# **Chapter III. The Numerus Clausus – The Soul of the Regime**

Apropos of the upcoming municipal election in Budapest, in early 1925 an author in the Jewish weekly *Egyenlőség* called the numerus clausus the “soul of the regime” in an article in which both the government’s and the capital’s municipal leadership were heavily criticized. The author, Jenő Gál, finished on the note that the numerus clausus symbolized everything that was detestable about the radical Christian, right-wing city leadership and emphasized the importance of going to vote, arguing that it would be an action against the numerus clausus: “For years, we have been bearing, suffering, feeling ashamed. Now we have to act. Our action is using our electoral right to annul the numerus clausus, the soul of the regime which is eating away our life.”

[[1]](#endnote-1)

In reality, this election resulted in the victory of the oppositional Democratic Bloc exactly because the right-wing city leadership did not have such a harmonious relationship with the right-wing government as Gál depicted[[2]](#endnote-2) and, therefore, sympathizers of the government probably also voted against the old municipal leadership. The crux of the conflict between the antisemitic, right-wing city leadership of Budapest elected in 1920 and the more moderately right-wing government led by István Bethlen since 1921 was the latter’s program of consolidation, including attempts to appease the Jewish elite. Gál nevertheless rightfully criticized this government for giving honors and awards to some individual Jews instead of putting an end to the numerus clausus, which was an insult to the entire Jewry.

Between 1922 and 1924, eight proposals for the cancellation of the numerus clausus failed in Parliament. Prime Minister Bethlen opposed such proposals, while Minister of Education and Religion Kuno Klebelsberg stayed in the corridor when they were being debated so as not to be present, just as he had done when the law was originally voted in 1920 (when 155 out of 219 members of Parliament remained absent, including Bethlen).[[3]](#endnote-3) In the mid-1920s, however, the camp of opponents of the numerus clausus grew within Hungary and international attention also grew thanks to the tireless efforts of the British Jewish journalist and diplomat Lucien Wolf. Therefore, this law increasingly came to be a burden on Hungarian diplomacy. The reputational damage made it harder to raise international loans needed for the country’s economic consolidation. Hence, while within Hungary the numerus clausus was promoted, introduced, and maintained with explicitly antisemitic rhetoric in Parliament and press, members of the government were not outspoken about the antisemitic reasoning behind the quota system. The double-talk was successful enough to defer international repercussions until 1925. This was also due to the great powers’ interest in the consolidation process promoted by the Bethlen government, for which there was a willingness to turn a blind eye to Hungary’s state level antisemitism. In fact, by negating equal treatment for all Hungarian citizens, the numerus clausus law clearly violated the Treaty of Trianon (1920), wherein Hungary had agreed to secure minority rights.

Although this could have provided legitimacy for representatives of Hungarian Jewry to ask for the legal help of international organizations, it would have been disadvantageous for them to base claims on a legal framework absolutely rejected by the Hungarian political leadership. It was inconceivable to refer to the Trianon Treaty also because even the Jews of Hungary resented it. It has to be stressed that the Hungarian Jewish mainstream adhered to the definition of Jews as “Hungarians of the Jewish faith” and promoted Hungarian patriotism. As Vilmos Vázsonyi, former minister of justice– in 1917, Hungary’s very first member of government of the Jewish faith[[4]](#endnote-4) – put it in 1924: “We do not ask for protection on the basis of the Trianon Treaty, since we do not wish to be a minority that puts itself under the protection of Geneva, where our government pilgrimages for democracy. Our nation’s grief cannot be the source of our rights.”[[5]](#endnote-5)

The community leadership rejected international help even when it was initiated from abroad by the Joint Foreign Committee and the Alliance Israélite Universelle. In fact, Prime Minister Bethlen pressured the Jewish community to reject such aid. Within the community there was a lively debate on what to do. In the end, they chose to satisfy Bethlen’s request, but with a different text from the one he proposed. The new text was composed by Vázsonyi and came to be a memorable quotation in Hungarian Jewish history. Vázsonyi (as a politician as well as a lawyer) argued that the legal equality of Jews should be restored on the basis of Hungarian constitutionality and not on the basis of an unacceptable international treaty (referring to the Treaty of Trianon) and especially not on the basis of intervention by the League of Nations:

Our denomination’s equality is part of the Hungarian constitution . . . Hence, when struggling against the numerus clausus, we only refer to the Hungarian constitution, and we do not refer to and we will not refer to the peace treaty’s paragraph about religious equality. We are Hungarians, we belong to the Hungarian nation and the peace treaty that is our nation’s grief, cannot be the source of our rights. . . . Standing on the basis of the Hungarian constitution, expecting the victory of our equality from the resurrection of noble Hungarian traditions, we want to get rid of the numerus clausus by convincing our own government and our own legislation. Thus, we did not turn to and are not turning to any foreign actor. If such intervention is offered – even if with good intentions – we reject it.[[6]](#endnote-6)

This was a patriotic but, at the same time, cunning rhetorical move thanks to clever timing. While the Jewish community was protesting the League’s intervention with such reasoning, the Hungarian government was asking for the League’s intervention so that Romania would be forced to pay compensations to the former Hungarian landowners of Transylvanian lands.[[7]](#endnote-7) The government based this request on nothing other than the otherwise detested Treaty of Trianon. Thus, in its contemporary context, Vázsonyi’s famous declaration did not only mean that Hungarian Jews rejected the Treaty of Trianon, even if it could have served their interests, but also meant that they were doing so when the Hungarian government was using the Treaty of Trianon for its own interests.

The League of Nations kept the issue of Transylvanian landowners’ compensation as well as the numerus clausus on its agenda. Even though the Hungarian government argued that the numerus clausus should not be on the agenda, since the minority concerned protested the League’s intervention. Nevertheless, the League’s council dealt with it in a meeting on December 10, where the Hungarian government was represented by Kuno Klebelsberg, the Minister of Education and Religion. He stated that the Jewish quota was a temporary measure, needed due to the situation caused by the Treaty of Trianon. It could be, however, changed whenever social and economic stability was achieved. The council instructed Hungary to modify the numerus clausus in the near future rather than tying it to the achievement of social and economic stability.[[8]](#endnote-8) More precisely, the cancellation of the third paragraph – the one that contained the quota – was requested.

In the next year, Minister Klebelsberg took steps to mitigate the application of the Jewish quota at universities. He instructed the universities not to count converted Jews in the Jewish quota but to admit them beyond the quota[[9]](#endnote-9) and to count the quota as 6% of the maximum number of the admissible students, not as the 6% of the actually enrolled students.[[10]](#endnote-10) In this way more Jewish applicants were admitted who previously would not have been, since by this time numerous faculties suffered a lack of applicants and were unable to have as many students as was allowed to them if taking the Jewish quota as strictly as Klebelsberg had required them in the early 1920s. Previously, converted Jews were to be counted towards the Jewish quota and the quota was to be counted in relation to the number of admissible students. Yet, the government did not take steps in 1926 for the amendment of the numerus clausus law itself, in view of the approaching end-of-year elections in which the more radically antisemitic opposition could have turned it against Bethlen.

After having won the election, however, Bethlen, was willing to get rid of the Jewish quota in the hope of international loans.[[11]](#endnote-11) Yet it took more than a year longer to actually amend the law and international pressure played an important role in it. The League of Nations’ council again put on its agenda for its meeting in December 1927 the issue of Transylvanian Hungarian landowners’ compensation by Romania as well as the annulation of the Jewish quota by Hungary. It was obvious that, in case the Hungarian government remained indebted with its earlier promise to annul the Jewish quota, there was no hope for the League’s pressure on Romania for the sake of Hungarian landowners.

Hence, Klebelsberg submitted a proposal for the amendment of the numerus clausus law to the Parliament on November 18, 1927. Bethlen travelled to Geneva in early December and presented Klebelsberg’s proposition to the League’s council and achieved the cancellation of the issue of the numerus clausus from the council’s meeting agenda. Eventually the Parliament voted the amendment of the numerus clausus law on February 24, 1928.[[12]](#endnote-12) The explicit Jewish quota was cancelled, but ample space for anti-Jewish discrimination remained. In this way, radical antisemites were not happy, less radical ones could go along with it, and the League of Nations thereafter turned a blind eye to Hungarian academic antisemitism, despite continuous efforts by Lucien Wolf to keep it on the agenda.

When the original numerus clausus law was in force between 1920 and 1928, Hungarian politicians often declared that the Jewish quota was a temporary measure to cope with the postwar social tensions, as did Klebelsberg in Geneva in 1925. Not everyone took this argument seriously. Some conservative politicians apparently did think that there was temporary need for a Jewish quota, but not fa permanent one, while their more right-wing, antisemitic allies had always regarded it as a first step in a longer process of marginalizing Jews. Opinions on whether politicians’ declarations on the temporality should be believed or not differed among Jews. Perhaps understandably, Bethlen’s premiership, the program of which focused on consolidation from 1921, especially bearing in mind the horrors of the antisemitic white terror in 1919–20, gave hope to many Jews that Hungary was going in the right direction and, consequently, the Jewish quota would not last forever. Jewish journalists of *Egyenlőség* and emigrant Jewish students whose reflections the editorial board helped to publish often wrote in a spirit that Hungarian Jews had to prove their loyalty to the nation, despite being exiled, so that the Jewish quota would be abolished. The earliest memoir on the experience of numerus clausus exiles published by Lili Fenyő, for instance, narrates a conversation of three Hungarian Jewish students with their Italian landlady where the landlady criticizes Hungary for not letting Jews go to university, while the Hungarian Jewish girls explain to her the rationale of the Jewish quota. The landlady wonders how can a European state be so uncultured? The girls reply that it is not about the lack of culture, but the economic situation and Trianon. The landlady is still unconvinced and proposes that the abundance of medical students would not be a problem because, in any case, only the most talented ones would become physicians. The Hungarian Jewish girls ran out of arguments and switch the topic to criticize the lack of freedom of press in Italy.[[13]](#endnote-13)

At times, Jewish emigrant students’ Hungarian patriotism was acknowledged even by representatives of the Hungarian state. For instance, István Pőzel Hungarian consul in Milan wrote in a report to the Foreign Ministry that the Hungarian students enrolled in the universities of Northern Italy behaved decently in terms of “loyalty to the nation”, even though most of them were Jewish.[[14]](#endnote-14) The Padua-based “Circle of Hungarian Students”even received a special praise from Foreign Minister Lajos Walkó on behalf of the Hungarian government in the summer of 1926.

Thus, unsurprisingly, in early 1928, when the debate on the abolition of the numerus clausus began in the Parliament and it was already quite clear from the press communications of the prime minister and the governor that this time the law would change, it was argued in the columns of *Egyenlőség* that Hungarian Jewry deserved the abolition of the Jewish quota with its patriotism and especially referred to the patriotic behavior of the exiled students abroad: “We are referring to, not to boast, but we must refer to our martyrs, our victims, the ten thousand [Hungarian Jews who fell in the Great War] . . . and to the touching, unforgettable propaganda conducted by the expelled students for their homeland and their Hungarianness, while they were deprived of their families and homeland, facing hunger and misery.”[[15]](#endnote-15)

The author seemed to be confident that the parliamentary debate would lead to a change that would end the terrible period of the numerus clausus: “So the debate on the numerus clausus begins! After eight long years of vicissitudes, after long years that seemed to be endless due to tragedies and desperation.”[[16]](#endnote-16) Even though it is acknowledged that those in the entourage of the government justify the revision of the numerus clausus with international pressure rather than a something they owe to Jewry and Hungarian culture.

The hope of temporariness of the numerus clausus was mirrored from the beginning in the functioning of fundraising and philanthropy for the exiles of the numerus clausus. Lajos Szabolcsi, the editor-in-Chief of *Egyenlőség*, found a new vocation in saving Jewish youth from the numerus clausus. As he put it two decades later: “The youth took the wandering staff. The biggest task of my life stood ahead of me . . . to use the huge publicity of the magazine [*Egyenlőség*] so that I can save the youth of Hungarian Jewry from the catastrophe of the numerus clausus. I envisioned a previously unseen mass movement, so that we can support the Jewish youth who wished to study and we can send them abroad from donations to foreign friendly universities.”[[17]](#endnote-17)

Szabolcsi’s weekly newspaper beyond fundraising collected and published useful information about foreign universities – Szabolcsi visited numerous German university towns in 1921 with this aim – and connected the “wandering students” living abroad with prospective ones still in Hungary. By 1922, this coordinating activity outgrew the framework of an editorial board. Hence the support was institutionalized in the form of the Central Jewish Student Aid Committee set up by the Pest Israelite Community. Importantly, this committee was called “Central”because there were a number of local student aid committees in the countryside.

The central committee worked in the framework of the presidential department of the Pest Israelite Community; thus it was directly controlled by the president of the country’s largest and most affluent Jewish community.[[18]](#endnote-18) The Central Jewish Student Aid Committeesimply distributed as much money as they managed to raise in a given academic year among all the students who applied for support without applying meritocratic or social criteria. Serious discussions about how to make the Committee functional in the long run only emerged after the 1928 amendment of the numerus clausus, when it was established that anti-Jewish discrimination was there to stay in Hungarian universities and thus Jewish students’ emigration was to continue.

On the other hand, it was also arguable from the very beginning in 1920 that the numerus clausus was a *sine qua non* of the “Christian Course,” as governor Miklós Horthy referred to the right-wing, antidemocratic regime he established in 1920. The numerus clausus was communicated as an anti-Jewish law and so it was, a result of a belief that Jewry collectively deserved punishment for the losses Hungary had suffered due to the Great War, the subsequent revolutions, and the Treaty of Trianon. In other words, Hungarian Jewry was quite clearly put in the position of the scapegoat. As the historian Guy Miron put it, the numerus clausus set in motion a process of de-emancipation.[[19]](#endnote-19) Hungarian legislation broke away from the principle of equality of all citizens before the law, thereby reversing Jewish emancipation. At that point, only Jews aspiring for higher education were concerned; the university quota, nevertheless, established a precedent that emancipation was not a one-way road. A minority could be deprived of emancipation, in short, de-emancipated. This ascertainment, however, is much more convincing to posterity than to contemporaries who wished to hope for a better future.

Thus, many trusted the temporariness of the Jewish quota until the preparations of the 1928 amendment of the numerus clausus law when they got the impression that antisemitic discrimination in Hungarian academia was there to stay. A member of the Jewish Student Aid Committee, Ernő Ballagi, had already declared in November 1927 that the improvement of the situation is not to be expected. Moreover, now the amendment was being prepared under calmer circumstances than the original law and hence they were probably meant for a longer period. In the following, Ballagi recalled his memories about the foundation of the Central Jewish Student Aid Committee which was supposed to be a temporary institution in order to promptly react to a multitude of Jewish youth leaving Hungary for studies and needing support: “We were always hopeful that the numerus clausus, the result of the mood created by the war and the revolutions, cannot be alive for a long time.” Due to politicians’ statements in a similar sense, many donors came to view the Committee as an outdated, obsolete institution and willingness to donate decreased. Ballagi argued that such position clearly became untenable following the developments around the numerus clausus and thus the system of supporting emigrant students must be solidified: “Such an organization of Hungarian Jewry needs to be created that will be able to send and enable to study abroad a sufficient number of Jewish students. Hungarian Jewry must take care of the resupply of its intelligentsia.”[[20]](#endnote-20)

Indeed, while the amendment was being prepared, both governor Miklós Horthy and Prime Minister Bethlen made it obvious that they work towards it only due to the international pressure and will only change the form but not the content of anti-Jewish discrimination.[[21]](#endnote-21) It merely changed the method of singling out Jews: instead of a “racial group,” the new proxy was the father’s profession.[[22]](#endnote-22) It was impossible to perfectly operationalize this new criteria which opened the road to arbitrary decisions about whom to admit and whom to exclude from admission to universities. Nevertheless, Lucien Wolf pointed out to the League of Nations that due to the occupational structure of Hungarian society it was predictable which occupations should be advantaged (civil servants) for the sake of admitting preferably non-Jewish students, and the law indicated the professions keeping the professional statistics in mind.[[23]](#endnote-23) Despite Wolf’s reports explaining how the amended law continued to contribute to discrimination against the Jews, the Leaguewas satisfied with the amendment.

Thomas Spira argues that the League of Nationsmissed a golden opportunity to implement its authority in East Central Europe by not protesting against the hypocrite amendment of the Hungarian numerus clausus in 1928.[[24]](#endnote-24) The question nevertheless emerges how the League’s external minority protection could have worked better in this case where the leaders of the minority concerned refused the principle of external minority protection. In fact, the minority protection system did not make it possible to defend the minorities’ rights without the minorities denouncing their own home country’s government. the conceivers of the international minority protection system did not take into account the dilemma that minority leaders would face when suffering deprivation of rights from governments of states that lost the First World War, thus were not interested in the maintenance of the status quo created by the Versailles peace treaty system. Governments could easily blackmail their minorities in order to prevent them from turning to the League of Nations*,* as did Bethlen with the Hungarian Jews when he called the Israelite Community of Pest for a protest against the League’s intervention in 1925. This protest resulted in the above quoted patriotic statement by Vázsonyi which is ever since quoted in historiography as a demonstration of Hungarian Jewish patriotism.

Unsurprisingly, within Hungary it was more often clarified by public intellectuals and politicians during the Horthy-era that the purpose of the modification of the numerus clausus was to keep the Jewish quota without the burden the explicit Jewish quota of the original law meant for Hungary’s international relations. As Alajos Kovács, a respected statistician of the era also known for his antisemitism, explained in his book about the statistics of Jews in Hungary:

[T]he milder form of the *numerus clausus* initiated by the late Count Klebelsberg,

Minister of Culture, fundamentally served the same purpose . . . although it did

not explicitly state that each race was to be admitted to university according to its

proportion of the overall population overall. . . . Since in the first [occupational]

category, which accounts for about half the students, there are hardly any Jews,

while in the other half of places . . . it would have been the children of agrarian

workers who were in a majority . . . in the end, the proportion of Jews in the student

body would have been roughly equal to their proportion of the overall population.[[25]](#endnote-25)

Bálint Hóman, Minister of Culture (1932–38 and 1939–42) expressed the same in an even more explicit way: “The Jewish quota, wiped away under international pressure, was replaced (with the modification of the law in 1928) by a measure that instead of openly naming the Jews, served the same goal as the original Jewish quota of 1920 by ‘indirect means’ of the quota for occupational groups.”[[26]](#endnote-26)

The first summer after the amendment, in 1928, brought about excitement and anxiety about how the amended law will play out in practice. Unfortunately for Jewish applicants, they continuously met discrimination. On the top of it, in that year the Ministry decreased the number of admissible students compared to the previous academic year. Therefore, if faculties were to insist on the Jewish quota, now this meant an even lower number of admitted Jewish applicants than before. For example, the medical faculty in Budapest admitted 300 students in 1927–28, but only 180 in 1928–29. The humanities faculty was to admit 220 students as opposed to 300 in the previous year. *Egyenlőség* established that: “Those Jewish students who submitted their applications to the various universities by August 25, are entirely puzzled and lack information. . . . The sad crowd of those trying their luck in foreign universities will again greatly grow. Many talented people will fall again, who will not take the risk of studying abroad.”[[27]](#endnote-27)

On the whole, in the new quota system those applicants were supported to get in the “closed number” of admissible students in a faculty whose fathers had professions in which – due to historical reasons – hardly any Jews worked. Thus, the principle of discrimination was not revoked by the amendment. Gyula Gömbös, a radical right-wing politician and future prime minister (1932–36), was not too greatly exaggerating when he claimed that “the Jews will wish we get back to the old form of the numerus clausus.”[[28]](#endnote-28) This statement had something to it, since although the Jewish quota was less strict between 1928 and 1932 than between 1920 and 1928,[[29]](#endnote-29) the new and hypocritical discrimination was clearly not to be abolished (whereas until 1928 there was space for hope that the Jewish quota at universities would be temporary), while the superficial alleviation instigated antisemitic violence on campuses. The historian Róbert Kerepeszki demonstrated these dynamics using the case study of the antisemitic student riots in Debrecen. The most intense period in this regard was the second semester of the academic year 1927–28 when the amendment of the numerus clausus was being debated in the Parliament.[[30]](#endnote-30)

An important supporter of Jewish emigrant students, Aladár Kaszab, a wealthy factory owner and famous philanthropist, also seems to have concluded in the first year after the amendment that in practice, the Jewish quota is still in place and still forcing Jewish youth to study abroad. He died in 1929 and several media reported about his last will and testament. He left 10% of one of his company’s revenues to the “university students of the Israelite faith who are forced to study abroad” and added that when there will no longer be a numerus clausus in Hungary, those revenues should cover stipends for any Hungarian student abroad with no regard to their religion.[[31]](#endnote-31) The last part was a customary scheme of donations by assimilated Jews who wished to demonstrate that they were not sectarian.

In May 1929, Chief Rabbi Simon Hevesi pointed out in the Central Jewish Student Aid Committee’s assembly: “The law has been amended . . . and ended the legislative stigmatization that had degraded us into a racial minority . . . This amendment may satisfy us as citizens, however, it does not change the fate of the vast majority of our students that is being pushed out from the homeland.”[[32]](#endnote-32)

The statistics of Hungarians studying in higher education abroad indeed reveal that student migration did not decrease significantly after 1928, only oscillated around the same number of migrant students. Since the new regulation based on the amended law came into force in October 1928, it is worth comparing the data on émigré students for the academic year before the amendment (1927–28) with subsequent academic years. Right after the amendment, the number actually grew.

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| --- | --- |
| **Academic year** | **Number of Hungarian students abroad (first semester)** |
| 1927–28  1928–29 | 1,807  1,882 |
| 1929–30 | 1,773 |
| 1930–31 | 1,887 |

*Hungarian émigré students before and after the amendment of the numerus clausus*[[33]](#endnote-33)

Although we must not take the number of émigré students simply as the number of numerus clausus exiles, it is certain that Jews had the most reasons to enroll in foreign universities. By the late 1920s, there were more than enough places for students in Hungarian higher education. Thanks to the educational politics of Minister Kuno Klebelsberg, the Hungarian state invested heavily in the development of education and scholarship.[[34]](#endnote-34) On the one hand, Klebelsberg argued that Hungary must demonstrate its cultural superiority over the neighboring countries in order to convince the great powers that the Treaty of Trianon – which expanded neighboring countries at the expense of Hungary – was a mistake and should be revised. On the other hand, the same Treaty of Trianon restricted the military investments of Hungary, providing an opportunity to channel more spending into the sphere of education and the finance of culture. Alajos Kovács, in his statistics about Hungarian Jewish students in Hungarian and in foreign higher education, estimated that 80% of Hungarian students who studied at foreign university were Jewish. He argued that, even prior to 1920, most of the Hungarians studying abroad were Jewish, but their proportion grew after the introduction of the Jewish quota in Hungary. In addition, the huge proportion of Hungarian students leaving Germany in 1933 also suggests that the majority of them was Jewish.[[35]](#endnote-35) Such an estimate, that four out of five Hungarian students were Jewish in the age of the numerus clausus, will be empirically proven in the next chapter of this book in the cases of Berlin, Bologna, Prague, and Vienna.

To be sure, for a few years, the amendment did enable the proportion of Jewish students in Hungarian universities to grow higher than the quota set in the original numerus clausus. From 8.8% in 1928–29, it increased to 9.6% in 1930, 10.5 % in 1931, 12.3 % in 1932, and 12.5 % in 1933. Yet, this did not mean equal opportunities between Jewish and non-Jewish youth. Even in these years, 70% of Jewish applicants were turned down, while only 15% of non-Jewish applicants were.[[36]](#endnote-36) In addition, such easing of discrimination did not last long, only until the academic year 1931–32. In the autumn of 1932, Minister of Culture Bálint Hóman instructed the universities to be “rigorous” in their admission procedure and, one year later, he declared in the Parliament that the proportion of Jews among university students should no longer be allowed to exceed the proportion of Jews in the general population.[[37]](#endnote-37)

The return of the 6% Jewish quota in Hungary had to do with Hitler’s rise to power in Germany. It rendered antisemitic student organizations’ demonstrations more forceful and they were taken ever more seriously. Hence, for the rest of the 1930s the 6% Jewish quota was in place in practice, even though formally it was only reinstated in the anti-Jewish Law of 1939.[[38]](#endnote-38) This “Second Jewish Law”[[39]](#endnote-39) was entitled “about the limitation of Jews’ takeover of public life and the economy” that echoes the rhetoric with which the numerus clausus had been justified in the preceeding two decades. However, already the name of the “First Jewish Law” of 1938 recalled the logic of the numerus clausus, disguising discrimination as affirmative action: A “law on the more efficient securing of the balance of social and economic life.”[[40]](#endnote-40)

1. Jenő Gál, “A numerus clausus –A kurzus lelke” [The numerus clausus –the soul of the regime], *Egyenlőség,* February 7, no. 1 (1925): 1–2. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Károly Ignácz, “Fővárosi választások és a törvényhatósági bizottság közgyűlése Budapesten 1920-1945 [Elections in the capital and the legislative committee’s assembly in Budapest, 1920–45],” *Urbs. Magyar Várostörténeti Évkönyv* 2 (2007): 202. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Mária M. Kovács, *Törvénytől sújtva: A numerus clausus Magyarországon, 1920–1945* [Down by Law. The Numerus Clausus in Hungary, 1920–45] (Budapest: Napvilág, 2012), 173–174. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. The very first Jewish Hungarian minister, Samu Hazai (minister of defense 1910–17), was a convert. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Vilmos Vázsonyi, “Nemzetünk gyásza nem lehet jogaink forrása” [The source of our nation’s grief cannot be the source of our rights], in eds. Hugó Csergő and József Balassa, *Vázsonyi Vilmos beszédei és írásai* [Speeches and writings of Vilmos Vázsonyi] vol. II. (Budapest: Országos Vázsonyi-emlékbizottság, 1927), 440. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Published in *Egyenlőség* in a commemorative article when Vázsonyi died: “Vázsonyi politikai végrendelete [Vázsonyi’s political last will],” *Egyenlőség*, June 1, 1926, 11–12. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Those who opted for Hungarian citizenship, when Transylvania was subsumed into Romania in 1920, were deprived of their landed property by the Romanian state, which distributed it among peasants without compensating the former owners. Based on the Treaty of Trianon, they should have compensated them, as was declared by the League of Nations in December 1927. However, the issue was only resolved three years later and the world economic crisis of 1929 in the end rendered those payments nearly worthless. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Andor Ladányi, “A numerus clausus-törvény 1928. évi módosításáról,” *Századok* 128, no. 6 (1994): 1123. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Andor Ladányi, “A numerus clausustól a numerus nullusig. [From the numerus clausus to the numerus nullus.]” *Múlt és Jövő*, 1 (2005): 57. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Ladányi, “A numerus clausus-törvény,” 1124. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Kovács, *Törvénytől sújtva*, 191. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. “1928. évi XIV. törvénycikk a tudományegyetemekre, a műegyetemre, a budapesti egyetemi közgazdaságtudományi karra és a jogakadémiákra való beiratkozás szabályozásáról szóló 1920. évi XXV. törvénycikk módosításáról” [Law XIV of 1928 on the modification of Law XXV of 1920 on the regulation of enrollment to university, polytechnics, Faculty of Economics at the University of Budapest and law academies], Accessed November 22, 2021, https://net.jogtar.hu/ezer-ev-torveny?docid=92800014.TV&searchUrl=/ezer-ev-torvenyei%3Fkeyword%3D1928.%2520%25C3%25A9vi%2520XIV. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Lili Fenyő, *Pillanatfelvételek a külföldön élő magyar diákság életéből* [Snapshots from the Life of Hungarian Students Abroad] (Budapest: Jupiter Nyomda, 1929), 19. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. István Pőzel, “Milánói Magyar Királyi Főkonzulátus levele” [Letter of the Hungarian Royal Consulate of Milan], April 15, 1928, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, K-60-1928. 20. I/6. item: Italy, Hungarian National Archives. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. “Eltörölni!” [Abolish it!], *Egyenlőség*, January 28, 1928, 1. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. “Eltörölni!,” 1. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Szabolcsi, *Két emberöltő,* 327. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. According to the census of 1920, in post-Trianon Hungary 46% of Jews (215,512 out of 473,310) lived in the capital and the majority of these were affiliated with the Pest side’s community. Péter Ujvári (Ed.). *Zsidó lexikon* [Jewish lexicon.] (Budapest: Edition of the Jewish Lexicon, 1929), 554. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Guy Miron, *The Waning of Emancipation: Jewish History, Memory, and the Rise of Fascism in Germany, France, and Hungary* (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 2011). [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Ernő Ballagi: “Harc a numerus clausus ellen” [Struggle against the numerus clausus], *Egyenlőség*, November 26, 1927, 15. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Kovács, *Törvénytől sújtva*, 196–97. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Kovács, *Törvénytől sújtva*, 200–02. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Nathaniel Katzburg, *Hungary and the Jews: Policy and Legislation, 1920–1943* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1981), 77–78. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Thomas Spira, *Hungary’s Numerus Clausus, the Jewish Minority and the League of Nations.* (Mainz: Hase & Koehler Verlag, 1973), 127. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Alajos Kovács, *A csonkamagyarországi zsidóság a statisztika tükrében* [The Jewry of truncated Hungary in the mirror of statistics] (Budapest: Egyesült Keresztény Nemzeti Liga, 1938), 39. The term “truncated” refers to the fact that the due to the Treaty of Trianon, two-thirds of Hungary’s former territory was attached to neighboring states. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Justification for the draft law on the regulation of university and polytechnic admissions in: Felsőházi Irományok, 1939, IV, 187–88, 15 November 1940. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. “A numerus clausus 1928-ban [The numerus clausus in 1928],” *Egyenlőség*, September 1, 1928, 1. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. MTI Hírkiadás [News by the Hungarian Telegraphic Agency], November 18, 1927, 13. Cited by Kovács *Törvénytől sújtva*, 196. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. Kovács, *Törvénytől sújtva,* 205. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Róbert Kerepeszli, “A numerus clausus 1928. évi módosításának hatása Debrecenben. [The impact of the 1928 amendment of the numerus clausus in Debrecen.]” *Múltunk* L, no 4 (2005): 49. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. “Kaszab Aladár végrendelete [The last will of Aladár Kaszab],” *Budapesti Hírlap,* March 20, 1929, 9. See also two articles under the same title on the same day in *Népszava* (p.4.) and in *Pesti Hírlap* (p.6.) [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. “Új harc a numerus clausus ellen [New struggle against the numerus clausus],” *Egyenlőség*, May 25, 1929, 1. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Data for the years concerned in the *Hungarian Statistical Yearbooks*: “A magyar honosságú hallgatók a külföldi főiskolákon 1926/27-től 1928/29-ig [Hungarian citizens studying in higher education abroad from 1926–27 to 1928–29]”, *Magyar Statisztikai Évkönyvek* 37 (1929): 272. “A magyar honosságú hallgatók a külföldi főiskolákon 1928/29-től 1930/31-ig” [Hungarian citizens studying in higher education abroad from 1928–29 to 1930–31) , *Magyar Statisztikai Évkönyvek* 39 (1931): 285; “A magyar honosságú hallgatók a külföldi főiskolákon 1929/30-tól 1931/32-ig” [Hungarian citizens studying in higher education abroad from 1929–30 to 1930–31), *Magyar Statisztikai Évkönyvek* 40 (1932): 293. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. We must remember that the only Hungarian Noble-laureate who brought off the research for which being awarded in Hungary and not abroad, is Albert Szentgyörgyi, who fulfilled his experiments in the 1930s and received the Nobel Prize in medicine in 1937. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. Alajos Kovács, “Magyarországi zsidó hallgatók a hazai és külföldi főiskolákon” [Hungarian Jewish students at Hungarian and foreign universities], *Magyar Statisztikai Szemle* 16, no. 9 (1938): 898. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. Mária M. Kovács, “The Numerus Clausus in Hungary 1920–1945,” in eds. Regina Fritz, Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, Jana Starek *Alma Mater Antisemitica. Akademisches Milieu, Juden und Antisemitismus an den Universitäten Europas zwischen 1918 und 1939* [Alma Mater Antisemitica. Academic milieu, Jews and antisemitism at Europe’s universities between 1918 and 1939] (Vienna: Wiener Wiesenthal Institut für Holocaust-Studien, 2016): 109. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. See Bálint Hóman’s contribution in: Képviselőházi Napló 1931, vol. XVIII, 332, 29 November 1933. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. “1939. évi IV. törvénycikk a zsidók közéleti és gazdasági térfoglalásának korlátozásáról” [Law IV of 1939 about the limitation of Jews’ takeover of public life and the economy], Accessed November 21, 2021, https://net.jogtar.hu/ezer-ev-torveny?docid=93900004.TV&searchUrl=/ezer-ev-torvenyei%3Fkeyword%3D1939.%2520%25C3%25A9vi%2520IV. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. The collective memory only counts three anti-Jewish laws (1938: XV, 1939: IV, and 1941: XV), but, in fact, 21 antisemitic laws were introduced between 1938 and 1944. Together with the numerus clausus of 1920, the Hungarian state institutionalized 22 anti-Jewish laws. György Karsai, “A magyarországi zsidótörvények és rendeletek, 1920–1944” [The anti-Jewish laws and orders of Hungary 1920–44],” in ed. Judit Molnár *A holokauszt Magyarországon európai perspektívában* [The Holocaust in Hungary in a European perspective], (Budapest: Balassi, 2005), 141. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. “1938. évi XV. törvénycikk a társadalmi és a gazdasági élet egyensúlyának hatályosabb biztosításáról” [Law XV of 1938 on the more efficient securing of the balance of social and economic life], Accessed November 21, 2021, https://net.jogtar.hu/ezer-ev-torveny?docid=93800015.TV. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)