

Model Prospectus

MMW4/5/6

On the following pages is a sample prospectus. The prospectus is a plan for writing the paper that will clarify your ideas and produce a proper structure for your analysis. Once you complete it, you will be well along the way toward producing a good rough draft of the entire paper. This does not mean that you cannot add new ideas and new sources to your analysis, but be absolutely certain to speak with your TA before changing your thesis or varying the analysis set forth in your prospectus to any substantial extent.

As you will see from the model, it is impossible to produce a good prospectus without having done the great bulk of your research already. After doing lots of reading, thinking about your problem, and looking at the most important sources in considerable detail, you need to develop very clear ideas of what you intend to argue and how the evidence, arguments, and counterarguments that you will address all fit together. Only then can you put those ideas down in the prospectus.

A Few Words of Caution about this Model:

You should treat this sample as a sufficiently reliable model for the kind of presentation you need to produce, but you should also be aware that it is not the only possible model. Given the logic of your particular problem, you might be able to vary the structure somewhat, e.g., by changing the order in which arguments and counterarguments are presented (see the “Transfer Student Survival Guide” for sample organization schemes). Nevertheless, while some flexibility may well be appropriate, you need to be absolutely certain to address carefully each of the required elements of the assignment set forth on the handouts. If you have questions about how to prepare the prospectus, consult with your TA as soon as possible.

Do not take the thesis of this prospectus as an exact model for your own work. While the thesis here charts a middle course between two extreme positions held by other scholars, this approach is difficult to do well, and it is even more desirable to argue for a thesis that is more independent of other scholars’ positions.

The bracketed notations in the model are for your reference only; they are designed to help you identify important elements of the assignment – they are the “parts” that the assignment absolutely requires (again, see the “Transfer...Guide”). You may find it helpful to use these notations in your own work as you draft the prospectus, but do not include them in the version you submit.

This document is intended primarily as a model for the *substance* and *organization* of the prospectus. Be wary of copying the format of this document too slavishly; you should follow the MMW Style Sheet and the MLA rules set forth in your writing manual.

Revised October 2007

[Student Name]

[Section Number, TA Name]

Model Prospectus: [MMWx -- x term 200x]

[Day Month Year]

[Title] Old Stereotypes and New Ideologies: The Complexities of Hungarian Anti-Semitism

[Introduction to the topic] Around 1900, Hungarian society experienced a noticeable upsurge of anti-Semitism. The problem was perhaps most acute in the capital, Budapest. This rapidly modernizing city had a large, wealthy, and powerful Jewish population, one which had begun to assimilate into the influential circles dominated by the country's ethnic Magyar elites (Romsics 57-59). Responding to the new prominence of Jews, some ethnic Magyars developed strong anti-Semitic attitudes. However, despite important philo-Semitic traditions and the usefulness of Jews to the Magyars' struggle with the Germans who dominated the Habsburg Empire, anti-Semitism had deep roots in Hungary. Magyars shared in a broader European pattern of anti-Jewish sentiment that became more severe around 1900.

[Problem/Question] Confronted with these developments, we might wonder whether, as some analysts have maintained, the intensification of anti-Semitism in Hungary around the turn of the century should properly be traced to traditional elements in Hungarian society or whether the phenomenon represents instead something primarily new and different in Hungarian society. Did the upwelling of anti-Semitism represent an outgrowth of traditional noble prejudices and Catholic clerical conservatism, or did it represent a new, radical, populist "transformation of nationalism" (Lukacs 190)? ***[Thesis]*** Having examined anti-Semitism in Hungary and the interpretations of these developments put forward by a number of scholars specializing in Hungarian affairs, I have concluded that a thorough explanation of anti-Semitism in Hungary

around 1900 must understand the phenomenon as the confluence of both traditional and modern elements and must recognize the extent to which anti-Semitism developed among a variety of social groups.

[Scholarly interpretations] It has been fairly common to interpret Hungarian anti-Semitism during this period as something that is primarily traditional. George Schöpflin, for example, argues that Magyar-Jewish relations have been determined to a significant extent by "a legacy from the pre-modern past that mingles with the modern modes that the society . . . adopted" (Schöpflin). According to Schöpflin, a Jewish tradition of skepticism and resistance to authority could not be fully reconciled with the dominant Catholic, Counter-Reformation legacy of the ethnic Magyar elites, which placed heavy weight on the legitimacy of hierarchy.

A number of other interpretations of the problem similarly stress the the key role of the traditional elite Magyar groups in generating and sustaining anti-Semitic attitudes. Ignác Romsics's history of twentieth-century Hungary, for example, describes anti-Semitism in terms of the conflict between Jews and the Christian lesser nobility. Members of the gentry at the time were especially troubled by their uncertain economic futures and by a reduction of influence in national affairs. They tended to link each of these developments with the social advancement enjoyed by Jews, which intensified their anti-Semitism (Romsics 57-59).

A related analysis is found in the work of historian Péter Hanák, who argues using primary documents that over the course of the nineteenth century, the self-image that prevailed among ethnic Magyars in Hungary was determined primarily by the tradition-bound self-image of the "backward-looking" nobility, who glorified themselves as the defenders of all things Hungarian (52) and became proponents of the typically negative image of Jews as alien, not fully assimilable, and non-Magyar (48-49, 52-53, 55-62).

[Counterargument] Against the views offered in studies like these which see turn-of-the-century anti-Semitism as the product of Magyar tradition, John Lukacs offers a different interpretation, showing that anti-Semitism in Budapest after 1900 was a modern phenomenon (186). He portrays Magyar-Jewish relations as friendly and maintains that the rupture which occurred after 1900 was the result of new political ideas. He argues proponents of anti-Semitism were not the traditional Magyar elites but rather "populist and democratic" forces (188).

[Rebuttal / Weaknesses in the above arguments] The analyses presented above have considerable merit, but they err in seeing Hungarian anti-Semitism as too closely linked to either tradition or modernity and too much the product of a particular segment of society. A more satisfying interpretation is one which acknowledges the considerable complexity and variety of anti-Semitism at the time. Lukacs is right to point to what was new, and in particular the shift toward the use of a populist anti-Semitism in mass politics, but Hanák, Romsics, and Schöpflin are also correct in emphasizing the continuing vitality of the genteel Christian Magyar ideal.

[Conclusion/explanation of significance:] A profitable approach can be found in an analysis like that by political scientist Andrew Janos, whose study suggests that we should not locate the sources of anti-Semitism too narrowly within any one class or social group. Interpretations are commonly focused on forwarding single determinate causes at the expense of the very complicated historical reality. It seems significant to take those complications into account. Janos insists, properly I believe, that the motivations for modern anti-Semitic movements arose from different strata of society. Varieties of anti-Semitism were embraced by the gentry, but also by the peasantry (141), by Catholics and Protestants (141-42), by the urban middle class (180), and by political radicals (181). Modern anti-Semitic thought that emerged

around 1900 built upon traditional stereotypes, producing a dangerous mix of "new" mass political mobilization with "old" concerns for the integrity of the Magyar nation.

