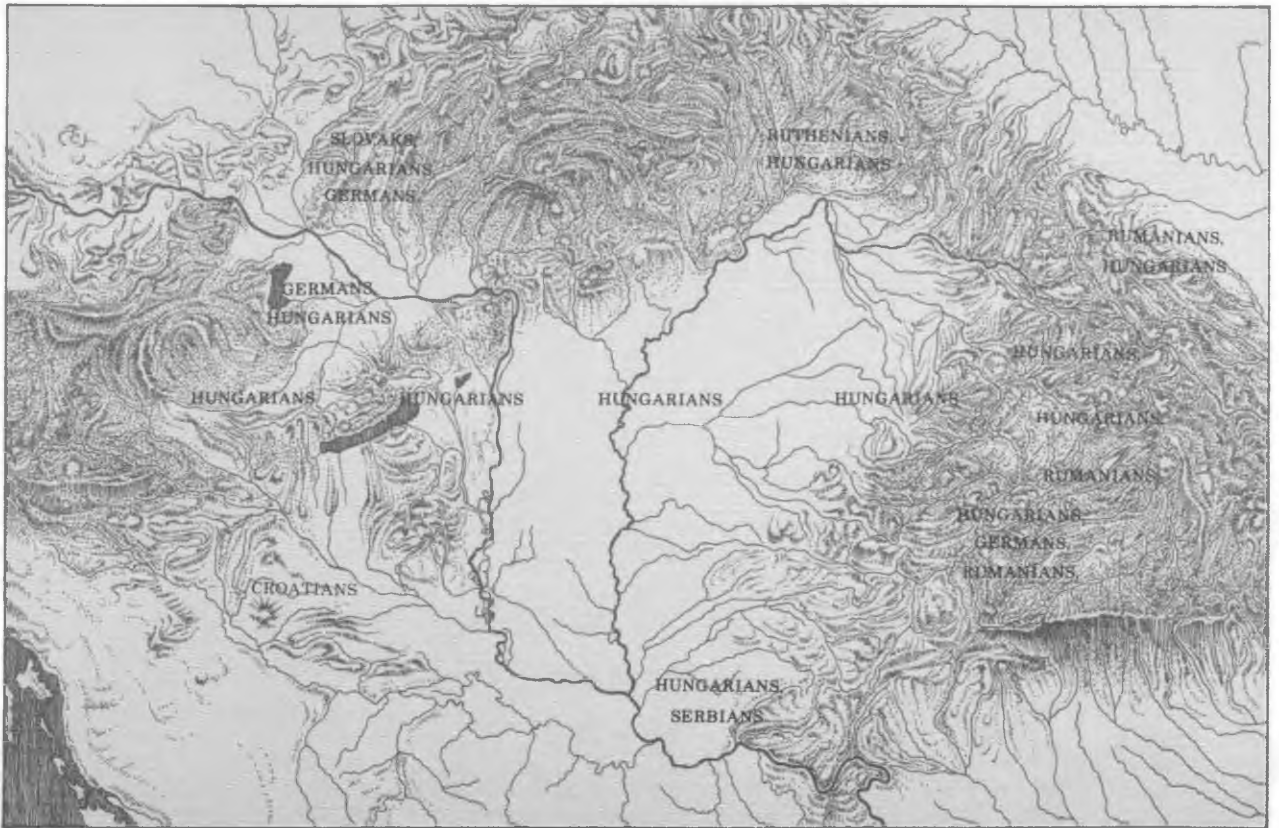


The Hungarian Quarterly



The Carpathian Basin

THE HUNGARIAN QUARTERLY was first published in the spring of 1934 by the Society of the Hungarian Quarterly. The editors were: Dr. Joseph Balogh, Budapest, Hungary, Owen Rutter, London, England and Francis Deak, New York, USA.

In 1944 the Society of the Hungarian Quarterly was dissolved, and in 1945-46 its members imprisoned or deported into Russia.

Years later the communist government in Budapest started the **NEW HUNGARIAN QUARTERLY**, a propaganda publication, which in no way can be regarded as the legal successor of the original Hungarian Quarterly.

Forty years after the occupation of Hungary by the armies of the Soviet Union, which occupation is still demonstrated by the presence of Soviet troops on Hungarian soil, members of the Hungarian exile in the USA, Canada, Australia and Europe decided to pick up the fallen banner, of "peace, justice and a better future through knowledge and understanding," and republish the Hungarian Quarterly in the USA.

Our aim is the same: to acquaint the English speaking world with the past as well as the present situation of the Carpathian Basin and try to deal with the difficult problems of the future. To clear up the misconceptions and blow away the smoke-screen created by unscrupulous political adventurers in their determination to enforce their nationalistic goals at the detriment of a multi-national population which inhabit the Carpathian Basin for long centuries.

According to the newest statistics the population of the Carpathian Basin includes: 15 million Hungarians, 4.5 million Croatians, 4 million Rumanians, 3.8 million Slovaks, 0.6 million Germans, 0.5 million Serbians, 0.6 million Ruthenians, and 0.6 million others.

Our aim is to point out the festering problems which smolder under the surface ready to explode again and search for a wise and just solution of these problems, a solution which could save the future of 29.6 million people from more destruction, more killing and more suffering.

The Hungarian Quarterly

Designed to spread true knowledge concerning the Carpathian Basin and its peoples. To explore the possibilities of mutual understanding and cooperation between the coexisting nationalities for the sake of a lasting peace, justice and prosperity.

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Minorities in Czechoslovakia: The Theory and the Reality, or Hungarians in the Slovak Socialist Republic Today

by Edward Chaszar

Introduction

The existence of a multiplicity of national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities in Central and Eastern Europe has been a source of many problems over the last two centuries or so, and continues to be one even today. The so called "nationality question" contributed to the outbreak of World War I, and to the decline and collapse of some of the old multi-national empires, the Ottoman Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, for example. But unlike after World War I, when a system for protecting minorities was set up under the *aegis* of the League of Nations, today the rights of minorities in the East-Central European area (and elsewhere) depend almost exclusively on the State of which those minorities form part.

In the case of Czechoslovakia, the minorities (now much less numerous than in the "First Republic") possess in theory all the rights assured to them by the Constitution of 1960, as amended in 1968.

The Constitution of July 11, 1960, proclaims that Czechoslovakia is a socialist state founded on the alliance of workers, farmers and intelligentsia with the working class at its head; furthermore, that it is a unitary state of two fraternal nations, the Czechs and the Slovaks, each possessing equal rights. Article 25 ensures citizens of Hungarian, Ukrainian and Polish nationality "every opportunity and all means for education in their mother tongue and for their cultural development." In addition, according

to Article 74, the Slovak National Council (the organ of legislative and administrative power in Slovakia) shall have the competence to... (g) "ensure, in the spirit of equality, favorable conditions for the full development of the life of citizens of Hungarian and Ukrainian nationality." Note here, that many of these "Ukrainians" prefer to point out their ethnic distinctiveness and call themselves "Rusyny" (Ruthenians); it is in deference to the Soviet Union that the Czechoslovak government refers to them as "Ukrainians."

In October, 1968, two constitutional laws were passed by the National Assembly: Constitutional Law 143/1968 transformed the unitary state into a federal state of a Czech and a Slovak Socialist Republic. Constitutional Law 144/1968 dealt with nationality affairs, extending the rights of minorities also to Germans, but otherwise not fulfilling the expectations minorities had during the "Prague Spring." Moreover, the occupation of the country by the Soviet (and some other Warsaw Pact) troops resulted in the gradual dismissal of the true democrats who sought a fair resolution of the minority problem, and brought the nationalists to the front.

As for the actual ethnic composition of Czechoslovakia, which in 1980 had a total population of 15,277,000, the ratio is: Czechs 65 per cent, Slovaks 30 per cent, Hungarians 4 per cent, Germans, Poles, Ukrainians and Gypsies 1 per cent. The overwhelming majority of Hungarians live in the Slovak Socialist

Republic, where they constitute 11.2 per cent of the population according to the census of 1980. Estimates, however, run as high as 14 per cent and more. (See *Tables 1 and 2* in the Appendix.)

In order to highlight contemporary problems, this report will focus on the recent situation of the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia, and on the three main factors which influenced that situation. These were, (1) The question of the use of the Hungarian language as a language of instruction in the Hungarian-inhabited parts of Slovakia, (2) The arrest of Miklós Duray, a spokesman for the Hungarian minority and leader of the movement to protect Hungarian schools in Slovakia, (3) The problem of the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Hydroelectric Project on the Danube River, which has more of an indirect effect on the situation of the Hungarian minority.

Before discussing the three main factors which shaped the situation, it is advisable to look into the background of the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia.

Background to the Situation of the Hungarian Minority in Czechoslovakia

At the end of World War I the peace treaties forced various national groups to live against their will in the newly created state of Czechoslovakia. Among them were, according to the census of 1910, over one million Hungarians who, by the stroke of a pen, suddenly found themselves separated from their country and were transformed into a national minority. According to British historian Alfred Cobban, "It was ironic that a settlement supposed to have been largely determined by the principle of nationality should have produced a state like Czechoslovakia, with minorities amounting to 34.7 per cent of its population, quite apart from the question of the doubtful identity of nationality between Czechs and Slovaks."¹

Charles Seymour, American delegate to the Paris Peace Conference, noted that the boundaries of the successor states did not even "roughly" correspond with the ethnic or linguistic line. In short, national self-determination was granted to all, but denied to the Hungarians.

When the Hungarian Peace Delegation was handed the dictated terms of the treaty for

signature, the chief of the delegation suggested that in accordance with the principle of self-determination the population affected by the treaty ought to be consulted through plebiscites. This, indeed, would have been entirely consistent with the Wilsonian idea of self-determination. The fear of plebiscites, however, prevailed among the victors, and the plebiscites were denied. The truth was revealed bluntly by André Tardieu (who was to become Prime Minister of France twice between the two world wars) in his book *La Paix*, in the following terms: "We had to choose between organizing plebiscites or creating Czechoslovakia."²

A great deal was alleged about the treatment of the nationalities in Hungary. However, compared to the situation prevalent in the old Austro-Hungarian monarchy, the lot of the new national minorities was (and continues to be) miserable. "Is it not scandalous — exclaimed Sir Robert Gower, Member of the House of Commons in Britain some 15 years after the peace settlement — that a European reconstruction, loudly hailed as one that was going to liberate the national minorities, should have resulted in their persecution, the severity of which is such that there is no parallel to it to be found in the ancient Kingdom of Hungary, where nationalities had been treated with infinitely more benevolence."³

The government of the newly formed Czechoslovak Republic agreed to accept the guarantee of the rights of national minorities under the protection of the League of Nations, but the history of the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1938) abounds with examples of violations.⁴

In November, 1938, due to the shifting European balance of power, the border between Czechoslovakia and Hungary was redrawn as a result of an arbitral process mutually agreed on by the affected parties. Based on the ethnic principle, the Vienna Award of 1938 returned to Hungary some of its lost territory (12,103 square kilometers, or approximately 4,600 square miles) with a population of 1,030,000 inhabitants, over 80 per cent of them Hungarians. However, the Award did not survive World War II; it was annulled by the Paris Peace Treaties of 1947.⁵

The Government of the Second Czechoslovak Republic blamed the national minorities

for the disintegration of the First Republic (1939), and decided to deal with them accordingly. On April 5, 1945, in Kosice (Kassa, Kaschau) the head of the new republic, Eduard Benes, proclaimed the program of the new government which contained an outright oppression and persecution of the non-Czech, non-Slovak and non-allied population of the partially restored republic. The numerical reduction and persecution of the Hungarian population took various forms: expulsion, deportation, internment, peoples' courts procedures, revocation of citizenship, confiscation of property, condemnation to forced labor camps, placement of Hungarian businesses and farms under state management, and change of nationality by a process known as "reslovakization."⁶

The Communist take-over in February, 1948, resulted in a temporary amelioration of the situation of the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia. In order to win the allegiance of the working masses, including the persecuted, demoralized, and totally disenchanting Hungarians, the nationalistic course of the Kosice Program was abandoned in favor of "proletarian internationalism." The persecution of Hungarians and the deportation and expatriation measures were halted, and Hungarians were slowly granted the formal rights of a minority within the institutions of the monolithic state.

As an additional improvement, theoretically at least, the so called Socialist constitution of 1960, and again the Constitution of 1968 (which transformed Czechoslovakia into a federal republic of Czechs and Slovaks) recognized certain limited rights for minorities, but the implementation of these constitutional provisions through national legislation is either nonexistent, or falls short of expectations. Ethnic minorities, for example, do not have effective political representation as corporate groups, and therefore "they frequently feel themselves to be second-class citizens whose ethnic rights are entirely subject to the will of the dominant Czechs and Slovaks."⁷

The Problem of the Slovakian Schools in Slovakia

The right to use their own language in everyday life as well as in educating their children is considered as one of the fundamental

rights of national, ethnic, and linguistic minorities. Consequently, when the Slovak government in 1978-1979 made an attempt to curtail the use of the Hungarian language in the public education system, a sharp reaction had set in among the Hungarian minority, including the founding of the Committee for the Defense of the Rights of the Hungarian Nationality in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.

In a *Statement*, submitted in May 1979 to the highest state and (Communist) party authorities of the Republic and its two constituent parts, the Committee listed unconstitutional discrimination in education in the following terms:

- Neglect in establishing Hungarian language nursery schools;
- Reduction in the number of Hungarian language primary and secondary schools;
- Reduction of the number of pupils by about 30% in Hungarian language primary schools in proportion to the number of children of school age;
- Experimental substitution of Slovak for Hungarian as the language of instruction;
- Unsatisfactory quality and level of Hungarian secondary education in technical schools and industrial vocational institutes;
- Abolition of the Hungarian Division of the College of Education of Nitra/Nyitra, effectively ending teacher training for basic schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction;
- Low number of Hungarian students in the colleges and universities of the CSSR;
- Hindering of study and acquisition of academic degrees at the colleges and universities of the Hungarian People's Republic;
- A deepening educational chasm between the Hungarian minority and Slovak majority.⁸

The *Statement* pointed out that the measures and actions listed were violating Constitutional Law 100/1960, Chapter II, Article 19, Paragraph 2; Article 20, Paragraph 2; Article 24, Paragraph 3, and Article 25, as well as Constitutional Law 144/1968, Article 3, Paragraph 1/a. It then called for remedial action.

However, instead of contemplating remedial action, the Slovak government proposed a new plan in schools in which the language of instruction was Hungarian. Under the plan the language of instruction — with the exception of the subjects of Geography, History, and Hungarian language — was to become Slovak, starting with the 5th grade and including high schools (vocational and academic). The plan would have changed the character of Hungarian schools completely.

As the *Statement*, and subsequent *memoranda* of the Committee, pointed out repeatedly, the plan was clearly unconstitutional. Article 25 of the 1960 Socialist Constitution reads: "The State shall ensure citizens of Hungarian, Ukrainian and Polish nationality every opportunity and all means for education in their mother tongue and for their cultural development." Since 1968, Article 3/a of Constitutional Law 144/1968 assures the same right for all nationalities, including Germans.

In the end the plan was not implemented, not so much because of its unconstitutionality, rather, because of the widespread opposition to it manifested in protests. Yet, at the same time, the Slovak authorities launched an investigation to uncover the members of the Committee for the Defense of the Rights of the Hungarian Minority, and in this connection they arrested and interrogated a number of Hungarian intellectuals. Ultimately one of these, the geologist Miklós Duray was accused with "incitement" and "subversion," and in 1983 he was put on trial. The outcome was unexpected: Due partly to the lack of convincing evidence, partly to international pressure — such as the presence of numerous foreign observers at the trial — the process was indefinitely suspended and Duray was set free. The charges, however, were not dropped.

One could guess already then that both the suspended plan and the suspended process would be taken up at a later time. The trial was suspended in February, 1983. The plan was taken up again in the fall of the same year, and Duray was rearrested in May, 1984. The details are worth considering.

The question of the use of the Hungarian language as a language of instruction in the schools was to be taken care of within the new Law of Education which was to be passed by the

Legislature (Slovak National Council) in the Slovak Socialist Republic. In order to avoid the charge of unconstitutionality, the article dealing with the language of instruction was rewritten several times, until finally it was submitted by the Government (on the recommendation of the chief ideologist of the Central Committee of the Slovak Communist Party) to the Slovak National Council on November 25, 1983, with the following text:

Article 32a. The language of instruction.

(1) the language of instruction is either Slovak or Czech; Czech is the language of instruction in schools (classes) indicated by the Ministry of Education.

(2) In schools or classes created for students of Hungarian, German, Polish, Ukrainian (Ruthenian) nationality, the language of instruction is that of the nationality.

(3) Inasmuch as in a school the language of instruction is not Slovak or Czech, it is mandatory to teach the Slovak or Czech language.

(4) In schools created pursuant to paragraph 2 and using a nationality language of instruction, the Ministry of Education may permit the teaching of certain subjects in Slovak or Czech, if this is proposed by the territorially competent National Committee in agreement with the parents of students attending these schools.

(5) The Ministry of Education may require in certain schools the teaching of specific subjects in a language other than the language of instruction of the school.⁹

Note, that the text was approved by the Council of Ministers; the next step to be taken was to get the approval of the Legislature.

Paragraph 4 as proposed was a contravention of the right of nationalities to use their language, disguised so as not to make it look unconstitutional by shifting the burden of the change in the language of instruction to the easily coercible parents: "...if this is proposed by the territorially competent National Committee in agreement with the parents of students attending these schools." The National Committees referred to in the text are organs of state power and administration in the regions, districts, and localities.

Paragraph 5 went even farther; it authorized the Ministry of Education to change the language of instruction without "consulting" parents.

Under circumstances it is understandable that the proposed bill encountered widespread resistance and protest. The protest was directed by the "Group to Defend the Hungarian Schools in Slovakia" (Szlovákiai Magyar Iskolák Védelmi Csoportja), supposedly led by Miklós Duray. The Group is said to have issued a circular letter in some 600 copies, addressed to Hungarian teachers, parents, and members of CSEMADOK, the cultural organization of Hungarian Workers in Czechoslovakia, urging them to use their constitutional right of free speech and protest the passing of this unconstitutional Bill. Duray himself addressed a letter to President Gustav Husak, to the Slovak National Council, and the Slovak Government, expressing the same views and his opposition.¹⁰

As a result of the circular letter, an unprecedented wave of protest swept the Hungarian-inhabited parts of Slovakia. By the middle of March, 1984, approximately 10,000 signatures were collected, protesting the proposed action. Not surprisingly the Western European information media picked up the story in Bratislava, capital of Slovakia; newspaper articles and radio reports started to deal with the adverse situation. Public opinion in Hungary reacted adversely, putting pressure on government and party organs to abandon their policy of non-interference, and approach the appropriate authorities in Prague and Bratislava to alleviate the problem.¹¹

An interesting offshoot of the entire case was the change — albeit temporary — in the role of CSEMADOK. Forced into a purely cultural role in the fall of 1968, as opposed to its former character of political representative organ of the Hungarian minority, the Association took a definitely political stand on the question of education in the Hungarian language, and asserted its right to represent the interests of the Hungarians. A majority of the Central Committee of the Association (all of them Communists) voted to protest the proposed Bill.

After repeated delays, the Bill was placed on the agenda of the Slovak National Council on its meeting of April 2, 1984. Surprisingly, the two paragraphs which were objectionable to the

Hungarian minority (and would have affected other minorities as well) were omitted from the text passed by the Council. As a matter of fact, they were withdrawn by the Council of Ministers after an extraordinary meeting held on March 19, 1984. However, the Minister of Education, Juraj Busa, made it clear in a press conference on March 23, that the measures omitted from the text would be accomplished eventually through administrative and educational practices. This seems to indicate that the chapter concerning the use of the Hungarian language in education in Slovakia is far from being concluded. Moreover, the regime did not hesitate to indicate its displeasure with the attitude of the Hungarian minority; in retaliation, and as a first step in a campaign of intimidation, Miklós Duray was arrested again on May 10, 1984, for "harming the interests of the State abroad," and for "spreading alarming news."¹²

The Case of Miklós Duray

Miklós Duray was born in 1945 of Hungarian parents in the town of Losonc, as it was called in Hungarian. Today it is located in the central part of Southern Slovakia, the belt inhabited until recently by Hungarians, and it is referred to exclusively by its Slovak name, Lucenec. Young Duray obtained his high school diploma in the Hungarian "Gimnasium" of Fülek in the year 1962 and proceeded to the Comenius University in Bratislava to study applied geology. Interrupting his studies because of illness, he obtained the doctor's degree in natural science eventually in 1977, and found employment with The Doprastav Bridge and Road Building Company (state owned) as a geologist. He is married to Susanna Szabó, also of Hungarian parentage in Slovakia.

As a student, Duray was a member of the Hungarian Youth Organization (MISZ) and, in the Presidium of the Central Committee of CSEMADOK (the Cultural Organization of Hungarian Workers in Czechoslovakia), he was a leading figure in the efforts to establish democracy in the country during the period known as the "Prague Spring."

Since 1978 he has been active in the Committee to Protect the Rights of the Hungarian Minority in Czechoslovakia (CSMKJB).¹³ In this capacity he has been repeatedly exposed to har-

rassment by the state security police. In January 1979 he petitioned the Slovak government concerning the question of Hungarian language schooling. In May 1979 he prepared a *Statement* or aide-memoir summarizing the grievances of the Hungarian minority.¹⁴ In February 1980 the Committee published an analysis of the problems of the Hungarian minority in relation to the human rights provisions of the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights and of the Helsinki Agreements. This was forwarded to all of the signatory governments of the Helsinki Final Act, and to international organizations. In addition to pointing out violations of international human rights instruments, the analysis again dealt with the unconstitutionality of various actions and measures affecting the Hungarian minority in Slovakia. In the summer of 1980 the Committee presented proposals for resolving internal minority problems to the Madrid Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

According to the circular letter of Amnesty International, calling for urgent action on behalf of Miklós Duray, his office was searched on June 3, 1982, and so was his home; a number of documents were seized in both places. Duray then admitted that he was the author of the documents published in the name of the Committee. Afterwards he was frequently summoned to the police "and some 50 people were questioned as witnesses in connection with his case. On 10 June 1982 the investigating authorities proposed to the Procuracy that Miklós Duray be charged under Article 100 with 'incitement'."¹⁵

Subsequently, he was arrested on November 10, 1982. The charge was changed to that of "subversion," or more precisely, "hostile acts against the state" which, under Article 98 of the Czechoslovak penal code, carries a prison sentence of between three and ten years.¹⁶

Duray's trial started on January 31, 1983. On February 1 it was adjourned for ten days and continued on February 11 when it was adjourned again indefinitely. On February 22, 1983 Duray was released without a sentence, but the charges against him were not dropped. The adjournments and the release have been attributed to international pressure, which included the presence of several Western observers

at the trial, the protests of many human rights organizations in different parts of the world, including the Czechoslovak human rights organization Charter 77, the presence of three well-known writers from Hungary, and the alleged behind-the-scenes intervention of the Hungarian government.¹⁷

The European press following the arrest, trial, and release of Duray with great interest; some reporters speculated on what would come next, and sought to interview him. His answer was predictable:

On 22 February I was set free whereby it was stressed that nothing has changed in the legal situation of my case: thus, I continue to be indicted under paragraph 98:section 2 which means imprisonment for up to 10 years. And I don't know which day the indefinitely adjourned process against me will start anew.¹⁸

He also knew that the state attorney's office kept collecting additional evidence against him. In fact, the type of evidence looked for was readily available: in 1983 two of Duray's works were published in the United States. One of them was a collection of literary essays, the other was an autobiographical account entitled *Kutyaszoritó (Choke Collar)*, discussing among others the unenviable situation of the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia, and therefore fit to be labeled another instance of "spreading false news abroad harmful to the interests of the State."

The rest of the story is already well known. The introduction of a new Bill of Education in the fall of 1983 led to the creation of the Group to Defend the Hungarian School in Slovakia, the publishing by Duray of the circular letter calling for protest action, as well as the letter to President Husak and other party and state authorities, the successful wave of protest (and again a supposed intervention by the Hungarian government), leading to the omission of the discriminatory paragraphs from the Bill, but ending in the arrest of Miklós Duray on May 10, 1984.

Duray's re-arrest immediately elicited considerable international attention. There followed a spate of protests, appeals, expressions of concern by governments, non-governmental organizations, individuals, and information media in

the United States and Europe, including Hungary, where a "Duray Committee" was formed to mobilize public opinion — much to the dislike of the government, which — for various reasons — until now did not pursue an open policy of concern for the Hungarian minorities living outside its borders.¹⁹

Among those protesting Duray's arrest and asking for his release were a number of Czechoslovak intellectuals: Ján Carnogursky, a lawyer disbarred for having defended a number of human rights activists; Milan Simecka, philosopher and journalist, who was himself arrested earlier for engaging in activities allegedly harming the interests of the State; Miroslav Kusy, a member and spokesman of Charter 77, who lost his job at Comenius University when he, too, was arrested for "subversive activities," and Jozef Jablonicky. In their letters to the Prime Minister of Slovakia or to the First Secretary of the Slovak Communist Party each of these individuals defended Duray's right of freedom of expression; one of them suggested that the problem of the minorities be subject to rational debate and solved on that basis; two condemned Duray's arrest, holding that this action hurt the interests of the State much more than did the activities of Duray.²⁰

Despite all these protests and appeals Duray remained in jail, held "incommunicado," and accused with "harming the interests of the State abroad," and "spreading alarmist news" under Articles 112 and 119 of the Czechoslovak Penal Code, which carry penalties up to three years and six months, respectively. In addition, he was to face the charge of "subversion," carried over from his prior arrest.

According to one report, the decision to imprison Duray again may have been motivated — in addition to official vindictiveness — by broader domestic and foreign policy considerations, namely a hardened attitude toward dissidents at home and ideological differences in the Soviet bloc. In addition, it was interpreted as a clear signal of displeasure to the Hungarian government. As the report says,

Budapest keeps a watchful eye on the treatment of the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia and raises the issue regularly in high-level bilateral consultations. Slovak Prime Minister

Colotka was in Budapest at the end of June [1984] at the invitation of Hungarian Deputy Prime Minister József Marjai. His visit was apparently routine, concerned mainly with matters of economic cooperation; but Duray's case could well have been on the agenda. The current harsh climate in Prague, however, offers little hope that the Husak regime will respond as readily as last year to Hungarian intercession on behalf of Miklós Duray or to international appeals from world renowned writers.²¹

Events later in 1984 seemed to confirm the correctness of the above assessment. Toward the end of November President Gustav Husak traveled to Budapest, supposedly to discuss economic matters, such as the disparity of the value of the two countries' currencies, which Czechoslovakia had long found disadvantageous, and matters related to the Danube hydroelectric project. Husak's presence was used by the Duray Committee in Budapest to stage a press conference and publicly demand Duray's release. Things must have turned sour for Husak also in his meeting with his Hungarian counterparts, for he hurriedly left Budapest after a few (some say four) hours. Then, on December 3, 1984, the German *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* reported that for the first time in its history the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (Communist Party) included among the guidelines of its forthcoming Congress the question of the treatment of the Hungarian minority in the neighboring countries.²²

Meanwhile, Miklós Duray, afflicted with a liver ailment, continued in jail still in pre-trial arrest. His supporters, especially those who collaborated with him in the protest movement by handing out petition forms or even just signing them, are said to be subjected to various forms of pressure. "It is devilishly difficult to be Hungarian in language and in spirit in the very Slovak Bratislava," wrote the French daily, *Le Monde*, in November, 1984.²⁴

"Tears for the beautiful Danube"

The third factor influencing the situation of the Hungarian minority in Czecho-

slovakia, not so much directly as indirectly, is the proposed plan to dam or divert part of the Danube River for a hydroelectric project. The plan affects a 138-mile stretch, from Gabčíkovo (near Bratislava) to Nagymaros in the scenic Danube-bend north of Budapest, Hungary. Some of the work has already begun in the Gabčíkovo area, where the river itself forms part of the Czechoslovak-Hungarian border. As a result of the construction, the border will be shifted in some areas.

According to the plan, agreed upon by the two countries in 1977, two power plants are to be built: one at Gabčíkovo, the other at Nagymaros. The estimated costs would run the equivalent of \$1.12 billion for each of the two countries. When completed, the entire system would generate 3.6 kilowatt hours of electricity annually, saving nearly 10 million barrels of crude oil a year for the two countries. Originally planned to begin operations at the two places in 1986 and 1989, respectively, the start-up dates have been changed to 1990 and 1993, and very likely will have to be changed again.²⁴

The trouble started when, in what was believed to be the biggest environmental protest in the Soviet bloc, about 7,000 Hungarians signed a petition in the spring of 1984 against the project. The petition, whose signers included fifty prominent scientists, writers, artists, and other intellectuals, was addressed to the Hungarian Parliament and the Council of Ministers and called on them to drop the project because of a large number of adverse consequences, unanticipated at the time of the agreement.

According to studies performed by competent scientists, engineers, and ecologists individually or in teams (including some under the aegis of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences), the dam systems would cause serious damage to the drinking water supply, agriculture, the forests, as well as the network of human settlements in the countries affected. The petition itself claimed that the project would cause "irreparable damage to the landscape and natural environment" of two Danube regions, known as the Csallóköz or Ostrov Zitni (an area of fertile farmland inhabited mostly by Hungarians, but now situated on the Slovak side), and Szigetköz. What the petition did not mention, but Hungarians are painfully aware of, is that the reservoir ensuing from the dam project at Gabčíkovo

would result in the resettlement of Hungarians, thereby contributing to the efforts of Slovak nationalists to change the ethnic composition of the borderland areas.²⁵

In a newspaper article, Hungarian biologist János Vargha, a chief critic of the project, contended that the amount of money Hungary would need to prevent or offset environmental damage was twice the amount to be invested in the construction.²⁶

Apart from cheap electric power, the planners hope to prevent yearly flooding and to enlarge the channel so smaller seagoing ships can go upstream as far as Bratislava. That is "an old Slovakian dream," said one Hungarian, who asked to remain anonymous. Due to old, and now seemingly resurgent, national rivalries, bitter feelings simmer between Slovaks and Hungarians. The protest against the project had temporarily slowed down the construction, at least on the Hungarian side, although the government claims that this is due purely to economic reasons. On the Slovak side construction is not only proceeding on schedule, but it is being speeded up, thereby putting pressure on the Hungarians. All this contributes to the worsening of Hungarian-Slovak relations and affects indirectly the problem of the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia. In an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust, accommodation and compromise has much less chance.²⁷

Epilogue

On the 21st of January, 1985, Amnesty International again issued an "urgent action" call for the release of Miklós Duray. Letters of appeal and protest poured into the office of the Chief Procurator General in Prague and in Bratislava, demanding the release of Duray, and asking for information concerning his status. At the time of the "urgent action" call it was unknown whether Duray had been indicted yet, or not, and whether his lawyer and his wife were permitted to visit him. The urgent action increased international pressure on the Czechoslovak authorities.

In the spring of 1985 Hungary's Minister of Education paid a visit to his counterpart in Slovakia, and later to that in Prague. According to the Hungarian Minister, Béla Köpeczi, interviewed in Prague, the discussions concerning

questions of mutual interest proceeded in a "constructive atmosphere," and touched both cultural and educational matters, including the education of minorities in their mother tongue. It was decided to create a mixed working committee to determine "which subjects should be taught in what grades in the mother tongue or both languages, and by what methods best suited for the purpose."²⁸ It is safe to assume that in the course of these discussions the case of Duray was also discussed, and perhaps some decision reached. Proof of this seems to lie in the fact that members of the Budapest-based Duray Committee, when interceding later in the spring for Duray at the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and demanding action through party channels, were told to drop the case, because Duray was to be set free.²⁹

Indeed, Duray was released on May 10, 1985 (and re-instated in his former job) under an amnesty order for certain categories of prisoners, passed by the government in celebration of the 40th Anniversary of ending World War II. The timing of Duray's release may have saved the Czechoslovak Government from the embarrassment of Western countries airing the case at the Conference on Human Rights of the signatories of the Helsinki Agreements, which just got underway in Ottawa, Canada, at that time. At any rate, the action taken removed one of the obstacles in the way of improving Hungarian-Czechoslovak relations.

The year 1985 also produced some development concerning the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Waterstep System. First came the environmentally influenced decision of the Austrian government not to engage in the building of a power station on the Danube, at least for the time being. Next, it was announced that Hungary and Czechoslovakia had agreed on postponing the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Project. This came as a surprise and was interpreted as a victory for the environmental protest movement in Hungary.³⁰ Unfortunately for the latter, the announcement proved to be premature, or rather, a "misinter-

pretation" of facts, according to the Czechoslovak side, and called for a clarification on the part of Hungary. The promised re-examination of the possible environmental effects of the waterstep system did not mean the abandonment of the project, merely its corresponding modification, explained György Lázár, Hungarian Prime Minister.³¹

During the middle of August, 1985, Hungary's participation in the project was again confirmed by the government. According to a Swiss report, this meant that "despite the great environmental danger, Hungary gave in to Czechoslovak pressure."³² At the same time, however, it was noted that the Hungarian Press Agency MTI referred to a modification of the 1977 State Treaty between the two countries, including the time table for the construction. According to the new time table the power station at Gabčíkovo will commence operations in 1990, the one at Nagymaros in 1995.³³ The fact remains that there is still no sign whatsoever that would indicate the beginning of the construction at Nagymaros, and the delay is still explained in purely economic terms, namely cost factors. All this seems to indicate that the Hungarian government would like to extricate itself somehow from the now unwanted project, if it could. Behind the verbal consent lurks factual resistance; disagreement over the project continues under the surface between the two countries.

Meanwhile, the problem of the use of the Hungarian language in Slovakia remains as yet unresolved and creates uncertainty for the battered minority. At the same time, the smoldering disagreement over the Danube project continues to exacerbate relations between the two countries and diminishes the ability of the Hungarian government to create goodwill and use its influence across the border.

As the year 1985 winds down, Czechoslovak-Hungarian relations show only slight improvement, and the situation of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia continues to be unenviable.

NOTES

¹ Alfred Cobban, *The Nation State and National Self-Determination* (London: Collins, 1969), p. 86.

² Quoted in Yves De Daruvar, *The Tragic Fate of Hungary* (Munich: Edition Nemzetör, 1984), p. 92.

³ Sir Robert Gower, *La Revision du Traité de Trianon* (Paris, 1937), p. 16, quoted by Daruvar, p. 111.

⁴ These violations are discussed in detail and documented in Charles Wojatsek, *From Trianon to the First Vienna Ar-*

bitral Award: *The Hungarian Minority in the First Czechoslovak Republic, 1918-1938* (Montreal: Institute of Comparative Civilizations, 1981).

⁵See Edward Chaszar, *Decision in Vienna: The Czechoslovak-Hungarian Border Dispute of 1938* (Astor, Fla.: Danubian Press, 1978).

⁶The pertinent chapters of the Kosice Program, and the discriminatory government decrees which helped to implement the anti-Hungarian measures, are attached to the *Supplement to the Memorandum of the National Committee of Hungarians from Czechoslovakia*, submitted to the Ottawa Meeting of Human Rights Experts of the Signatory Governments of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, dated February 15, 1985 (Portola Valley, Calif.: NCHC, 1985 [mimeographed]). For a comprehensive treatment of the subject see Kálmán Janics, *Czechoslovak Policy and the Hungarian Minority, 1945-1948* (New York: Social Science Monographs, Brooklyn College Press, Distributed by Columbia University Press, 1982).

⁷David W. Paul, *Czechoslovakia: Profile of a Socialist Republic at the Crossroads of Europe* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1981), p. 124. Paul explains that the present two-nation view was a matter of serious controversy in the First Republic, when the dominant assumption of the political elite was the existence of a single "Czechoslovak" nation. This idea was disputed hotly by the Slovak nationalists and an important faction in the Communist Party. "The grievances of the Slovak nationalists led them into collaboration with Hitler, and, as a result of the fratricidal conflict between Czechs and Slovaks, the Czechoslovak idea became discredited and was abandoned by the end of the Second World War." (p. 124) Today the Czechs and Slovaks are considered the constituent "nations," all others are merely "nationalities."

⁸*Statement of the Committee for the Defense of the Rights of the Hungarian Nationality in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic*, submitted to the Government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, May 1979. The English text of the *Statement* may be found in the *Memorandum of the National Committee of Hungarians from Czechoslovakia* (Cleveland, Ohio: NCHC, 1980), submitted to the Signatory Governments of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, popularly known as the Helsinki Agreements, during the follow-up meeting in Madrid, in the fall of 1980.

⁹For the original text in Slovak see Hungarian Human Rights Foundation, *In Defense of Hungarian Schools in Slovakia: Documents on the Struggle for Self-Protection of the Hungarian Minority in Czechoslovakia, November 1983 - August 1984* (New York: Hungarian Human Rights Foundation, 1984), p. 12. This remarkable publication contains documents in Hungarian, Slovak, English and German languages, including some written by Miklós Duray himself.

¹⁰Both the circular and Duray's letter are reproduced in the book cited, *In Defense of Hungarian Schools*, pp. 14-15, and pp. 16-17, respectively.

¹¹The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* in Switzerland reported as early as September 16, 1983, the adverse situation of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia due to widespread and undisguised discrimination, in a lengthy article entitled "Bedrängte Magyaren-Minderheit in der Slowakei; Eine inoffizielle Dokumentation mit offiziellen Zahlen." [Threatened Hungarian Minority in Slovakia; An Unofficial Documentation With Official Figures.] The report was

datelined in Bratislava. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (Federal Republic of Germany) ran a story in its January 11, 1984, issue, under the title "Eine fast vergessene Minderheit." [An Almost Forgotten Minority.] Other articles in the same vein were published by the *Zürichsee Zeitung* in Switzerland, "Schutzlose Minderheiten in der CSSR" [Defenseless Minorities in the CSSR], May 24, 1984, and at the same time by the *Thungauer Zeitung*, also in Switzerland, "Prag plagt die Ungarn in der Slowakei" [Prague Troubles the Hungarians in Slovakia], the title suggesting that the Federal Parliament authorized the legislation.

¹²This was reported in *The New York Times*, May 22, 1984, based on the reports of the Associated Press, the Agence France Presse, and the Reuters Agency, of the same date.

¹³Also referred to variously as Committee for the Defense of the Rights of the Hungarian Nationality, or Committee for the Legal Protection of the Hungarian Minority, or Committee for the Protection of the Rights of the Hungarian Minority.

¹⁴See note #8, above.

¹⁵Amnesty International circular letter dated London, 30 November 1982, No. UA 273/82, *Legal Concern, Czechoslovakia*: Miklós Duray.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷See the *Newsletter of the International P.E.N. Club, Centre for Writers in Exile, American Branch*, Fall 1984 issue, p. 2. Among those who publicly demanded that the Czechoslovak Government fulfill the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act in its treatment of Duray and the Hungarian minority were several United States Government and Congressional figures and the writers Irving Howe, Susan Sontag and Kurt Vonnegut.

¹⁸The quotation is from an interview given by Duray to Anna Bojkovski and Georg Breitter of *Gegenstimmen* (Vienna, Austria), No. 12/4, Summer 1983, pp. 33-38, and translated into English by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service in its *East Europe Report* No. 2240, dated December 9, 1983.

¹⁹A representative selection of news items, reports, letters of protest, telegrams, and the like, is found in the book cited before, *In Defense of Hungarian Schools in Slovakia*.

²⁰Copies of these letters in the Slovak original, and their English translation, were kindly made available by the Czechoslovak National Council of America in Washington, D.C. In its periodical *Update* the Council monitors the fate of arrested Charter 77 members, including Duray.

²¹"Situation Report: Czechoslovakia," *Radio Free Europe Research* (Munich, Germany), 11 July 1984, p. 3.

²²"Budapest erhebt Minderheiten zum Parteitagsthema." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 3 Dezember 1984, Nr. 273/49D. The passage referred to in the news item is item No. 7 in the *Guidelines* issued for the 13th Party Congress. See *A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt Központi Bizottságának Irányelvei a Párt XIII. Köresszusára* (Budapest: MSZMP-KB, 1984), p. 9. The inclusion of this time in the *Guidelines* is considered by many as a rather surprising development. The question of the treatment of the Hungarian minority in the neighboring countries, especially in Rumania (where they are outright persecuted) has not been raised publicly before, so as to avoid charges of "bourgeois nationalism" and "revisionism." Besides, under the concept of "proletarian internationalism" in the socialist countries there is not supposed to be discrimina-

tion or differential treatment based on grounds of nationality or ethnic origin; supposedly the question of minorities would resolve itself spontaneously, and disappear altogether. Item No. 7 suggests that a re-evaluation may be in progress in the higher cadres.

²³“Les Hongrois silencieux de Bratislava,” in *Le Monde* (Paris), 4-5 November, 1984. Commenting on the educational and cultural affairs of the harrassed Hungarian minority, the article describes in vivid terms the situation and the fear these people have of speaking their mother tongue in public, the changing of place names to Slovak, and other measures of discrimination.

²⁴“Tears for the beautiful Danube,” in *The Plain Dealer* (Cleveland), Sunday, July 14, 1984, p. 1 of Section AA. See also “Ungarn: Protestwelle gegen Stauwerk,” in *Die Presse* (Wien), May 7, 1984.

²⁵“Tears....”. The *Neue Zurcher Zeitung* of Switzerland, in a full-page article published on May 5/6, 1984, under the title “Kommt die Donau-Korrektion zwischen Bratislava und Budapest?”, went into considerable detail concerning the expected adverse consequences of the project.

²⁶János Vargha, “Minden áron?” *Heti Világgazdaság* [World-economy Weekly], December 3, 1983. In Hungary

there exists a large literature on the project.

²⁷A news item in the Slovak capital Bratislava confirmed the progress of the construction. See “Zavazok budovatel'ov,” in *Smena na Nedelu*, May 25, 1984.

²⁸“Magyar-Csehszlovák kulturális tárgyalások.” (Hungarian-Czechoslovak Cultural Discussions.) *Magyar Hírek (Budapest)*, June 22, 1985, p. 4.

²⁹Information received from the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation, New York.

³⁰“Neues Donauwerk in Ungarn aufgeschoben.” (New Danube Project in Hungary Put Off.) *Die Presse* (Vienna), February 14, 1985, p. 1.

³¹“Donau-Dissonanzen Zwischen Ungarn und CSSR.” (Danube Discords Between Hungary and CSSR.) *Tages Anzeiger* (Zürich), March 11, 1985.

³²“Budapest sagt ja zum umstrittenen Donau-Stau.” (Budapest Says Yes to Controversial Danube Dam.) *Tages Anzeiger* (Zürich), August 17/18, 1985.

³³“Definitive Teilnahme Ungarns an Donau-Ausbauprojekt.” (Definitive Participation of Hungary in the Danube Construction Project.) *Neue Zurcher Zeitung*, August 17/18, 1985.

Table 1

**Population of Czechoslovakia by Nationality
(Census of 1980)**

	Czech Socialist Republic		Slovak Socialist Republic		Total	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
Czech	9,763	94.9	35	1.1	9,819	64.3
Slovak	343	3.3	4,321	86.6	4,664	30.5
Magyar (Hungarian).....	20	0.2	560	11.2	580	3.8
German.....	57	0.6	5	0.1	62	.04
Polish.....	65	0.6	2	0.0	68	0.4
Ukrainian and Russian.....	15	0.1	40	0.8	55	0.4
Other and unspecified	26	0.3	5	0.2	29	0.2
Total	10,289	100.0	4,988	100.0	15,277	100.0

Table 2

**Compositon of the Population of Present Day Slovakia
by Nationality, 1910-1980**

	1910		1919		1921		1930	
		%		%		%		%
Slovak	1,686,713	57.6	1,962,766	66.6	1,952,866	68.1	2,250,616	67.7
Hungarian	896,271	30.6	692,831	23.5	650,597	21.7	585,434	17.6
German	196,958	6.7	143,589	4.9	145,844	4.8	156,279	4.7
Rusyn (Ukr.)	97,051	3.3	93,411	3.2	88,970	3.0	95,783	2.9
Czech*	—		—		—		121,696	3.7
Other	49,832	1.8	55,710	1.9	84,397**	2.8	107,280**	3.2
Total	2,926,824	100.0	2,948,307	100.0	3,000,870	100.0	3,324,111	100.0
	1950		1961		1970		1980	
Slovak	2,982,524	86.6	3,560,216	85.3	3,878,904	85.5	4,321,100	86.6
Hungarian	354,532	10.3	518,782	12.4	552,006	12.2	559,800	11.2
German	5,179	0.1	6,259	0.1	4,760	0.1	5,100	0.1
Rusyn (Ukr.)	48,231	1.4	35,435	0.9	42,238	1.0	37,200	0.7
Czech*	40,365	1.2	45,721	1.1	47,402	1.0	55,200	1.1
Other	9,678	0.3	6,621	0.2	10,922	0.2	9,400	0.3
Total	3,442,317	100.0	4,174,046	100.0	4,537,290	100.0	4,988,000	100.0

*Counted in the "others" category from 1910 to 1921.

**The growth is explained by adding Jews to this category, in order to decrease the number of Hungarians.

**Slovak and Czech periodicals in the libraries of Budapest
Published before 1918. Állami Gorkij Könyvtár 1985.**

István Kafer

Kafer's catalog is part of an extensive project initiated by a research group of Hungarian Academy of Sciences and now continued on wider basis at the Nationality Department of Gorkij State Library, a research center for the literature of all nationalities in Hungary. The objective of the project is to track down all the literary materials published by various nationality groups and now sheltered in the libraries all over Hungary. It aims at furnishing documentary sources for the research workers at home and abroad, thus to promote scientific cooperation with the neighboring states.

Kafer's work of 270 pages contains invaluable materials for the researchers of Czech and Slovak literature that appeared before dismemberment of Hungary after World War I. It is an accomplishment of laborious effort of many years. Hungary gives with this project a commendable example for fostering the cultural heritage of nationalities not withstanding the opposite tendency in some neighboring states where the Hungarian cultural documents are condemned to gradual disappearance or even destruction. (CH.)

Blueprints for Peace with Justice:

Under the above title we are starting a new column in this magazine, with the purpose of dealing in a straight and honest manner with the most difficult problem of our age: the existence

of the national minorities. We sincerely hope that this initiative will lead to a useful, objective and uplifting discussion on the pages of this quarterly.

The Heritage of the Carpathian Basin

by Albert Wass

Shortly after the well established economical, cultural and political unit of the Carpathian Basin was blown up by uncontrolled emotions and irresponsible political adventurism, more and more people began to realize that those areas where several nationalities coexisted for centuries were posing an entirely different problem than countries of an homogenous population. In the case of multinational countries, uncontrolled democracy is just as harmful and dangerous as extreme nationalism, because it encourages the unconditional domination of a majority nation over all the existing minorities. On the other hand, where nationality groups are overlapping for centuries, it is impossible to draw any boundaries between these nationalities without degrading some of them into a minority status, with all the dreadful consequences this term encompasses today.

The immigrant, to whom permission was granted to enter and settle in America, is eager to assimilate and become an American. A nationality group, on the other hand, which occupied a certain land for many centuries, will refuse to give up its rights to its own language, culture and self-administration just because, due to some military or political situation, its native land was taken over by a bigger and more powerful neighbouring nation. Names like German, Hungarian, Croatian, Slovak or Rumanian are names of human beings of a common ancestry, culture and language developed through centuries into distinct and separate na-

tional entities. Therefore these names do not mean "countries" like the words "America", "Canada", or "Brazil", but it means peoples of different backgrounds, rooted into the land they inhabit by history and culture. Therefore, they have certain inalienable rights, which have to be taken into consideration: their right to language and culture, their right to self-determination and self-administration. No "majority" nation which happened to gain control by military force or political maneuvering of territories inhabited by other nationalities has the right to annihilate them, or assimilate them by the use of force, or remove them by force from their native land, or deny their right to language, culture and self-administration.

It is an absolute necessity therefore, that the form of government established by such majority nations be flexible enough to secure proper restrictions in the use of the "majority power", and accept the national minorities as administrative and cultural entities having complete autonomy within the political framework of the country. In areas and locations where the close coexistence of different nationalities is inevitable, the rights of all the nationalities must be respected through bi- or tri-lingualism in public places, offices, schools, etc. including their right of proper representation in local governments.

During the feudalistic system of previous centuries there were no majority and minority problems in Central Europe. There were only classes: serfs, tenants, free peasants, trademen,

merchants, office holders, educators, clergymen, small nobility and aristocracy. The nobility governed the country. In the Carpathian Basin, known from 1001 A.D. to 1920 as the Hungarian Kingdom or "Lands of the St. Stephen's Crown", the official language of the government was, until the first part of the 19th century, the Latin, which language, established by the priesthood, became all over Europe the "international language" of the educated classes. However, the language of the local governments was always the language of the serfs, tenants, peasants, tradesmen and merchants who happened to inhabit the villages, towns and districts, each nationality having their own churches and schools, built and maintained by the landlords. Among these landlords, in the ranks of the nobility, there were, besides Hungarians, many Germans, Croatians, Slovaks, Rumanians and Serbians, who assimilated into the upper class culturally as well as linguistically, and took active part in the government, as "Hungarian noblemen".

The majority versus minority problem came up only after the French revolution, when "nationalism" as such was born. Due to the constitution of the Hungarian Kingdom, the culture of the different nationalities as well as their right to self-administration, was secured. The friction between the Hungarian majority and the different minority groups was kindled from Vienna in the 18th and 19th centuries, when Hungary attempted to shake off Habsburg domination and regain independence. Abiding by the well-known motto of "divide and conquer" the imperial government was successful in turning some of the nationalities against each other, especially the Transylvanian Rumanians against the Hungarians, by promising them land confiscated from the rebelling Hungarian nobility. After the young Emperor Franz Joseph was able to crush the liberty war with the help of the Czar of Russia and punish the Hungarians with twenty years of cruel oppression, this friction between the coexisting nationalities increased. After the compromise of 1867, when the Emperor was finally accepted as King of Hungary and in exchange the Hungarian parliament was reestablished and Hungary officially recognized as "equal partner" within the dual Monarchy, the seeds of hate had already poisoned the souls. The

Hungarians could not forget that their free republic of 1848, headed by Louis Kossuth, had been defeated by the Emperor of Austria with the help of their next-door neighbors of Rumanian, Croatian, Serbian and Slovak descent. Neither were they able to forget all the horrible atrocities committed by these national minorities against the defenseless population of Hungarian towns and villages.

On the other hand, the nationalities were promised total independence under Austrian rule, and they kept pressing their demands within the newly reestablished framework of the Hungarian parliament. These growing frictions were exploited by irresponsible politicians, who did not care about the future of the country, only about the future of their own nationality group. Due to these manipulations the thousand year old multi-national state-complex of the Hungarian Kingdom was broken up after World War I into small national states, bringing economic havoc and hardship into the entire Carpathian Basin, and incredible sufferings to those who found themselves suddenly oppressed minorities in their own homeland, second grade citizens of foreign countries.

It is true that the peace treaties, following both World Wars, contained certain clauses for the protection of the minorities. However, these clauses were not only ambiguous in their wording, but the peace makers failed to establish any judicial authority for minority complaints. Thus, the minorities had no practical recourse against the administrative, social, political, cultural and economical abuses of the governing majorities. Their "rights" were only on paper, not in the practice.

It is a proven fact today that the mistakes made by the victorious powers after World War I laid the foundation for World War II. After which the mistakes were even magnified. Today the situation of the national minorities in Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Byelorussia (which is also part of the Carpathian Basin and occupied today by the Soviet Union) is worse than ever, qualifying as "cultural genocide" according to the interpretation of this term by the Charter of the United Nations. In the case of Rumania, we can call the brutal anti-minority actions of the government and its political police as out-and-out genocide: a blatant shame of the entire civilized world. (See:

“Genocide in Transylvania, a documentary”, Danubian Press, 1986.)

We strongly feel, that for the sake of world peace it is the obligation of every free man and woman to work for the termination of oppressions, injustices and human sufferings wherever these situations may be found. The Carpathian Basin is definitely one of those places where injustice, oppression, persecution and human suffering is rampant. To heal the situation, first of all reconciliation is needed between the co-existing nationalities, then a wise revamping of the present structure. The cluster of small national states, each with its own nationalistic

tendencies trying to suffocate the national minorities, must be replaced by a large and all-embracing unit, which is able to coordinate industry and commerce based on the rich natural resources of the area and in the same time be home to everyone who lives there, no matter what language he speaks.

This is the objective; and we hereby challenge every thinking person of good will and sincerity to ponder over the problem. Whoever thinks he or she has found a clue, a workable idea: share it with all of us on the pages of this quarterly, dedicated to peace with justice in the Carpathian Basin.

Condensed

Oral Statement of László Hámos

Hearing on United States—Rumanian Policy and Most Favored Nation Status for Rumania
Senate Foreign Relations Committee, European Affairs Subcommittee
February 26, 1986

Mr. Chairman, my name is László Hámos, and I am president of the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation.

The point of my testimony is that our policy toward Rumania has been based on false premises for quite some time now. It vastly overvalues what is regarded as Rumania's relative independence in foreign relations, and it ignores the most brutal human rights violations committed by any East European government in recent times.

Mr. Chairman, Rumania's distinction in Eastern Europe does not lie in its foreign policy. Its distinction lies in being the only country in the region which has never undergone a process of de-Stalinization. It is a full-fledged Stalinist dictatorship, with the added feature of a pervasive nepotism on the part of the ruling dictator.

The central concern of my organization is Rumania's oppressed national minorities, among them 2.5 million Hungarians (the largest national minority in Europe), about 350,000 Germans, and sizeable numbers of Serbs, Turks, Ukrainians, Jews, Greeks and others. I want to emphasize, however, that no citizen of Rumania, with the possible exception of some secret police and Party types, experiences any benefit from Mr. Ceausescu's policies. In my written statement, I provide a chronology of official antiminority measures, the persecuion of minorities, which can leave no doubt about the deliberate nature and the ultimate goal of Rumania's nationality policy. The destruction of the 405 year-old Hungarian Bolyai University; the closing of the last Hungarian high school this fall; the elimination of all minority language radio and TV programs last January; the closing of two Hungarian theaters in Transylvania this fall; the repeated interrogations of the poet Géza Szócs; the torture of Father János Csillik; the continued imprisonment for over three years now of the three Transylvanian-Hungarians Ernő Borbély, László Buzás and Béla Páll — all these measures can have no other explanation but the existence of a deliberate policy to forcibly denationalize Rumania's minorities.

Mr. Chairman, the case of the prominent Transylvanian-Hungarian actor Árpád Visky typifies how the state secret police (the dreaded “Securitate”) deals with minority dissidents. On several occasions, Visky had dared to comment in public on the arbitrary conduct of Rumanian state security personnel, as well as the terror against minorities prevailing in Rumania. On January 5, 1986, Visky's body was found in a forest outside the town of Sfintul Gheorghe (Sepsiszentgyörgy) — where he had been hanged by the secret police.

Surely, Mr. Chairman, a Congress and an Administration which purport to hold Rumania's human rights behaviour as a major condition for extension of Most Favored Nation status should take vigorous steps to investigate this tragedy. How many more acts of barbaric killing — how many more secret police murders like that of the Hungarian Catholic priest Father Géza Pálfi in early 1984 — are necessary to produce genuine concern, backed by a willingness to impose sanctions, by our government? Simple human decency, if not the enormous economic and political leverage the U.S. government bears over the tinpot dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, would warrant a firm response. At the very least, our government should support and facilitate the demand made by scores of world-rekowned writers who, upon hearing of this tragedy during the recent International PEN Congress held in New York, quickly signed the Declaration attached to my written statement.

Mr. Chairman, I and members of my organization have spent ten years investigating these abuses, collecting the evidence and presenting it to our Congress and State Department. While I have found considerable sympathy in Congress, our State Department seems too enamored of Mr. Ceausescu to concern itself with matters as trifling as the forced denationalization of one sixth of all Hungarians in the world.

What are the Facts About Minority Oppressions in What is Today's Northern Yugoslavia?

by Dr. Antal Lelbach

The Europe of Medieval times did not know any other state but one built on Christian ideals. It was governed not by constitutional but ecclesiastical laws. The first King of Hungary, St. Stephen applied Christian ideals in governing the state and by their institutions succeeded in pushing the pagan way of life into the background.

During the course of its history the Hungarian people have found the way to co-exist with other peoples. Many non-Hungarians were absorbed into the Hungarian nation through assimilation, taking over ancient Hungarian properties.

St. Stephen bestowed upon his son the principle of welcoming immigrants in his "Admonitions," following the example of the Roman Empire which became powerful because it granted to noble and wise aliens the possibility to develop their talents in a free realm. The "Admonitions" emphasized how welcome skilled immigrants should be. Their skills, expertise, and customs could then be adopted for the benefit of the country as a whole.

St. Stephen and his successors granted to those immigrants numerous privileges. It would be a mistake to believe that St. Stephen had in mind the degree of protection which made it possible for them to maintain their old nationalism. He did not grant minority rights as such, but insisted on application of the principles of Christianity in dealing with the native population as well as the immigrants.

St. Stephen defeated the rebellious Hungarian chieftains. Ajtony and Koppany in order to consolidate his internal rule. He

granted their confiscated land holdings to German knights who had helped him.

The Kingdom of Hungary, a country built on Christian morality, respected for centuries the privileges extended by King Stephen to the national minorities. In Hungary harmony prevailed among all nationalities, while devastating fights occurred in the medieval Prussian, Polish, German, and Czech provinces.

In Prussia ancient Slavic settlements were ravaged by Germanic tribes, followed by bloody wars of annihilation between them and the Poles, the coexistence between Germans, Czechs, and Poles was characterized by the burning of cities and villages and sometimes the total extinction of entire tribes.

These conditions must be contrasted with the medieval "Pax Hungarica" in order to make clear the significance of Hungarian rule in the Danube basin; refuting those who through their propaganda attempt to spread hatred against Hungarians.

The laws of Hungary up to the 18th century, created a long period of protection for all national minorities. These laws were carefully observed by all concerned. National minorities in Hungary enjoyed by law the protection of the Palatine, holder of the most powerful constitutional office except for the king. One of his mandates was overseeing that national minorities were governed in accord with their customs and privileges. For instance the Saxons of Transylvania were governed under the "Iure Teutonico," the Germanic common law. This protected them against the demands of the big landholders, the churches, and small nobility.

To be sure assimilation did exist in Hungary in medieval times, but it was not so ordained by the state. Instead it came about naturally and logically as a consequence of contacts between the native Hungarians and the immigrants.

Medieval Hungary saw no danger in embracing national minorities and did not apply protective measures even for the Magyar language. The main concern was the Christian religion and education of the Hungarian people, emphasizing the principle of brotherly love. The atmosphere of medieval brotherly love in a multilingual country resulted in weakness, in contrast for example to Germany or France where the national was unilingual. The onslaught of the Tartars in 1241-42 and the plague in 1347-50, contributed to the weakening of Hungary.

The kings invited foreigners to settle in depopulated areas. Fleeing from the Tartars, first the Cumanians begged for admission, then a general migration started into Hungary. Polish, Slovak, and Ukrainian mountain shepherds flowed in until the 17th century. Into Transylvania Vlachs or Rumanians seeped in. It was a great mistake that Hungarian kings settled these immigrants in separate and contiguous areas, often along the borders of their relinquished former homelands, and granted them self-government. The Saxon, Rumanian, and Slavic settlements were created in this fashion; undisturbed, preserving their customs and languages. In the ever renewing fight against the Turks along the lower Danube, the native Hungarian population was annihilated. They were replaced by Serbs in the thousands, many of whom became marauders with the conquering Turkish forces. Against all that the country remained in its spirit, in culture, still European and Magyar, Hungary fell in 1526, losing the Battle of Mohacs. Only the events of the "Wars of Liberation" (from the Turkish occupation) were darker and perhaps more horrible. The Germans further decimated the Hungarians, whose numbers had diminished after many fled their homeland.

During the reign of Leopold I, German and mercenary forces entered the country with the intent of subjugating the people. Towns and forts were destroyed, people robbed and tortured, rendering the population a people deprived of home and country. For forty years the

Imperial Army assumed the role previously played by the Turks.

The land, void of population, turned into a swampy and sandy area, uncultivable. Central Hungary and the land west of the Danube became settlement areas for immigrants. Even in those times the Magyars did not lose their generous attitude and perhaps inborn courtesy in their dealings with national minorities. It was also during the reign of Leopold I that a catastrophe of great magnitude befell the land.

Under the leadership of Arzen Carnejovic, a patriarch of the Serbian-Orthodox Church, 200,000 Serbs fled at the hands of the Turks, settling in the southern most part of the Hungarian Plains. They were given permission to do so temporarily, with the condition they would return to Serbia after its liberation from the Turks, a condition quickly forgotten. The Imperial Court, led by Kolonic, used those Serbs against the Hungarians. Vienna considered those parts of Hungary which were liberated from the Turks by Imperial troops as its own property.

To perpetuate this notion, Hungarians who were beginning to filter back to their former lands were expelled by force and German settlers were brought in to settle. They were given special privileges, mainly a promise of exemption from taxes. All this was the idea of the chairman of the Emperor's Advisory Council. This attitude did not disturb the relations between the Magyars and those German immigrants whose origin had been in the Provinces of Wurtemberg. They differed from the Serbian immigrants because they would not take up arms against the Hungarians as the Serbs did.

The differences in the two groups was that those German immigrants entered Hungary as farmers, not as bearers of arms. They were peaceful people, dedicated to agriculture. They had a difficult task turning the neglected swamp lands into arable soil again.

The industry of those Germans, many of whom perished during the reclamation of those swampy lands, has never been doubted by anyone. However, it should be kept in mind that Emperors Maria Theresa and Joseph II, and the officials of the Holy Roman Empire in Vienna did intend to effect Germanization of the country through these German settlements. That goal was not reached. However, the mercantile

minded government in Vienna acquired for itself industrious and accountable taxpayers.

Hungarians who had earlier fled to the north from the Turks, particularly the small nobility, intended to return to the lands of their ancestors. That presented an obstacle to the plans of the government in Vienna. It did not recognize their ancient proprietary right to their lands. These lands were rather granted by the Crown to Viennese officials and generals as their reward.

The real conquerors of those lands were the Hungarian serfs. From the over-populated northern lands the resettlement to Hungary began. There was a great distance to travel so the move that began with the fathers had to be completed by the new generation.

One should mention that from many Crown Lands, such as the province of Temes, Hungarians were completely excluded, since already Eugene of Savoy considered a cardinal principle of the resettlement process that it must not acquire a Magyar character. Hungarian farmers begging for re-admission were repulsed by military force. Only Joseph II permitted their return, after the entire Banat basin was filled with German, French, and Italian newcomers. It was also he who ordered complete Germanization. Agents were sent to impoverished and war torn German areas where they advertised opportunities to settle in Hungary, making grandiose promises. The Germans from the Provinces of Wurtemberg characteristically did not represent themselves as a political force, they were content to do so in the economic sense only. Their relations with the urbanized German immigrants were reserved. Some of their leaders were under the influence of the ideas of Enlightenment. However the intellectual movements that stirred from time to time remained alien to them. For a time they were under the spell of Austrian patriarchal absolutism and joined followers of Imperial patriotism. Most of them, enchanted by the ideas of Hungarian National Renaissance soon assimilated into the Hungarian nation.

Relations between Serbs and Hungarians began to turn for the worse in the time of the Rakoczi uprising, when the Serbs, tools of the Vienna government fought against Hungarians with cruelty. At the same time Croats, crossing the Drava and Mur rivers travelled to the

north as far as Pozsony (Pressburg).

Still the Hungarians continued to follow the same ideals in dealing with national minorities. As in medieval times their spiritual needs were respected. All minorities received their religious instructions in their native language. In the Pozsony secondary schools, as ordered by Peter Pazmany, instructions were given in the Hungarian, German, and Slovak languages. The princes of Transylvania similarly provided for education in the Hungarian and Rumanian languages. They had printed the first books ever published in the Rumanian language.

Under the influence of the Renaissance, German feelings for a national identity rose among the German burghers in the cities. They began to send their sons to German Protestant universities. Despite all of this the Germans in Hungary remained loyal to the state and Hungarians on their part did not consider Germans a national minority. Towns with a German majority were administered in that language.

During the Turkish occupation the Hungarian nation suffered a great deal. Many lives were sacrificed for the West, but the nation instead of disappearing rose to a high level among Christian nations. It lost many things, but it preserved its self-confidence, becoming a great nation.

The center of Serbian intellectual life was in Hungary. Their writings were printed for the first time in the Buda University Press and were proliferated inside the country and beyond its borders. It was from Hungary that the ideas of Serbian nationalism flowed into Serbia.

The legislation of 1848 contained only favorable provisions for the minorities. They had been liberated the same as the Hungarian serfs had been. During the summer of 1848, Serbs and Croats in the service of alien interests, attacked Hungary with force. The government in Vienna lured them with the possibility of an independent Serbo-Croatian state. Since the beginning of the 18th century Vienna did all it could to impede peaceful co-existence between the nationalities within Hungary. The atrocities against Magyars in Transylvania and in what today is the northernmost part of Yugoslavia, committed by Rumanians and Serbs, took place before the eyes of the representatives of Vienna. The memories of

these atrocities impeded the peace process decades later.

Following defeat of the Hungarian uprising in 1848-49, the government in Vienna took over the administration of Hungary. Magyars and national minorities as well were deprived of their rights. The reconciliation of 1867 between Austria and Hungary brought about the era of dualism. The Serbs continued to insist on their own separate territorial demands, an enlarged Serbian territory carved out of Hungary and Croatia with power in their own hands to treat others as national minorities. Russian influence greatly assisted them in the making of these claims.

Serbs of Hungary visiting Belgrade were in contact with a unified Serbian society. Their emotional attachment to their brothers was quite noticeable. This was clearly seen by Magyar statesmen, but the Hungarian government closed its eyes to the Serbian-Russian financial support of the Serbs in Hungary. Instructions, financial support, and encouragement flowed continuously from St. Petersburg to the Serbs in Hungary, holding out hope for the final victory.

An agreement was made to create a new state to be formed of the South-Slav peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy which would enter into a personal union with Serbia under the scepter of King Peter Karageorgevic. Those who promised to abide by the agreement never intended to do so. After the Serb's victory the agreement was no longer expedient. Another agreement was made and once again there was no intention of honoring it. The only function of the declaration was to ease the fears of the Croats and Slovenes for a short time, until the Serb divisions, soldiers of the "White Eagle," occupied the lands situated between the Drava and Sava rivers on behalf of the Allied Powers. Here the Croats and Slovenes learned that might always precedes right.

Behind the creation of the Yugoslav state there lurks the aspiration for power by Pravoslav Imperialism. Croats bitterly resisted Serbian oppression and their sturdy resistance led to a permanent civil war. The best Croatian patriots sacrificed their lives to achieve their liberty. The spring of 1941 brought about the birth of independent Croatia and by this the state calling itself Yugoslavia, a

makeshift state of many nationalities, ceased to exist. World War II broke out under these circumstances and the clock of history struck for the Slavs.

Count Paul Teleki stated that, "If we enter the war which Germany will lose, of that I am certain, we will also lose; if Germany wins, we are lost." When Croatia declared independence, Hungary was compelled to enter those parts of Hungary kept occupied by the Serbs, despite her having entered into a Treaty of Friendship with Yugoslavia a few months earlier. This treaty had not been ratified by either party and was soon repealed.

Yugoslav air units bombed Hungarian cities. The occupation of these areas was arranged between Admiral Horthy and the Hungarian Jews to save the Jews living there.

General Antonescu threatened that in the event Hungarian troops would occupy the Banat, Rumanian troops would march in. So the Germans occupied it. The clean-up in Ujvidek, a consequence of partisan activity, outraged the Hungarian people. Among the victims there were Magyars and friendly Serbs.

Creation of an independent Croatia would have meant total annihilation of Serbian political ambitions. It was therefore quite clear to every Serb that this must be prevented at any cost.

In the meantime, in Ujvidek the National Council, consisting of Serb members only went into session. The Serbs who attended came from counties where Serbs accounted for only one-fourth of the population.

The former citizens of the dual monarchy, mainly Magyars, were either exiled or assumed the full burden in the new state. In order to ruin the Hungarian farmers and landowners, they were required to pay taxes ten years after their lands were confiscated. At the same time a carefully planned settlement program for the Serbs was implemented. Hungarian officials and engineers were left in their positions until the arrival of their Serbian successors, at which time they were dismissed without compensation.

Whenever possible Hungarian schools were closed. Magyar speaking Serb teachers replaced the Hungarian teachers but only Magyar language and mathematics were taught in Hungarian. All other subjects were taught in the state language. Tuition fees in universities

were based on parents' tax assessments, making university studies impossible for Magyars.

There was no independent Hungarian intellectual life.

As a result of the oppression, Hungarians became stronger and tougher, and acquired self-reliance. Their souls were ennobled by their will to mutually assist each other.

Hungarians became glorious members of a minority, struggling for survival and happiness. There were no class controversies. They preserved the Magyar way of thinking. Their youth became the personification of the brave citizen living his fate in a national minority. Nationalism toward Hungary was their foremost concern. Their deep social roots fueled their patriotism. In the grinding mill of minority life, Hungarians rid themselves of the useless burdens of habit and formalities. They became like steel and their youth the guardians of the tattered tree of life of Magyardom. Hungarian students at Zagreb University distinguished themselves by conducting social surveys of villages. They examined and analyzed in Slavonia and in the Szeremseg, Hungarian villages on the verge of assimilation, trying to help them avoid it.

To unite the whole Balkan Peninsula under Serbian rule is the aim of Yugoslavia's external policies. Hiding behind the name "Yugoslav," every segment of these policies was directed against Magyardom and the Hungarian state.

Yugoslavia was born out of the naivete and graciousness of the victorious Great Powers and the centuries of gullibility and carelessness of Hungarian politics.

The first master stroke of Serbian politics consisted of separating Germans and Magyars. They also succeeded in preparing themselves for the Hitler era. For the Germans, this Machiavellianism created a tragedy rarely seen in world history. Tito and his men were good students of Pasic. Three-hundred-thousand Germans and 100,000 Magyars were slaughtered.

The main reason for the political ignorance of North America and Western Europe is their lack of knowledge of history. The time has come to think of the reconstruction of Hungary and the enlightenment of the world in historic perspective to the danger of the Slav peril. Wrong policies followed by the West in Central Europe following World War I resulted in German hegemony. The same, following World War II led to Russian rule. Therein lies the mortal danger to the West. One should strive to bring about economic units in Europe among the people now under Russian occupation.

The ideas of patriotism and liberty must be brought into the foreground in Hungary's present disastrous immobility. Hungary must synthesize past, present, and future and let the forming of the future be their immediate focus.

Hungarians must evoke — and this is the duty of emigrated Magyars now — a spiritual Hungary.

Violations of the National Minority Rights in Burgenland

by Dr. Rudolf Dabas

Burgenland, the most easterly province of Austria, came into existence in 1922. Formerly this territory had been an integral part of Hungary for over one thousand years. Created by the Treaty of Trianon, it was annexed to Austria, without self-determination. The territory of Burgenland — previously the western borderland of the Kingdom of Hungary — was neither geographically nor politically known as a separate entity, therefore its name was artificially coined from the suffixes of three western provinces ("vármegyék") of Hungary: Wieselburg, Ódenburg and Eisenburg.

In no case should we confuse this relation with the actual area (3,965 km²) transferred to Austria. Only the western portions of the three Hungarian provinces were awarded to Austria, leaving the larger portions together with the capital cities within Hungary. Consequently, with the creation of Burgenland these three Hungarian provinces were each cut in two, losing their smaller western portions to Austria.

Due to its strategic location, the territory presently known as Burgenland had been kept unpopulated in the 10th and partly in the 11th centuries. This empty zone along the westernmost frontier was the "gyepü", a glaciis. Only frontier watchmen of Hungarian origin or people from related tribes were permitted to settle along the frontier. German peasants started to enter during the second half of the 12th century, but the Hungarians maintained their majority until the Turkish invasions in the 16th century. From then on the Croats, who fled the Turks in their Balkan homeland, resettled those Hungarian villages which had been destroyed during the Turkish wars. At the same time German immigrants also populated many devastated villages. Lutherans persecuted in

Styria, arrived in masses as late as the 18th century, due to the tolerance of Hungary.

Under the six decades of Austrian rule, Burgenland's demographic pattern changed a lot in favour of the German speaking majority by assimilating the Hungarian and Croatian minorities.

The numerical presence of the Hungarians should not determine the quality of their rights as an ethnic group. This principle is apparent in neighbouring Switzerland, where the Reto-romans amounting to only one percent, enjoy full political and cultural partnership with the three larger ethnic groups of the Swiss federation. Similarly, Austria's eastern neighbour Hungary, with the best record on minority rights behind the Iron Curtain, is extending a helping hand to its small minority groups by providing schools bilingual signs and public service in their respective languages.

Further supporting the principle that basic human rights can not be denied by numerics, Canada is granting in the Northwest Territories full cultural, political and administrative rights in their native language to its 635 francophone citizens (1.4% of 45,000).

In contrast to the above generosity, in Burgenland according to Professor A. F. Burghardt, "the Croats as well as the Magyars seem certain to be assimilated within a few decades." In light of this sombre prediction, it is not surprising that the Croats are also complaining about the lack of enforcement of the 1955 minority laws. According to the 1981 census, the Hungarian national minority was reduced by 26.9% during the preceding decade.

A significant indication of how poorly the 20% combined Croatian-Hungarian minority's rights have eroded, is the declaration of Dr. Yvo

Peeters, minority rights expert in the European Council who after visiting Burgenland in 1985, expressed a rather depressing concern. He reported his observation that the leaders of the minorities (primarily the Hungarians) themselves do not really know what they want and are confused about their goals. It is interesting to note that Dr. Peeters' encounter with the Burgenland government, after hearing the arguments of its representatives, led him to believe that a minority policy is non-existent in Burgenland. I must admit that I am more inclined to give the benefit of the doubt to Dr. Peeters than to the Austrian authorities.

It is incorrect to assume that the decreasing trend among Burgenland's Hungarians is due to the neglect of the elders. It is true that their leaders do not measure up to expectations, but this is a far lesser handicap than the damage caused by the lack of cultural institutions. Had they had their own kindergartens, schools etc. during the last 64 years of Austrian rule, surely the current bleak outlook would be different.

The overwhelming majority of Canada's six million franco-phones form a territorial and linguistic unit in the province of Quebec, and recently benefitted from numerous protectionist measures for the safeguard of the French language. Considering this, how can we expect from the approximately 20,000 Hungarians in Burgenland (out of a total population of 270,000) to avoid assimilation without any minority protection?

In spite of the peace treaties and international charters, this group of citizens is not recognized by Austria as a national minority.

They are denied the basic rights of having schools in their mother tongue or using their own language officially etc. Meanwhile, a second generation is already growing up without a complete education in Hungarian. We must bear in mind that the Hungarians are not immigrants in Burgenland. Their land was taken over by Austria against their will, consequently having to abandon abruptly their political and cultural ties with the rest of the Hungarian nation. Without the benefit of a state-organized network of cultural institutions — primarily schools — the parental home alone is unable to secure the preservations of the ethnic individuality especially because these parents themselves had no opportunity to attend Hungarian schools, and are further exposed to a certain intimidation as well.

Clearly, the blame is with the Austrian government which does not fulfill its democratic commitments toward the national minorities in Burgenland. It is the responsibility of the Austrian state to maintain ethnic schools and provide a working environment where nationalities can preserve their identity not unlike those in Switzerland or South Tirol.

The validity of the above theory is well demonstrated in Hungary, whose thriving Rumanian minority — proportionally similar to that of the Hungarians in Burgenland — clearly shows the enormous effects of the generous ethnic rights granted by the Budapest government.

The remedy to improve the climate for the minorities is there, but the Austrian government seems unwilling even to attempt to consider it.

Hungarian Cultural Influence in Europe Under the Hunyadi and Jagiello Dynasties

(1446-1526)

Compiled by Prof. Leslie L. Konnyu,
Cultural Historian

The founder of the Hunyadi Dynasty was John Hunyadi (1409-1456), a military genius. He began his military career under Emperor and King Sigismund, and further increased his



Joannes Hunyadi, Gubernator Regni Hungariae Comes de Besztercze. Athleta Christi, 1456.

military expertise by serving in the Italian (Milano), Croatian, and Serbian armies. When he returned to Hungary, Hunyadi won quick promotions in the military ranks, and also moved quickly upward in civilian affairs by becoming

Count of Beszterce, Voivode of Transylvania, and Governor of Hungary. Because of his many victories over the pagan Turks he became known as the "Athlete of Christ". His greatest victory over his foe was at Nandorfehervar (now Beograd, Yugoslavia) in 1456. In this battle his helper was the famous Franciscan, John Capistrano (later Saint John Capistrano), who recruited the crusading soldiers for Hunyadi. The great French artist, Gustave Dore, immortalized this final victory of General Hunyadi over the pagan Turks. In this famous painting John Capistrano and the Hungarian Cross are visible behind Hunyadi. In fact this last victory over the Turks was so overwhelming that Pope Callixtus ordered church bells to be rung daily at noon all over Christendom. This is the origin of the noon-bell ringing.

In 1458 his son, Matthias (Corvinus) Hunyadi, was elected king of Hungary and reigned until 1490. After the death of his Bohemian wife, Catherine von Podiebrad in 1476, Matthias married the Neapolitan princess, Beatrix of Aragon, who brought with her to Hungary many Italian artists and scientists. King Matthias shared her love of the beautiful, the artistic, and the scientific. He sent agents all over Europe to buy antique books for his great library. He ordered beautiful painted codices from the famous Florentine Attawante, and also from Bologna and Venice. During his reign Buda was one of the cultural centers of Europe.

In Florence the famous John Beltraffio painted King Matthias' portrait. In Lombardy a renaissance sculptor carved Matthias' relief. There were portraits and statues of Matthias in Ortenburg (Silezia), in Rome (Italy), in Vienna (Austria) and in Florence (Giovanni Beltraffio and Andrea Mantegna).



King Matthias by G. Boltraffio

During the reign of King Matthias, a young Hungarian goldsmith, Anthony Ajtos, from the Hungarian town of Ajtos (Csanad county) wandered in the 1460's to Nurenberg, Germany. There he met and married the daughter of goldsmith Hieronym. Their son, Albert Dürer, a second generation Hungarian German became one of the greatest painters and illustrators of the world. His father's name translated and Germanized as Ajtos-Thürer-Dürer is still the name of a street in Budapest. Dürer himself painted a door on his family shield. A few years ago the Hungarian Postal Administration issued a commemorative Christmas stamp with a reproduction of Dürer's famous painting "Mary with Child."

Matthias (Corvinus) Hunyadi extended his influence as a ruler and patron of the arts and sciences when he acquired the kingships of Bohemia and Austria. In 1485 he moved the seat of government to Vienna. As a rule of three

kingdoms he wisely left the privileges of the burghers and the universities untouched. He became a great benefactor of Austrian arts and sciences. He gave magnificent gifts to the Vienna and Wiener-Neustadt cathedrals. He founded a new chancellor-translator's office and a codex copying workshop. He maintained his communications with the entire Western world. One of his Hungarian subjects, the great church painter, Jacob of Kassa (now Kosice, Czechoslovakia) painted the altar of the Church of St. Michael in Vienna, the windows of the White Friars' Chapel, and he sculpted statues for the dome of St. Stephan's Cathedral. Another Hungarian artist, goldsmith Jacob Melczer, (also from Kassa) created beautiful monstrances and reliquaries for this famous cathedral.

In 1486 at Leipzig, Germany, King Matthias published a Latin Code of Laws. By giving his subjects a unified, even-handed legal system, King Matthias did for the Hungarians what Emperor Justinian had done for the Romans.

Not only Hungarian fine arts but Hungarian literature made great headway during the reign of King Matthias. The contributions of the child prodigy, Janus Pannonius, (1434-1472) are outstanding examples of this progress. His uncle, the great humanist and chancellor of the Academia Istropolitana University, Archbishop John Vitez (1434-1472), sent young Janus to study theology and philosophy in the Italian universities of Ferrara and Padua. While still a student he became such a talented poet that his epigrams, elegies and panegyrics were read all over Europe. During his busy, productive life he exchanged letters with popes, kings, bishops, humanists, writers, poets, and scientists.

The Latin theological books of Franciscan Pelbart Temesvari (1435-1504) were other prominent literary successes. Sixteen editions of his "Stellarium" (Wreath of Stars) and 18 editions of "Pomarium" (Orchard, 1504) were printed in Hagenau, Germany.

Fortunately for the progress of Hungarian art, the contributions of a living King Matthias had added such great impetus that his death in 1490 did not adversely affect this cultural advance. During the reigns of the Polish-Lithuanian Jagiellos (1490-1526) Hungarian humanism extended its influence into Poland and Lithuania. The paintings of M. S. Master of Selmechanya, Hungary found a warm reception

in France and his "Adoration of the Magi" (1506) is in the Beaux Arts Musee in Lille, France.



Palatine S. Werbóczy, author

The learned Hungary lawyer, Palatine Stephen Werboczy, wrote in Latin the law book "Tripartitum" (Book in Three Parts). This book was published in Vienna in 1517 and became so popular that this collection of Hungarian laws had Latin editions in 1545, 1561, 1572, and 1581. Because of its continuing popularity, it was published in Hungarian in 1565, in Croatian in 1574, and in German in 1594. Although as a law book it is one-sidedly in favor of the nobility, the Tripartitum exerted a great influence on the legal systems of Hungary's neighbors.

In spite of the fact that Hungarian renaissance was still blooming under the Jagiellos, the Turks in 1526 defeated the Hungarians. This barbarian horde not only looted the royal palace and library of their cherished contents but also burned these magnificent edifices. The beautiful art objects and painted codices were sold in Western markets. The Corvinas were spread all over Europe. When Austro-Hungary, in 1882, organized an international show of Hungarian renaissance under the Hunyadis and Jagiellos, the artifacts and codices of King Matthias had to be borrowed from 18 different countries. This

fact is eloquent evidence that the legacy of King Matthias Corvinus was and still is an important part of Western civilization.



Woodcut of "Stellarium". Hagenau, Germany, 1498.

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Letters to the Editor

Editor:

Permit me to respond to the letter of Mr. Hirsch, published in the January issue of your magazine. It would be wrong to pessimistically dismiss at this moment the idea of a Danubian or Carpathian Federation of Central Europe. To elucidate my point, let me cite an example: Theodore Herzl, a Hungarian journalist, suggested about a century ago the reestablishment of a "Land of the Jews". Since his idea sounded quite unrealistic at that time, he was assailed with passion by his own people. Nevertheless, today the State of Israel exists, surrounded by a hostile sea of Muslims.

The Hungarians established a nation in the Carpathian Basin, which survived for a thousand years in spite of trials and tribulations. At the time of the Magna Charta, and the contemporary equivalent of the Golden Bull of Hungary in the 13th century, there were two million Hungarians, of which only about three hundred thousand survived the devastating attack of Ghengis Khan's armies. But in spite of this and other devastations our nation had to endure while defending Central Europe and Western civilization from the invasions of the Tartars and the Turks, Hungary rose up again and again to be the standard bearer of Western culture and the citadel of Western Christianity, the land where freedom of religion was first declared law.

Dismembered and crushed by two World Wars, deprived by her traditional leaders and more than half of her population, Hungary still rose up in 1956 in her quest for freedom. Crushed again by the Soviet Union, the Hungarian nation still exists today, slowly rising on the way of material prosperity, and united in the respect for the past and the search for a better future. No ideas were ever realized without faith in ourselves, and dedication to hard work for a noble purpose.

Whenever there is a choice between materialistic pragmatism or idealism, the Hungarian people will always reach for the latter, and so will the Christian World, striving for freedom and equality for all, instead of a selected few.

Leadership accepted by true consensus is far superior to empires created by absolute domination and cunning manipulations, which inevitably produces dissent, leading to feuds and wars. The U.S.A. is worldwide admired and envied, but fragmented into 50 feuding states could have never attained this well balanced prosperity and advanced freedom.

Europe, viewed from a spacecraft, displays conspicuously the magnificent mountain ranges surrounding the Carpathian Basin. Having in mind the importance of the ecological units, this area, if united again, is destined for future greatness.

I am in agreement with Mr. Hirsch that a Danubian or Carpathian Federation is unlikely to materialize in our lifetime, but life without ideals and hope is dreary and aimless. Power, based on terror, can not survive more than a century or two, and — if painfully slow sometimes — the world improves. The crude force of the invaders is weakened step by step by the infiltration of the superior culture of those invaded.

No one can take away my dreams of a better future, as they are based on logic, and lessons learned from history. They also represent a national goal for which Hungarians will never cease to work. Let us welcome this magazine on the rocky road of the architects of a "future with justice and peace". The pen, with ideas behind it, is the mightiest weapon of mankind on the road to a better future.

Stephen A. Hegedus, M.D. Spokane, Washington

LET US BREAK NEW ROADS

Editor:

In a recently published book by Dr. Ernest Kovács "Transylvania My Eternal Love", I happened to come upon a chapter on page 47 entitled: "Let us break new roads to Transylvania — the Rumanian dilemma." In this chapter Dr. Kovács explores a possibility I have never heard anybody mention before. I quote:

"...With the sword of Damocles over their heads, the Rumanians cling with all their power and cunning to the possession of Transylvania. They oppress the autochthonous Hungarian minorities, aiming at their complete assimilation, bordering on biological and cultural genocide... This anti-Hungarian attitude of a small country like Rumania is a silly policy. She is surrounded by enemies, and very much hated by her mighty Russian neighbor. America and China are too far to be of any help. The only non-Slavic, non-

Germanic nation, which could be a reliable friend (as she was for centuries during the Turkish invasions) is Hungary. But the unjust, unsatisfactory solution of the problem of Transylvania following two terrible world wars, and the mistreatment of the Hungarian and other minorities is poisoning the relationship between the two countries..."

"We have to break new roads to reach our goal: enlist the support of the great powers... to mediate between Hungary and Rumania, so that Transylvania may constitute a bridge between the two states, uniting them in peace and cooperation..."

Do you think a Hungarian-Transylvanian-Rumanian Federation could bring peace as well as prosperity to this troubled part of our world?

A born Transylvanian: Dave Mueller,
Saskatoon, Canada

Book Reviews

Slovak Politics

Stanislaw J. Kirschbaum, Ed.
Cleveland, Slovak Institute, 1983

Friends and colleagues of Joseph M. Kirschbaum, a prominent former Slovak politician currently living in Canada, paid tribute to him by writing and publishing a volume of essays.

The introductory article reviews the life and work of the celebrated septuagenarian from his university years in Czechoslovakia through his political and diplomatic career with the first Slovak republic, 1939-1945. The essays trace the overall development of that government's national consciousness; therefore my observations are limited to general views regarding the contributions of this volume.

The article on the Slovak student organization, Detvan, 1882-1914, is directly concerned with the activities of this association of Slovak students studying in Prague. A statement made, "...the Magyar's attempts to assimilate the Slovaks forced the young Slovaks to go abroad to study, and as a result Czech-Slovak relations entered a new era." It seems to place too much emphasis on the Magyarization efforts of the Hungarian government of the period.

The early political career of the ambitious Milan Hodza, a Slovak politician and member of the Hungarian Parliament, 1903-1908, and editor of the Slovensky Tyzdennik, is described in the second article. After founding of Czechoslovakia, Hodza chose the Czechoslovak political orientation and became the Prime Minister of the Prague government from 1935-1938.

An essay on the Slovak People's Party in opposition to the Prague government investigates the causes of the political antagonism of the majority of Slovaks who were thought to be co-founders of Czechoslovakia, together with the Czechs. The article specifies the grievances of the Slovak autonomists and the ideological differences between the political aims of the Slovaks and the unrelenting pursuit of the notion of Czechoslovakism by Czech racists.

Part III examines various aspects of the Slovak republic, 1939-1945; its constitution, the program of the government, and its foreign policy. A point is made as the dependence of Slovakia on the Third Reich, suggesting this as the reason the constitution reflected some German ideological currents. The ethnic groups were represented in the Parliament by their respective associations. The German minority played an important role in the government and the Secretary of State for German Affairs ranked de facto as a minister. The Hungarian ethnic group had only one appointed representative in Parliament. The constitution called for a special function of the only existing political party, the Hlinka Slovak People's Party. It ensured the conduct of the government would never depart from the stated party ideology. The Hlinka Party possessed veto power against the appointments of politically intolerable persons to public office. The rights of the Hungarian ethnic group were extended on the basis of reciprocity of the treatment of the Slovak minority in Hungary, as interpreted in Slovakia.

The article written on the foreign policy of Slovakia acknowledges that the Slovak state was a useful tool for Hitler's foreign and military policy.

The last articles discuss the disappearance of the Slovak Republic after six years of statehood and the partial restoration of Czecho-Slovakia after World War II.

This scholarly endeavor is not free from deep-rooted historical traumas and prejudices. Hungarian source material was limited to a Parliamentary Diary dated 1903. For 1,000 years the Slovaks and Hungarians lived in a common homeland. There are numerous books published by Hungarian authors relating to various aspects of Slovak life. For the sake of historical objectivity some of them should have been referenced. A study of this kind should attempt to be above any bias, especially since Kirschbaum himself advocates the application of the right of self-determination in the Danubian Basin.

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Comments Upon the Slovak Commemoration of the 350th Anniversary of the Pázmány University

Viliam Cicaj's "Trnava University in Our History, published in the *Historický Casopis* (*Historical Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 5, pp. 650-663), the official organ of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, is the only extensive Slovak article commemorating the 350th anniversary of the founding of the University of Nagyszombat (Trnava) the predecessor of the present Lóránd Eötvös University of Budapest, founded in 1635 by the then Primate of Hungary, Péter Pázmány. The article comments on the impact of the University upon Slovak culture and the development of national self-consciousness. However, by omitting certain essential historical facts and by projecting into the past recent Slovak national concepts, this historical reflection gives a very slanted and scanty account of the historical role of that celebrated institution. Our comments seek to rectify this situation and to complete the picture.

The precursor of the University of Budapest was founded in what is now the Czechoslovak city of Trnava — formerly Nagyszombat — not through some Slavic cultural effort but solely because of the historical circumstances. This is a fact beyond dispute. When Turkish expansion after the tragic battle of Mohács (1526) reached Esztergom, the ecclesiastical capital of Hungary established by King St. Stephen, the residence of the Primate and his Chapter was transferred about a hundred miles north into the city of Nagyszombat. This town was located on the trade route between Buda and Prague and had already been a populated settlement in the time of the Roman Empire. King Béla IV raised it to the rank of royal city in 1236. It received its Hungarian name from its internationally popular markets held on Saturdays, while its German (Tyrnau) and Slavic (Trnava) names took their origin from the creek that flows through the city. In the early centuries, the government of the city was in the hands of the Hungarian nobility and of German patricians brought over from the German states by the Hungarian kings. The surrounding areas became overwhelmingly Slavic with the arrival of hordes of Balkan Slavs fleeing the Turkish invasions and by the immigration of Czech-Moravian refugees after the defeat of the Hussites. The Slavic population gradually filtered into the city and claimed positions for themselves, but not without resistance from the local patricians. The Hungarian nobility, moving northward from the southern lands occupied by the Turks, were granted by Ferdinand I privileges equal to the royal prerogatives of the patricians.

Primate Miklós Oláh, the internationally renowned Hungarian humanist, entrusted to the Jesuit Order the opening of a college there in 1561, primarily for the education of the children of the Hungarian nobility. This college became the nucleus of the university founded by Primate Péter Pázmány seventy years later. The contemporary cultural and civic character of the city is reflected by the fact that the students of the Jesuit college performed their stage plays in Latin and Hungarian. In 1683, the City Council corresponded in Hungarian with Imre Thököly when he encircled the city with his insurgent army; even the commander of the royal army, Graf Kilmansegg, sent his messages to them written in Hungarian. The presence of Slavic elements in the civil administration is, however, evidenced by correspondence of the City Council in Czech language for commercial transactions with cities in Bohemia and Moravia. (Az Eötvös Lóránd Tudományegyetem Története, Kiadja az Egyetem Tanácsa, 1985, p. 22).

The cultural and political importance of the city was greatly enhanced by the transfer there of the Primate's seat and by the establishment of the University in 1635. When Péter Pázmány, a member of the Jesuit Order, became the Primate in 1616, he was already a well-known figure throughout the country. The descendant of an ancient Hungarian noble family, he himself turned to the Catholic Church from Calvinism under the influence of the first Hungarian Jesuit preacher in Nagyvárad, an eastern Hungarian cultural center. After joining the Jesuit order, he pursued his professional studies at the leading Jesuit universities in Europe. Having taught for a few years at the University of Graz, in Austria, he was called

back home to lead the Catholic counter-reformation movement. In this role, he became a protégé of the Bishop of Nyitra, Ferenc Forgách, who later, as Primate, took Pázmány with him to Nagyszombat as his principal assistant in his counter-reformatory effort. Through his brilliant oratory and literary talent, Pázmány regained for the Catholic Church the greater part of the most influential families of Hungary.

When Pázmány succeeded his mentor in the Primate's seat (1616), he began to prepare the financial and professional foundations for what would be the crowning achievement of the counter-reformation: a university established upon the pattern of the famous Jesuit institutions abroad. The first choice for its location was Pozsony (Pressburg, since 1918 Bratislava), the ancient cultural and political center of Hungary, endowed with royal patent rights as early as 1291 by King Andrew III. King Matthias had established there the first university in Central Europe, the *Academia Istropolitana* which, unfortunately, closed upon the death of its founder. Pázmány, however, selected Nagyszombat, the seat of the primate, although with the expressed intention of relocating the institution when circumstances allowed. He entrusted its administration to the Jesuit Order, which was already running a well known college there. The University soon attracted celebrated foreign professors and students from all over Hungary and also from abroad. It became the cultural and intellectual center of the entire country, especially after the addition of the Faculty of Law (1667) to the original philosophical and theological faculties.

The exclusively Jesuit administration of the University became secularized a hundred years after reforms in the spirit of the Enlightenment. Following the model of the University of Vienna the administration was taken over by the jurisdiction of the Gubernatorial Council appointed by the Imperial court. It was enlarged with the addition of Faculties of Natural Science and of Medicine. The papal dissolution of the Jesuit Order in 1773 finally facilitated the long-considered plan to transfer the University from Nagyszombat to Buda. This was accomplished in 1777 with the approval of the Empress Maria Theresa and in accordance with the instructions of the Gubernatorial Council presided over by Ferenc Eszterházy, the Hungarian Chancellor. From then on, along with the two cities, Buda, and Pest merged in one, the institution which had been launched by Péter Pázmány gradually rose to become one of the leading universities in Central Europe.

The author of the article in *Historicky Casopis* recognizes the contribution of Pázmány's university to the development of the Slovak language and of a unified national consciousness but without giving credit for it to Pázmány himself. He barely mentions his name and, when he does, arbitrarily changes it into Slovak spelling (Pazman) as if he had been of Slavic ancestry. The Slovaks are more indebted to him than they are willing to admit.

In his relentless endeavors to restore the Catholic Church to its former status in Hungary, Pázmány's attention was focused on Upper Hungary with its large Slavic population. He held them in high esteem for their deep religious character and sought to rescue them from encroaching Lutheranism. He recruited Slovak youth into the Jesuit College and sent them abroad to complete their studies, primarily to the Jesuit house of studies he himself had established in connection with the University of Vienna. Many of them studied at his own university, some becoming professors in Jesuit colleges established in all parts of Hungary. One of the few extant statistical records which lists the students of the philosophical faculty for the years 1635-36 according to both social status and nationality, shows an enrollment of 56% nobility (overwhelmingly Hungarian), the rest being of civic origin, including an 11% Slavic enrollment, undoubtedly recruited from the local Slovak population for Pázmány's counter-reformatory program (op. cit, p. 40).

These Slavic speaking members of the University began, in their religious literary works (among them the translation of Pázmány's works) to break the dominance of the Czech language in this field. They started to introduce the western Slavic dialects into the religious literature intended primarily for the Slavs of upper Hungary. From this developed the so-called *Jesuit Slovak* which was the start of Slovak literary movement brought to completion more than a hundred years later by Anton Bernolák. This was one of the decisive factors in building a sense of Slovak self-identity and national consciousness, neither of which could otherwise have arisen among the heterogeneous and linguistically diverse Slavic groups of Upper Hungary.

Another matter of import, only passingly mentioned in the article, is the founding of the University printing press by Miklós Telegdi, an Hungarian who rose from serfdom to high ecclesiastical rank. As the Provost of the Primate's Chapter at Nagyszombat, he secured a printing press from Viennese Jesuits in 1577 to use in the Primate's counter-reformatory efforts. When Telegdi's printing press stopped functioning, Primate Forgách bought a new press which he put under the care of the Jesuits at Pozsony. It was later transferred to Nagyszombat where the first Hungarian-German-Slovak Dictionary was published. Pázmány demanded that the teachers at the College and at the University master the language of the local Slavic population, introduced regular preaching for them in their language and put the university's printing press equally at the service of both German and Slav nationalities. Among the publications of the University Press between 1578 and 1777, 223 were printed in Hungarian, 43 in Slovak and 22 in German (T. Kafer, *Az Egyetemi Nyomda 400 éve*. Magyar Helikon, 1977, p. 49). Thus the origin of Slovak Catholic publishing goes back to the institute established by Péter Pázmány.

The article in *Historicky Casopis* sketchily refers to the works of a few professors (M. Szentiványi, S. Timon) in the field of historical geography which allegedly support the idea of Slovak continuity with Svatopluk's Great Moravia and its historical connection to the apostolate of Sts. Cyril and Methodius. This sounds like anachronistic projection into the past of newly-developed nationalistic views rather than solid history based on objective documentation. It was in the schools of the Jesuit of Piarist Orders during the Baroque Period that the conception of *Regnum Marianum* became a common idea enthusiastically endorsed by all nationalities. It regarded St. Stephen's kingdom as a common homeland for all nationalities symbolized by St. Stephen's crown placed under the protection of the Blessed Virgin. The same idea inspired Timon's interpretation of Slav-Hungarian relations: according to him, the occupation of the Carpathian Basin by the Magyars was not a heavy-handed subjugation of the Slavs but rather their willing acceptance of the new rule under which Magyars and Slavs built a common homeland in a friendly cooperative manner. To this interpretation stands in opposition the article's contention that the Hungarian nobility promoted the idea of subjugation of the Slavs; this would most especially not have applied to Upper Hungary where the Hungarian nobility became closely inter-related with the Slav population. There is no trace of the cult of Sts. Cyril and Methodius in this baroque ideal of a common homeland and the idea of the Slovak's continuity with Svatopluk's Moravia is a later product of the influence of Lutheranism and Czech-Moravian Protestantism with Pan-Slavic overtones.

The author of the article admits that "Slovak historiography has not dealt so far in detail with the history of the University of Nagyszombat-Trnava... and even today is missing a comprehensive treatment of the history of this highly important educational, scientific and cultural institute." The 350th anniversary has not produced a noticeable change in this regard. The article in *Historicky Casopis* itself is a superficial and sketchy contribution to a subject of great importance to the Slovaks. Aside from this article, we have information only about a *Vlastovedny Seminár* (Patriotic Seminar) arranged by the Slovak Historical Association and held in Nagyszombat-Trnava on May 23, 1985, commemorating the anniversary. The Slovak press abroad completely ignored the anniversary. It is even more difficult to understand this in light of the fact that Pázmány's University is often cited in Slovak sources as a Slovak foundation and the whole baroque culture of contemporary Upper Hungary — greatly enhanced by the University and its founder's personal influence — is often presented by Slovak authors as a Slovak accomplishment. The total silence on Pázmány's contribution to the birth and development of Catholic Slovak culture takes on a note of nationalistic prejudice in light of the fact that the delegation from the Theological Institute of Budapest, originally the Theological Faculty of Pázmány's University, was not allowed by the Slovak government to place a wreath on Pázmány's tomb in St. Martin's Cathedral in Pozsony-Bratislava, a city which culturally had been much enriched by him and his successor Primate of Hungary. Slovak historiography clearly needs to purify itself of a self-defeating nationalistic prejudice which by omissions and misinterpretations falsifies the past in order to meet the ambitions of the national self-image of the present.

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