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Thesis of Doctoral Dissertation
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The history and reception history of the Galilei
Circle (1908-1919)

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When passing through Anker alley, doorway number two, no trace can be found of the once famous but at the same time infamous atheist-materialist student organization called the Galilei Circle that functioned there between 1910 and 1919. The plaque of Galilei Circle in Anker alley was knocked off with a hammer in 1990 (today only the inner plaque, marking the former common room on the second floor, can be seen), such unusual affection against a student organization. The question is why?

The answer can be indicated by the role many galileists played in the Hungarian Soviet Republic, a republic that had been identified and canonized in the Hungarian cultural recollection as the ‘nadir of Hungarian history’. The dominant ‘negative’ account of the Hungarian Soviet Republic during the Horthy Era, which was considered to be ‘true’ between 1919 and 1944, and which returned into the public awareness with great intensity after 1990, established the Galilei Circle as the vivifier of the darkly represented characters of the Hungarian Soviet Republic.

Indeed, a number of communist commissars, deputy commissars and commissariat functionaries evolved from the Galilei Circle; two of the four murder attempts against István Tisza can also be linked to galileists – to Ilona Duczynszka and János Lékai -, although at its 1908 foundation, according to the student organization’s self-identification, it was supposed to be a specifically apolitical, free thinking company vowing for self-education and science. Endre Ady addressed the galileists as the ‘young army of Fever’, he dedicated numerous of his poems to the Galilei Circle, whereas Oszkár Jászi believed that the galileists would be able to lead Hungary from ‘the Balkan into Western Europe’, just to mention a few positive aspects of the Circle.

Despite its importance, however, only three monographs have been published about the history of the student organization, which included such internationally acclaimed scientists as Karl Polányi, Mihány Polányi, György Pólya or Karl Mannheim. The first monography on the history of the Galilei Circle – to be more precise, on the actions of a well-defined antimilitarist group of them, the so called Duczynszka-Sugár-Group – was published by Jolán Kelen in 1957, with the title *A Galilei lawsuit in the 20th century*. Jolán Kelen, a former galileist, had been part of the events herself, her work is solidly a literary recollection of the Galilei-lawsuit taking place between the 19th and 25th of September, 1918, during which two people were sentenced to three, respectively two years of prison for treason. The sin of these

two galileist lovers, the young Bolshevik medical student Tivadar Sugár and the iconic female figure of the late Galilei Circle, the engineer Ilona Duczynszka, the latter Károlyné Polányi, was organizing anti-war actions. The work of Jolán Kelen – although the author was a co-worker of the then Institute of Party History – is at times closer to a historical novel than an academic work, sometimes even going as far as to operate with dialogues. Even reviewers of the era couldn't agree whether to place the literary reminiscences of Jolán Kelen among the works of youth literature or in the field of historiography.

The Birth of the Galilei Circle from 1974, a work of the former founder of the Circle, that of medical student Zsigmond Kende, reports on the formation of Galilei Circle with a historical need, even though it turned out to be a rather heterogeneous text. The original concept of the writer, namely writing an ‘unbiased’, fact-finding scientific work, is constantly overruled by the passionate remembering self, which makes his unfinished monograph to be treated solely as a memoir. However, let me emphasize that what can be considered a disadvantage looking at it from the aspect of the ‘unbiased fact-finding’ idea of his work is at the same time its most significant virtue as it bequeaths a ‘galileist’ attitude.

The one and only ‘scientific’ – and by scientific I mean self-representation and verifiability that can be traced through the given references – work in the academic sense dealing with the Galilei Circle so far has been the monograph written by Mária Tömöry in 1960, called *Új vizeken járok* [I walk on New Waters]. Tömöry, who preferred the labour movement – historical perspective, interpreted the left shift of the first apolitical while rather bolshevizing Galilei Circle as a Marxist teleology. The disproportion of Mária Tömöry’s work is indicated by the fact that – as opposed to my conception based on the Circle’s educational activities, the number of their manifestos, etc. – she only dedicated 54 pages to the 1908-1914 ‘grand’ period of the Galilei Circle, whereas the ‘small’ period between 1914 and 1919 is covered on 90 pages, 64 of these discussing the period after the annulment of the Galilei Circle in January, 1918.

My dissertation is the fourth bigger study in this row. According to my intention, I sought to unfold the ‘grand period’ of 1908-1914 in particular, aiming to highlight the years missing both from the work of Zsigmond Kende covering the story until the establishment of the Galilei Circle and also its ‘small’ period from 1914, which received special attention from the

party historiography; although written according to defined ideological preferences, but still highly scrupulously wrought.

The main sources of my work are the former reports and records of the Galilei Circle, the materials of the student organization kept in the Archives of Political History and of Trade Unions, the journal of the Galilei Circle and the Hungarian Association of Free Thinking called *Szabadgondolat* (Free Thought); contemporary newspapers (*Budapesti Hírlap*, *Haladás*, *Népszava*, *Pesti Hírlap*, *Pesti Napló*, *Világ*) and journals (*Huszzadik Század*, *Magyar Figyelő*, *Magyar Kultúra*), in addition to the published and unpublished memoirs of former galileists.

I intend to summarize the most important statements of my dissertation revealing the history and the reception of the Galilei Circle in the twenty following thesis statements:

1. The 1908 foundation of the Galilei Circle was not separate from the politico historical series of events which are usually referred to by Hungarian historiography as ‘the escalation of political tenseness at the turn of the century’, ‘the political crisis at the beginning of the century’ or ‘the crisis period of the dualism’. These series of events led to the biggest ever political crisis of 1905-1906 and helped the ‘national coalition’ become the leader of the government. The ‘national coalition’ tried to dissemble its political ‘impotence’ by symbolic gestures and measures, bringing forth the intensification of the ‘cultural war’ whose product I considered the birth of the Galilei Circle. Exercising ‘labanc’ politics despite its former promises, while talking in a ‘kuruc’ way, the government of the ‘national coalition’ began to include a preferred gesture in its nationalistic rhetoric; representing the bourgeois radical (or radical democrat) intellectuals and their sympathizers who supported the 1905 Darabont government as well as those who belonged to the bourgeois radical inner circle, such as the Galilei Circle, being established soon after, as ‘stateless’ and ‘nationless’. The situation of the ‘stateless’ and ‘nationless’ was not eased by the fact that for historical-sociological reasons those of Jewish origin were strongly overrepresented both among the bourgeois radical intellectuals *and* the galileists.
2. The ‘cultural fight’ at the beginning of the century had a well-defined social background - to simplify it immensely -, the opposition between the emerging Jewish bourgeoisie and the

declining, so-called ‘gentry middle class’. I argued that the binary (or rather ternary) society-model of Ferenc Erdei and the outline of Péter Hanák dealing with the society during the dualism can be accepted -with numerous caveats - as the hypothetical interpretation frame for the Hungarian social conflicts at the beginning of the 1900s, for example the opposition of the Szent Imre Circle assigned to the historical-national society or the Galilei Circle, representing the bourgeois society in the model. I reviewed the three conflicts relating to the three sectors of the social model; the antagonism between the new ‘modern culture’ and the ‘historical-national’ culture, the question of electoral law and the issue of land, all that defined public discourse in Hungary at the beginning of the 1900s and in which the galileists had no other choice but to take sides.

3. I have already emphasized that the history and the activities of the Galilei Circle can only be understood and interpreted through its intellectual-historical context and former institutional network. I have reviewed those new ideas emerging at the turn of the century which defined the galileists’ perception of reality: positivism, Darwinism and evolutionism, historical materialism and free thinking. Those institutions and gatherings have also been introduced which provided an organisational and mental hinterland for the forming Galilei Circle: the radical-oriented Masonic Lodges, the Centre for Social Sciences, the group from the periodical *Huszadik Század*, the gathering of intellectuals around the journal *Világosság* and the Hungarian Association of Free Thinking. By the time of the establishment of the Galilei Circle, namely, a whole new left-wing radical counter-culture came into being, which created its very own counter-culture institutional system as opposed to the ‘official’ national conservative or conservative-liberal, ‘Old’ culture. The Galilei Circle integrated into this counter-world as the ‘Other’, the ‘Young’ Hungary’s student organization; according to their self-image.

4. As for the group of the bourgeois radical intellectuals, I found *that* influential vision their most important spiritual legacy which had been reflected in contrasting the ‘Old’ and the ‘Young’ Hungary, idealizing progression and demonizing ‘reaction’. Oszkár Jászi and his intellectual inner circle visioned a ‘Young Hungary’, conforming the imagined western standards and being established based on science policy, and as a counterpoint they constructed the image of the ‘Old Hungary’ - namely that of the beginning of the 1900s- open to criticism. When the galileists represented their own society in the journal of the Hungarian Association of Free Thinking and Galilei Circle, called *Szabadgondolat*, in 1911 as a ‘piece of

Young Hungary's advanced image', they took over the bourgeois radical rhetoric absolutely. This is the reason why I emphasized that only by knowing the context of the bourgeois radical ideology and language game can the Galilei Circle be discussed satisfactorily.

5. In order to be able to place the Galilei Circle, I have found it important to outline a more narrow picture after demonstrating the ideas and the institutions of the left-wing radicals in the 1900s as a wider frame; the system of higher education at the beginning of the century and its problems (e.g. the issue of location). I presented the most important student organizations functioning prior to Galilei Circle, such as the University Circle, the catholic Szent Imre Circle and the first radical, socialist student gathering called Socialist Student Club. These student organizations proved to be incompetent to deal with student problems widely, due to their corruption - Szent Imre Circle-, their strongly exclusive sectarian nature – Szent Imre Circle- and partly to their exaggerated doctrinarism and aversive nature – Socialist Student Club. For example, they could not represent properly the interests of those atheist students of Jewish origins who declared themselves Hungarians or that of the poorer, in the need of social assistance who were admitted to university as a result of the start of mass education. I find it a defendable point of view to consider the founding of the Galilei Circle as a response to the challenges raised by the deficiencies of the Hungarian higher education system at the beginning of the century.

6. After the structural challenges that triggered the forming of the Galilei Circle I concentrated on the cyclical reasons, that is, I presented the university manifestations of the escalating 'cultural fight': the 'crucifix japes' and the Pikler japes, besides their galileist recollections. Analysing the reception of the 'crucifix jape' - where I used Jolán Kelen's narrative as the example – I noticed that although the directorate of the university showed a rather liberal attitude during the 1900-1901 'crucifix jape' (the rejection of the 'crucifix-memorandum', the disciplinary for the participants of the action and the expulsion of Dezső Köpösdy), this did not occur at all in the narration of the 'crucifix jape' story. The reason for this can be found when contrasting the usage of the 'reactionary-progressive' and 'old-new' asymmetric counter ideas, preferred by the galileists in their texts, a black and white technique that could not allow any concessions for the representatives of the 'Old Hungary (e.g. the university directorate), not even a little. Focusing on the second Pikler jape, I showed how later the galileists - above all Zsigmond Kende - established a cult around the university clashes; those demonstrating and fighting for Pikler and the future student organization that

shaped during the university fights and then founded the Galilei Circle (which was originally meant to be called Pikler Circle), with the help of tools like ‘oldening’ Gyula Pikler who, in reality, had only been a middle-aged man at the time of the clashes.

7. My next approach after the structural and conjunctural level was to look at it from the individual’s point of view: I introduced that smaller group from the secondary school in Tavaszmező street that had already established a Materia Circle besides the official self-study group during their student years, owing to their teacher, Jenő Posch, who was the first registered atheist tutor of Hungary, a teacher who even provoked a parliamentary interpellation against himself for undertaking his atheism. These students of Tavaszmező street, who had already flirted with the idea of free thinking in secondary school, made up the ‘backbone’ of the group later forming the Galilei Circle. Apart from them I looked at two other people and their memories in detail, that of two outsiders: the first chairman of the Galilei Circle, Karl Polányi, who overtook the leadership of the young free thinking group after joining the Tavaszmező street students, whereas the other was the radical- free thinking intellectual, the ‘Osvát’ of the Galilei Circle who supervised the birth of the Circle, called Aladár Székely. When recounting the join of Polányi, I emphasized the importance of that social capital he brought along: his quite good acquaintances from the intellectuals who were present at the Pollacsek-salon, -a place which played a significant role in the history of the Hungarian left-wing radicalism - among them Oszkár Jászi or Ervin Szabó. Although the young free thinkers had encountered them before, through the appearance of Polányi these relationships became even more intense, Jászi and Szabó become mentors of the galileists. In addition, the description of the path of the leading free thinker, Aladár Székely, who became a Parliament representative in 1910, provided an opportunity to illustrate how transition became possible between the ‘Old’ and the ‘Young’ Hungary - separated distinctly in the rhetoric of the bourgeois radical and et seq the galileist one-, indicating that his personality and career contradicts the hypothesis of a strict separation.

8. While delineating the genesis of the Galilei Circle - how a company of students that bounded during the university ‘fights’ had decided the establishment of a free thinking student organization and how they gained the mental support of the radical intellectuals and the financial support of the radical Masonic Lodges so that eventually the Galilei Circle could come to life on the 22nd November, 1908 - I paid special attention to the manifesto of the free-thinking student organization which they printed to be heard. In this, the galileists

defined themselves as opposed to the whole contemporary secondary and higher education of Hungary, identified by them as ‘Old’. I stated in my analysis that school conditions were depicted as sufficiently dark/black by the galileists in order to be able to represent the Galilei Circle all the lighter/whiter. This method worked well with the ‘enemy forming’ technique of the bourgeois radicals, a technique analyzed by Gábor G. Fodor. The galileists adopted the rhetoric of the manifesto whose poetics I have indicated by the strategic metaphor of contrasting ‘death’ and ‘life’, which at the same time represent the struggle of ‘bad’ and ‘good’. I have identified the manifesto’s narrativity as a romance based on Hayden White’s historical tropological system.

9. Before delineating the activities of the Galilei Circle, I had found it crucial to try and answer a question: who were the galileists? It is not easy to find an answer to this question with a student organization of about 1000-1100 members yearly, moreover, it makes even harder for the historian researching the history of the Galilei Circle, that -for historical reasons - some are strongly overrepresented among those recollecting their youth from the former galileists. They are the ones who got the attention and the opportunity to recount their memories already from the 1950’s, meaning the historian achieving this with the help of these memoirs looks back at the ‘past’ through a necessarily strong labour movement ‘lense’. For this reason I tried to compare the qualitative sources referring to ‘class position’, taken from members of a highly selected group with the available other sources. I had three aspects: first I unfolded the galileist self-understandings. As opposed to traditional student organizations representing the ‘Old Hungary’, Galilei Circle – representing ‘Young Hungary’ - appeared in self-representation as ‘the devoted mean of force, destroying the old and creating the new’ while also grabbing every opportunity to emphasize the pioneer role they played in ‘Hungary, a country on the verge of social transition’. It has been emphasized several times that a radical engagement of the students is almost an obligation, due to their liminal position. I have compared this idea with the contestations of the ideologists from the 1968 student protests, according to which the student body is the only consistently revolutionary gathering. Secondly, I tried to answer the question how the outside world saw the galileists. Looking at contemporary reception I realized that even though Galilei Circle identified itself as a non-denominational, free thinking gathering, opposing both Catholic *and* Jewish ‘clericalism’, mainstream society still considered it a ‘Jewish’ association. According to my statement, when actioning the history of galileists tragically, this had to be the tragic of the Galilei Circle. Finally, I analysed the recruitment of the members of the Galilei Circle. While

'traditional' student organizations were of juristic dominance, an overrepresentation of engineering, medical and natural science students can be detected in the free thinking student organization, compared to the national rate.

10. The first 'grand' period in the history of the Galilei Circle - an organization that chose 'to learn and to teach' as its motto, was a significant self-study group and pursued labour mentoring activities later - fell between 1908 and 1914 and was primarily characterized by anticlericalism. In my opinion, anticlericalism was a necessary aftermath of the free thinking ideology proclaiming the 'lack of prejudice', as in the opinion of free thinkers, who deified individual 'experience', the church - providing authoritarian doctrines - sees the society as 'children' even though 'children' made up the bottom of free thinker's values scale. The galileists argued that the church played a reactionist role by hindering through doctrines, for example, scientific improvement (the story of Galileo Galilei was used with predilection), something the rationalist free thinkers considered as the guarantee for human progression. When analysing the articles printed in *Szabadgondolat*, I concluded that on the second level of free thinking interpretation, influenced by historic materialism, religious dogmas were merely used by the church - which, according to the journal, formed a strong coterie with feudal landowners - to cover its class interests. I reckoned Karl Polányi's statement as paradigmatic: 'the church is the nervous system of the state, moving it but being nurtured by it at the same time. Those fighting against the church all find themselves opposed to the state, thus turning general political attitude into atheism'. Galileists were in favour of representing the church and the state as an intertwined trust which offers an industrial volume of 'obscurantist products' manufactured in their 'rosary factories'. In my opinion, this metaphoric system of anticlerical rhetoric joined the anti-capitalist Marxist and the anticlerical standpoints, attacking both capital and church at the same time. As a result, Marxist and anticlerical ideas were able to connect already from the beginning through a common language within the Galilei Circle. Characteristically, their anticlerical language moved around the metaphoric system of wartime ('black army', 'knights of the new Middle Ages') or health-illness ('trematode', 'leeches' where the latter also recalls the image of quackery). Analysing the galileists's language-game, I believe it is an important realization that although free thinking students considered themselves atheistic, most of them were characterized by a rather manicheistic thinking: the galileists identifying themselves as belonging to the group of 'lucidity' found their own 'dark', secular devil in the reactionist 'clergy'.

11. I discovered this highly ideological view of problems and the world of the galileist in their attitude towards literary questions. Although *Szabadgondolat* did not have a literary-artistic column, galileists still dealt with plenty of literary and artistic questions, even if doing so from a specific political-ideological perspective. The appreciation of Imre Földes' novel called *Feketeország* [Black Country], which appeared in *Szabadgondolat* in 1920, was a definitive case study of literary reviews. The flaws of the novel were openly excused due to its anticlerical merits which makes it clear that anticlericalism was the main guiding line, even in the artistic reviews of *Szabadgondolat*, but the place of Anatole France was also primarily marked by his anticlericalism and socialism in the young free thinkers' literary pantheon. Literature had no self-value for an ideal-typical galileist, nor was a pleasure of art an objective, as literature was mainly considered as a tool for changing the society. I also pointed out when analysing the Ady-reception of the galileists that ideological preferences dominated the aesthetic aspects within the Galilei Circle. I explained the galileists' affectionate admiration for Ady with his contemporary polarization role: accepting the poetry of Ady was not a question of taste but a question of choice between the 'Young' and the 'Old' Hungary.

12. However, the fairly selective worldview of the young free thinkers can be demonstrated by their judgement concerning the result of the Hungarian team at the 1912 Stockholm Olympics. This had also not treated sport as a self-value but considered the topic only suitable for creating a front line; to draw a conclusion from it with respect to Hungary's state of affairs. On the one hand I stated that practically the tuberculosis statistics had been printed in *Szabadgondolat* instead of the Olympic medal chart by – exclusively – discoursing the defeats of Russia, Spain, Hungary and the Balkans. On the other hand, the sport success of the USA had been explained by them being the 'champions of democracy'. As I see it, it is obvious that the galileists did not look at the Olympic performance at Stockholm from the apolitical perspective of a 'supporter' or an 'expert' but rather politically, having in mind the electoral struggles.

13. When analysing the anti-alcoholic propaganda of the Galilei Circle, I also came to the conclusion that they did not only pay special attention to the fight against alcoholism - which was considered to be an endemic at the beginning of the century - for health reasons but because they regarded it the main factor of hindering free thinking and identified it, along with religion, as the supporter of ruling classes, a 'pillar of social Order'. I established that

determining religion as a drug demanded necessarily action against alcohol and that the language of anti-alcoholism and anticlericalism appeared with similar vocabulary in the galileist texts. At times, even the notion of the patrician-nationalist ‘fighter - drinker - derring-do’ Hungarian heroic character was connected to alcohol, something pilloried heavily in the bourgeois radical - social democrat political approach. Thus did ‘Old Hungary’s’ religious - nationalist - drinker ‘old Hungarian’ character evolve which opposed ‘Young Hungary’s’ atheist - internationalist - anti alcoholic ‘new Hungarian’ ideal. Alcoholism, similarly to crime, was described as the result of ‘inappropriate economical order’ and for this reason they believed that dishabituuation of people from alcohol was only superficial treatment. Real solution to the problem of alcoholism was expected from a comprehensive social conversion, the coming of a ‘new Hungary’ where the sine qua non was seen as the extension of electoral law.

14. Members of the Galilei Circle supported the general and secret electoral law in agreement, as they considered political reform as a prerequisite of social reform. The radical electoral law reform was not the aim, but only an asset for them in the creation of a ‘Young Hungary’ (whose system of government was thought to be secondary) through positioning masses of lower status opposing ‘Old Hungary’ as political actors. According to the concept, namely, they were meant to form the base of reforms as they could only ‘lose their chains’. The idea, that labour masses could also allocate representation for the ‘reactionist’ power, did not even occur to them. This was partly a result of the galileists - playing an efficient role in labour education considered as the tool in the transformation of society - idealizing proletariat as the potential bearer of ‘future pursuits’ and as a ‘mass, thirsting for culture’. However, the galileists did not leave themselves the opportunity to oppose the radical electoral law: accepting or rejecting the general, equal and secret electoral law was such a front line for them which divided the society into two parts, ‘Young Hungary’ and ‘Old Hungary’. In a reception history case study relating to the issue of electoral law and analysing the question whether galileists had first sung *Internationale* during the first demonstration for electoral law on 23rd May, 1912, as stated by Mária Tömöry, author of the preceding Galilei Circle monograph, I tried to point out the role of dramaturgic needs present in historiography. As I see it, Thömöry - who presented the history of Galilei Circle as a labour movement romance - dated the ‘historical’ singing of *Internationale* to the 23rd for dramaturgic reasons, namely to indicate the switch of free thinking students to the side of the workers through a sufficiently strong, ‘soul unsettling’ symbol.

15. I tried to retrieve the ideologies of Galilei Circle from their answers given to Hungarian ‘issues of fate’ – the issue of nation, nationality, land, etc., from which my dissertation dealt most exhaustively with the issue of land and the agitation activities connected to that. After processing the articles of *Szabadgondolat* related to the issue of land, I came to the conclusion that galileists taking sides with distribution of land thematised the issue of land mainly from the point of secularization, where secularization gained its sublime local value to them in the fight against anticlericalism. As ‘large estates’ were made symbols of Old Hungary, they practically had a negative sign in the articles published in *Szabadgondolat*: everything it comes into contact with turns negative. Instead of making ‘large estates’ the scapegoats, I pointed out the idealization of ‘small estates’. Already at that time had professional criticisms been drawn up in connection with this dogmatic concept, even within the circle of *Huszadik Század* (e.g. Lajos Leopold), however, ‘old Hungary’ was primarily an ideological construction rather than a result of analysis. I came to the conclusion that the galileist did not so much depict the image of Old Hungary by the issue of land but rather the issue of land was depicted by the ideological construction of Old Hungary: they saw a ‘Black country’. This, however, does not contest the validity of some, or of even more of their statements.

16. The dissertation placed special emphasis on the social policies of the Galilei Circle, above all on its 1909 statistics called *The student poverty in Budapest*, a pioneer study in Hungary. Looking at the reception of the Galilei Circle I pointed out how even the conservative-liberal and ‘Christian-national’ critics of the activities of the free thinking student organization concentrated least on the social policies of the Galilei Circle which were not open to challenge. *Magyar Figyelő* provided a great example to prove my statement, whose conservative authors reflected on student ‘poverty’ without a doubt, as they explained the university popularity of the Galilei Circle and the radicals with the ‘exasperation’ and ‘dissatisfaction’ “which the pitiable undergraduates feel”, but they did not mention the student welfare activities of the Galilei Circle at any level. Not even once did they mention how Galilei Circle tried to solve the ‘hardship’ of students: the lack of social policy activities of the galileists in the right-wing reception reflects well on the excessively divided memory of the free thinker student organization.

17. However, after the outbreak of World War I, ‘antimilitarist’ propaganda based on a historical materialistic root became the focus of the activities of the atheist - free thinking

student organization, fighting for education free of ecclesiastic influence and for the aid of socially disadvantaged students, regardless of their religion. I reviewed the ‘small’ period’ of the Galilei Circle - far more insignificant when compared with the works and results of the ‘grand period’ - following 1914 in the light of four reminiscences written by members of the Circle, namely that of József Litván, Aurél Kolnai, Jolán Kelen and Ilona Duczynszka. Reading the reminiscences of the four galileists and comparing them with the antimilitarist activity being put into focus, I pointed out what different types of personalities, a different judgement of the World War and different questions and radically differing answers it can cover being flagged a ‘galileist’. The only common ground of Aurél Kolnai and Ilona Duczynszka, antithetically distinguishable from each other – beyond their Galilei Circle membership – can only be identified that they were both judged as ‘defeatists’ during the Horthy-era.

18. When answering the question why the substantive activity of Galilei Circle - banned in January, 1918 and launched again in October the same year - finished with the 21st March, 1919, I contested the explanation of Hungarian Marxist historiography prior to 1990, according to which this occurred as a result of the establishment of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, a party whose policies immediately realized the one decade old propagated programme of Galilei Circle. Instead, I looked for less ideological answers and highlighted simple ‘human resource’ aspects for the dissolution of the Galilei Circle: the engagement of the galileists in the radical replacement of the elite, meditated by the Commune, was simply required, and they soon found themselves in leading positions of commissariats and newspapers, followed by the emigration of most of them in August, 1919.

19. It is also due to emigration that during the Horthy Era the right-wing account of Galilei Circle’s history, which represented the Circle quasi as the trigger of the darkly imaged characters of the Hungarian Soviet Republic remained without a concurrence and dominated the Galilei Circle’s remembrance until 1945, so as to return into public awareness after 1990 with an even stronger force. The last larger unit of my dissertation showed how three authors of the 1920-1930s, also acknowledged by the official cultural policy – Cécile Tormay, Gyula Szekfű and Gusztáv Gratz – saw the Galilei Circle. In the case of Cécile Tormay - who interpreted the World War defeat as a stabbing theory and portrayed galileists as the agents of an anti-national ‘judeo- bolshevist’ conspiracy- I pointed out how he defined the role galileist played in the 1918-1919 events based on one of his reading experiences, that being

Demons by Dostoyevsky. By reconstructing the Galilei Circle image of Gyula Szekfű, I could also contradict a historiographical cliché, as it turned out that the relevant passages in his *Hungarian history*, considered the zenith of his oeuvre, are in reality far more ideological than that of *Three generations*, identified as the professional nadir of the prominent historian, due to its ideology. Finally, I put emphasis on describing Ottó Korvin's humpback and on the adequate interpretation of the age-old concept of *what's inside what's outside* in connection with the analysis of Gusztáv Gratz's works. I considered the humpback of Korvin as a great offset point where left-wing and right-wing accounts of the Galilei Circle recollections can be distinguished. The hump of Korvin is also an expression of his psychic malformation in the right-wing accounts, whereas in the left-wing commemorations Korvin's physical malfunction became significant in a 'rough body-sensitive soul' connection.

20. My dissertation trying to deconstruct both the cult and the counter-cult of the Galilei Circle can also be evaluated as an attempt to liberate the memory of this free thinking student organization burdened by 'massive' names such as Mátyás Rákosi, József Révai or Ottó Korvin. My aim was namely to prove that Galilei Circle – especially after its 'major' period bringing many positive results between 1908 and 1914 – deserves, without a question, a place among the most significant and valuable Hungarian student organizations.

Academic publications relating to the theme of the dissertation:

1. „Tüdővészes diákok” – A galileisták képe Tormay Cécile Bujdosó könyvében, *Kommentár*, 2012/3., 66-78.
2. Ördögök – Károlyi Mihály és a galileisták képe a Bujdosó könyvben. In: *Tormay Cécile-emlékkonferencia. A Magyar Művészeti Akadémia konferenciafüzetei IV.* Szerk.: Kollarits Krisztina, Bp., 2013, 189-217.
3. Fekete sereg, métely, piócák – A Galilei Kör „antiklerikális” retorikája és tevékenysége, *Kommentár*, 2013/6., 41-60.
4. „Hallgatták ájtatosan Jászi kirohanásait” – Szekfű Gyula Galilei Kör-képe. In: *Studio Vincentiana. Válogatott tanulmányok.* Szerk.: Gulyás Martin, Szent Vince Szakkollégium, Piliscsaba, 2014, 85-95.
5. Variációk a „defaitizmusra” – Az első világháború és a Galilei Kör „antimilitarista” tevékenysége galileista memoárokban, *Kommentár*, 2014/2., 33-52.
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