungarians against Hungarians” (fig. 6), violent disagreement between two Hungarians is followed by a cheering crowd that includes Russia and France, a Romanian, a Slovak and a Serb from Hungary as well as a Czech and an Austrian German who have just stopped fighting each other. According to the caption, this “watching audience” accompanies the fight with their cheers in their respective languages: *Să trăiască* (Romanian), *Živio* (Croatian/Serb), *Nazdar* (Czech/Slovak) and *Hoch* (German).

There is one set of cartoons, however, that stands out on grounds of state law: Because of its constitutional status since 1868, Croatia-Slavonia was a region with limited autonomy in domestic affairs, religion and education, with a governor (called *ban* in Croatian language) and an assembly (the *Sabor*). Therefore, the Croatian language was the only one besides Hungarian that had a limited function as an official language. This fact was constantly contested by Hungarian governments, who kept trying to enforce the use of Hungarian in as many administrative areas as possible (cf. Veliz 2012). In the respective cartoons, these political conflicts translate into the message that Croatia was taking advantage of its privileged status to demand too much at the expense of the integrity of the Hungarian state. The cartoons suggest that these demands unjustly overtaxed Hungary and the resistance of Croatian politics restricted Hungary as a whole. Accordingly, Croatia is characterised as insatiable or as assisting in brutal operations against Hungary and its representatives in the autonomous region. In one cartoon, the “Croatian Moloch” (fig. 7) – easily recognisable by the moustache and the typical hat – is fed with Hungarian officials shackled with ropes as “fresh flesh” by Prime Minister István Tisza (1861-1918) to the astonishment of the parliamentary opposition. In another one, sarcastically entitled “Croatian surgery” (fig. 8), Tisza as a “military doctor operates on the infected tongue” of a railway official, alluding to the question of the intended extension of the use of Hungarian by railway officials. In the Hungarian language, the words for “language” and “tongue” are identical (*nyelv*).

Despite this special status of Croatian representatives, however, the central narrative figure among the national minorities of Hungary is the male Romanian (mostly pejoratively referred to as “Wallachian”). Normally, the use of the word “Wallachian” instead of “Romanian” serves to downplay

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8 Caption: “The nationalities: Well, look, we don’t even have to make an effort, the crazy Hungarian does it for us!” We see the Serb, Romanian and Slovak (from left to right).

the significance of the Romanian national movement within Hungary, which at that time still sought autonomy. In many cartoons, we see this figure in the foreground or as leading the actions of the other minorities who just follow suit. We can even watch the transformation of the peasant stereotype into a valuable member of society (with neat clothes and proper shoes) by being put in jail, which is ironically called an “educational institution” (fig. 9<sup>9</sup>). The caption says, “He goes in wild. He comes out tamed.” Here a wildly gesturing Romanian peasant is brought into the building by Prime Minister Sándor Wekerle through the door labelled “punishment” and released as a useful member of society by Prime Minister Miklós Bánffy (1873–1950) through the door labelled “pardon”. Both are dressed as prison guards. This is in fact one of the very few cartoons that contain a message of de-securitisation.

There is also a female variant of the stereotypical national symbol: On the one hand, Hungary is represented as a young and modest girl and/or a juvenile beauty who is defending her moral integrity successfully in all kinds of awkward settings. On the other hand, Hungary gets depicted as the mother figure “Hungaria” who welcomes, protects and takes care of all the different regions and segments of the population and thus visually integrates ethnic and language diversity. These kinds of cartoons often choose a family setting (with the father figure being either an individual Prime Minister or Francis Joseph in his function as Hungarian king and “Hungaria” as the mother). Her children are composed of a Hungarian boy (who is sometimes older and more mature) and male representatives of the different nationalities of Hungary (German, Romanian, Slovak and Serb) who are of the same age (somewhere between 5 and 10 years) and thus also perceived as having less or no independent agency.

This is also the case in the few cartoons in which female family members return to or are about to be integrated into their natural Hungarian family. In a cartoon entitled “The lost and turned up girls” (fig. 10), Fran-

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9 In 1892, a memorandum written by a 24-person committee composed of members of the Romanian National Party in Hungary and addressing demands for national rights of Romanians within Hungary was presented by a delegation of 237 people to Emperor Franz Josef at his court in Vienna. For constitutional reasons, he let the memorandum unread and be forwarded to the Budapest parliament, from where it was also returned unread to the head of the delegation. As the document was printed and circulated, the authors were sued in May 1894, accused of instigating the press. After the trial, those leading members of the Romanian National Party who had been sentenced to long prison terms and had not left the country by that time were imprisoned in the state prison at Szeged.

cis Joseph re-unites Bosnia and Herzegovina with “*Matrona Hungaria*”, their natural mother, as the message suggests.<sup>10</sup> With the crown of Saint Stephen as the main sacral symbol of Hungarian statehood on her head, she welcomes them saying, “Come to my bosom. For you ought to be mine!” Another cartoon uses the Christmas Eve setting to tell a similar story (fig. 11): Hungarian Prime Minister Kálmán Széll (1843–1915) accepts the seemingly tattered city of Fiume to the Christmas Eve celebration. This important seaport of today’s Rijeka in Western Croatia was a small territory that was an integral part of Hungary, despite its overwhelmingly Italian speaking population. As Fiume enters the room, Hungary’s other children are just receiving their presents. King Francis Joseph is present in the form of a portrait painting, and the message “liberalism” is written on the star on top of the Christmas tree. The “returned girl”, as the title of the cartoon suggests, is asking for re-admission into the family, which is generously granted.

We also have a female equivalent to the narrative of destruction: Here it is the family that is about to be destroyed by the obstructive action of women. On the right side of the cartoon “The holy right hand” (fig. 12) one can see a right hand pointing at the boy who by his clothing represents the Romanian minority of Hungary. For an educated Hungarian audience of that time, it was easy to recognise the reference to the holy relic of Saint Stephen (969–1038). This holy relic of the first king of Hungary, which is still kept in the Budapest Basilica, serves as a substitute for divine instructions or divine interventions (God is never shown figuratively in political cartoons of that time). It is this “holy right hand” that sends away the Romanian boy (with the traditional fur hat as an identifier) to his “natural” mother Hungary. She is a well-to-do young woman who sits in front of a well-tended permanent house.

Her opposite is a female figure who is labelled “Wallachian irredenta” but rather corresponds to the image of an old “gypsy” woman (physiognom-

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10 Bosnia and Hercegovina had been occupied by Austria-Hungary after the Congress of Berlin in 1878. Since it legally remained part of the Ottoman Empire up to its annexation in 1908 and due to competing constitutional claims of Hungary and the Austrian state on the region, Bosnia and Hercegovina became the only territory of the Habsburg Monarchy that was actually administered from the imperial level, namely by the joint Ministry of Finance. The administration for the region remained highly centralized, since decision-making processes were almost exclusively centered in Vienna with imperial interests prevailing over local ones when it came to developing the poor infrastructure and communication of the region.

my, tangled hair, pipe, gold coins on bracelet and headscarf; the figure is sitting on a tree stump barefoot). She also corresponds to the stereotype that “gypsies” steal children from ordinary families and force them into their lower culture and itinerant lifestyle. In this cartoon, the term “Wallachian irredenta” stands for the political movement to unite the predominantly Romanian populated areas in Eastern Hungary with the Kingdom of Romania, which became fully independent from the Ottoman Empire in 1881. Here the use of the gypsy stereotype is, however, a rhetorical device with the aim of profoundly discrediting the intentions of the Romanian national movement.

In general, women are subjected to a patriotic-patriarchal code of obedience and availability. Their choices are limited, their affiliation to Hungary presented as natural and without any alternative. The behaviour that was required of any of these female representatives is devotion and/or loyalty to Hungary, whereas deviant behaviour comes close to marital infidelity. High moral norms seem to dictate the performance — or wrongdoing — of most female representatives in the cartoons analysed. In figures 13<sup>11</sup> and 14, we even see an interesting constellation of triangular relationships between the husband (the Hungarian), the girl (the Transylvanian Romanian and the Hungarian port city of Fiume respectively) and the rival for her favour (the Kingdom of Romania — dressed like a peasant — and the Croatian).

Sometimes the theme of availability comes with clear assumptions that Hungarian Michael can claim sexual rights. A cartoon entitled “The common booty” (fig. 15) shows Bosnia and Herzegovina as two veiled Oriental young women who are about to be brought into the “Imperial harem” (*Reichsharem*), to the great astonishment and frustration of *Hungarian Michael*, who complains, “Gosh! Bring the two kittens; I want to make use of my Hungarian public rights”. With Prime Minister Sándor Wekerle (depicted as “main eunuch”) responding, “Infidel! Do you not see that we are transferring these little lambs to the empire of the Great Lord?” This again illustrates that inter-group relationships between Hungarian representatives and minority representatives of either gender are being assessed on the basis of (male) codes and norms of honour, prestige, behaviour and agency.

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11 Figure 13 shows *Hungarian Michael* go for a walk without suspicion with Fiume on his arm, who secretly slips a letter to the Croatian Michael (Mirko Horváth), the Croatian representative, as an obvious sign of affection.

There are also cartoons that show Hungarian politicians as credulous individuals that do not see the danger that the minorities pose (fig. 16<sup>12</sup>). Some of them suggest that Hungarian political behaviour would unintentionally prove counter-productive since it would help the minorities' cause as well as foreign powers. Some cartoons obviously aim at disavowing individual personalities in Hungarian political life by putting them into contexts in which their intimate or close relationship to the dangerous other is questioning their loyalty and their trustworthiness to fulfil any important political function in the Hungarian state system. Today, we can read these as visual devices to discredit the intentions, integrity and morale of individual agents and their political concepts. Sometimes these individuals are depicted in a cross-dressing scenario with Romanian politicians to suggest 'unnatural' political beliefs. For example, a cartoon entitled "Caught inflagranti" (fig. 17) aimed at discrediting politician Gyula Justh (1850–1917) just two weeks after he had resigned from his post as speaker of the House of Representatives in the Hungarian parliament. The reader sees him cross-dressed as a Romanian peasant, to the astonishment of Hungarian Michael on the left. The bottle on the table suggests that he is under the influence of alcohol when dancing with Aurel Vlad (1875–1953), a leading Romanian politician, who appears as a woman in a Romanian folk dress. Another cartoon "At the Csicsós" (fig. 18) shows a pair dancing in front of the astonished audience of the Hungarian parliament. A representative of the Romanian National Party (from 1905 to 1918), Ștefan Cicio Pop (1865–1934), dressed as a Romanian peasant (on the right), is dancing with Béla Mezőssy (1870–1939), Hungarian representative for the Independent Party. His cross-dressing as a young Hungarian woman along with the caption addressing him as "Ms. Csicsós" is meant to discredit Mezőssy and his political positions.

There are many more cartoons showing individual Hungarian politicians in homoerotic (by wearing a woman's outfit to attract the male minority figure's attention) or even openly homosexual settings (showing affection and intimacy by embracing and kissing each other). Especially the oppositional-leaning journals such as *Bolond Istók* used the Romanian figure to discredit any attempt to come to an agreement with the national minorities. This is first and foremost true of Prime Minister István Tisza,

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12 We see Prime Minister Kálmán Széll as Saint George feeding the dragon with sweets instead of killing it. The different nationalities (Slovak, German, Romanian, Serb, Croat) can be discerned by the headwear as well as by the hairstyles and beards. The caption says, "This way he will not defeat the seven-headed nationality dragon."

who in 1913 and 1914 sought a political compromise with the Romanian National Party and thus became the target of such visual attacks. In the respective cartoons, he is shown as a straw doll around which the Romanian politicians dance and cheer (fig. 19), or as someone who kicks *Hungarian Michael* in the groin while he is reconciling with Romanians and Croats (fig. 20). For the representative of the Hungarian nation, this act is both physically violent and painful as well as humiliating and defamatory.

### Conclusion

As Lene Hansen (2000, p. 290) put it, 'security', as defined by the Copenhagen School, is not only about survival; it is about collective survival. To argue that something threatens a group's survival is to engage in a political process. One has to convincingly show that a particular threat is of such a magnitude or unknown quality that action needs to be initiated and normal rules suspended. Against this backdrop, we can say that the visual narratives of *Borsszem Jankó* and *Bolond Istók* clearly reflect the security concerns and belief systems of the strata of Hungarian society that are composed of elites, opinion leaders and decision-makers. They disseminate this security concept by means of the stylistic devices of humour, exaggeration and sarcasm. In the cartoons analysed here, the minorities are securitised by presenting them as dangerous, brutal, selfish, backward and irresponsible. The variants through which the confrontations between national interests and minorities are depicted range from scenarios of threat, competition, discord, defamation, effeminization to domestication and dominance.

Minorities are shown as being of an evidently lower civilizational status that negatively affects their behaviour and sense of loyalty. Following the logic of that discourse, it would only create discord and instability if they were given too much attention or if one were to communicate with their political activists on an equal footing. It seemed completely inappropriate to strike a compromise with them or to think that alternative political scenarios and concepts were at all possible. Although the figures are attributed with changing degrees and characteristics of agency and conflict, they confirm the official narrative that Hungary's sovereignty and integrity must be defended without compromise, not least since there is nothing that comes close to a discussion of alternative political approaches or open scenarios.

The visual discourse of the cartoons was of course not present in all of Hungarian society. We might conclude, however, that the readership of



the two satirical journals was likely to adopt and reproduce the securitising visual messages and presumptions disseminated by them. Regardless of the political attitude of the individual reader, the cartoons worked in a certain segment of Hungarian society towards the reification of its minorities as dangerous others. Since the journals in question were economically and editorially successful over decades, they also testify to what could be said and shown in printed form under the special circumstances of Hungary's politics of power against the country's national minorities.

The analysis of these satirical discourses reveals what Uma Narayan (1998, p. 88) called "the creation of the radically foreign through language by using a strategy of crystallizing the negative through the alienation of other cultural content to create an integral image of the enemy." What we would characterise as diversity today is depicted as cultural, civilizational and political deviance with the aim of mediatizing and reifying a normative political order. The cartoonists of *Borsszem Jankó* and *Bolond Istók* thus played a part in the dogmatisation of the Hungarian minority policy and a system of sustaining indifference towards the demands of political representatives of half the citizens of Hungary. Hungary's "dangerous others" became visually securitised, and the political measures taken to protect Hungary proactively against any harm from their side were made to seem legitimate and politically salient.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (2008) was one of the first scholars to point out that, in the context of existing power relations, it is often not possible for the subaltern to draw attention to their heterogeneous concerns. Sarah Bertrand (2018, p. 288) later rightly observed that, "if the subaltern cannot securitize, then others can or even 'must' do it for them." She suggested that there are three modes of invisibility: "when the subaltern cannot speak, when the subaltern are not being listened to, and when the subaltern cannot be heard or understood." (Ibid., p. 282) The analysis of the cartoons discussed here seeks to add another form of dealing with the subaltern: securitising the subaltern and fixing their position in a power structure by ridiculing and scandalising them. This can be interpreted as visually silencing the "other" through ridicule and discursive escalation. These cartoons are part of a discourse that excludes alternative options and thus narrows political agency by securitising and scandalising minorities as "the other" and "the dangerous".

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Figures

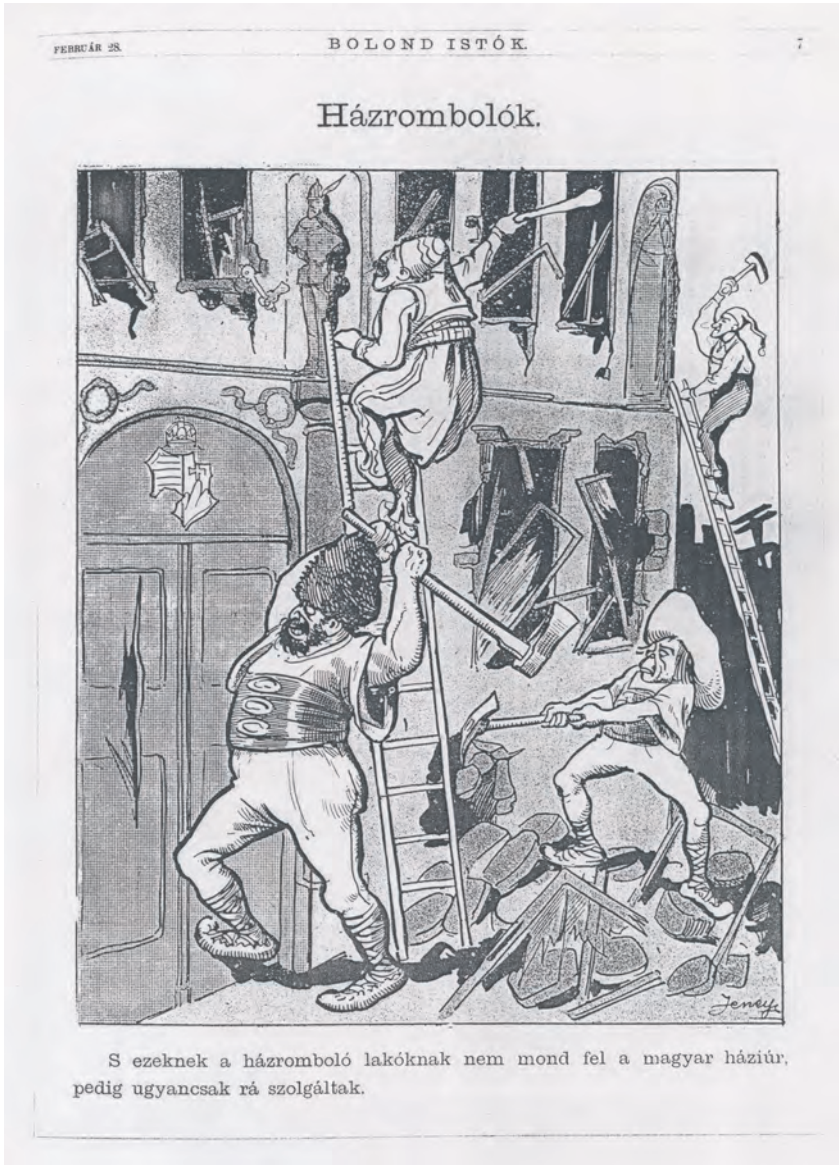


Fig. 1: Jenő Béla Jeney, “Házrombolók” (“House destroyers”), in: Bolond Istók 28.2.1909, p. 7



Fig. 2: Atanáz Homicskó, "Türelem-játék" ("A game of patience"), in: Borszem Jankó 7.7.1907, p. 4

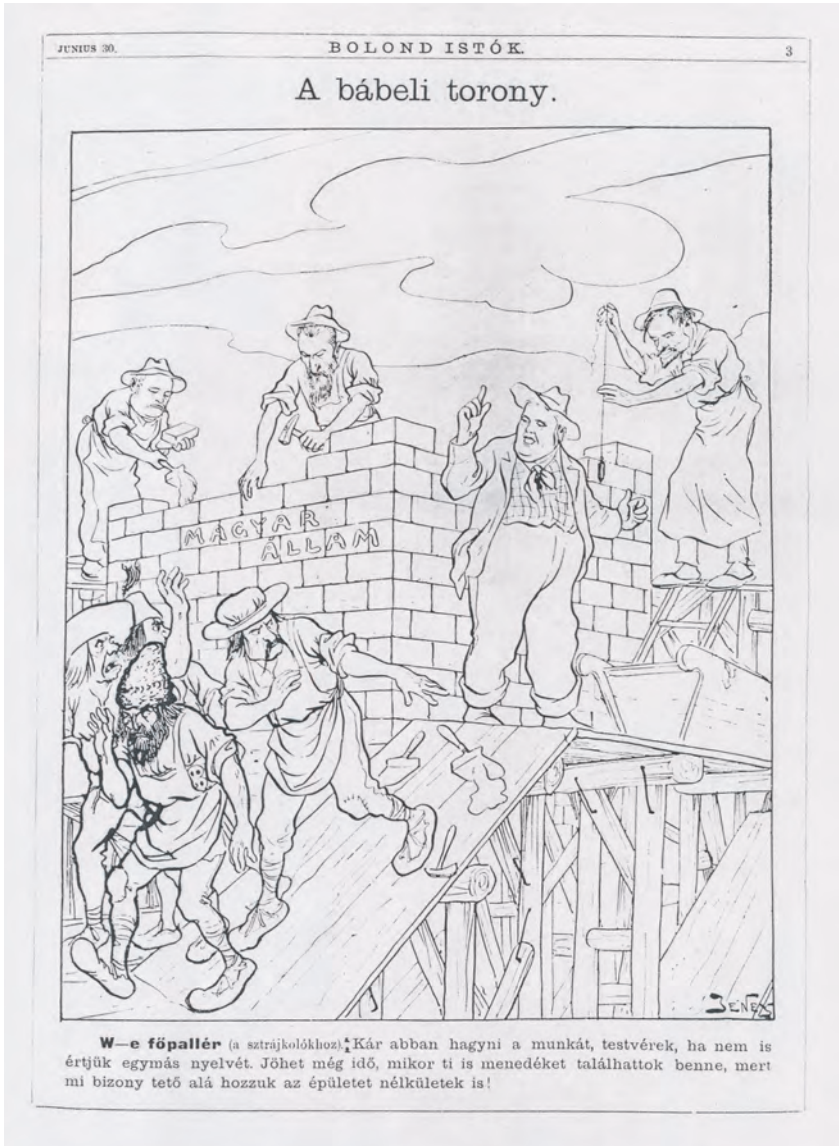



Fig. 3: Jenő Béla Jeney, “A bábeli torony” (“The tower of Babel”), in: Bolond Istók 30.6.1907, p. 3

Budapest, Augusztus 4. 1443. (31.) szám. XXVIII. évfolyam. 1895.

# BORSSZEM JANKÓ

Külön konyha.



Magyar Mihály. — Testvérek, ne vessetek meg a főtömet. Jézus lesz az a szívesen látlak.  
Amazok. — Edd meg magad. Mi külön főzünk a magunk gustusa szerint.

Előfizetheti a kiadó-hivatalban: Budapest, Ferenczyk-tere 3. sz. Előfizetési díj: Egész évre 8 frt. — Félévre 4 frt. — Negyedévre 2 frt.

Megjelen minden vasárnap. Egyes szám ára 18 kr.

Fig. 4: Geza Farago, “Külön konyha” (“Separate cooking”), in: Borsszem Jankó 4.8.1895, cover





Fig. 5: Jenő Béla Jeney, “Az ellentálló vármegye” (“The resistant county”), in: Bolond Istók 27.1.1907, p. 3

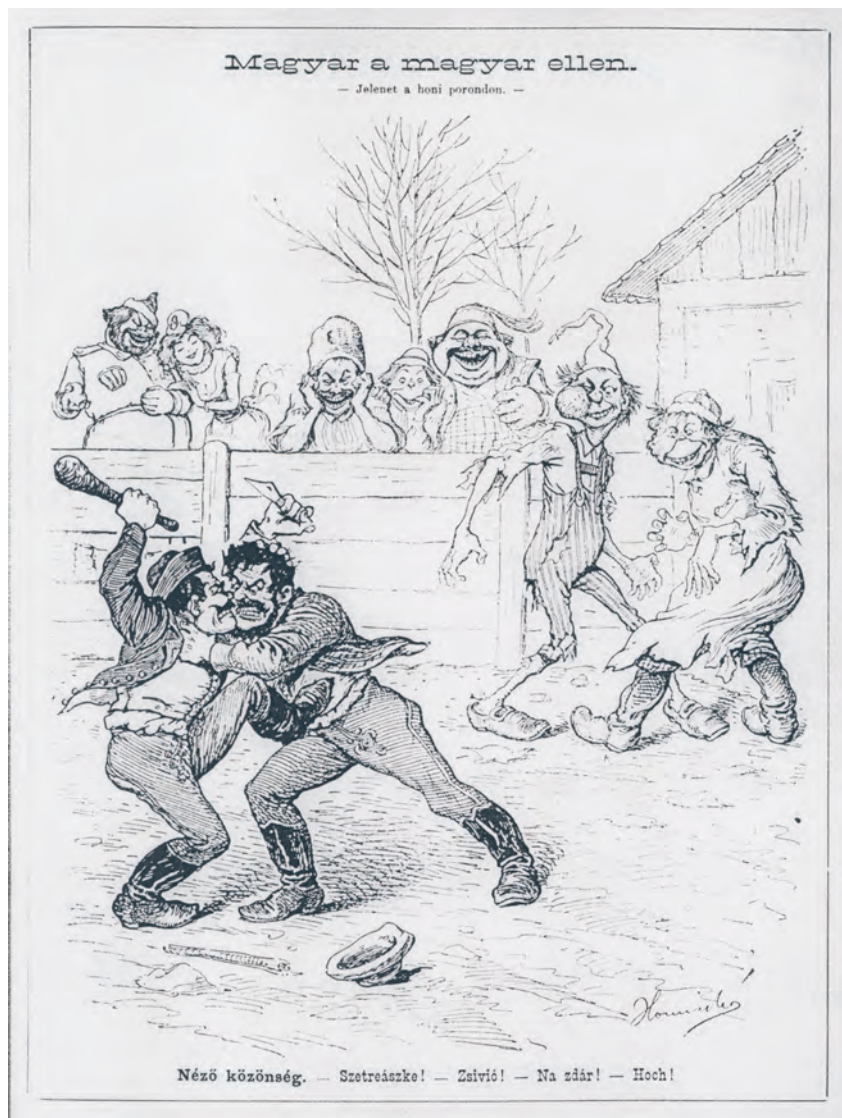


Fig. 6: Atanáz Homicskó, “Magyar a magyar ellen” (“Hungarians against Hungarians”), in: Borsszem Jankó 15.1.1899

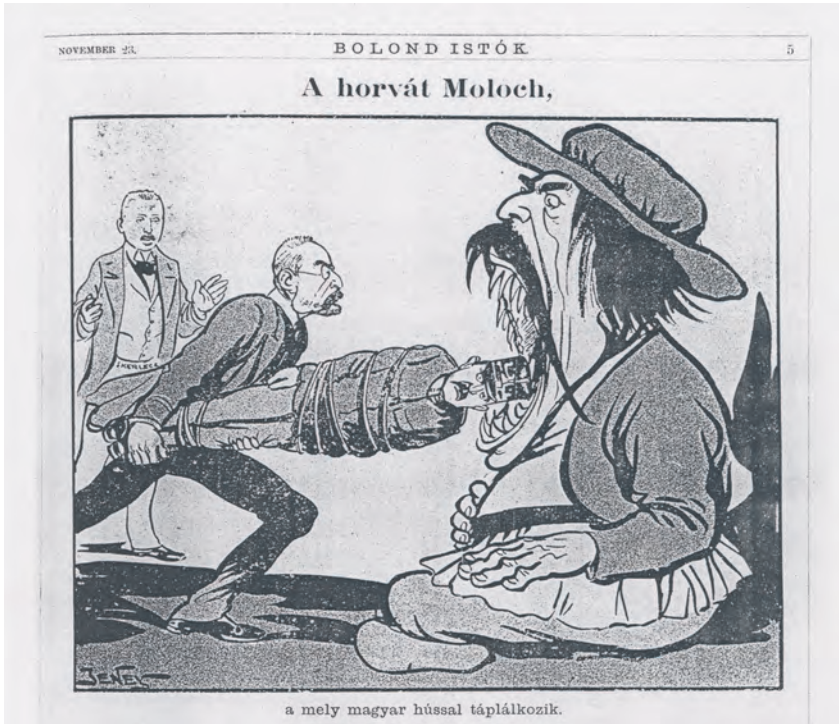


Fig. 7: Jenő Béla Jeney, “A horváth Moloch” (“Croatian Moloch”), in: Bolond Istók 23.11.1913, p. 5

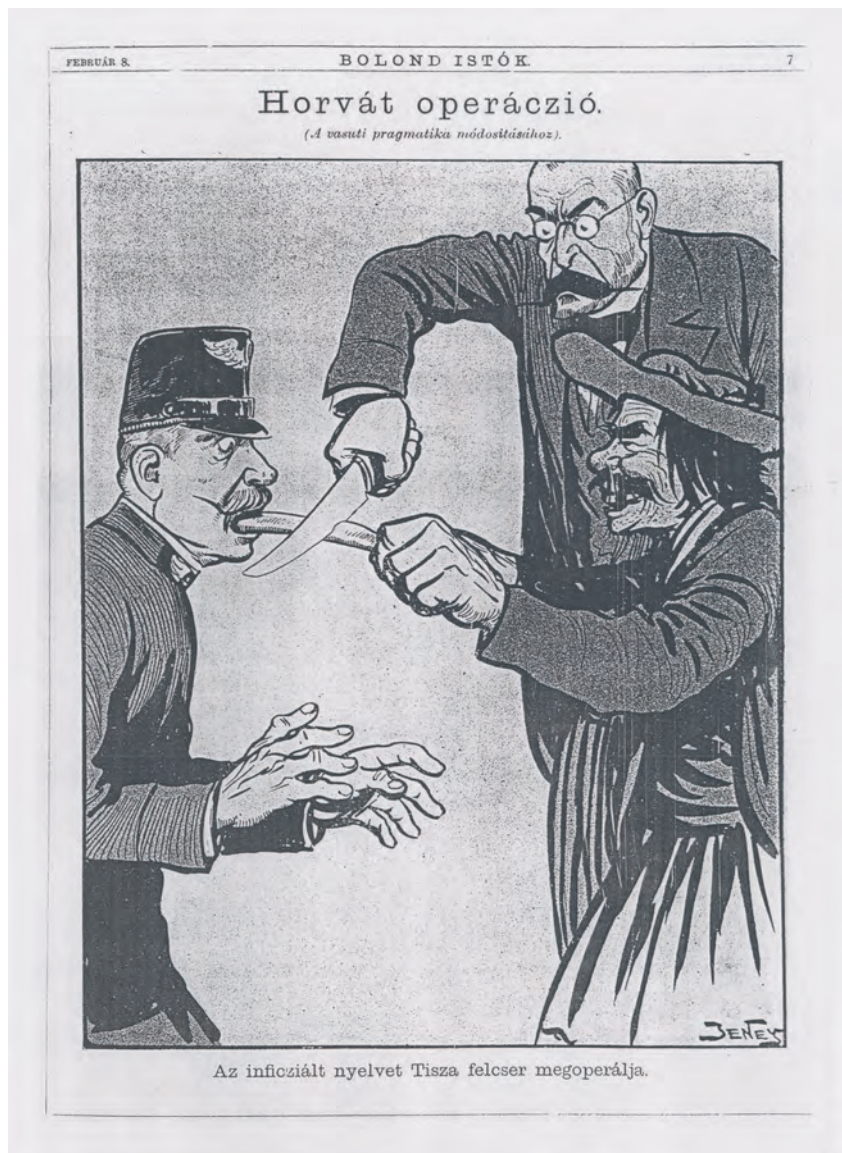


Fig. 8: Jenő Béla Jeney, “Horváth operáció” (“Croatian surgery“), in: Bolond Istók 8.2.1914, p. 7

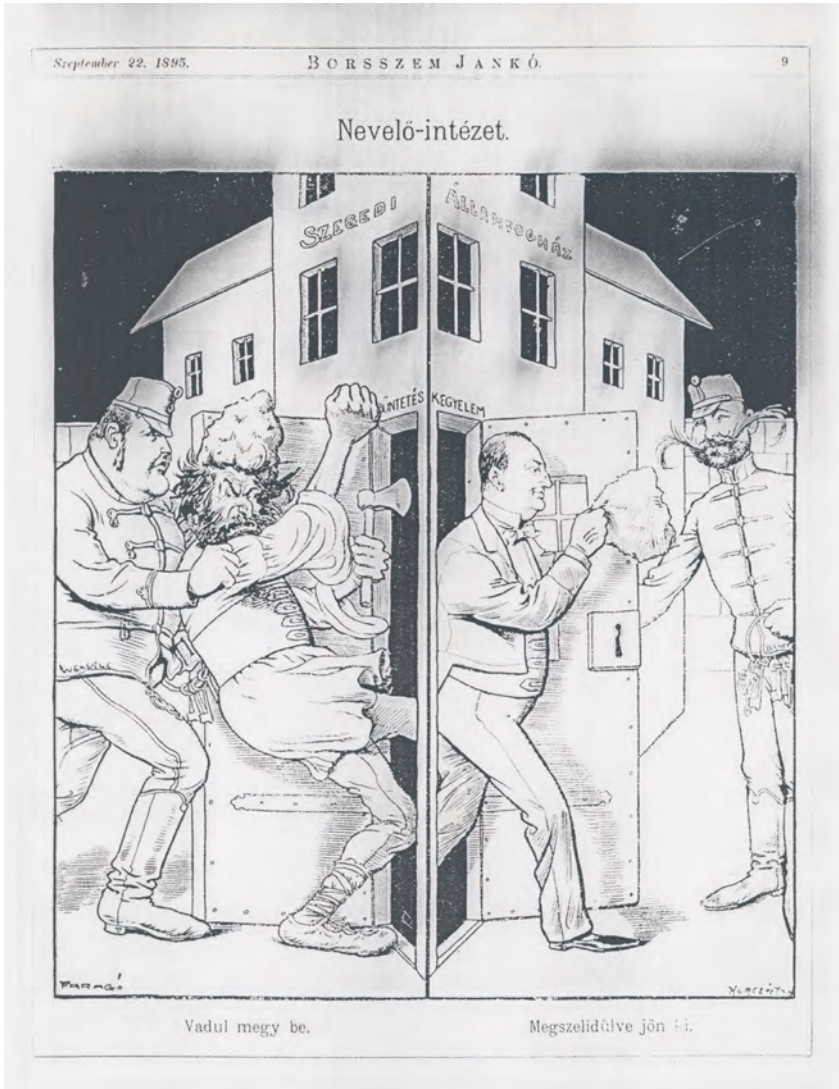


Fig. 9: Geza Farago, “Nevelő-intézet” (“Educational institution”), in: Borszem Jankó 22.9.1895, p. 9

Az elveszett és megkerült leányok.



Matrona Hungaria. — Jertek a keblemre. Hiszen az anyimék voltátok ti!

Fig. 10: “Az elveszett és megkerült leányok” (“The lost and turned up girls”), in: Borsszem Jankó 5.10.1910, p. 5



Fig. 11: Atanáz Homicskó, “A megtért leány” (“È permesso? May I enter?”), in: Borsszem Jankó 23.12.1900

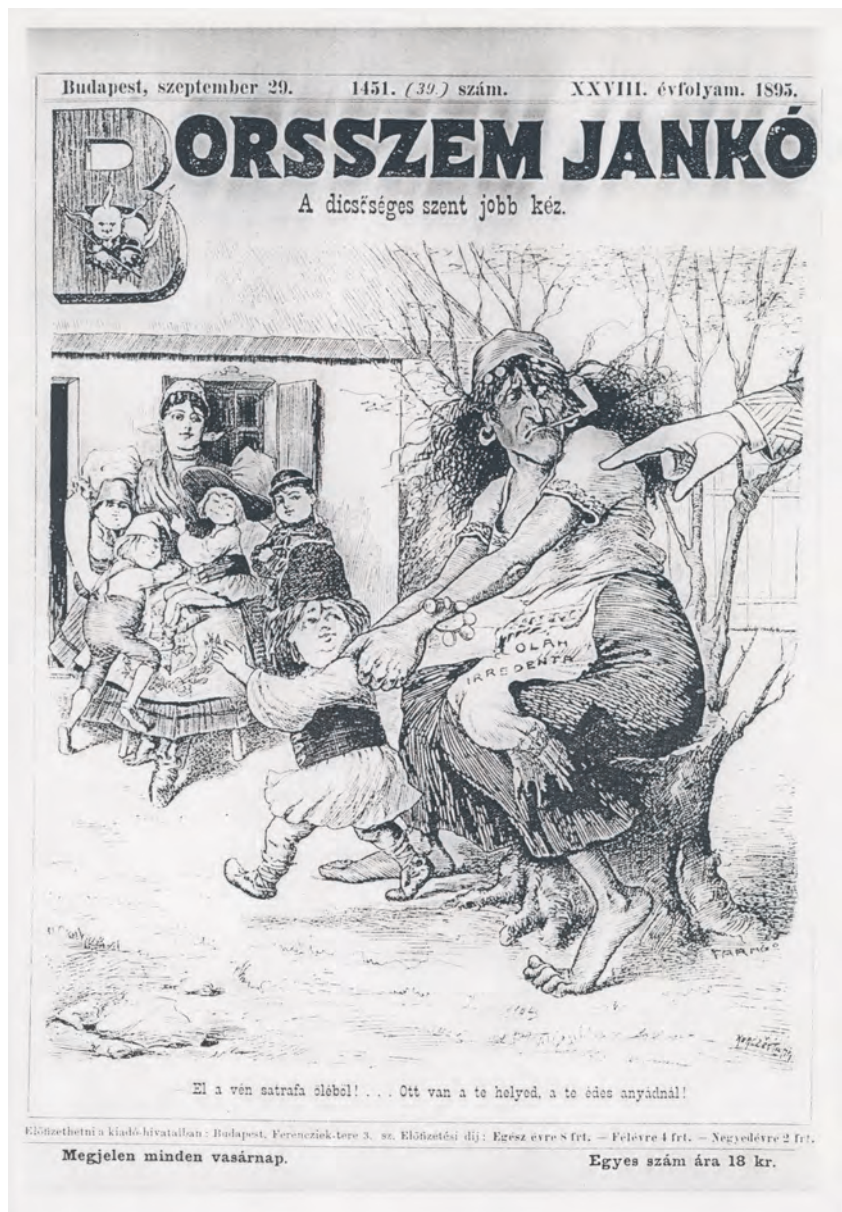


Fig. 12: Geza Farago, “A dicsőséges szent jobb kéz” (“The holy right hand”), in: Borsszem Jankó 29.9.1895, cover





Fig. 13: Geza Farago, “A hű asszonyka” (“The faithful little wife”), in: Borszem Jankó 7.2.1897, cover



Fig. 14: Atanáz Homicskó, “Oláh fáta, magyar legény” (“Walachian girl, Hungarian lad”), in: Borsszem Jankó 29.7.1894,p. 5

A KÖZÖS ZSÁKMÁNY.



**Magyar Mihály.** -- Tyűh, az áldóját! Ide azt a két ezeczát, élni akarok ősi magyar közjogommal.  
**Wekerle főunuch.** -- Csiba gyaur! Nem látod, hogy ezeket a báránykákat a Nagyur birodalmi háremébe kísérjék?

Fig. 15: "A közös zsákmány" ("The common booty"), in: Borsszem Jankó 11.10.1908, p. 13

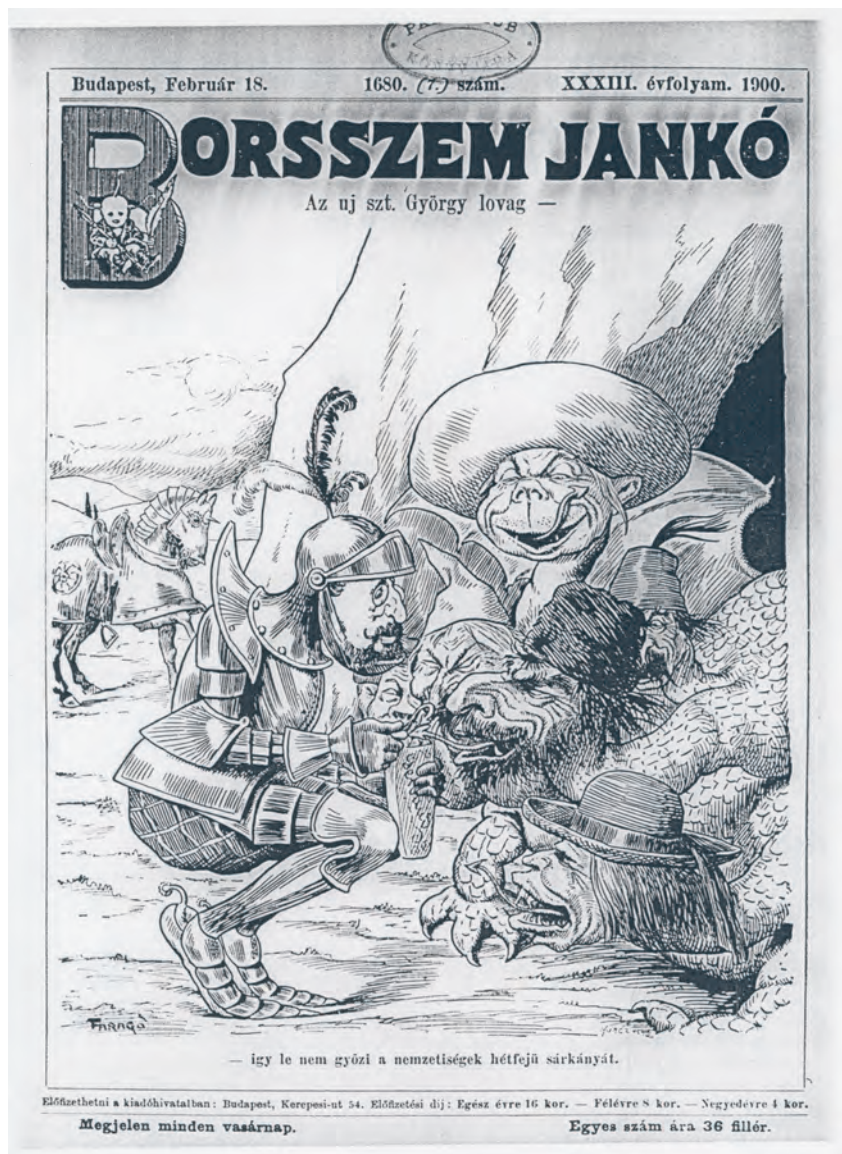


Fig. 16: Geza Farago, “Az új szent Görög lovag” (“The new knight Saint George”), in: Borsszem Jankó 18.2.1900, cover



Fig. 17: Jenő Béla Jeney, “Tettenérés” (“Caught in flagranti”), in: Bolond Istók 28.11.1909, p. 7

## Csicsóéknál.



Csicsóéknál ég a világ.  
Nyíri truska ropja Csicsóval az oláht.  
Csicsóné, galambom,  
Rád illik a programom.

Fig. 18: Atanáz Homicskó, "Csicsóéknál" ("At the Csicsós"), in: Borsszem Jankó 24.7.1910, p. 5



Fig. 19: Jenő Béla Jeney, "A paktum" ("The pact"), in: Bolond Istók  
25.1.1914, p. 3



Fig. 20: Jenő Béla Jeney, “Békeszerzés” (“Peacebuilding”), in: Bolond Istók 11.1.1914, p. 3