

Barbara Striker

**Re: [Laura Polanyi 1882-1959: Narratives of a Life](#) by Judit Szapor,  
Polanyiana Vol. 6, No 2, 1997**

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To the Editorial Board of Polanyiana:

Enclosed I send my comments and criticisms and those of Thomas Polanyi concerning Judit Szapor's article [Laura Polanyi 1882-1957: Narratives of a Life](#) published in Polanyiana Vol.6 No.2 1997. I would appreciate it if you could publish them in the next English issue of Polanyiana.

15 July 1999

Barbara Striker  
Budapest

I believe the article is a part of Judit Szapor's study on Laura Polanyi, which was based on the lecture she delivered at the Central European University in Budapest on 2.12.1997.

Szapor had certainly collected a lot of materials for her study. However, she had not checked certain statements which were not based on written documents. This led to several errors in the text, which are detrimental to the reputation of the Polanyi Association and its journal.

As a member of the family, I feel it is my duty to call the attention of the Editorial Board to these errors.. For this reason I contacted Thomas Polanyi in order to help me clarify those parts of the article which concern him and his brother. The enclosure in this volume, containing the most important corrections, is a result of this exchange..

The following are my own corrections.

Page 47.

The author omits the fact that Laura Polanyi Striker's elder son studied not only at Vienna Technical University, but was at the same time a student of economics in Budapest, and

therefore the study on Maria Theresa's economic policy (written in Hungarian by his mother) was really written as a dissertation for Michael (Mihály) Striker's doctoral degree to be submitted at Budapest University. In Vienna, Michael Striker was studying mechanical engineering, so how could anyone use a paper written in Hungarian for any purpose at a Vienna University?

Page 49.

For the first paragraph the facts:

Laura Polanyi's elder son, Michael and his wife immigrated to the US in February 1938 with visas received due to his contacts with US patent attorneys. Her daughter Eva entered the US in October 1938, together with his husband Hans Zeisel, thanks to his contacts with US jurists. Her younger son, Georg-Otto received the immigration visa due to the fact that his wife's uncle, a US citizen, since the 1920s, provided for him and his wife the affidavits necessary for the immigration visa. Before Laura Polanyi Striker's arrival in the US, her niece (Marika Szecsi) had been living in the US since 1937, her immigration, which was granted to her as her husband to be had been there several years before her. And Laura's husband came to the US in 1941 as a result of the efforts of their three children. Sophie and her son died in the Warsaw ghetto; her daughter Edit died a natural death in London, and her husband, Egon, died in the concentration camp in Dachau.

However, Laura Polanyi achieved something extraordinary for her niece Eszter Polanyi Engel in 1950. Eszter survived the war in Budapest. Her husband, as a member of the Smallholders' Party, had taken part in the resistance movement, was arrested and died in a labor camp in 1944. Eszter, who had heart disease, intended to join her father Adolf Polanyi in Brazil. Her demand for an exit permit, however, was refused again and again. - And Laura Polanyi wrote a beautiful letter to Rokosi, whom she had met in Budapest in 1918-19, and Eszter was permitted to leave Hungary for Brazil early in 1957 - an absolutely unique accomplishment in those times!

As for the second paragraph, see Thomas Polanyi's letter.

As is well known, Laura Polanyi Striker was a highly educated, cultured and remarkable person, so it is not necessary to attribute to her actions which she could not and did not perform.

Page 52.

I do not know why it is necessary to include in the lecture and the article all the nonsense taken from Peter Drucker's *Adventures of a Bystander* (Harper and Row, New York, 1978). And, by the way, Laura Polanyi Striker's younger son, George, had written many a letter to Harper and Row, demanding correction all of which the Publisher sent to

Drucker, who did not acknowledge his errors and was naturally unwilling to make any corrections.

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Barbara Striker

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