



Female Agrarian Workers in Early Twentieth-Century Hungary

The Making of Class- and Gender-Based Solidarities

Introduction: Susan Zimmermann

Source Translation: Piroska Nagy

Source translated and discussed: Letter, sent by Mrs. István Bordás and Mrs. Gábor Magyar to Róza (Rosika) Schwimmer, dated 1 June 1908, National Archives of Hungary—National Archives (Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára, MNLOL), Fond P 999, Feminist Association, 1904–1959, batch 5, no. 40, handwritten.¹



The letter, published here in English translation, is one of a few existing sources in which a poor woman peasant worker living in Hungary during the Habsburg Monarchy speaks about the experiences and struggles of women belonging to her social group in her own voice. Mrs. István Bordás penned her letter at a moment best described as an exceptional confluence of three greater historical contexts in the “giant village” of Balmazújváros, her home community: the gendered history of agrarian socialism; the Hungarian suffrage struggle, in which gender played an important if often unacknowledged role; and contact between women belonging to radically different social classes involved in the political struggles of the time. The letter, dated Monday, 1 June 1908, reports an incident that happened the day before on Sunday, 31 May, when women tried to improve their labor conditions. The document, the first known letter written by any of the women engaged in and describing the local struggles, is the first of a long series of letters between the women of Balmazújváros and the Feminist Association (Feministák Egyesülete) in Budapest, the Hungarian capital, written between 1908 and the interwar period. The incident and the letter had been preceded by contact and correspondence between local male leaders of the agrarian-socialist movement and the Feminist Association, and a visit to Balmazújváros on Ascension Day, Thursday, 28 May 1908, by the suffragist and leader of the Feminist Association Róza Schwimmer, internationally known at the time and today as Rosika Schwimmer. The cooperation between the two groups of women would bring the women of Balmazúj-



város to the attention of the Hungarian political elite and the international women's movement. This public attention, the politics of the Feminist Association in relation to the women of Balmazújváros in the period following Schwimmer's visit to the village, and a sociology by the author Péter Veres entitled *Falusi krónika* (Village chronicle), first published in 1941, all played an important role in keeping the memory of these peasant women alive. The letters, which are kept in the archives of the Feminist Association in the Hungarian National Archives, have not attracted attention so far.²

The Historical Conjuncture

Balmazújváros had long been one of the centers of social and political struggle of the poor and landless peasants in Hungary³ when, on 6 April 1908, an event took place in the village that was of importance both for the local political landscape and beyond the region: a left-wing peasant party called the National Agriculture Party (Országos Földművelő Párt) was founded with local male agrarian-socialist leaders as its key figures. The meeting in Balmazújváros, which attracted around four hundred participants, discussed the party's founding proclamation, which would be later finalized as the party's program during a meeting in Debrecen on 12 April and published in a weekly journal on 25 April.⁴ The program included the demand for "general, secret, equal" suffrage and full freedom of the press, and the unrestricted right of assembly and association.⁵

With regard to women's suffrage, the wording of the demand for the right to vote was ambiguous at best. The Hungarian language has no grammatical gender, so the demand can be read, in principle, as inclusive with regard to women. However, many parties, groups, and politicians involved in the suffrage struggle at the time used formulas such as the one contained in the program of the new National Agriculture Party to circumvent clear self-positioning in favor of or against women's suffrage and/or as a *carte blanche* implicitly allowing for the future exclusion of women or plainly meant to exclude women. This was one reason why the Feminist Association, the key organization fighting for women's suffrage, used a formula when pushing for women's suffrage according to which "suffrage is only general if it does include women too."⁶

There is clear evidence that in Balmazújváros, women played an active role in initiatives surrounding the founding of the new party. The rapid adoption of the demand for women's suffrage by the National Agriculture Party as centered in Balmazújváros between April and May 1908 can similarly be traced in the documents. In a letter dated 3 June 1908, one of the women involved, Mrs. Gábor Magyar, referred to a separate women's organization established in Balmazújváros as the Free Women's Organization (Szabad Nőszervezet),⁷ which had likely been set up soon after the foundation of the party. A special women's appeal (to be) issued in Balmazújváros was mentioned in early May.⁸ After her visit at the end of May, Róza Schwimmer reported that a women's organization had indeed been founded in Balmazújváros on 8 April 1908. She quotes the statement adopted at the founding meeting as saying that "in Balmazújváros the Women too want to Organize, To the End that they fight [*küzgyenek*] in the Economic and the Political realm side by side with their Husbands and brothers for the Welfare

of their Families.”⁹ Ferencz Pokrócz (Ferenc Pokróc), a smallholder peasant and the secretary of the new party,¹⁰ in a letter to Róza Schwimmer dated 5 May, had referred to both his women fellows in Balmazújváros and a recent meeting with Schwimmer, addressing her as “my beloved woman comrade” (*szeretet elvtársnőm*). Pokrócz initially had wanted Schwimmer to give a “women’s lecture” on 1 May, but now invited her to Balmazújváros for Ascension Day, Thursday, 28 May 1908.¹¹ In a follow-up letter, Pokrócz gave a list of topics that should be addressed during the upcoming women’s meeting: the situation of mothers of families, the organizing of women, “universal suffrage without distinction as to sex,” and cultural issues.¹² Finally, he related that his “women fellows” are very happy that Schwimmer will come to Balmazújváros. Pokrócz now signed “in the name of women.”¹³ Soon after Schwimmer’s initial visit, the women of Balmazújváros themselves spoke out for women’s suffrage in one of their letters.¹⁴ Last but not least, Péter Veres reports on a handbill issued around Christmas 1908, which on the cover page gives the program of the National Agriculture Party signed by local leaders, while the reverse side gives “the proclamation by Mrs. István Bordás addressing women.” The proclamation answers the question of why women must participate in the struggle with another question: “Why does nobody ask us” why “we do the hard” agricultural work at harvest time “from daybreak to sundown ... side by side with the men”?¹⁵

The above evidence gives important information on the establishment of the connections that eventually gave rise to our document, and the activities and demands of the women and men involved in these events in the months of April and May 1908. Yet it says little about what was going on between the women and men in Balmazújváros as the women’s involvement in the local agrarian-socialist activism evolved. Veres writes that “socialist men reconciled themselves to the organizing of women.”¹⁶ The contours of the larger context—namely, the connection and cooperation between the Feminist Association and the National Agriculture Party and the positive attitude toward women’s suffrage on behalf of the latter—are much clearer. Cooperation was nourished by the particular political constellation driving the struggle for suffrage in 1908. By this time, the hope fostered by various social movements that general suffrage would soon be introduced had vanished. They turned against the national-conservative government, which had prepared a suffrage extension that would bring about so-called pluralism—that is, the weighing of the votes—but continued to exclude women. The National Agriculture Party was connected to the antigovernment politics of former Minister of the Interior József Kristóffy. In 1906, Kristóffy had presented a draft bill on suffrage reform, which in its justification argued against the inclusion of women while not mentioning women in the main text—the typical pattern described above. However, the National Agriculture Party competed with the Social Democratic Party of Hungary (Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt, MSZP), which at the time campaigned for universal equal male suffrage alone, and other radical groups, which as a rule avoided declaring themselves explicitly in favor of women’s suffrage. Beginning in 1907, the Feminist Association—with reference to the Stuttgart decision of the Socialist International in 1907, which demanded that the “struggle for ... the right to vote ... is to be fought as a struggle for women’s suffrage”—strongly campaigned against the suffrage politics of the MSZP. In March and April 1908, the Feminist As-

sociation demanded, and publicly resolved in favor of the demand for, a suffrage law that would decree “universal, equal, and secret suffrage for women and men.”¹⁷

These multiple backgrounds explain why the Feminist Association, or Róza Schwimmer herself, was particularly interested in cooperating with a socialist ally who in contrast to the MSZP would explicitly include women’s suffrage in the demand for general suffrage. The National Agriculture Party, even though its initial program (12 April 1908) did not include the demand, soon thereafter became visibly interested in taking up the demand, as documented in the letters written by the male leaders cited above. Demanding women’s suffrage could serve as a means to distinguish the National Agriculture Party from the MSZP and other radical groups. The exact influence of this larger context in bringing about the swift adoption of the demand for women’s suffrage (in a form visibly influenced by the politics of the Feminist Association) by the National Agricultural Party can be established only once we know more about the dynamics and the impact of the local context, that is, the role of the women, and the interaction and relationships between the men and the women of Balmazújváros.

History Unwritten: The Experience and Struggle of Poor Women Peasant Workers

The rich scholarship on the circumstances and sociopolitical struggles of poor and landless peasants in Hungary under the Habsburg Monarchy¹⁸ repeatedly mentions women and points to gender differences in the world of peasants and the agrarian-socialist movements. Still, there is no study in Hungarian or any other language on the history of women participating in these agrariansocialist movements, nor is there a gendered history of the social struggles of these strata in Hungary in the interwar period. Similarly, the life experience of poor women peasant workers has not been a subject of up-to-date historical research, despite the fact that voluminous ethnographic studies produced over the decades repeatedly illuminate gendered differences and variety. The series of letters to which the source published here belongs can serve as one entry point to writing these histories. The primary material on which the scholarship mentioned here has been built will also be a key resource for such research.

In Hungary, under the dual Habsburg Monarchy (1867–1918), the quantitatively dominant social group was that of the peasantry. It was a period of rapid economic development in the area of agrocapi-talism and of the ruthless and increasing exploitation of agricultural labor. Poor or landless peasants, both female and male, worked as agricultural servants and day laborers, hired out for a tenth or even less of the produce they harvested when employed by large estates or for seasonal migrant labor. Most of them lived a miserable life. Hunger at certain stages of the agricultural cycle and the lack of any comfort were regularly occurring experiences accompanying many of them during the course of their lives. The source published here illustrates the suppression of workers who attempted to organize and the repressive response to their demands, as well as the demonstrative and deliberate humiliation of the peasant class by landowners and public authorities. These features of Hungarian society were al-



Figure 1: The handwriting on the backside of the post card says that the picture shows “Sára R. Tóth Mrs. István Bordás and six her family [*hat családja*],” meaning six of her children. The picture in all likelihood was taken in 1915.

Source: National Archives of Hungary—Hajdú-Bihar County Archives [Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Hajdú-Bihar Megyei Levéltára], XXXV ÉD 706.

ready legendary at the time and have been documented in sociographic works and the historiography on peasant life and agrarian socialism.

In the “giant village” of Balmazújváros, the landless population made up for an extremely high proportion of its population of eleven to twelve thousand. According to contemporary sources, the ordinary inhabitants of Balmazújváros owned no more than 1.5 percent of all arable land. The importation of cheap migrant workers, often from upper Hungary (Slovakia today), put additional pressure on local agrarian workers, who themselves often sought refuge in seasonal labor migration or migration. In Balmazújváros, most of the land was dominated by large estates whose owners often leased vast areas to tenants. Both estate owners and leaseholding families hired overseers to manage labor and production. A certain “Dezső Listyán,” correctly Dezső Lichtschein, who is mentioned in the source, belonged to a leading leaseholding family who managed approximately eight to twelve thousand hectares of land in the vicinity of Balmazújváros. Lichtschein was also an important local politician.¹⁹ Our source mentions Lichtschein’s estate manager as his “officer.”

At present, we know little more about the circumstances and labor struggles of the group of politically active women in Balmazújváros than what is given in the document published here, some other letters kept in the Hungarian National Archives, and a few scattered hints in Péter Veres’s *Falusi krónika*, the journals of the Feminist Association, and a few local studies.²⁰ The names of those who spoke at the women’s meeting on 28 May 1908 in Balmazújváros were Mrs. Gábor Magyar Mária Sós, Mrs. István Szabó Julianna Bak, Sára Czellár, and Mrs. István Bordás Sára Rokon Tóth. The women who traveled to Budapest in 1913 or 1917 were Mrs. István Bordás, Mrs. István Szabó, Mrs. András Juhász Ilona Péntes, Mrs. Gábor Magyar, Mrs. Bálint Gém, Mrs. József Deli, Mrs. Péter Szeifert Julcsa (Júlia) Pokrócz, and Mrs. Imre Béke.²¹ The letters kept in the Hungarian National Archives were written by Mrs. István Bordás and Mrs. Gábor Magyar. Mrs. Bordás (1880–1957) has been described as a “day laborer” and wife of an agricultural servant,²² who gave birth to seven children and was “the leader of the women of Balmazújváros.”²³ Mrs. Bordás was very active in war-related and antiwar activism during World War I. During the Republic of Councils in Hungary, she was elected into the Council of Workers, Soldiers, and Farmers (Munkás-, Katona- és Földművestanács) and is said to have been saved from prison in the aftermath of the republic only because of the large number of children for whom she had to care.²⁴

History Documented: Women Together and Apart

The connection between the women of Balmazújváros and the Feminist Association that was initiated at the time of Schwimmer’s visit to the “giant village” on 28 May 1908 was to prove a long-lasting one. Knowledge of this relationship has long been rather one-sided, with a strong focus on the presence and behavior of “peasant women” when they made an appearance in unexpected places, or when Róza Schwimmer invoked this connection in the context of the Feminist Association. There was, for instance, quite a bit of media attention paid to the participation of “peasant women” in the seventh congress of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA) in Buda-

pest in 1913, and their inclusion in a women's delegation to see government leaders in 1917. Péter Veres also gives colorful detail about the two events, including one story related by Mrs. Szeifert. When the women's delegation (or members thereof) boarded a tram in Budapest in 1917, Countess Iska Teleki, an associate of the Feminist Association, "called upon the public to rise and make place for the peasant women because they provide a living for all of us."²⁵ Róza Schwimmer repeatedly directed attention to the women of Balmazújváros within the international women's movement. At the fourth conference of the IWSA in Amsterdam, the opening of which took place only a few weeks after the connection between her and the women of Balmazújváros had been established in 1908, Schwimmer presented herself as a fraternal delegate representing the "Society of Peasant Women in Balmazujvaros."²⁶

The documents kept in the Hungarian National Archives shed light on the making of this type of connection. In her letter of 3 (?) June, Mrs. Bordás first repeats the account of the event in Balmazújváros documented in the source published here and then adds two supplementary sections. After talking about the gratitude of the women of Balmazújváros,²⁷ she continues:

We have received your letter. My dear women fellows, we too are very happy that together with you we work side by side, and we entrust you to represent our free organization in the interest of women's suffrage and also in the interest of what we have stressed with regard to economic matters in front of our women fellows here [on the occasion of Schwimmer's visit], because we are agriculture [*földművelő*] women, and we want to topple this present ugly system, and participate not only in [?] and in tax-paying, but in other things too.²⁸

The letters kept in the Hungarian National Archives reveal just how dissimilar the approach, language, and some of demands of the two groups of women who lived under such different circumstances were. They also help shed light on some of the characteristics and asymmetries that animated the mutual perception of the relationship. There was, without doubt, a lasting genuine companionship between the two groups of women, and the women of Balmazújváros expressed their feelings frankly and entirely in their own way. In their initial letters, Mrs. Bordás and Mrs. Magyar reflected on the visit of Schwimmer in Balmazújváros with the greatest possible gratitude and warmth. In her closing note, Mrs. Magyar addressed Róza Schwimmer by telling her, "I would squeeze you to my bosom but only if I could touch you more closely."²⁹ Mrs. Bordás wrote, "We cannot express how big a delight and solace you left here because for us during this one day it was as if you had always been with us." When the train "began to dash with you, we began to cry."³⁰

The divergent conditions of the two groups of women repeatedly surface in the letters. A few weeks after Róza Schwimmer's visit, Mrs. Bordás confirms the receipt of a letter, a postcard from Amsterdam, and a number of books. The women of Balmazújváros would very much like to host Schwimmer once again in their home community, and then she should stay longer so things could be discussed in detail. "You do not disturb us in our work ... we ... cannot go anywhere far away from our families [and] we can meet the obligations of our agricultural work only at home in our

own circles." The group was very pleased that the women of the Feminist Association were so enthusiastic about them, and that the journal of the association had written about them.³¹

Asymmetry was also apparent when the women of Balmazújváros received an invitation from the IWSA in 1909 to participate in its fifth conference to be held in London. The fact that the women of Balmazújváros would participate in the conference was duly publicized by the Feminist Association.³² The related letter written by Mrs. Bordás, however, paints a different picture. Mrs. Bordás refers to communication the women of Balmazújváros had received in a language other than Hungarian. Because they could not read the document, they simply forwarded it to the Feminist Association. The letter explained that they could not go to London for the conference because their "material situation" did not allow them to do so. Since they could not even send a letter to London because they did not know the address, they kindly asked their fellows of the Feminist Association to take their letter with themselves to London.³³

In terms of their own political demands and profile, the women of Balmazújváros were self-conscious. They were keenly aware of the differences and overlaps between their agenda and the politics of the Feminist Association, and they perceived their relationship as a mutually supportive one. An undated document written at some point before the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy details the "program of the Socialist and Feminist Women of Balmazújváros" in twenty-two points. It includes demands directed toward Hungary's political and economic independence or autonomy (*teljesen független*), including the introduction of an autonomous customs territory. They wanted radical changes in the political system, such as a republic cast in the form of a monarchy (modeled after Great Britain), as well as other far-reaching social, political, and educational demands. The demand for women's suffrage formed part of the program. The concluding sentence of the document, addressing the Feminist Association as the recipient, reads, "Hitherto we have always fought for these, and these are our main goals, yet we also advocate yours and support [*patrol*] yours."³⁴

We do not know whether and what kind of advice Róza Schwimmer or the Feminist Association gave to the women of Balmazújváros after they had reported their attempt to improve and control their labor conditions and the ensuing encounter with the representatives of the local employers and authorities on the square in front of the church in Balmazújváros on 31 May 1908. Nonetheless, we can safely state that we would know much less about the struggles and the history of the women of Balmazújváros if the relationship and companionship between these women and the Feminist Association, however asymmetric, hadn't existed.

**Kelt Levelem 1908dik Júniús 1ső napján
Tiszteletel Svimmer Róza társnőnek³⁵
(My letter dated on this first day of June 1908³⁶
with respect to my fellow member Róza Svimmer³⁷ [Rosika Schwimmer])**

With deep respect we ask our beloved women fellows and all the women fellows of our Society with whom we share mutual affection to kindly accept this plaintive letter of a mere few lines, and we also ask with respect that you read attentively that, which happened to us in Balmaz Újváros [Balmazújváros], from where Your Honor must hear the pretty and good and glorious news now about our most recent history. Please examine, and we would like to have instructions from our most beloved women fellows, for your recent presence has greatly surprised us, and it is our great desire to make plain before our women fellows about how the Venerable BÚV Gendarme Patrol Captain [Venerable Gendarme Patrol Captain of Balmazújváros] picked a fight with us on the market square on May 31st because we were not willing to sell ourselves for any less than the amount we wanted to. We gathered on the market square by the church, as was our custom, to be hired for work by the tenant lords, and the officer of the honorable Dezső Listyán came in among us and went before the worker girls to tell them they were to work for him, and the mother of one also stood with them, a certain Mrs. András Górgyán Júliána Remenyik, who asked where are you going daughter that you are handing over your work book but are not asking about the daily wages, and she asked the granger who said he'd pay 70 *krajczárs* [1.4 kronas],³⁸ to which she said it is not enough, he should pay more, because food is expensive,³⁸ at which time the Gendarme Patrol Captain brutally stepped forth and very loudly ordered our women fellowsto go to the village hall and not incite others, to which she replied I will go in the morning but not now, now my duty is to be with my family, I will buy the weekly provisions and see them off to work, to which the Captain faced off with her grabbing her by the arm and dragging her. But one of our companions grabbed her too and bravely announced that that was not the direction we were going in but the other way, to which the Captain drew his sword, but several of us sisters gathered round and retorted, and we were not afraid because we were demanding our rights, and the Captain in his anger did not know what to do, so he reported to the Sergeant who said why doesn't he use his sword, and the Captain said because he didn't want to get it dirty and the Sergeant said it will have red juice on it anyway.³⁹ This is how the government's keepers of law and order support us.⁴⁰ Even though we don't incite, still they use their swords and say we are inciting. Honored Law Enforcement Authorities are wrestling with women, but we squared off and our solidarity is all the greater for it even incorporates Pest [Budapest, the capital city of Hungary]. We are happy to find great comfort in you, our dear woman fellow.

With this we close our letter.

We remain with respect in the name of all of female society your beloved woman fellow Mrs. Gábor Magyar supervisor and Mrs. István Bordás president. If you receive this letter please be so kind as to reply.

Ad: Batyán [Battyányi]⁴¹ st. num. 52

Mrs. István Bordás

◆ About the Authors

Susan B. Zimmermann is University Professor at the Central European University, and President of the International Conference of Labour and Social History (http://www.ith.or.at/ith_e/i_index_e.htm). She has widely published on the history of Hungarian and international social and labor policy, women's organizations, and the politics of global inequality, including *Divide, Provide and Rule. An Integrative History of Poverty Policy, Social Policy and Social Reform in Hungary under the Habsburg Monarchy* (Budapest-New York: CEU Press, 2011). Email: zimmerma@ceu.edu

Piroska Nagy was born in the United States in 1962. She received her MA in Ethnography from the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, Hungary. In the late 1980s she photographed the events that took place in Budapest leading up to the political transitions of 1989, and published a book of her photographs entitled *Years of Euphoria* (Budapest: Kieselbach Gallery, 2011). She has been working as a freelance translator and at the American International School of Budapest since 2000, where she continues to develop curriculum and teach Hungarian Cultural Studies. Email: piroska62@gmail.com

◆ Notes

1. The reference no. is MNL OL P 999 - 5 –no. 40.

2. The database Women and Social Movements in Modern Empires since 1820 (<http://search.alexanderstreet.com/wasg>), edited by Thomas Dublin and Kathryn Kish Sklar, includes all dated letters written from Balmazújváros to the Feminist Association from the beginning of 1908 to 1918, and all undated letters that can be assumed to have been written before the end of the Habsburg Monarchy. In the following, I will give the names of the senders and addressees of the letters in correct form regardless of their original spelling and explicit or implicit indication. *A nő és a társadalom* (Women and society) and *A nő: Feminista folyóirat* (Woman: A feminist journal), the subsequent journals associated with the Feminist Association, which repeatedly reported on the women from Balmazújváros, are available online and in open-access mode (<http://mtdaportal.extra.hu/NET.html> and <http://mtdaportal.extra.hu/NO.html>). Some portions of the chapter in Péter Veres's sociography in which he gives an account of the history of the women of Balmazújváros directly build on these reports. The chapter similarly is included in the database Women and Social Movements in Modern Empires since 1820. *A nő és a társadalom* 9 (1908): 145, refers to the incident narrated in the letter published here.

3. Péter Fodor, "A balmazújvárosi Földművelő Munkás Egylet megalakulásának néhány körülménye (1897–1902)" [Some circumstances of the inception of the Balmazújváros Agriculture Workers' Association (1897–1902)], in *Hajdú Bihar megyei Levéltár Évkönyve* [Yearbook of the archives of Hajdú Bihar County] 7 (1981) (Debrecen): 131–138; see <http://hbml.archivportal.hu/data/files/144623095.pdf>.

4. Péter Fodor, "Az Országos Földművelő Párt és lapja, a Föld Népe, Balmazújváros, 1908" [The National Agriculture Party and its journal, People of the Soil, Balmazújváros, 1908], in *Hajdú-Bihar megyei Levéltár Évkönyve* [Yearbook of the archives of Hajdú-Bihar County] 17 (1991) (Debrecen), 47–61, here 50–52; see <http://hbml.archivportal.hu/data/files/144716274.pdf>.

5. Gyula Mérei and Ferenc Pölöskei, eds., *Magyarországi pártprogramok 1867–1919* [Hungarian Party Programs 1867–1919] (Budapest: ELTE - Eötvös kiadó, 2003), 250. This publication gives 12 April, Balmazújváros, as date and place of the foundation of the party.

6. Quoted in Susan Zimmermann, *Die bessere Hälfte? Frauenbewegungen und Frauenbestrebungen im Ungarn der Habsburgermonarchie 1848 bis 1918* [The better half? Women's movements and women's aspirations in Hungary under the Habsburg Monarchy 1848–1918] (Budapest and Vienna: Napvilág kiadó and Promedia, 1999), 323.

7. Letter Mrs. Gábor Magyar to Rosika Schwimmer, 3 June 1908, MNL OL P 999 - 5 -no. 41.

8. Letter Ferenc Pokrócz to Rosika Schwimmer, 5 May 1908, MNL OL P 999 - 5 -no. 37.

9. Capitalization and spelling as in the original quote given in *A nő és a társadalom* 2, no. 9 (1908), 144.

10. Mérei and Pölöskei, *Magyarországi pártprogramok*, 250.

11. Hungarian spelling in the original. Letter F. Pokrócz to Rosika Schwimmer, 5 May 1908, MNL OL P 999 - 5 -no. 37.

12. Letter Ferenc Pokrócz to Rosika Schwimmer and Women Comrades, n.d., MNL OL P 999 - 5 -no. 38.

13. Letter Ferenc Pokrócz to Rosika Schwimmer, n.d., MNL OL P 999 - 5 -no. 39.

14. As discussed further later.

15. The question is given as a direct quote in Péter Veres, *Falusi krónika* [Village chronicle], 2nd ed. (Budapest: Magyar Élet, 1944), 234.

16. Veres, *Falusi krónika*, 234.

17. *A nő és a társadalom* 2, no. 4 (1908): 54, and 2, no. 5 (1908): 86, both include the demand put forward in parliament and built into the resolution adopted at the public meeting in Budapest. Irén Simándi, *Küzdelem a nők parlamenti választójogáért Magyarországon 1848–1938* [The struggle for women's parliamentary suffrage in Hungary 1848–1938] (Budapest: Gondolat, 2009), 21–22; Fodor, "Az Országos Földmívelő Párt," 49–51; Zimmermann, *Die bessere Hälfte?*, 323, 328, 337, 345–350, 372–375; Susan Zimmermann, "A Struggle over Gender, Class and the Vote: Unequal International Interactions and the Formation of the 'Female International' of Socialist Women (1905–1907)," in *Gender History in a Transnational Perspective: Networks, Biographies, Gender Orders*, ed. Oliver Janz and Daniel Schönplüg (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books 2014), 102–126, here 115–116, 118 (incl. the quote from the Stuttgart decision).

18. Susan Zimmermann, "The Agrarian Working Class Put Somewhat Center Stage: An Often Marginalized Group of Workers in the Historiography of Labor Written in State-socialist Hungary," *European Review of History* 25, no. 1 (2018).

19. Mária Vajda, "'Egri legény balladája' Balmazújvároson" ["Ballad of the Eger bachelor" in Balmazújváros], *Újvárosi dolgozatok: A Balmazújvárosi Múzeum kiadványai* [Studies from Újvár: Publications of the Museum of Balmazújváros], no. 2 (Balmazújváros, 1978), http://www.derimuzeum.hu/userfiles/Digitalizalt_kiadvanyok/UjvDolg_1978_02.pdf, esp. 8, 11; Fodor, "Az Országos Földmívelő Párt"; Fodor, "A balmazújvárosi Földmívelő Munkás Egylet."

20. For these journals, see note 2. In addition to the literature discussing the local history of Balmazújváros quoted already, there is also Antal Varga, *Balmazújváros története 1945-ig* [History of Balmazújváros to 1945] (Debrecen, 1958), and the material kept in the Hajdú-Bihar County Archives.

21. *A nő és a társadalom* 2, no. 9 (1908): 144; Veres, *Falusi krónika*, 237, 241. We do not know whether or how Mrs. Seifert was related to Ferenc Pokrócz.

22. Note on Mrs. Bordás's life dates, and article entitled "Bordás Istvánné (Rokon Tóth Sára), napszámos, Balmazújváros (1880–1957)" [Mrs. István Bordás (Sára Rokon Tóth), day laborer, Balmazújváros (1880–1957)], both kept in Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Hajdú-Bihar Megyei

Levéltára, MNL HBML [National Archives of Hungary—Hajdú-Bihar County Archives, MNL HBML], XXXV ÉD 706. I would like to thank Gergely Kovács, archivist of the MNL HBML, for his help in working with the archival material kept there.

23. Veres, *Falusi krónika*, 232.

24. Further research is needed with regard to the information about Mrs. Bordás's role in the Republic of Councils. "Mrs. István Bordás," MNL HBML, XXXV ÉD 706; and various letters, MNL OL P 999–5.

25. Veres, *Falusi krónika*, 241.

26. IWSA, *Report of the Fourth Conference, Amsterdam, Holland, June 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 1908* (North Holland: F. Van Rossen, 1908), 11. Spelling in the original.

27. As discussed further later.

28. Letter Mrs. István Bordás to Rosika Schwimmer, 3 (?) June 1908, MNL OL P 999 - 5 - no. 42.

29. Letter Mrs. Gábor Magyar to Rosika Schwimmer, 3 June 1908, MNL OL P 999 - 5 -no. 41.

30. The address "You" here is given in the most formal and polite manner. Letter Mrs. István Bordás to Rosika Schwimmer, 3 (?) June 1908, MNL OL P 999 - 5 -no. 42.

31. Letter Mrs. István Bordás and Mrs. István Szabó to Feminist Association, 14 [19?] July 1908, MNL OL P 999 - 5 -no. 43.

32. *A nő és a társadalom* 3, no. 4 (1909): 63.

33. Letter Mrs. István Bordás to Feminist Association, n.d., MNL OL P 999 - 5 - (handwritten p. 116). The letter does not carry a date but in all likelihood refers to the London invitation.

34. "A balmazújvárosi szocialista és feminista asszonyok programja" [Program of the socialist and feminist women of Balmazújváros], n.d., MNL OL P 999 - 5 - (handwritten p. 124–125, possibly belonging to no. 95).

35. In the translation of the letter, the misspellings have been corrected and the largely missing punctuation added. Clarifications are given in square brackets.

36. The year given is not clearly legible. However, the account of the incident is repeated in a second letter dated 3 (?) June 1908, which again asks for "enlightenment with regard to what we can do against such things." Letter Mrs. István Bordás to Róza Schwimmer, 3 (?) June 1908, MNL OL P 999 - 5 -no. 42.

37. If pronounced according to Hungarian pronunciation rules, Schwimmer's family name as given here will be given in a phonetically correct manner; yet Schwimmer's family name was spelled "Schwimmer" in Hungarian too. "Róza," in the spelling given here, was the official given name of Rosika Schwimmer on her birth certificate, and this spelling was sometimes used in Hungarian-language documents and writings; the spelling of "Róza" is given in such a way that, if pronounced according to Hungarian pronunciation rules, it comes through like the German-language "Rosa" rather than the Hungarian version of this given name, which is spelled "Rózsa" and pronounced differently.

38. In the second account of the incident, Mrs. Bordás gives this element of the encounter as follows: The incident happened "because we didn't sell ourselves for wages as low as they wanted us to. It is our custom to go the market to hire ourselves out for work. On the day of 31 May the officer of Dezső Listyán arrived there to take up/hire workers, and the workers encircled him serving the books [their work books; every worker held such a work book in which all employment relationships had to be recorded] on top of each other, and they didn't even ask what the daily wage was. Thereupon a rather self-confident woman, by the name of Mrs. András Gyorgyán, spoke out claiming that the master estate manager [the officer] just could give more than 70 *krajczárs*, since in the other week more than this had been given already even

though this was not such a big work season as just now." Letter Mrs. István Bordás to Róza Schwimmer, 3 (?) June 1908, MNL OL P 999 - 5 -no. 42.

39. In the second account of the incident Mrs. Bordás gives this element of the encounter as follows: The gendarme patrol captain "went up to her [Mrs. Gyorgyán] in a brutal manner saying that she should not incite here but go over there to the village hall, and the woman didn't want to go, and grabbing her arm he dragged her to go in front of him, and a woman fellow saw this from afar and rushed there to protect her and tore i.e., dragged her away from in front of the Captain. Upon this noise a number of persons assembled, and the Gendarme [Captain] asked her what her name is, I am Mrs. András Gyorgyán, thereupon the Sergeant went up there asking what's the problem here. He [the Captain] tells him. He [the Sergeant] replied why didn't he cut her into halves like a dog, and on this he [the Captain] replied that I didn't want to get my sword dirty, and they will have to spoon up this red juice anyhow." Letter Mrs. István Bordás to Róza Schwimmer, 3 (?) June 1908, MNL OL P 999 - 5 -no. 42.

40. *A nő és a társadalom* 2, no. 9 (1908): 145, reports that Mrs. András Gyorgyán and Mrs. Ferenc Szilágyi were sentenced to ten days detention and a fine of 40 kronas each.

41. See Letter Mrs. István Bordás to Róza Schwimmer, 3 (?) June 1908, MNL OL P 999 - 5 -no. 42, where the street name to which letters to the women of Balmazújváros are to be addressed is given as "Batyányi utca 52 sz."