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# Délvidéki Szemle

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Délvidéki Szemle  
Délvidéki Review

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# DÉLVIDÉKI SZEMLE Délvidéki Review

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On the cover: **Policemen of Martonos. The persons who are marked with an X were killed in 1944. 11. 21.** (Source: Archive of Délvidék Kutató Központ)

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The *Délvidéki Szemle's* ("Délvidéki Review" – The Southern Region Review) "*Academi Announcements*" column publishes original academic articles, not yet published anywhere else, with their abstracts. The publication contains peer-reviewed studies from all areas of history and social sciences; research results, works processing and compiling new sources, analyses and comprehensive syntheses.

The "*Public Life*" column publishes historical research about the Délvidék, journalism pieces relating to it as well as interviews and the transcripts of conference lectures to which the requirements of academic publications do not apply.

In the "*Téka*" column of the *Délvidéki Szemle* one can read reviews and critiques of books, films, databases and other media in connection with the Délvidék.

The main criterion for publishing academic works that have been submitted to the editors of the periodical is professional quality. The editors express their opinions on the manuscripts, and then a representative of academic life is asked to review the works along with members of an editorial committee. The authors of these pieces state that they have not published their work elsewhere; however, the editorial staff does not exclude publication of the material in other media or in other languages after it has appeared in the *Délvidéki Szemle*. Hungarian, Serbian, German and English language manuscripts must be sent electronically to the editorial office's address. The studies must be a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 20 printed pages.

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**THE INTERPRETATION OF THE SOUTHERN REGION'S WAR AGAINST  
THE TURKS IN THE 1789 VOLUME OF THE MAGYAR KURÍR  
(HUNGARIAN COURIER) OF VIENNA**

ANDRÁS DÖBÖR<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT**

*This presentation aims to show – on the grounds of the volume of year 1789 of the Hungarian newspaper published in Vienna under the title Magyar Kurír – the interpretation of the political and social consequences of the Turkish war lead by Emperor Joseph II in alliance with Tsar Catherine II against the Ottoman Empire which started in 1787 in order to win back the Serbian and Wallachian territories lost due to the Peace Treaty of Belgrade signed in 1739, and continued mainly in the South and ended by the capture of Belgrade and Szendrő in 1789.*

*The contextual and statistical analysis of the articles of the Magyar Kurír – initially Josephinist later focusing more and more on Hungarian reality and national grievances and revolts rather than on spreading the Viennese enlightened ideas – edited by Sándor Szacsuvay forms the basis of my research. I compare the reports and accounts of the southern Turkish war and by bringing into a broader context I place them in the subject matter of the volume of the year 1987 of the newspaper.*

*As a result of my studies I aim to present how the topic relates to issues of foreign policy, internal affairs and social subjects, dominating the contemporary common talk and public thinking, such as to the French revolution and other European movements of independence, to the economic and health problems of the residents of Hungary suffering from the burden of the war and to the increasingly evolving national ambitions against the reforms and reign of Joseph II.*

**THE SOUTHERN REGION'S WAR AGAINST THE TURKS**

Austria started the Southern Region's war against the Turks, i. e. the last Habsburg–Ottoman war, in alliance with the Russians in 1787. The imperial army was led by Emperor Joseph II because he believed it to be his duty to rise to the challenges of wartime with his army. The battles went on for a year and a half with varied luck. There were great losses on both sides, the Turkish armies reached the Southern areas of Hungary, the emperor ordered recruitment and that the Hungarian counties ship grains to the forces and pay military aid. All this only furthered the estates' resistance to the preparation of a new tax system. The county councils wrote petitions to protest against the emperor's regulations saying that only the parliament had the right to vote on recruitment and new taxes. The emperor, who had contracted malaria, arrived home seriously ill after the campaign and his condition further worsened in 1789. Although he promised the estates that he would assemble the parliament, he was unable to appease them. When the allies, led by General Laudon, were finally able to capture Belgrade, Joseph II received the news on his deathbed. After his death, his successor, Emperor Leopold II signed the separate peace treaty of Sistova, in which Austria relinquished Belgrade and agreed to restore the pre-war status quo. Russia continued the Turkish war on its own. The peace agreement of 1791 put an end to the almost four and a half century long conflict between the Hungarians and the Turks.<sup>2</sup>

**JOSEPHINIST SÁNDOR SZACSVAY AND THE MAGYAR KURÍR OF VIENNA**

Sándor Szacsvay, who was from a Transylvanian noble family and had studied in the lyceums of Debrecen and Bratislava and then attended law school in Vienna, belonging to the Josephinist intellectual strata, returned to Bratislava in 1784 where he became the editor of the first Hungarian newspaper. Between 1784 and 1786, the *Magyar Hírmondó*, edited by Szacsvay, still sympathized with Josephinist beliefs and remained in favor of the policies of Joseph II as a proponent and supporter of his reforms. In fact, he felt it was his duty to expose those who went against the regulations of the "good ruler". Thanks to the enlightened court and the moderate censorship, he could attack the conservative Hungarian church and government leadership, which was based on social hierarchy, in a satirical Voltairian manner. He also scrutinized the pomp and wastefulness evoking the French "*ancien regime*" and the "*dames*" who symbolized its ignorance, also the fanatical and superstitious priesthood who sometimes even went against the laws of faith and religion, and the devoted, too, who were deceived by them – so Hungarian feudal circumstances on the whole – thus, already gaining many enemies for himself. One thing is for certain, however, that the Hungarian newspaper was at the height of its popularity at the time, with 449 subscribers, which it could never exceed after Szacsvay was dismissed due to financial disputes.<sup>3</sup>

In 1786, Szacs vay, who had by then committed himself completely to journalism, along with Dániel Tállyai, previously the editor of the *Pressburger Zeitung*, publisher of a Slovakian newspaper, the *Presspurské Nowiny*, were considering launching their own Hungarian newspaper. Dániel Tállyai, who in that certain era can be thought of as a businessman who saw the money-making possibilities in publishing, planned to launch two other media outlets apart from his Slovakian paper. He intended to start a Hungarian language newspaper as an alternative to the *Magyar Hírmondó*, and a German language newspaper as an alternative to the *Pressburger Zeitung*, and both to create commercial competition to the already existing papers.<sup>4</sup>

A call for subscriptions was issued for the *Magyar Kurír* and the *Pressburger Merkur* but local press owners Patzkó and Landerer, even though Joseph II had put an end to press monopoly, did everything in their power to prevent the newspapers from being published. The campaign – which was clearly based on financial interests – ended with the victory of the printing press owners. Eventually, one unauthorized sample issue of each newspaper was published in July of 1786, for which the city council had the press owner, Weber arrested. However, this was not the main reason why Szacs vay had to leave Bratislava. He had made just too powerful enemies – apart from the press owners –, chiefly among the priesthood and the dames he had continually criticized in the *Magyar Hírmondó*, as well as the “*the High Reverends and Dignitaries*”.<sup>5</sup>

From the end of the year the story continues in Vienna, where the launch of the *Magyar Kurír* could not be prevented on grounds of press privilege and the imperial capital’s enlightened atmosphere was very attractive as well. On December 2nd, 1786, the second issue was published in the capital city of the Empire and from January of 1787 to the first issue of the year 1793, when he was dismissed from the newspaper, Szacs vay edited and published the *Magyar Kurír*, the paper known in professional literature as “*the second Hungarian language newspaper*”.<sup>6</sup>

#### **PLACEMENT OF THE SOUTHERN REGION’S WAR AGAINST THE TURKS IN THE THEMATIC NETWORK OF THE VOLUME OF 1789 OF THE MAGYAR KURÍR**

Unequivocally, Szacs vay became the most progressive and most significant journalist and editor of the era in Vienna who reached a high quality of progressive publicism compared to the media outlets of the time. He was not immune to the internal conflicts that became characteristic of the Josephinist intellectual strata with the growth of resistance from the nobles and estates, since due to his correspondents, he remained in close contact with public life at home, gained knowledge of the people’s dissatisfaction with the ruler, which was exacerbated by the Turkish war and spread from the nobles to the farmers and to the intellectuals as well. Szacs vay’s newspaper followed this incremental change very well, which change had a characteristic impact on the general atmosphere of that era.

At the beginning he was enthusiastically Josephinist, calling Joseph II the “*wise ruler*” and “*the sweet father of our sweet homeland*”. On the page he advocated for religious tolerance, attacked the demands of the estates and most of all the church officials, supported the abolition of tax exemption for the nobles and condemned the movements of the Netherlands and France but in reaction to the political changes, he later altered his tone.

While retaining a Josephinist attitude, he no longer described the events in France as a rebellion but turned toward them with sympathy. He played an important role in spreading the news of the French revolution due to the unique style of his dispatches and commentaries. His sources were foreign newspapers but since he could only broadcast this topic based on the contents of the authorized Vienna paper, he used the popular fictitious genre of underworld dialogues used by enlightened authors of the time to complement the official dispatches. In Szacsavay’s newspaper sometimes animals (sparrows, swallows, dogs), sometimes historical figures (Machiavelli, Alexander the Great, Democritus), at other times fictional heroes (Aesop) told their interpretations of the “*French uproar*”, all this in a Josephinist disapproving tone to further deter the vigilance of the censors.

Despite the growing pressure from the censors he gave news on the other significant foreign policy issue affecting the Habsburg Empire at the time, the Turkish war,<sup>7</sup> through direct battlefield dispatches apart from writings adapted from the official Viennese paper, which he marked with an asterisk<sup>8</sup> so as to separate them from his own writings.

He tried to emphasize how successfully the Hungarian troops were able to cope on the battlefield, for example, in the July 22nd, 1789 issue of the newspaper, he printed a long summary on the Erdőd Hussars,<sup>9</sup> composed mostly of young men from the counties of Fehér, Veszprém, Vas and Sopron stationed in the Bánság, with whose story he aimed to prove that “*Hungarians are generally good soldiers against all enemies but especially against the Turks...*”<sup>10</sup> Even later he always found the means to detail the “*history*” of the Hussar Regiments who were glorious in the battles.<sup>11</sup>

He sought to expand his own network of reporters in various ways, for example, he printed the following notice in his paper: “*Those who would send us reports from the camps of this present war... we would send these people free issues of the newspaper for three years*”.<sup>12</sup> He also reassured his correspondents that no-one would see their letters apart from the censor, so they could write at ease because: “*The gentleman who examines the paper crosses out from our letters what should not be there, otherwise, no-one else has the authority to find out who wrote what*”.<sup>13</sup> Regarding the question of publicity, with the pretext of the newspaper stamp tax implemented by the government, which regulation had been previously published,<sup>14</sup> the *Magyar Kurír* addressed



it vehemently in the July 4th, 1789 issue: *“Ideas are free of payment; now but if these are written on newspaper pages a half Kreutzer has to be paid... They sometimes do stick the stamp on the Kurír’s horse; tell the truth or lie already – the price is half a Kreutzer anyhow!! Tell the truth, then.”*<sup>15</sup>

In the English dispatch of the same issue he detailed the circumstances of the implementation of the Stamp Act in England and made bold statements on the subject of freedom of the press in relation to it: *“This is the straight path on which the Stamp arrived from Vienna:<sup>16</sup> oh but what pain! What a great pity that with this Stamp the freedom of writing that comes with it could not come from England. – In England such freedoms do the journalists have who pay the Stamp that they may freely speak their minds against the King, the Parliament, the Ministries, Heaven and Earth, and it can be sold in common papers.”*<sup>17</sup>

Szacsvay told his readers of the establishment of public access to parliamentary proceedings according to which *“what happens in the Parliament is made known to the people in 14 days from the News Papers, so they gladly pay even a high price for them (...) through these, everything is brought to the knowledge of the People; here, writing and printing a Newspaper is allowed without any screening...”*<sup>18</sup>

He purposely did not replace or correct the parts of his reports that had been taken out by the censors as a way to let his readers know his opinion. He left them empty and marked them with crossed out lines and humorous messages (*“Left in after screening”, “Screen gap”, “Look for it in the screen”, “the Kurír is not even permitted to say it”, “we will not write anything more here because the Budai Újság also has only this much on the matter but this also means something”, etc.*)<sup>19</sup>

The volume of 1789 reports from the beginning on the antecedents of the last Estates-General called together by the French king (election of ambassadors, the economic situation, internal political atmosphere),<sup>20</sup> its commencement, the demands of the burghers and the topics they wished to discuss and the events of the first sessions – of course,<sup>21</sup> all within the limits of censorship, but expanding those limits in the manner previously indicated.

On June 27th, 1789 the *Kurír* was published significantly abbreviated by censors and marked in Szacsvay’s usual style. It reported that the Estates-General continued to debate, *“the contentions and the smoke of internal fire have not yet ceased; but nothing notable, worthy of reading has happened, except that not long ago --”*<sup>22</sup> Then where the dispatch had been cut short, where the censor had removed the text, he published an implicative fable about the wealthy French tailor, who attained noble status and an impoverished marquis, in which the tailor, derided for his low birth, tricks the arrogant marquis and says: *“...because even now I am not ashamed of this craft that has made me a rich and noble man”*.<sup>23</sup>

On July 11th he reported in a careful tone on the events of the June 24th Estate-General when Louis XVI declared the previous decisions of the Estate-General to be void and attempted to dissolve the meeting but his attempts were declared unacceptable by the burgher estate and the multitude. He reviewed Necker's discussion with the king and its result, then from the previously detailed Josephinist perspective, so as to quiet the censors, he characterized the events as follows: "*The cup of Pandemonium is already full here; the burgher estate is unruly and says that they are the ones who constitute the French people; it would not wish to distinguish itself from the Noble Estate: this seems to bear bad consequences*".<sup>24</sup> He continued to report on the events of that day in the July 19th issue of the newspaper giving an account of the burghers arming themselves, attacks against rural manors and castles, the soldiers' oaths that they would not bear arms against their own people as well as on the political victory of the third estate: "(...) *the Clerical Estate joined the Burgher Estate and afterward practically forced the Noble Estate to join them*".<sup>25</sup> After reporting the news, he could not resist and reacted to the events in an excellent squib, in which he discussed the absolute power the French kings had held over their people since Louis XIV as well as their European influence and alluded to the radical changes that were a foot thanks to the current political situation: "*How powerful were the kings of France. In an assembly of crowns the French king was the greatest and when he spoke, all listened, only the great Frederic<sup>26</sup> mumbled occasionally. (...) This once mighty king has had boundaries forced upon him by his lowliest serfs, the Burgher Estate.*"<sup>27</sup>

Szacsvay later revisited the French events several times briefly summarizing the news he received on the political and economic situation according to which the crisis was still not over. On July 25th, in a short commentary he reported that "*in Paris and in all of France the inner peace is not yet whole, poverty digs elbow deep into the French breadbasket*".<sup>28</sup>

On July 29th, in a new piece, he allowed himself to use the following expression that since the common people of France noticed that "*the noble Estate, in fact, the greatest ruler in the world is also born naked, dies naked and is buried naked, so they do not want to believe that they do not have the lawful right to their natural lot: this is why there is always a new uproar in Paris (...), which will always end in bloodshed.*"<sup>29</sup>

The August 5th, 1789 issue of the paper can be considered one of the zeniths of Szacsvay's political publicism, in which he attempted to review the events that had taken place up until then in a longer piece. However, due to censorship, he chose to do this in the genre of fictitious dialogues from the underworld, in which a French and a Hungarian sparrow meet in the hereafter and tell each other the stories of their lives and deaths, showing at once the French and Hungarian internal political situations.<sup>30</sup>

The French sparrow, who was sent to the Elysian fields by starvation and was born on the same day as Voltaire,<sup>31</sup> who will forever be remembered, gives a detailed account based on French newspaper reports, of the events that took place from 1788 until then: the great famine and cold, which brought destruction during the winter of 1788/1789, the political battles between the king and the burgher estate, the king and the common people arming themselves against one another and the violent acts. *“So my dear sparrow Friend, due to the famine and the uproar, France is under such dire circumstances that only in the past few days more than 800 people lay dead in their own blood in King Louis XV’s market square.”*<sup>32</sup>

After this, when reporting on the revolution, he was forced to use the form of the Elysian dialogues, but strived to give detailed accounts of the post-July 4th happenings to his readers.<sup>33</sup> For example, in the August 22nd issue he published the correspondence between the king, Necker and the national assembly, regarding the matter of the replaced minister returning to Paris. Based on the accounts of the Parisian papers, he informed of the first decisions made by the National Constituent Assembly<sup>34</sup> as it worked out, based on Rousseau’s *“Social Contract”* and Montesquieu’s *“Theory of the separation of powers”* – among others –, the *“happiness of the People based on the fine measure of the Laws of nature”*.<sup>35</sup>

In the August 26th issue he could only give an account of the cruelties perpetrated during the revolution, the atrocities committed against the aristocrats and the nobles in the form of Elysian publicism, as the dialogue between Count Artois’ dead dog and Cerberus suggesting<sup>36</sup> that the revolution would spread to regions beyond the river Rhine, for example, to Belgium.<sup>37</sup> This passage was heavily restricted by the censors even in this form and of course, Szacs vay could not let this pass without comment: *“It is well known, Dear Cerberus, what is the lot of us dogs! We must not bark much about Belgium, so that no-one may shear our wolf skin fur; that is why I am silent here.”*<sup>38</sup> He thought it was a veritable comedy that the Assembly had named the king the *“Restorer of freedom”*.<sup>39</sup> *“Oh Cerberus, I was once at a comedy, a comedy written by Molière, titled: The doctor acting against his own will.”*<sup>40</sup>

Szacs vay’s next report on the events of the revolution, based on Parisian newspapers, came on October 24th, 1789. He provided accounts of the achievements of the Assembly, the famine, as well as the Women’s March<sup>41</sup> and Louis XVI moving to Paris with his family.<sup>42</sup> After informing the readers of these happenings, he stated with an apt feel for politics that the Assembly and the Parisian people were constantly gaining power over the royal family. He alluded to the decreasing popularity of the king, especially the queen, and predicted the final outcome with the words of a clairvoyant: *“...but after all the situation is such in France that it is no wonder they prey for them in Rome”*.<sup>43</sup> On November 7th, in a short article he informed the readers that the royal family was still not being allowed out of Paris, *“the King has no choice, but to gladly sign the regulations put forth by the Assembly”*.<sup>44</sup>

Besides the events taking place in France, he also kept a close watch – via newspaper sources – on reports of the other freedom movements of Europe. Apart from providing positive commentary on these, he also sought to emphasize the theoretical relationship with the freedom movements of North America and Western Europe. For example, in a June 24th, 1789 dispatch he made an interesting comparison with the Polish Republican movement, which was on a different level as regards social development: *“The Russian Empress Catherine<sup>45</sup> has moved all her armies and food supplies out of Ukraine. The Patriot Poles, now holding discussions at the Parliament on how to improve their societal rights, are saying that after the death of the present Polish king there should be no more kings and instead they would make their country a Free-Community. – All nations are starting to adopt Washington’s<sup>46</sup> philosophy and whilst in Europe Monarchies are rising, the French People wish for English freedom.”<sup>47</sup>*

In the July 11th, 1789 issue’s Warsaw dispatch regarding the Polish nobility voluntarily voting for military aid, he quoted with serious political implications the wealthy nobleman, Rubikovsky’s speech in which he advocated for the voluntarily tax payment of the nobility: *“Let us give the tithe to our Dear Homeland from the assets which we have taken from it (...) I would rather give a fourth of all my fortune (...) for the protection of my homeland than to have (...) a stranger ransack my house and treat me dishonorably on the land where I was born. – If fate would so have it that our Dear Homeland and Country is to be lost; then we are ready to be buried together in the coffin of our dear Homeland... and to extinguish the fire of our Homeland’s dishonor with our blood, which we Poles, up to the 1772nd year have tolerated without so much as shedding a drop of our own blood (...) but I voluntarily swear that of my assets every year I will take 40 thousand animals of which I am determined to gladly sacrifice a tenth part each year for the general use of my country.”<sup>48</sup>* The nobility’s volunteering to pay taxes and willingness to make sacrifices for the common good were portrayed in an unequivocally positive light by Szacsvay, and he also reported on other such pledges sending a clear message to his readers, the Hungarian nobles.

On September 5th, he published a brief report on Holland about *“a secret place where Patriots surreptitiously hold meetings. It does not seem important; But it is big news to those who understand.”<sup>49</sup>*

By 1789 local reports definitely took a very different tone from official news and painted an increasingly darker picture. One of the *Kurír’s* correspondents reported from Brasov that *“we, here on the borders, are quiet; but I do not know what our wives and children will eat in the future”<sup>50</sup>*. A correspondent from Háromszék (Covasna) reported that a cubic fathom of wheat’s price was rising to 13 Forints while the poorer quality wheat’s price rose to 10 Forints. *“According to this proportion all things for eating and drinking are so expensive that in certain places the poor can hardly sustain themselves; in some places something to eat or drink cannot even be found for money... In Hungary they are complaining of the same everywhere.”<sup>51</sup>*

At the beginning of 1789, according to the accounts of the *Magyar Kurír*, instead of a merry Carnival season and a beautiful wife, people wished one another peace, health and protection from famine and plague.<sup>52</sup> On May 2nd, he wrote in a letter to Count András Hadik, commander of the southern armies, about the farmers starving due to confiscation, calling them “*those who can hardly stand the weight that this war has put on them*”.<sup>53</sup>

And Szacs vay found a way again to express his opinion in an allegorical tale on the consequences of the Turkish war, the diseases, the epidemics and the people who were in hardship due to the burden of having to put up soldiers – clearly alluding to the responsibility of the court and the establishment of “*liberating*” army. The story is about a Gardener, whose garden is pilfered by a rabbit, so he turns to his Master for help, who immediately “*grabs a hunting rifle, 36 hunting dogs and has 3 hunters join him*”<sup>54</sup> and they begin the hunt stamping all over the vegetable garden. In the end the rabbit escapes through a hole in the fence. “*Upon which the Master of the garden sends for the Gardener and reports to him that the rabbit has been chased away from the garden like the Great Leader from Bánát. – The Gardener makes his way all around the garden and starts to scratch the base of his ear. – So! He says: the rabbit did indeed run away; but you, My Lord, and your hunters and My Lord’s Dogs have ruined my garden more than the rabbit could have in a hundred years (...) Who is the Gardener, the Farmer and the rabbit? Those who wish to know ought to give it some thought.*”<sup>55</sup>

In the formerly mentioned Elysian dialogue of August 5th, 1789, through the Hungarian sparrow’s account, Szacs vay clearly alludes to the internal difficulties the Habsburg Empire was facing: the Turkish war and the famines caused by the poor economic circumstances. Since the Sparrow was born during the happy times under the rule of the late Empress Maria Theresa, “*when a bushel of wheat, even the best, was only 8 Groschens, and now a cubic fathom can be sold at 6-7-8 Forints in many places (...) We Sparrows indeed have never known starvation in this happy country; but last year and this year we have suffered much strife; because one neighbor is an enemy and the other offers help here (...) many were taken, many fell prey and I am afraid that even after next Christmas my sons who are still alive will suffer unexpected need.*”<sup>56</sup> This work carefully notes that besides the burdens of the Turkish war the accommodated German and allied soldiers mean a serious burden to the population and that the accommodation and confiscations were also causes of the famine and the uncertain internal political situation.

Even though his attention was mainly focused on the revolutionary events and the situation caused by the war, he did come to emphasize and publish an increasing number of writings on the linguistic and cultural efforts of the patriot movement; in contrast with what we saw when he was editing the *Magyar Hírmondó*, where he seemed to be indifferent on the subject.

By the beginning of the '90s, thanks to modifying its reports in this direction based on intuiting social needs and interests, the *Magyar Kurír* experienced a great increase in readership and thus in influence and significance. By the end of 1788 Szacs vay could already boast of 800 subscribers to his newspaper, a number which no Hungarian media outlet had reached before. In 1789 the number grew to 900 and in 1790 to 1200, which showed the undiminished development of the paper and its readership. This was certainly due to Szacs vay's careful but growing sympathy towards the estates' resistance which was at the same time not free of criticism. The culmination of these sentiments could be seen in his 1790–91 parliamentary dispatches.<sup>57</sup>

Under the protective umbrella of the Josephinist court and during Leopold II's era of temporary relief, even though he was subject to serious attacks, his political publicism remained uninfluenced. In fact, during this time, instead of spreading enlightened Viennese notions, his attention turned increasingly toward the Hungarian reality and the offenses suffered by the nation. Greatly surpassing his era, he wrote his short political squibs during this time and can be personally credited with establishing the genre in Hungary.<sup>58</sup>

After the death of Leopold II, due to political changes, his old and new adversaries were able to have him removed from the paper in 1793.<sup>59</sup>

It is known from literary sources that the pretext based on which the *Magyar Kurír* was banned was the report published on the French king's trial. In the paper's first issue of the year 1793 there was an article about the interrogation of the king despite the fact that the censor had removed it. Another issue was that the king addressed as "Sie" was translated to "Your Grace" in Hungarian, which was considered disrespectful to the king. It did not matter that in another Hungarian paper, the *Hadi és Más Nevezetes Történetek* (Important Stories of Military or Other Topics, supported by magnates Ferenc Széchenyi, György Festetich, Pál Teleki), the article was published without the censor's permission only to be punished with a fine that was later canceled. The chancellery announced on January 3rd, that the *Magyar Kurír* had been banned. Szacs vay turned to the sovereign with a petition which made it clear that he had already seen his position as disadvantaged compared to other papers that better align themselves with the politics of the chancellery, and in which he gave an account of the above mentioned harassments from which he always had to defend his newspaper. What is more, they had deprived him – along with his wife and child – of their living, since he had no background other than his business, the *Magyar Kurír*, which in the past six years had increased the treasury's income by 30 000 Forints and earned the printing works 14 000 Forints. He complained that the censor did not proceed according to the guidelines and deleted all sort of things in the said article that was at the same time published by other papers. The same censor had permitted another paper to publish the same article that he was actually being punished for.<sup>60</sup>

As a result of all these things his exile proved to be final, he was never to hold a position as a journalist again neither in Hungary nor in Transylvania up until his death in 1815. Since the time he had spent in Bratislava he had been accumulating offenses against the church and the aristocracy; through his satirical articles and sharp diatribes, his journalistic qualifications but especially due to the shift in power – first the estates' opposition's attacks against the Josephinists, later the compromise between the court and the estates – to which he did not want and could not adapt, he remained permanently alone. The notions as well as the editorial methods in which he believed became completely unviable in the new political system and nearly half a century was necessary for Hungarian journalism to reach that level again where it had been between 1787 and 1793.<sup>61</sup>

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The author is a doctoral candidate and a college senior lecturer (University of Szeged Juhász Gyula Teacher Training Faculty).
- <sup>2</sup> László Katus: *Magyarország a Habsburg Monarchiában*. In: Romsics, Ignác (ed.): *Magyarország története*. Budapest, 2010. p. 536., p. 584.
- <sup>3</sup> Béla Dezsényi: *A Magyar Kurír és a cenzúra 1787–1793*. Magyar Könyvszemle. 1967. sz. p. 21.
- <sup>4</sup> Béla Dezsényi: *A Magyar Kurír és a cenzúra 1787–1793*. Magyar Könyvszemle. 1967. sz. p. 22.
- <sup>5</sup> Béla Dezsényi writes in more detail about the “*Bratislava antecedents*” in the study referred to above (pages 21–27), according to its premise, Szacs vay was “*placed in an idle position*” after 1793 due to reasons that date back to this early journalistic period.
- <sup>6</sup> György Kókay – Géza Buzinkay – Gábor Murányi: *A magyar sajtó története*. Budapest, 2001. pp. 36–40.
- <sup>7</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. pp. 13–14., pp. 35–36., pp. 53–57., pp. 59–62., pp. 78–80., pp. 93–98., pp. 118–120., pp. 125–127., pp. 132–138., pp. 144–146., pp. 151–154., pp. 176–178., pp. 195–199., pp. 204–208., p. 210., pp. 237–240., pp. 254–257., pp. 325–331., pp. 340–344., pp. 353–356., pp. 389–392., pp. 413–420., pp. 429–433., pp. 444–450., pp. 454–458., pp. 460–466., pp. 467–471., p. 474., pp. 479–481., pp. 484–486., pp. 495–496., pp. 500–505., pp. 509–514., pp. 531–532., p. 553., pp. 555–560., p. 581., pp. 594–596., pp. 605–608., pp. 611–614., pp. 619–624., pp. 627–640., pp. 651–656., pp. 660–666., pp. 679–682., pp. 695–697., pp. 708–710., pp. 713–714., pp. 719–722., pp. 726–728., pp. 742–747., pp. 755–767., pp. 771–776., pp. 787–796., pp. 811–814., pp. 820–828., pp. 833–834., pp. 835–849., pp. 858–861., pp. 867–870., pp. 883–890., pp. 899–914., pp. 913–920., pp. 941–949., pp. 962–968., pp. 977–986., pp. 993–999., pp. 1009–1016., pp. 1018–1023., p. 1024., pp. 1049–1055., pp. 1085–1089., pp. 1097–1140., pp. 1141–1143., pp. 1145–1176., pp. 1182–1190., pp. 1193–1208., pp. 1211–1220., pp. 1229–1239., pp. 1242–1252., pp. 1277–1287., pp. 1293–1301., pp. 1315–1319., pp. 1329–1331., pp. 1341–1346., pp. 1349–1359., pp. 1365–1374., pp. 1382–1387., pp. 1391–1396., pp. 1410–1411., pp. 1418–1421., pp. 1438–1443., pp. 1463–1465.
- <sup>8</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. pp. 915–916.; “A Fő-Hadit-Tanáctól közelebb ki-adott Tudósítás ez: (\*\*)” megjelöléssel. “*This report has been issued from closer than the Headquarters:*” marked with (\*\*)
- <sup>9</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. pp. 798–800.
- <sup>10</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 797.
- <sup>11</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. pp. 1057–1062.
- <sup>12</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 706.

- <sup>13</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 706.
- <sup>14</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. pp. 582–584.
- <sup>15</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. pp. 707–708.
- <sup>16</sup> News stamp.
- <sup>17</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 717.
- <sup>18</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. pp. 717–718.
- <sup>19</sup> Eg.: Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 73., p. 275., p. 560., p. 592., p. 596., p. 603., p. 713., p. 714., p. 874., p. 896., p. 927., p. 952., pp. 1333–1335., p. 1441., p. 1444.
- <sup>20</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 120., pp. 130–131., pp. 358–359., p. 486., pp. 492–493., pp. 514–516.
- <sup>21</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. pp. 566–567., pp. 574–575., p. 609.
- <sup>22</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 682.
- <sup>23</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. pp. 682–684.
- <sup>24</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. pp. 751–752.
- <sup>25</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 781.
- <sup>26</sup> Frederick the Great Prussian king.
- <sup>27</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 782.
- <sup>28</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 817.
- <sup>29</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 831.
- <sup>30</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. pp. 851–858.
- <sup>31</sup> Voltaire.
- <sup>32</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 855–856.
- <sup>33</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. pp. 874–880., pp. 893–897., pp. 930–939., pp. 949–955., pp. 974–975., pp. 986–990., pp. 999–1000., p. 1055., pp. 1093–1094., pp. 1140–1141., p. 1208., pp. 1220–1224., pp. 1254–1260., p. 1290., pp. 1301–1304., p. 1331., p. 1347., p. 1359., p. 1423.
- <sup>34</sup> Which are built into the fundamental document of the French Revolution, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, adopted on August 26th of 1789.
- <sup>35</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. pp. 933–934.
- <sup>36</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. pp. 949–955.
- <sup>37</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 952.
- <sup>38</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 953.
- <sup>39</sup> *Restaurateur de la liberté.*
- <sup>40</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 954.
- <sup>41</sup> October 4th, 1789.
- <sup>42</sup> October 6th, 1789.
- <sup>43</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 1224.
- <sup>44</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 1290.
- <sup>45</sup> Catherine the Great.
- <sup>46</sup> George Washington.
- <sup>47</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 666.



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- <sup>48</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. pp. 749–750.
- <sup>49</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 1003.
- <sup>50</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 698.
- <sup>51</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 718.
- <sup>52</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 3.
- <sup>53</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 352.
- <sup>54</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 16.
- <sup>55</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 17.
- <sup>56</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. pp. 856–857.
- <sup>57</sup> Magyar Kurír, 1789. p. 101., pp. 140–145.
- <sup>58</sup> György Kókay: *Hírlap és folyóirat-irodalmunk a 18. században*. In: Miklós Szabolcsi – György Kókay (ed.): *A magyar sajtó története I. 1705–1848*. Budapest, 1979. p. 140.
- <sup>59</sup> György Kókay – Géza Buzinkay – Gábor Murányi: *A magyar sajtó története*. Budapest, 2001. p. 40.
- <sup>60</sup> György Kókay: *Hírlap és folyóirat-irodalmunk a 18. században*. In: Miklós Szabolcsi – György Kókay (ed.): *A magyar sajtó története I. 1705–1848*. Budapest, 1979. pp. 150–151.
- <sup>61</sup> For more details, see: András Döbör: *Egy székely hírlapszerkesztő élete a bécsi sajtópolitika hullámverésében*. In: Gábor Ferenc Kiss (ed.): *Közös múlt és közös jövő*. Szeged – Arad, 2008. pp. 37–38.

## MILITARY CLERGY IN THE DIOCESE OF CSANÁD IN 1848–1849

PÉTER ZAKAR

### ABSTRACT

*More than 120 years ago, in 1892, József Ambrus, the parish priest from the Diocese of Csanád in Kisorosz, published a volume on the military clergy participants in the Hungarian Revolution of 1848. In the midst of the church conflicts and national identity questions that were raging in the 1890s, the patriotism of Catholic priests was increasingly being called into question. Ambrus expressed his disappointment that “patriotism today is a matter of throat and pen”, and he condemned the kind of “small-minded view” that considered only Hungarian speakers to be Hungarians. In his work he aimed to prove the patriotism of the linguistically and culturally diverse Catholic clergy during the Revolution of 1848. “Those who, through a thousand dangers and storms, sacrificed their blood and lives, deserve not to be forgotten. We owe it to them to prove with facts and names, to the country and to the world, that the Catholic clergy, not only in the churches and on the pulpit, not only through words but through actions, on the battlefield, in fire and water, in the smoke of guns and cannonballs, was as patriotic and brave as anyone.” These were the words with which Ambrus in his preface summarized the task before him.<sup>1</sup>*

*One hundred and twenty years in itself would be a good enough reason to take into account the more recent literature, even if we restrict the research to the Diocese of Csanád, and taking advantage of the Roman Catholic Diocesan Archives of Temesvár, we take a look again at the history of the clergy in the army. Numerous soldiers of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848, including, for example, László Baross, had a history*

*almost impossible to learn about without the sources in the Temesvár archives. Since people took up Hungarian or different names, it is difficult to track all the changes in people's names. Among our goals is the comparison of the results of military history research and church history research. In the future we hope to treat the history of the Diocese of Csanád in 1848–49 in a monograph. The first part of one of the chapters of this work is presented below, which deals with the members of the clergy who took arms in the army. Thus, in this writing we do not deal with military chaplains, national militia or other members of the clergy who took arms outside the context of national defense.<sup>2</sup>*

### **THE CSANÁD DIOCESE IN 1848–1849**

Nothing better illustrates the colorful history of the Diocese of Csanád in 1848/49 than the fact that during this time two bishops and four vicars tried to run the diocese. The emperor Franz Joseph I named József Lonovics Archbishop of Eger, and Mihály Horváth, Provost of Hatvan was appointed Bishop of Csanád on June 25th, 1848. The diocese was run by vicars during the absence of the bishops: until August 27th, 1848, Ignác Fábry, Titular Bishop, then József Róka, General Vicar. The latter, on November 1st, 1848, due to the threatening behavior of the Temesvár military council, moved headquarters to Makó, to the bishops' summer residence. Lonovics, following an unsuccessful attempt, named Fábry vicar again on February 10th, 1848, while also ordering the Makó vicariate to move to Temesvár. The latter was reluctant to obey, Róka moved to Debrecen, so József Mihálovics, Honorary Canon had to oversee the district. Fábry, however, was captured by the Hungarians, and so in Temesvár, István Oltványi canon took up management of affairs. Róka and Mihálovics were on the side of the Hungarians, Fábry and István Oltványi were loyal to the emperor.<sup>3</sup>

Lonovics' order arrived in Temesvár on February 10th, where they tried to implement it. Since Fábry did not arrive back in Temesvár until March 10th, the vicariate informed the members of the 16 subdeaneries which were under imperial control about the appointing of István Oltványi. At this time, the authority of the vicar of Makó only extended over Szeged and three districts of Arad. At the same time, it is obvious that the authority of the two vicariates was a question of the current military situation. The situation was advantageous to the vicar of Temesvár in February and March, however, things changed in spring. On April 27th, 1849, the Hungarian troops surrounded Temesvár, so the vicariate there closed down for a few months; the diocese from that point on was directed primarily by the vicar of Makó. On August 9th the blockade ended, then the Makó vicariate was dissolved, and on the 18th the direction of the diocese was taken over once again from István Oltványi by Ignác Fábry. The frequent changes introduced into the governance of the diocese made the clergy prone to join the military.<sup>4</sup>

Before we move on to the subject of clergy that took arms in the military, we would like to make a preliminary remark. In the Temesvár seminary and the lyceum founded by Bishop József Lonovics, many among the teachers and the students sympathized with modern principles. A large fraction of the teachers of the educational institutions had to be replaced following the revolutionary war because they urged church reforms, including democratic church government and the abolition of compulsory celibacy. Following the failure of the revolution, the diocese leadership took various levels of retaliation against members of the movement. For example, in the case of Pál Hegedűs (1807–1870), who was appointed administrator in September, 1849 at the border of the diocese in Kistelek.<sup>5</sup> At the end of December he was forced to withdraw his earlier requests for reform in writing.<sup>6</sup>

### ORDAINED PRIESTS PERFORMING ARMED SERVICE IN THE MILITARY

István Oltványi, the bishop's vicar loyal to the emperor, did not fail to mention his disapproval of the situation at the seminary in a letter that he wrote to József Lonovics:

*"It pains me to report", he wrote on March 9th, 1848 "that some of the members of the Csanád clergy followed not only as chaplains, such as for example professor Magyarai, Kornis, Kerényi; but, what is more, took arms in joining the military. Including: Baross, Bobik, Rózsafy, Klobucsár, Kőszeghy, Berecz, Bokányi. I have heard numerous complaints about this formerly poorly-behaved group of assistants, and also there is a general emergence against the whole of the young priests, their education and even their teachers (with respect to the few notable exceptions). Some parish priests prefer to work without assistants than to put up with ones who are poorly-behaved. The public wishes for a radical change!"*<sup>7</sup> Was the vicar right to connect disciplinary problems within the church with time spent in the military?

According to the laws of the church, priests may not hold arms. Those who broke this rule committed an infraction (*irregularitas*). Canon law further distinguishes between just and unjust war. In the case of the former, the chaplains who only encouraged their soldiers to be brave did not commit an infraction. However, in the latter case, supposing that opposing soldiers were killed or injured, the chaplains who had encouraged the action committed an infraction due to the lack of priestly meekness (*defectus lenitatis*). While the lack of priestly meekness is an infraction stemming from a lack of adherence to canon law (*irregularitas ex defectu*), murder and mutilation is a crime, which itself is an infraction (*irregularitas ex delicto*). Thus, those priests who took arms committed this latter category of infraction.<sup>8</sup>

According to the above-mentioned letter, László Baross (1819–1892), the chaplain from Billéd (or Billét) was born in a noble family; his father was Ferenc Baross, his mother was Borbála Nyéki.<sup>9</sup> During his time as chaplain in Billéd, he played cards regularly, and – by his own admission – accumulated a debt of 1000 pengőforints,

which the reckless chaplain partly attributed to the greediness of his usurers. For a period of time his uncle, László Nyéky, living in Makó, helped him out, but when he saw that he was accumulating ever greater amounts of debt, he also stopped supporting him. As a result, on July 25th, 1847, he turned to his bishop, and asked him to seize his assets in order to escape his creditors this way. In response the ecclesiastical court took his assets under protection on August 4th, appointing the parish priest Pál Novák as its guardian.<sup>10</sup>

On September 17th, 1847, The Ecclesiastical Court of Csanád called Baross to appear before it, where *“after his action, which put himself in debt beyond his means, put both his good-faith creditors – risking both his own honor and the reputation of the church – and himself in the kind of trouble whose pitiable consequences would affect the entire rest of his life, in the name of this court, his Leading Excellency [Bishop Ignác Fábry – P. Z.] disapproved of; telling him in very strong words to abandon his wasteful ways, to abandon playing cards, the unfortunate consequences of which he was again experiencing, and to forever abandon accumulating debt, and threatening him with more serious consequences should he again relapse, and making him promise that he would conduct himself with behavior beyond reproach, and through the tireless performance of his official duties to give all the indications of the improvement that is rightfully expected of him”*.<sup>11</sup>

However, Baross' debts greatly surpassed the amount that he indicated, since his guardian on November 10th, 1847 reported a debt of 2811 forints.<sup>12</sup> At the same time Pál Novák began paying off the most impatient creditors, first meeting the demands of Márk Krancsits, a citizen of Temesvár–Józsefváros.<sup>13</sup> László Baross, who in the meantime took the necessary exam before Frigyes Konrád, required to absolve him of his transgression, achieving a medium result,<sup>14</sup> did not improve despite the reprimand, and as a result of this he rather joined the military as a volunteer. This is because Baross, over the course of a few months, accumulated a new debt of 167 forints 40 krajcárs.<sup>15</sup> Since he did not want to turn to his church superiors again, he decided to join the national defense instead. He shared his decision with Ignác Fábry in mid-July of 1848:

*“On the 18th of this present month [July, 1848], I joined the volunteer civil defense in Pest. I thought it better to end the rest of my miserable days heroically on the battlefield than between four walls by a rope, or any other death. I thought it appropriate to share this with your Excellency.*

*It is my strong conviction that the Reverend Chapter will not take steps such that I will be forced to leave my current position. I certainly cannot work successfully in that field in which I have spent six years with certain zeal, I dare say, not least of all so that they do not force me to take such steps as I shudder to imagine.*

*I thought it best to hide my name and the position I had held heretofore, so that nobody should be horrified by my actions, and so thereby bring any kind of disrepute to the order of which I had been an unsuitable member.”*<sup>16</sup>

The Ecclesiastical Court of Csanád debated the Baross issue on August 8th, 1848, and decided that it could not take appropriate steps, since neither Baross' pseudonym nor his location were known to it. Besides this – as we can read in the record of the court's meeting, they state *“the steps that need to be taken in order to save this unfortunate individual could only become clear after a wider exposition of the circumstances”*, and so they only informed his uncle, László Nyéky about what had happened, and they ordered an inventory of all of Baross' possessions to be taken.<sup>17</sup> László Nyéky sent an additional 15 forints to pay debts, which, however, even with the 30 forints that remained from László Baross, was not enough to pay all of the debts, and so, via the guardians, the ecclesiastical court informed the creditors that it is necessary to go through the civil authorities' bankruptcy proceedings that must be undertaken in such cases.<sup>18</sup>

Baross had already asked in mid-July to be transferred to a battalion stationed in the battlefield, which in fact happened. On July 5th, 1849, The Ecclesiastical Court of Makó issued a certificate, at his request, stating that László Baross, who was a sergeant in the 5th civil defense battalion, under the pseudonym Bányai, was in the service of the church and was originally called Baross.<sup>19</sup> He was later transferred to the 92nd Civil Defense Battalion, and promoted to lieutenant.<sup>20</sup> Following the armistice, the Royal military committee ordered to Arad exempted him from military service, following which the area command furnished him with a passport, and on September 6th, he travelled to Makó to his uncle.<sup>21</sup>

Both Baross and Imre Makra, the Makó dean and parish priest, informed the ecclesiastical court about the arrival of the former military officer. In the meantime Baross visited his sister at Földeák from time to time.<sup>22</sup> At the meeting held by the ecclesiastical court on September 18th, his matter was discussed, where considering his armed service through which he committed a transgression (*irregularitas*), he was suspended from the practice of his priesthood. According to the records of the ecclesiastical court:

*“Following the appellant's, László Baross', unfaithful leaving of his post without the permission of his superiors and after leaving this prefecture, choosing to pursue a way of life which the church laws forbid all its church members to pursue under pain of committing an irregularity, which is all the more sinful action in his case because he chose to forever renounce his secure priestly post, and not shying from risking the compensation of his numerous good-faith creditors, with a disingenuous conscience, and with regard also to the small eagerness he showed even prior to that time toward his official duties, directing his efforts only toward the selection of chaplain posts, and changing them according to his whims, and squandering his time and wealth on playing cards, he did not secure any pleasure or true usefulness to himself or to his church order that he should honestly better himself following this, and with*

*the mercy of God, which is only available to those who with honest heart and humility, and who repent with committed dedication, can gain the conditions of salvation, who also commit to the necessary regulation required for this way of life, and who resolve to be suspended from his priestly service and its practice in any form, and have himself classified as forbidden, commit a binding obligation to a) enter the Szeged or Radnai Monastery of St. Francis, and there to spend two months bearing his own costs for a room and food, while during this whole time deprived of any company, including strict solitude even during meals, going alone in the morning to listen to mass in the monastery's choir, b) during this whole period to read edifying books intended to develop priestly virtues in pious meditation and with earnest prayer, c) to spend every Friday fasting except for bread and water, d) at the end of every two weeks he will perform a contrite confession, he will only contribute to communion after submission to this, and only if he has met the requirements of this resolution, and his superior in the monastery sends a letter here stating that he has made a solid renouncement of playing cards, and has paid his creditors insofar as possible, and shows promise of entering a better path, and will take appropriate steps for absolution of his suspension, and his irregularity, without causing problems in the subject of his employment.”<sup>23</sup>*

As soon as Baross received the order, he left for the Radna Monastery, where his costs were again taken on by his uncle. From here, on October 1st, 1849, he penned repentant lines back to the see: *“I sinned before God and the whole Christian world, by leaving my priestly post and choosing a way of life that was opposed to my station, and for this reason in order to earn the forgiveness of my country and the Holy Church, I will humbly submit myself to the merciful order.”*<sup>24</sup> On October 19th, 1848, László Baross and József Kornis, another priest under a similar injunction, turned to the Ecclesiastical Court of Csanád in order to release them from the performance of the remaining portion of their punishment. They justified their requests by stating that up until that time they had fulfilled the decree of the ecclesiastical court flawlessly, and since they had been deprived of their assets, the cost of their stay at the monastery was too high for their relatives. However, on October 31st, 1848, for their further spiritual benefit the ecclesiastical court ordered them to continue to perform the rest of their punishment exactly as assigned.<sup>25</sup>

The errant chaplain this time fulfilled his promise. On December 7th, 1849, he petitioned his superiors for the requested certification from the leader of the convent of Radna and confessor father, as well as sent in a written statement that he would no longer play cards. This latter statement read as follows: *“The undersigned, on the merciful order that the ecclesiastical court passed on September 18th of this year, and which was sustained, and which of my own volition I chose to submit to, I hereby officially resolve and promise that the pathetic addiction to playing cards, being the sole cause of my straying from the righteous path, I will no longer pursue. And the debts*

that have been generated through this and which are yet unpaid, I hereby oblige myself to pay as my circumstances allow.”<sup>26</sup> On January 30th, 1850, the diocese asked for an absolution for him by Rome, to which Primate János Scitovszky responded that by the mercifulness of His Holiness, and with the help of the Primate, this could be given on February 20th. He was indeed absolved from the irregularity.<sup>27</sup>

Following this, László Baross was curate at several parishes, Földeák, Bogáros, Battonya, Makó, Szentanna, and Zsombolya. In 1856 he was named a curate (independent chaplain) in Csermő. He received compensation as a parish priest in Kisfalud in 1859. He replaced this position with one in Facsét in 1869 and then in 1873 with a parish priesthood in Vecseház. In 1882 he was sent to retirement, and in the first years of the 1890s he lived in Szeged. In the church directory he was mistakenly maintained as an 1848/49 military chaplain. He passed away on July 22nd, 1892.<sup>28</sup>

The next military priest is Gusztáv Bobik (b. Bocvár, July 11th, 1824 – d. Merczyfalva, November 27th, 1907). His mother was Judit Belinghausen, his father was Pál Bobik, a notary in Bocvár. He studied in Szeged, and then continued in Temesvár. From 1845 to 1847 he was a tutor at Antal Szabó's house in Sósút. On July 7th, 1847, he was ordained a priest was then sent to Nagybecskerek as a curate.<sup>29</sup>

In the fall of 1848 he enlisted in the 34th Infantry Regiment of the 3rd Battalion and participated in the southern battles. On March 25th, 1849 he was promoted to second lieutenant, and on June 6th promoted to first lieutenant. At the same time he served as a commander to the deeply religious general, Károly Knezić. Following the armistice, on August 26th, he was enlisted in the 59th infantry regiment. On June 20th, 1850, he was discharged from the military. Returning to his diocese, he was absolved of his irregularitas and was employed again after being required to be cloistered in a monastery for a few weeks.<sup>30</sup>

At first he was a chaplain in Világos, and then on October 1st, 1850, he petitioned to be made the Parish Priest of the Zsidóvár parish but did not receive this appointment. On October 30th, 1850, he was sent to be a curate at Nadrág (as an independent chaplain), to which the head of the Temesvár military leadership, Count Johann Baptist Coronini, the Austro-Hungarian general, strongly protested against in a letter dated October 5th, 1852. The general found it impossible that a priest, who committed treason and became so unworthy of his priestly dignity that he had fought with a weapon in his hand, should work independently in a parish. Bobik should rather be transferred to serve as a chaplain under a “*prominently reliable parish priest*” in a place where a better attitude toward the government prevails. In response to this request the ecclesiastical court transferred the chaplain to Versec, then to Zsombolya and then to Krassova.<sup>31</sup>

Following this, in 1858, János Karácsonyi, the subdean of Krassova, caused his superiors considerable surprise, when he informed them that Gusztáv Bobik,



having returned to Krassova, was occupied with the exploration and operation of coal mines. The chaplain, who had actually founded a local business together with a teacher and several others, had to defend himself before the diocese, and what is more, the company operated in breach of tax law, and so drew the attention of the civil authorities as well.<sup>32</sup>

It is hardly a coincidence that Bobik, in 1858, was transferred to a position of curate in Perkoszova, and only became a parish priest in Merczyfalva on October 24th, 1863. He did not deny his past in the military even during the period of the Austro–Hungarian Compromise, and through his whole life he was a member of the Temes County Military Club.<sup>33</sup> He also pursued literary activities: several of his articles appeared in the *Csanád* and the *Fővárosi Lapok* periodicals, and he also wrote an epic with the title *The Comedy of Man*. Due to his expressions of oppositional political views, however, his career in the church did not develop well. On September 11th, 1897, Sándor Dessewffy, the Bishop of Csanád, nominated the former military officer, who since 1888 had been the Dean of the Felső-Temes District, for an honorary canonry. As the bishop highlighted in his letter written to the Minister of Religion and Education, he “recommended Gusztáv Bobik for the highest possible distinction based on his half of a century of conscientious and earnest work as a pastor, during which with his exemplary lifestyle, scientific qualification and patriotic conduct he earned the respect and honor not only of his followers but of the priesthood of the entire diocese”.<sup>34</sup>

However, Gyula Wlassics, Minister of Culture, responded dismissively in his letter, referring to the fact that “the named man of the church, on the occasion of the latest parliamentary elections, showed himself to have the most extreme oppositional political viewpoints, in addition to which he disparages public servants at every opportunity”. He recommended the nomination of a different candidate even though Dessewffy stood by his original nomination. He nominated Gusztáv Bobik again, who “as a young presbyter participated in the revolution of 1848/49 as military aide to general Knezić, as a consequence of which he was subsequently only able to save his life by hiding; in the years following this period he devoted himself to the study of literature”. The bishop stressed the goodness of his heart, as well as the boundless love of his congregation towards him. He explained his oppositional views by saying that his followers also supported the National Party. “By contrast, it will be remembered as a sad fact in the history of this country”, the bishop continued, “that an individual who fought for his country, and moreover, later in all respects performed exemplary service in his official and civic duties, was robbed of the recognition of his whole life’s work because as a free citizen he expressed his views according to his convictions”.<sup>35</sup>

Since he did not receive the expected appointment, on February 24th, 1898 his bishop appointed him archdeacon of Krassó.<sup>36</sup> After he passed away on November 27th, 1907,<sup>37</sup> in accordance with his will, he was buried in his final resting place besides his mother in the Merczyfalva cemetery.<sup>38</sup>

We have relatively little data about József Bokányi (1820–1849). He was ordained a priest in 1844, and from 1847 he was chaplain in Szőreg.<sup>39</sup> He belonged to the radical clergy, since at the district assembly held on August 16th, 1848 in Szeged he forcefully supported the so-called “*Csanád points*”, that is, the radical reform of the church, and at the same time, as we can read in the records of the meeting, “*he thoroughly and excellently argued for the introduction of clerical marriage*”.<sup>40</sup> Antal Kreminger, the Provost Priest of Szeged, already informed the Makó vicariate on June 7th, 1849 that Bokányi, fleeing from the Serbians, “*took refuge in Szeged, joined the defense here, converted to a different religion and got married*”.<sup>41</sup> Ignác Fábry, in the spring of 1850, knew nothing about Bokányi, beyond the fact that he had joined the military, converted to the reformed faith and entered a forbidden and ungodly marriage with a girl from Szeged. He was injured in the battle of Temesvár (August 9th, 1849), and in the absence of proper medical attention, died as a result of gangrene.<sup>42</sup>

The parents of our next priest in the military, András Klobucsár (1820–1873), were József Klobucsár (Tomljenovich) and his wife, Anna Shuttija, who lived in Szirács (County of Torontál).<sup>43</sup> Klobucsár, like most of his colleagues, studied in Szeged and then Temesvár. He was ordained a priest in 1844 and then was sent to Óbesenyő as a chaplain, where he spent many years.<sup>44</sup> In July, 1848 they wanted to transfer him to Perlasz, but he – owing to his political views – asked for the decision to be altered. In his letter to Ignác Fábry he also summarized the consequences of the unfolding “*minor war*” in Délvidék:

*“On the 5th of this month, to my humble request addressed to Your Excellency, I attach some sad news I have heard from some travelers going through our city, according to which in Nagybecskerek, in Écska, and especially in Perlasz, the Rascians banded together with the Serbians, attack members in favour of the reform indiscriminately. This thieving group of people, which is growing day by day, forces every adherent of liberty, equality, and fraternity to fear for his life, and every day we are saddened to see wagons loaded with tearful mothers and four or five pieces of baggage, pass through our city with women who, having left their beloved husbands, who are ready to perish for their country, in arms, complain in tears how harshly they are treated along with their property. It truly moves one’s heart to look upon these families who have to leave their houses and homeland.”*<sup>45</sup>

On December 19th, a portion of Óbesenyő’s Bulgarian inhabitants accused curates András Klobucsár and Imre Berecz of sowing the seeds of discord among the faithful, interfering in the matters of the parish, incitement against the local parish priest, negligent fulfilment of their duties and a dissolute lifestyle.<sup>46</sup> In response, others among the faithful lodged a complaint against their parish priest, Alajos Milassevics, before the Makó vicariate on January 12th, 1849, accusing him

of anti-freedom sentiments and mistreatment of the decent local curates (András Klobucsár and Imre Berecz).<sup>47</sup> At the end of January, 1849, Óbesenyő's curates fled to Szeged together with some local inhabitants. In turn, on March 18th, the parish priest urged Klobucsár to be ordered back to the parish. According to his reasoning, *"at the end of January, while the overwhelming majority of Hungarians in Torontál – afraid of the pillaging of the advancing Serbs – fled to the neighboring Arad, Csanád and Csongrád Counties, his curates also moved to the same area, and abandoned him in the burdensome caring for the parish"*.<sup>48</sup> Subsequently, Klobucsár applied for government aid in Szeged, which he received belatedly because he had failed to report his departure from the parish to his church superiors.<sup>49</sup> According to the report by Antal Kreminger, parish priest-dean of Szeged, dated February 25th, 1849, Klobucsár had also joined the military.<sup>50</sup>

What justifies further research in his case is the fact that so far no trace of a proceeding by the Ecclesiastical Court of Csanád has been found in connection with him. After the Hungarian Revolution, he continued to serve as a chaplain in Óbesenyő, then worked as a coadjutor in the same place, and in 1860 he even published a Bulgarian language prayer book.<sup>51</sup> On June 29th, 1863, an imperial loyalist reported him to the Diocese of Csanád. According to his accusation, during his 19 years serving as chaplain, Klobucsár *"defiled our virgins, caused infidelity between married couples; he is a treacherous sedition inciter"*, who *"on the occasion of the constitutional election of officials, instead of teaching the elected members righteousness, guided them to evil, and refused them by saying not to go to him for confession; and what is unprecedented, before the delegate election he even dared campaign in the confessional"*.<sup>52</sup>

However, the parish leaders supported Klobucsár. In their opinion *"during his nearly 19 year long stay here the said curate was never scandalous among the people, he served exemplarily with his demeanor, Christian morals, and never involved himself in secular matters"*. It was also uncovered that the accuser wrote his denouncing letter under a pseudonym, furthermore, every witness who was heard stood by Klobucsár, who himself also denied every charge, emphasizing that the people were pleased to listen to his Bulgarian songs and requested that he preach in Bulgarian, but this he could not perform because of the absence of church permission.<sup>53</sup> In 1864, he was still a coadjutor in Óbesenyő; on October 3rd, he was appointed the administrator of Rafnik.<sup>54</sup> He died in Resica on March 16th, 1873, where he was staying for medical treatment.<sup>55</sup>

István Kovács (1816–1884) was born in Szeged and after completing his education he was ordained a priest in 1838.<sup>56</sup> In November, 1842, he switched from the position of chaplain of Makó to be the parish vice-priest of Bocsár. In the first half of the 19th century, for a prolonged period Bocsár did not have an independent parish priest. The Hertelendy family built a small, classicist style church for the German settlers.

Since there was no vicarage, the parish rented a room for the new administrator, only until he was relocated to the manor to be an educator for the Lord Lieutenant's son. That is where he was acquainted with his later wife, Fanni Ottoványi.<sup>57</sup> István Kovács reported to the Bishopric of Csanád in March, 1848, that the Hertelendy family was paying an annual 150 forints to the parish priest and donated 25,000 tiles for the construction of the parish.<sup>58</sup>

The adverse conditions may have been the reason that in the summer of 1848 he submitted an application to the representative body of the town of Szeged for the position of parish priest of Kistelek. As he emphasized in his brief appeal, *“thus I, who was born to a commoner woman in Szeged, relying on the grace of my townsmen, and on my faithful services performed for eleven years in the Diocese of Csanád, and referring to my diocesan bishop regarding my conduct, as well as all those with whom I have been in contact with during my pastoral activities, and primarily the Hertelendy and Rónay families, I am confident in pleading before the honorable representative body to deign to elect me to be the parish priest of Kistelek”*.<sup>59</sup> However, the parish priest position was given to Ferenc Bezdány not to him.<sup>60</sup>

István Kovács reported to the church high authority on September 19th, 1848 that *“all the income and food sources in which he partook of the voluntary charity of the local lord of the manor will be exhausted with the lord's departure to Pest”*, and as a consequence of this he requested the taking of appropriate measures for the purpose of caring for his parish.<sup>61</sup> According to the report by István Burghardt, Sub-Deacon of Nákófala, dated in November, 1848, the faithful of Bocsár and Nákófalva, citing their poverty, did not want to increase the remuneration of their parish priests; thus the sub-deacon intended to turn to the government for assistance through the County office. According to the response expressed at the session of the see held on November 26th, 1848, there was no hope *“that in the current adverse conditions of the country aid would be offered from public funds for the supplementation of the Bocsár parish priest's remuneration and the construction of the vicarage”*. Bishop's vicar, József Róka, did not expect much success from the application to the Ministry either, but he emphasized that if the Ministry of Religion and Public Education sends him the application, then he will not neglect to send it back with a favorable opinion.<sup>62</sup>

In 1848, István Kovács was a captain in the Bocsár national militia. In January, 1849, he fled to Szeged together with his disciple to escape the Serbs. In January–February, 1849, he organized the 1st Torontál Volunteer Battalion, mainly from men who fled the agricultural lands neighboring Bocsár. He was the commander of the unit in the rank of Major. In the beginning of June, 1849, in Pétervárad, on one occasion imperial loyalist Gabriel Krantzl Garrison Priest actually hid when he was supposed to hold mass for national militiamen. General chaos was successfully averted

by István Kovács by putting his mass vestments on top of his blue militia uniform and celebrating communion in his spurred boots. Manó Bozó, a former classmate of Kovács remembered the unusual scene as follows:

*“On the day of the garrison mass, the castle army was arranged in appropriate attire (indeed there were some in shepherd cloaks and peasant trousers), the castle commander already appeared in front of the chapel tent; only the main person, the garrison priest was missing. A national militia officer was sent to the castle to find him, who searched for the man of God in his home and in the church, but could not find him or any other priest. Certainly, they were suffering from yellow oriole. Holding the garrison mass became doubtful. Amidst the greatest confusion István Kovács stood forth,<sup>63</sup> who was the young Major of the Torontál national militia’s mobile battalion (my former classmate in Pécs), and turned to the castle commander with the following words: ‘If there is no other trouble, I can perform the mass, I am a parish priest.’ His offer was greatly welcomed, and clasping off his sword, the brave priest put his mass vestments on top of his blue militia uniform and celebrated communion in his spurred boots, making a brief but pithy and inspiring speech in front of the fierce but devout audience. Having completed this, he took off his priestly garb, sat back on his horse, and, taking the lead of his battalion with his sword drawn, marched his men up to the castle commander in battle formation. The brave Major priest was greeted with thunderous hurrahs, and as an acknowledgement of his otherwise excellent attributes and good conduct was promoted to Army Major.”<sup>64</sup>*

After the disbanding of his unit, from the middle of June, 1849, he served as an orderly officer beside General Richárd Guyon in the 4th Corps. He remained faithful to the ideals of freedom even in the last days: for instance he escorted the unit of Károly László artillery Second-Lieutenant to the Hungarian camp from near Sándorháza together with 100 hussars from Szabolcs. After the failure of the revolutionary war, he fled to Turkish territory, and after converting to the Reformed faith he married Fanni Ottoványi (Winter) in Sumla on December 24th, 1849.<sup>65</sup>

Fanni Ottoványi arrived in Sumla with an engineer by the name of Gábor Jasmagy, who was the founder of the Austrian spy organization in Turkey. After her arrival she informed the governor of her travelling companion’s requests.<sup>66</sup> Jasmagy’s assignment was to observe the emigrant community, and possibly to organize the capture and extradition of refugees. He often involved women in his plans; for example, he intended a role for the young wife of Teodor Dembiński in the arrest of Kossuth.<sup>67</sup> Fanni Ottoványi’s role in the emigrant community is also unclear. Károly László learned on June 30th, 1851 that she was serving one of the Austrian spies; József Bilkai testified that the two emigrants accused of espionage, Ferenc Házmán and Ede Lórod, were receiving payments from the Austrians, and the money was delivered to them *“through the wife of Major István Kovács, the Austrian whore”*.<sup>68</sup>

In his journal written in Turkey, Gábor Egressy recorded the wedding of István Kovács and Fanni Ottoványi as follows:

*“Pista Kovács’ fiancée finally arrived from Hungary in the recent days after many vicissitudes, and on the next day the Calvinist priest, Gida Ács married the two of them in the presence of five witnesses, of whom I was one.*

*Before the revolution, Kovács was a parish priest in Bánát; his wife, W. Fanni, was a children’s governess at a noble family in the same town. She is a very resourceful woman.”*<sup>69</sup>

In January, 1850, Kovács was still in Sumla; his name appears on the list prepared of Hungarian emigrants dated January 26th.<sup>70</sup> He arrived in Kütahya together with his wife on July 12th, 1850. Their names appeared on the list of Hungarian refugees there, dated January 1st, 1851,<sup>71</sup> and in the May, 1851, István Kovács’ wife was already expecting a child; the young couple remained in Kütahya solely for this reason.<sup>72</sup> Their child was born in Turkey and according to an anonymous journal entry by Gedeon Ács related to them: *“A Catholic priest became a Calvinist in my presence, and then I married him and his fiancée. As I baptized their child, whose name was Zulejma, two Turkish colonels were present as witnesses, and one of them even signed the baptism certificate.”*<sup>73</sup> On September 10th, 1851, István Kovács and his wife, in the company of Lajos Kossuth and other emigrants, started out on their voyage to America aboard the Mississippi steamship.<sup>74</sup> István Kovács lived in the United States for the rest of his days; an Austrian court-martial sentenced him to death in his absence on May 6th, 1852.<sup>75</sup>

István Kovács and his family lived in New York, New Buda, then again in New York. His son (Kornél) was born in 1853, his daughter (Anna) in 1858. His wife divorced him, and in 1862 she married Ferenc Házmán.<sup>76</sup> In 1859 István Kovács was considering traveling to Europe to fight against the Austrians but in the end he cancelled the trip. In 1861, in New York, he was elected Colonel of the forming Hungarian Regiment but eventually there were not enough men. In spite of this, he volunteered into the Union army and on September 7th, 1861, he was drafted into the 54th New York Infantry Regiment as a Captain. On January 4th, 1862, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Major, then on June 3rd, 1862 to Major. In the battle of Gettysburg (July 1st–3rd, 1863) he was captured by the enemy, and he was held prisoner at the Libby prison in Richmond, where on special occasions he even made his fellow prisoners laugh with some anecdotes. On March 11th, 1864, he was liberated by way of a prisoner exchange and returned to the army. His Colonel, Jenő Kozlay, did not have a favorable opinion of his military skills. He was permanently discharged from the army on April 14th, 1866, in Charleston, South-Carolina. Subsequently, he returned to New York where he worked as a cigar maker. He died in 1884 at the home of his friend Dr. Attila Kelemen.<sup>77</sup>

Antal Kőszeghy (1824–?) was born on September 14th, 1824 in Szentilona, in Krassó County. He was presumably a gifted student, since after his studies at the Temesvár Lyceum, in 1845/46, he was a student at the Vienna Pázmáneum.<sup>78</sup> In the summer of 1846, Lonovics ordered him back from Vienna but, citing financial difficulties, he only returned to his diocese later. “*Your Excellency deigns to know my financial means – he wrote to his bishop on March 2nd, 1847 –, which have such dried up sources that is scarcely enough even for daily necessities in this land so appreciating its nectar.*” Since he did not have money for travel expenses, the treasurer of the “*Pázmán Institute’s Hungarian Association*” was forced to travel home using the association’s money. He withdrew 20 forints of the 300 forints he managed, obliging himself for its timely payback, which he was unable to fulfill even within six months. Therefore, he requested his superior to pay back his debt, which was done.<sup>79</sup>

After his ordainment he was appointed to be a chaplain in Makó on July 20th, 1848, then a few days later – changing the original arrangement – he was ordered to Újvár.<sup>80</sup> However, first he applied for an 80 forint loan at the County treasury for his clothing needs, the payment of his debts and for the purpose of enriching his library, which he received. He was given 10 forints by his bishop, while 70 forints were loaned to him by the County treasury for a two year term with interest.<sup>81</sup> He performed the examination generally conducted on these occasions with excellent result before József Róka and István Oltványi.<sup>82</sup> Since his debts still did not diminish, in the autumn Koppel Hirschel, an “*industrial draper*” from Temesvár, requested Antal Kőszeghy “*to be compelled for the settlement of all his so far unpaid debts*”. Consequently, on October 16th, 1848, the Bishopric of Csanád demanded that he pay.<sup>83</sup>

Instead of making a payment, Kőszeghy travelled to Fehértemplom, the German town that heroically held out against Serbian rebels in 1848. The administrator of Fehértemplom, Kornél Ruzsinszky (1808–1887), petitioned for Antal Kőszeghy, who was staying in town, to be ordered to his side. Thus, on December 18th, the diocesan authority sent a copy of the letter written by the parish priest of Újvár to Ruzsinszky for the purpose of making a declaration in which Kőszeghy was accused of several offences “*among others, the alienation of property*”.<sup>84</sup> The accused chaplain was supposed to list his debts in his reply. “*I furthermore warn you – stated the ecclesiastical court’s instruction to Ruzsinszky –, that if the stolen sword and winter coat referred to in the parish priest’s letter happened to be found in the possession of the accused, to confiscate them from him; if that is not possible in a peaceful manner, by the intervention of local police and to keep them until further instructions; and to send a report regarding the action.*”<sup>85</sup>

On January 13th, 1849, Kőszeghy volunteered to join the 28th National Militia Battalion and continued to serve all the way till the surrender at Világos.<sup>86</sup> Subsequently,

at the ecclesiastical court's session of October 31st, 1849, "*Antal Kőszeghy's plea was brought up who, having been swept away by the commotion of the revolution and performed military service, was now supplicating to be allowed to exercise priestly duties and be employed in the diocese*". However, the court rejected his appeal: "*Beyond doubt the appellant was recorded among those – said the reasoning –, who agitated the people, who are to be [!] captured on sight; his plea cannot be taken into consideration under such circumstances*".<sup>87</sup>

Bishop's chancellor, Ignác Fábry, wrote to János Scitovszky, the Archbishop of Esztergom, on March 28th, 1850 that Antal Kőszeghy had performed military service for a few months and achieved the rank of Captain, fought with arms and even participated in the siege of the castle of Buda. Before the surrender, to avoid being taken prisoner of war, he appealed to return to diocese service from the Transylvanian army, but because of his uncertain situation he was forced into penitence at the monastery of Radna. Since his revolutionary sedition activities were also investigated by imperial military authorities, they chose to take a wait-and-see approach concerning his person. Eventually, the imperial authorities drafted him into the army, transported him to Vienna where, upon the intervention of the Primate, as an ordained priest, he was released in the following days.<sup>88</sup>

After his release and absolution from the infraction (irregularitas), on June 12th, 1850, Antal Kőszeghy was ordered to be chaplain in Katalinfalva.<sup>89</sup> He also took his morals study examination belatedly, in February of 1851, as he was stationed in Nagybecskerek, he presented as an excuse that he did not have enough money to travel to Temesvár.<sup>90</sup> According to the report of Frigyes Halász, parish priest of Elemér, Kőszeghy was placed under his supervision on March 1st, 1851. He warned the chaplain that the members of his congregation knew "*he had deflowered a maiden in Becskerek, Teréz Kálmán, depriving her of the most valuable maidenly treasure*", and warned him to conduct himself in a priestly manner.<sup>91</sup> Antal Kőszeghy took his pastor examination on May 8th, 1851,<sup>92</sup> but at this time he was already haunted by the thought of abandoning the Catholic Church, as he explained to his archdeacon in a letter dated June 14th, 1851. "*Deign to believe – he wrote – that this idea did not arise following the recent catastrophe; it was rather my favorite cherished thought much earlier: as I currently aspire to let Your Excellency know about this, to request that you inform The Ecclesiastical Court of the Diocese of Canád in this regard as soon as today. As of 10 am on June 14th, I ceased to be a Roman Catholic and – as the natural consequence of the former – I ceased to be a communion performing priest, in the sense that is generally understood by the Catholic Church.*"<sup>93</sup>

Even though in 1852 he did not become an apostate yet, because of his scandalous behavior he was relocated again, this time to Pécska.<sup>94</sup> Since he violated the rules related to celibacy in Nagybecskerek, Elemér and Pécska, on May 24th, 1853, he was punished



by 3 days of seminary captivity, then he was ordered to Szentanna to be a chaplain. Since he did not abandon the keeping of lovers at his new station either, and lived together with Anna Tóth (Panni Veréb) of Pécska, who was also married, on August 14th, 1856, he was divested of his church dignitary position (degradation).<sup>95</sup> In response, on September 27th, 1856, Kőszeghy converted to the Reformed faith, and the Ecclesiastical Court of Csanád excommunicated him from the Catholic Church.<sup>96</sup> The priest gone astray made several attempts to return to the Catholic Church, in 1857 he requested the Bishop of Vác, Ágoston Roskoványi, and in 1859, the Bishop of Csanád, Sándor Csajághy, to intercede on his behalf but as of yet we have no sources regarding his further fate.<sup>97</sup>

János Nátly (1821–1849) of German ancestry, was born to a noble family in Újszentiván; his father was József Natl, his mother was Margaréta Biringér.<sup>98</sup> He was also educated in the Csanád seminary, where he completed the 4th academic year in 1843/44.<sup>99</sup> As the curate of downtown Temesvár, on September 12th, 1848, he received a passport and a permit from the Csanád diocese “to travel to Szeged and from there, as the conditions would allow it, further to Pest, and even beyond”. At the end of December, 1848 the Makó vicarage was informed that János Nátly, who was given a six week long holiday on September 12th, had not returned to his station and had not notified his superiors regarding the reason of his absence either. Later the vicarage learned that he was in Szentiván. The Szeged Provost Parish Priest, Antal Kreminger, was instructed to demand that the chaplain return to his station immediately, or if that is not possible, to report the related reasons.<sup>100</sup>

Bishop’s chancellor, Ignác Fábry, in the end of March, 1850, still only knew that János Nátly had participated in rebellious movements and had been awarded the rank of Lieutenant in a military unit, although the documents serving to prove this were missing. According to some people, he died during the Transylvanian Campaign; others say that he was drafted into the Imperial army, according to a letter by Scitovszky, the Titular Bishop and Csanád Vicar.<sup>101</sup> The Archdeacon of Nagyszeben confirmed the tragic news: János Nátly, a priest of the Diocese of Csanád had died in Nagyszeben on August 26th, 1849.<sup>102</sup>

Pál Rózsafy (Rosen) (September 18th, 1824. – April 30th, 1903.) was born in Arad, where his father was a master baker.<sup>103</sup> After his education in Arad and Temesvár (where he completed the 2nd academic year of the Lyceum in 1842/43), he attended the Temesvár seminary. In 1842 he was one of the founders of the seminarians’ reading circle and was ordained a priest on May 4th, 1847.<sup>104</sup>

He was a curate in Versec, Nákófalva, then in Tornya in 1848. About Pál Rózsafy the vicarage knew as early as in September, 1848 that he wished to travel to the Hungarian military camp. In reply vicar József Róka wrote as much to him that he hoped he would serve as a military chaplain and did not wish to take up arms at the military camp.<sup>105</sup>

On November 11th, 1848, the vicar repeatedly inquired of the parish priest of Tornya “*whether or not your curate, Pál Rózsafy, in accordance with his intent reported to you actually moved to the Transdanubian military camp*”.<sup>106</sup> On November 20th, the parish priest of Tornya replied that Pál Rózsafy had departed on October 4th to the “*upper camp*”, and wished to retain his position as chaplain for the duration of his absence.<sup>107</sup>

Meanwhile, Rózsafy – since he had not been awarded the post of military chaplain – voluntarily had himself drafted into the 4th Mounted Battery under the command of József (Holczer) Faváry, where he achieved the rank of Artillery Sergeant. He participated in numerous battles and combat engagements starting from the battle of Schwechat to the siege of the castle of Buda.<sup>108</sup> On May 15th, 1849, upon the recommendation of Baron Cézár Mednyánszky, Garrison High-Priest, General Artúr Görgei appointed him to be the military chaplain of the 1st Corps. Subsequently, he served until the surrender at Világos.<sup>109</sup> The parish priest of Tornya reported the return of Rózsafy from the military camp on September 2nd, at the same time he supportingly submitted his “*petition for the curate position in Tornya*”. According to the reply of Ignác Fábry dated September 3rd: “*For the sufficient authentication that Pál Rózsafy, applying himself faithfully to his dismissal received on September 26th of last year, from the beginning to the end solely performed the position of military chaplain, and now may be reinstated into his priestly duties without the suspicion of irregularity, I require that he submit to me his document appointing him to be military chaplain*”.<sup>110</sup>

The Ecclesiastical Court of Csanád discussed Rózsafy’s case on October 9th, 1849. This was the time when the former national militia priest’s appeal of defense was read, dated September 22nd, according to which “*after the vicarage permission number 1626, dated September 26th of last year, having travelled to Pest and not receiving the military chaplain position there, he had himself drafted into the artillery, where after receiving training in the required practices, as a result of his knowledge of Hungarian and German languages he was given duties at the office, in which he remained until May 1st of this year, at this time he was appointed military chaplain into Görgei’s Corps by the General’s order, in which he remained until August 14th of this year*”. It emphasized that he did not participate in any battle, he never used his decorative sword and his pistol because he was never attacked, but since he served in the Hungarian army he was guilty of an infraction and he was now appealing for absolution. Subsequently, they read the opinion of József Dollencz, Seminary Vice-Principal and juror of the ecclesiastical court, dated October 8th, according to which, as church disciplinary action, Rózsafy should be sent to the Radna monastery for six weeks. The court did not accept the chaplain’s appeal of defense and proved that he had taken up arms.<sup>111</sup>

According to the accepted ruling: “Curate, Pál Rózsafy, received a vicarage permission to leave the diocese, number 1626, dated September 26th of last year, solely under the clear condition that, complying with church rules, he would follow the military camp solely as military chaplain not in any other capacity”. At the same time it was evident from the presented documents and even his own account that “going beyond the permission he had been granted, he chose to pursue a way of life which the church laws strictly forbid all its church members to pursue under pain of committing an irregularity”. His defense was not accepted either since he himself wrote to the parish priest of Tornya that he participated in the battle of Schwechat. He was suspended from exercising his priestly duties and was sentenced to six weeks of penitence at the Radna monastery.<sup>112</sup>

After serving his penitence and confession, in accordance with the decision of the ecclesiastical court on December 27th, 1849, he was absolved from the disciplinary action brought against him.<sup>113</sup> He was absolved from the infraction by István Oltványi, after which Ignác Fábry reinstated him in his employment in the diocese from April, 1850.<sup>114</sup> Until 1858 he served as a curate in several places such as Temeshidegkút, Billéd, Nagyszentpéter, Lippa, Nagyikinda, Zsombolya and Versece.<sup>115</sup> His military past impeded his church advancement for a long time, since every time he applied for a parish priest position he was rejected and was told: “not to forget that you served in the national militia!”.<sup>116</sup> He was appointed to be the administrator of a small mining village, Dognácska, in May, 1858.<sup>117</sup>

On October 7th, 1872, he submitted an application for the parish priest position of Kiskomlós (Ostern), the patron of which was the Ministry of Finance. He cited three things. Firstly, that he completed his philosophy as well as theology studies with general commendation and he had been an ordained communion priest since 1847, meaning for 26 years. Secondly, after serving as a curate for eleven years, he had been an independent parish priest in Dognácska since 1858. Thirdly, with “complete humbleness” he cited “the documents of his pure patriotism full of sacrifices”, which in the present as well as in 1848/49 were evident “in his unshakably faithful loyalty to the High Government and its principles, proven by his tireless and, in this region, truly difficult operation”.<sup>118</sup>

In his letter written to Bishop Sándor Bonnaz, Finance Minister, Károly Kerkápoly stated that he chose Rózsafy from among the three submitted applicants, thus eventually, he was appointed parish priest, and his salary was drafted starting from April 1st, 1873.<sup>119</sup> Starting from 1885 he was a parish priest in Nagyjécsa but after September, 1888, because of his “damaged vocal cords and asthmatic unsteady breathing”, complicated by severe nervousness, he could not perform any tasks except silent masses and written work. Therefore, he was willing to renounce his salary and at the same time applied for aid from the diocese. At the meeting of the church aid fund committee

held on February 26th, 1889, “*in consideration of his inability to perform his duties as a result of his deteriorated health*”, permanent aid was approved for him by a vote with the condition that his resignation be legally accepted.<sup>120</sup> This occurred in 1890, from then on he lived in Versece as a retired parish priest<sup>121</sup> until his death at 3:15 pm on April 30th, 1903.<sup>122</sup>

Jakab Varjasi (Vranovits, Varjassy) (1820–1886) was ordained a priest in 1844; his father was József Vranovits, a doctor from Arad. In 1848 he had been serving as a chaplain at the Szeged-Palánk parish when on June 2nd, bishop’s chancellor, Ignác Fábry, ordered him to Újvár.<sup>123</sup> “*The pain – he wrote to his superior – that the received order inflicted on my soul, almost renders me silent, all the more so: because my humble person feels the cane of punishment inherent in my relocation to Újvár! I have examined my conscience; I considered every day that has passed since I have been staying here with serious attention, and God is my witness that in my official functions, in my conduct toward my superior and the faithful, I have not found anything deserving of punishment.*”<sup>124</sup> Accordingly, he requested the bishop’s chancellor to revoke his previous order.

Consequently, Fábry changed his mind and he ordered the above mentioned Antal Kőszeghy to Újvár, while he sent Varjasi to Makó. However, the young priest did not like this order either, and he kept delaying his departure to Makó. As a result of a report by Imre Makra, Sub-Deacon Parish Priest of Makó, dated July 7th, 1848, in which he cited that the hospital of national militia soldiers “*needed in the military camps*” had been placed to Makó not only from Csanád County but also from neighboring counties, on July 8th, Ignác Fábry repeatedly urged Varjasi’s departure. Fábry made the reluctant chaplain responsible for “*all the delays and shortages that may be suffered by the pastoral office in the affected parish*” and ordered Varjasi to travel to Makó.<sup>125</sup>

In turn, Varjasi repeatedly requested, on July 16th, that he be allowed to continue performing his duties in Szeged mentioning that for him the most painful thing was “*to believe that not all of us are equal sons, subordinates of our bishop*”. Anyhow, on August 4th, Fábry definitively rejected the chaplain’s request. As he wrote, he was not relocated to Makó as punishment, and that he wished him to submit himself to the decision of the diocese, which ordered him to a more favorable station.<sup>126</sup> In September, 1848, he also participated in the Gaal Damaszcze, the “*Diocesan Council*”, in the company of József Szabados and Károly Bizek, which served for the preparation of the planned National Synod, and which was adjourned with matters unfinished because of the civil war situation.<sup>127</sup>

On February 21st, 1849, Imre Makra, Sub-Deacon Parish Priest of Makó, reported to the vicarage of Makó that Varjasi had joined the national militia, and – in our opinion – he probably hungarianized his name around this time.<sup>128</sup> He served in the 42nd National Militia Battalion, then in the Makó battlefield

command. On April 9th, 1849, he converted to the Reformed faith and married Gizella Temesvári. He participated in the Southland military campaign; on May 13th, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant in the 104th National Militia Battalion. On July 14th, he was wounded in the battle of Hegyes.<sup>129</sup> All Ignác Fábry knew about him on March 28th, 1850 was that he had converted to the Reformed faith and entered into an unlawful marriage with a woman. As a former national militia soldier, he was repeatedly drafted by the Austrians into the Imperial army.<sup>130</sup> In 1852 Bishop Sándor Csajághy informed József Ébner, parish priest of Pécska that Jakab Varjasi had been excommunicated by the Catholic Church.<sup>131</sup>

After the failure of the revolutionary war, the former national militia Lieutenant became a notary in Battonya. For his participation in rebellious incitement, he was at first sentenced to death in 1853, and then out of mercy, the sentence was changed to four years of imprisonment instead. He was set free in 1856 in an amnesty after which he worked in Battonya, first as a lawyer's clerk than again as a notary. After the Austro–Hungarian Compromise of 1867 he became a deputy district judge in Kisjenő.<sup>132</sup>

## SUMMARY

It is prominent from the biographical data of the military clergy in the Diocese of Csanád which we have described that four among them – Bokányi, Kovács, Kőszeghy and Varjasi – converted to the Reformed faith, in which their antipathy toward mandatory celibacy may have played a major role, since three of them got married and one of them kept lovers. Church disciplinary problems arose – aside from their military service – in all of their cases, with the exception of Pál Rózsfy. László Baross, István Kovács and Antal Kőszeghy were driven toward the national militia by their debts and humble living conditions; Bokányi, Klobucsár and Kovács fled from the Serbs, Bobik commenced an enterprise after the revolutionary war, on top of this, Baross was even a card gambler in the 1840s. Bokányi, Klobucsár, Kőszeghy and Nátly accepted the orders of their church superiors reluctantly, or not at all.

At the same time, all of them were brave soldiers in the 1848/49 revolutionary war. István Kovács achieved field-officer rank, Baross and Bobik officer ranks. Bokányi and Nátly died heroically in the Hungarian revolution. Those who remained in their priestly career were impeded in their advancement in the church by their military service of 1848/49. Bobik, who was a member of the Temes County National Militia Association was not appointed titular canon in 1897 because of his oppositional conduct, while Rózsfy only started receiving his parish priest salary in 1873, and even then only as much as the Hungarian state patronized. The biographies of members of the clergy in the military in the Diocese of Csanád contribute to the understanding of yet lesser known correlations in the military and church history of the 19th century.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> József Ambrus (ed.): *Az 1848 és 1849-ik évi szabadságharcban részt vett római és görög katolikus paphonvédek albuma. Book VI.* Nagykikinda, 1892. (Henceforth: Ambrus, 1892)
- <sup>2</sup> We owe thanks to the episcopal archives archivist, Calin Claudiu, for help in the preparation and research of the archive material. (P. Z.)
- <sup>3</sup> Péter Zakar: *A Csanádi egyházmegye kormányzata 1848–1849-ben.* Aetas, 26. (2011) No. 4. pp. 82–101. In this source, however, I mistakenly gave the name of György Nátl, priest of Orcifalva as József Nátl after Jenő Szentkláray. Péter Miklós informed me of the error.
- <sup>4</sup> Temesvári Római Katolikus Egyházmegyei Levéltár (Henceforth: TRKEL) Protokollum Officii dioecesiani Csanadiensis de anno 1849. Article No. 129–130 on Pál Oltványi, bishop’s–vicar’s secretary of August 18th, 1849. Pál Oltványi, who was in office at the vicariate of Makó, kept it in secret that the members in Makó were reluctant to obey Lonovics and move to Temesvár. Henceforth, we will also list the name of the actual town at the articles of the vicariate of Makó from 1849. (P. Z.)
- <sup>5</sup> TRKEL Protokollum Officii Dioecesiani Csanadiensis de anno 1849. No. 306.
- <sup>6</sup> TRKEL Personalien Hegedűs Pál 1849:985.
- <sup>7</sup> TRKEL Personalien Oltványi István; from István Oltványi to József Lonovics. Temesvár, March 9th, 1849. 1849:unnumbered.
- <sup>8</sup> József Szeredy: *Egyházjog különös tekintettel a magyar szent korona területének egyházi viszonyaira, valamint a keleti és protestáns egyházakra.* Pécs, 1883. pp. 321–338.
- <sup>9</sup> Baross László keresztlevelének másolata. November 16th, 1837. TRKEL Personalien Baross László 1837:unnumbered.
- <sup>10</sup> TRKEL Personalien Baross László 1847:1344.
- <sup>11</sup> TRKEL Personalien Baross László 1847:1853.
- <sup>12</sup> TRKEL Personalien Baross László 1847:2025.
- <sup>13</sup> TRKEL Personalien Baross László 1848:23.
- <sup>14</sup> TRKEL Protocollum Officii Dioecesiani Csanadiensis de anno 1848. No. 4.
- <sup>15</sup> TRKEL Personalien Baross László 1848:1609.
- <sup>16</sup> Baross László – Tisztelt püspök atya! Hely és dátum nélkül. 1848 TRKEL Personalien Baross László 1848:1404.
- <sup>17</sup> TRKEL Protocollum Officii Dioecesiani Csanadiensis de anno 1848. No. 1404.
- <sup>18</sup> TRKEL Protocollum Officii Dioecesiani Csanadiensis de anno 1848. No. 1609.
- <sup>19</sup> TRKEL Personalien Baross László 1849:241.
- <sup>20</sup> Gábor Bona: *Hadnagyok és főhadnagyok az 1848/49. évi szabadságharcban.* Budapest, 1998. (Henceforth: Bona, 1998) p. 87.
- <sup>21</sup> TRKEL Personalien Baross László 1849:315.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibidem.
- <sup>23</sup> TRKEL Protokollum Officii Dioecesiani Csanadiensis de anno 1849. No. 315. Zsolt Tamási also published on this resolution of the see, however, he saw this as a delinquency by Baross, where the fault was “only in playing cards for money”. Zsolt Tamási: *A katolikus egyházvezetés önvédelmi törekvései az 1848–1849-es forradalom leverése után.* Történelmi Szemle, 51. (2009) No. 3. p. 366.
- <sup>24</sup> TRKEL Personalien Baross László 1849:551.
- <sup>25</sup> TRKEL Protocollum Officii Dioecesiani Csanadiensis de anno 1849. No. 550.
- <sup>26</sup> TRKEL Personalien Baross László 1849:933.

- <sup>27</sup> Ignác Fábry to János Scitovszky. Temesvár, March 28th, 1850. Primási Levéltár (Henceforth: PL) Scitovszky-akták Cat. 21. 1417. cs. Acta Iudicii deleg. polit. Compromissos concernentia. Original, unnumbered.
- <sup>28</sup> Schematismus cleri dioecesis Csanádiensis pro anno Domini 1892. Temesvár, 1892. p. 195, p. 235.
- <sup>29</sup> Testimonium Scholasticum. Szeged, July 30th, 1841. Gusztáv Bobik 1841:unnumbered. József Szinnyei: *Magyar írók élete és munkái*. Budapest, 1891. (Henceforth: Szinnyei, 1891) pp. 1110–1111. According to Petri, he received his degree in philosophy in Eger, however, on the basis of a copy of his transcript this seems unlikely. Anton Peter Petri: *Biographisches Lexikon des Banater Deutschtums*. Marquarstein, 1992. (Henceforth: Petri, 1992) p. 162.
- <sup>30</sup> Bona, 1998. p. 177. Sándor Kováts correctly stated that Bobik, for a period of 1 year and 6 months, was unemployed in his own diocese (Sándor Dr. Kováts: *A Csanádi papnevelde története. A mai papnevelde megnyitásának első centenáriuma alkalmából. 1806–1906*. Temesvár, 1908. [Henceforth: Kováts, 1908] p. 367.), which Kálmán Juhász referenced by stating that “Gusztáv Bobik, chaplain of Nagybecskerek, was punished for a period of a year and a half”. Kálmán Juhász: *A Csanádi egyházmegye 1848/49-ben*. Ed.: Antal Lotz. In: László Blazovich (ed.): *Tanulmányok Csongrád megye történetéből*. Szeged, 1994. p. 73.
- <sup>31</sup> TRKEL Personalien Bobik Gusztáv 1852:2165.
- <sup>32</sup> TRKEL Personalien Bobik Gusztáv 1858:356, p. 596.
- <sup>33</sup> Bona, 1998. p. 177.
- <sup>34</sup> TRKEL Personalien Bobik Gusztáv 1897:3114.
- <sup>35</sup> TRKEL Personalien Bobik Gusztáv 1897:4019.
- <sup>36</sup> TRKEL Personalien Bobik Gusztáv 1898:605.
- <sup>37</sup> TRKEL Personalien Bobik Gusztáv 1907:5608.
- <sup>38</sup> TRKEL Personalien Bobik Gusztáv 1907:6088.
- <sup>39</sup> Kováts, 1908. p. 360.
- <sup>40</sup> The meeting held by the deanery of Szeged. Szeged, Szt. Döme parish, August 16th, 1848. TRKEL Mihály Horváth 1848/49. 1848:unnumbered.
- <sup>41</sup> Kreminger’s declaration was published by Péter Miklós. Péter Miklós: *Adalékok a szőregi római katolikus plébánia 1848/49-es történetéhez*. Magyar Egyháztörténeti Vázlatok (METEM) 2000. No. 1–4. pp. 153–160.; Péter Miklós: *Város, egyház, társadalom. Tanulmányok a szegedi katolicizmus történetéből*. Szeged, 2004. (Henceforth: Miklós, 2004) pp. 81–90.; as well as: Péter Miklós (ed.): *“A jelenkor vészes napjaiban”*. *Dokumentumok a csanádi püspökség 1848/49-es történetéhez*. Szeged, 2006. (Henceforth: Miklós, 2006) pp. 11–23.
- <sup>42</sup> Ignác Fábry to János Scitovszky. Temesvár, March 28th, 1850. PL Scitovszky-akták Cat. 21. 1417. cs. Acta Iudicii deleg. polit. Compromissos concernentia. 1850:unnumbered.
- <sup>43</sup> TRKEL Personalien András Klobucsár. Keresztlevél másolat a daruvári plébánia anyakönyvéből September 12th, 1841:unnumbered.
- <sup>44</sup> Schematismus cleri dioecesis Csanadiensis pro anno Domini 1859. Temesvár, d.n. 175. Testimonium Scholasticum. Szeged, September 12th, 1841. TRKEL Personalien András Klobucsár 1841:unnumbered.
- <sup>45</sup> TRKEL Personalien Klobucsár András. 1848:1275.
- <sup>46</sup> Protocollum Officii Dioecesani Csanádiensis de anno 1848. No. 1864.
- <sup>47</sup> TRKEL Protokollum Officii dioecesani Csanadiensis de anno 1849. [Makó] No. 29.
- <sup>48</sup> TRKEL Protokollum Officii dioecesani Csanadiensis de anno 1849. [Makó] No. 171.
- <sup>49</sup> TRKEL Protokollum Officii dioecesani Csanadiensis de anno 1849. [Makó] No. 223.; TRKEL Mihály Horváth 1849:223.
- <sup>50</sup> “Klobucsár András öbesenyői segéd, most honvéd.” TRKEL Mihály Horváth 1849:137.

- <sup>51</sup> Szinnyei, 1891. p. 568.
- <sup>52</sup> TRKEL Personalien Klobucsár András. 1848:1863.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibidem.
- <sup>54</sup> TRKEL Personalien Klobucsár András. 1848:1486.
- <sup>55</sup> TRKEL Personalien Klobucsár András. 1848:719.
- <sup>56</sup> Kováts, 1908. pp. 360–361. There is great uncertainty in the technical literature regarding the birthdate of István Kovács. Considering that the date he was ordained priest occurred in 1838, he could hardly have been born in the 1820s; in this work we have accepted as credible the years that can be read in the Church register. *Schematismus venerabilis cleri Dioecesis Csanádiensis ad annum Jesu Christi MDCCCXLVIII*. Temesvár, d. n. 124.
- <sup>57</sup> Jenő Szentkláray: *A Csanád-egyházmegyei plebániák története*. Temesvár, 1898. pp. 370–371.
- <sup>58</sup> *Protocollum Officii Dioecesiani Csanádiensis de anno 1848*. No. 460.
- <sup>59</sup> Ilona G. Tóth: *Az 1848/49. évi forradalom és szabadságharc szegedi dokumentumi a Csongrád megyei Levéltárban*. Szeged, 2000. p. 49.
- <sup>60</sup> Péter Miklós: *A kisteleki római katolikus plébánia 1848/49-ben*. In: Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve. Történeti Tanulmányok (Studia Historica) 5. k. Szeged, 2002. pp. 97–117.; the same article can be read in: Miklós, 2004. pp. 102–127.; as well as: Miklós, 2006. pp. 24–60. A kisteleki plébánia rövid történetét Péter Miklós also wrote about this in *Századok*, however, he wrote about János Kovács instead of István Kovács, cf.: Péter Miklós: *Fejezetek a Csanádi egyházmegye 1848/49-es történetéből*. *Századok*, 144. (2010) No. 3. pp. 640–641.
- <sup>61</sup> TRKEL *Protocollum Officii Dioecesiani Csanádiensis de anno 1848*. No. 1729.
- <sup>62</sup> TRKEL *Protocollum Officii Dioecesiani Csanádiensis de anno 1848*. No. 1822.
- <sup>63</sup> Correctly: István Kovács. (P. Z.)
- <sup>64</sup> Manó Bozó: *Pétervárad 1849-ben*. In: Abafi, Lajos (ed.): *Hazánk. Történelmi Közöny*. X. Book. Budapest, é. n. p. 310.
- <sup>65</sup> Gábor Bona: *Tábornokok és törzstisztek az 1848/49. évi szabadságharcban*. Budapest, 2003. pp. 458–459.; Károly László: *Katonai életemből. Napló, 1848. Between Sept 25th, 1848 and Sept 10th, 1851*. Ed.: Ildikó Pordán. Budapest, 2001. (Henceforth: László, 2001) p. 53.
- <sup>66</sup> István Hajnal (ed. and intr.): *A Kossuth-emigráció Törökországban*. Budapest, 1927. (Henceforth: Hajnal, 1927) p. 333., pp. 341–342.
- <sup>67</sup> Tibor Somlyói Tóth: *Diplomácia és emigráció "Kossuthiana"*. Budapest, 1985. pp. 102–124.
- <sup>68</sup> This is especially worthy of attention because Fanni Ottoványi later divorced István Kovács and married Ferenc Házmán. László, 2001. pp. 146–147.
- <sup>69</sup> *Gábor Egressy's diary in Turkey. 1849–1850*. Pest, 1851. p. 128.
- <sup>70</sup> Hajnal, 1927. pp. 679–683.
- <sup>71</sup> László, 2001. p. 102., p. 119.
- <sup>72</sup> László, 2001. pp. 133–134.
- <sup>73</sup> Gedeon Ács: *Mihelyt gyertyámat eloltom... Bostoni jegyzetek 1856–1863*. Budapest, 1989. p. 234.
- <sup>74</sup> Dénes Jánossy (ed. and intr.): *A Kossuth-emigráció Angliában és Amerikában 1851–1852*. Budapest, 1940. pp. 684–686.; László, 2001. p. 162.
- <sup>75</sup> *Magyar Hírlap*, May 7th, 1852. pp. 3551–3552.
- <sup>76</sup> Károly László: *Napló-töredék az 1849-iki menekülteket, internáltakat, Kossuthot és környezetét illetőleg, Törökországban és az Amerikai Egyesült-Államokban*. Budapest, 1887. p. 75.



- <sup>77</sup> István Kornél Vida: *Világostól Appomatoxig. Magyarok az amerikai polgárháborúban*. Budapest, 2011. pp. 251–253.; Ödön Vasváry: *A déliek magyar hadifoglya. Vasváry-gyűjtemény. Somogyi Könyvtár*. Szeged. K6/a pp. 55–56.
- <sup>78</sup> István Fazekas: *A bécsi Pazmaneum magyarországi hallgatói. 1623–1918. (1951)*. Budapest, 2003. p. 377.; Kováts, 1908. p. 307.
- <sup>79</sup> TRKEL Personalien Kószeghy Antal 1847:460.
- <sup>80</sup> TRKEL Protocollum Officii Dioecesanii Csanádiensis de anno 1848. No. 1172.
- <sup>81</sup> TRKEL Personalien Kószeghy Antal 1848:1145.
- <sup>82</sup> TRKEL Protocollum Officii Dioecesanii Csanádiensis de anno 1848. No. 1245.
- <sup>83</sup> TRKEL Protocollum Officii Dioecesanii Csanádiensis de anno 1848. No. 1699.
- <sup>84</sup> TRKEL Protocollum Officii Dioecesanii Csanádiensis de anno 1848. No. 1832.
- <sup>85</sup> TRKEL Protocollum Officii Dioecesanii Csanádiensis de anno 1848. No. 1856
- <sup>86</sup> TRKEL Protocollum Officii dioecesanii Csanádiensis de anno 1849. [Makó] No. 48.; Kováts, 1908. p. 360, p. 368.
- <sup>87</sup> TRKEL Protocollum Officii Dioecesanii Csanádiensis de anno 1849. No. 548.
- <sup>88</sup> Ignác Fábry to János Scitovszky. Temesvár, March 28th, 1850. PL Scitovszky-akták Cat. 21. 1417. cs. Acta Iudicii deleg. polit. Compromissos concernentia. 1850:unnumbered. Concerning his rank as a Captain, we have doubts, unless he, too, served in the military under a pseudonym. (P. Z.)
- <sup>89</sup> TRKEL Personalien Kószeghy Antal 1850:1330.
- <sup>90</sup> TRKEL Personalien Kószeghy Antal 1851:374.
- <sup>91</sup> TRKEL Personalien Kószeghy Antal 1851:1301.
- <sup>92</sup> Kováts, 1908. p. 356.
- <sup>93</sup> Kószeghy Antal – Esperes Úr! Nagybecskerek, June 14th, 1851. TRKEL Personalien Kószeghy Antal 1856: 1809 melléklete.
- <sup>94</sup> TRKEL Personalien Kószeghy Antal 1852:2143.
- <sup>95</sup> TRKEL Personalien Kószeghy Antal 1856:1809. Removal from priesthood (degradatio) is the most serious punishment possible, which means the church member is removed from practice of the order, from compensation and the privileges of belonging to the priesthood. (P. Z.)
- <sup>96</sup> TRKEL Personalien Kószeghy Antal 1856:2194.
- <sup>97</sup> TRKEL Personalien Kószeghy Antal 1857:1217, 1859:1323.
- <sup>98</sup> Testimonium Scholasticum. Szeged, July 30th, 1840. TRKEL Personalien Nátly János 1840:unnumbered. Natl József received a noble title in 1847. In Péter Mikós's article, he showed that János Nátly's life in 1848–49 must be a separate area of research. Miklós, Péter: *A Nátly család és a katolikus egyház*. In: Miklós, 2004. pp. 75–77.
- <sup>99</sup> Kováts, 1908. p. 376.
- <sup>100</sup> TRKEL Personalien Nátly János 1848:1880.
- <sup>101</sup> Ignác Fábry to János Scitovszky. Temesvár, March 28th, 1850. PL Scitovszky-akták. Cat. 21. 1417. cs. Acta Iudicii deleg. polit. Compromissos concernentia. Unnumbered original fair copy. The rank of János Nátly as a Lieutenant is doubtful. (P. Z.)
- <sup>102</sup> TRKEL Personalien Nátly János 1850:2381.
- <sup>103</sup> Petri, 1992. p. 1601.
- <sup>104</sup> Kováts, 1908. p. 311., p. 324., p. 360.
- <sup>105</sup> TRKEL Protocollum Officii Dioecesanii Csanádiensis de anno 1848. No. 1626. A large part of the order was cut out of the register with scissors. (P. Z.)

- <sup>106</sup> TRKEL Protocollum Officii Dioecesanii Csanádiensis de anno 1848. No. 1772.
- <sup>107</sup> TRKEL Protocollum Officii Dioecesanii Csanádiensis de anno 1848. No. 1810.
- <sup>108</sup> Ambrus, 1892. pp. 160–162.
- <sup>109</sup> Hadtörténelmi Levéltár 1848/49-es fond 28/405.
- <sup>110</sup> TRKEL Protocollum Officii Dioecesanii Csanádiensis de anno 1849. No. 199.
- <sup>111</sup> TRKEL Protocollum Officii Dioecesanii Csanádiensis de anno 1849. No. 449.
- <sup>112</sup> Ibidem.
- <sup>113</sup> TRKEL Protokollum Officii Dioecesanii Csanádiensis de anno 1849. No. 987.
- <sup>114</sup> TRKEL Personalien Rózsafy Pál 1850:761.
- <sup>115</sup> Péter Zakar: *A magyar hadsereg tábori lelkészei 1848–49-ben*. Budapest, 1999. p. 151.
- <sup>116</sup> Ambrus, 1892. p. 162.
- <sup>117</sup> TRKEL Personalien Rózsafy Pál 1858:1158.
- <sup>118</sup> TRKEL Personalien Rózsafy Pál 1872:2374.
- <sup>119</sup> TRKEL Personalien Rózsafy Pál 1873:608, 829.
- <sup>120</sup> TRKEL Personalien Rózsafy Pál 1889:302.
- <sup>121</sup> *1848–49. Történelmi Lapok*, January, 1898. p. 15.
- <sup>122</sup> TRKEL Personalien Rózsafy Pál 1903:1807.
- <sup>123</sup> Schematismus venerabilis cleri dioecesis Csanádiensis ad annum Jesu Christi MDCCCXLVIII. Temsvár, d. n. 93. p. 128.
- <sup>124</sup> TRKEL Personalien Varjasi Jakab 1848:1202.
- <sup>125</sup> TRKEL Protocollum Officii Dioecesanii Csanádiensis de anno 1848. No. 1266.
- <sup>126</sup> TRKEL Personalien Varjasi Jakab 1848:1423.
- <sup>127</sup> TRKEL Protocollum Officii Dioecesanii Csanádiensis de anno 1848. No. 1569.
- <sup>128</sup> TRKEL Protokollum Officii dioecesanii Csanádiensis de anno 1849. [Makó] No. 128.
- <sup>129</sup> Bona, 1998. p. 426.; Gusztáv Habermann: *Személyi adattár a szegedi polgár-családok történetéhez*. Tanulmányok Csongrád megye történetéből XIX. p. 294.
- <sup>130</sup> Ignác Fábry to János Scitovszky. Temesvár, March 28th, 1850. PL Scitovszky Files Cat. 21. 1417. cs. Acta Iudicii deleg. polit. Compromissos concernentia. Unnumbered original fair copy.
- <sup>131</sup> TRKEL Personalien Varjasi Jakab 1852:2804.
- <sup>132</sup> Bona, 1998. p. 426.

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE INDEX OF CIVILIAN CASUALTIES  
IN VOJVODINA 1941–1948**

**Preliminary research results of the records of civilian casualties  
in Vojvodina from 1941 to 1948 by the Inter-Academy Commission  
– Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences and  
the Hungarian Academy of Sciences**

SRĐAN CVETKOVIĆ<sup>1</sup> – NEBOJŠA STAMBOLIJA<sup>2</sup>

**ABSTRACT**

*This research brings the latest results of the Joint Serbian and Hungarian Academy Commission on numbers and breakdown by selected criteria of civilian casualties in Vojvodina between 1941 and 1948. This research is the result of the most comprehensive research project undertaken so far to produce an accurate report on WWII and post-war casualties, and is a revision of all individual research attempts conducted by the state institutions.*

The history of the twentieth century Serbia is a history of Calvary of one nation. Yet, a nation whose history is marked with five wars during this century alone and is a society with most war casualties per capita has no comprehensive and accurate account of them. After World War I., the state authorities in Yugoslavia had no interest to complete casualty accounts and build war cemeteries and memorials. Irrespective of the importance of the liberation movement in Yugoslavia and more than half a century of peace time in the country, there is still no complete account

of even WW2 casualties. However, there are some efforts and initiatives by individuals and certain institutions for an accurate account of war casualties, or at least to give a more objective estimate than the 1.7 million given by the post-war Yugoslav authorities. Official recordings of war casualties which commenced in the 1960s were obstructed by political prejudice, national war casualties' symmetries and unrealistic projection of their numbers.<sup>3</sup> In the absence of quality research methodologies demographic methods and estimations were used instead. The most accurate methods used were the ones during the 1980s by Bogoljub Kočović and Vladimir Žerjavić.<sup>4</sup> After the fall of the Communist regime in Serbia, during the decade of battle for Yugoslav heritage, no serious attempts to index war casualties were made. Some historians, including Dr. Aleksandar Kasaš and Dr. Enikő Šajti, gave partial estimates of Hungarian casualties as the results of their individual research or the estimates of the Volksdeutscher casualties in Vojvodina given by Dr. Zoran Janjetović.<sup>5</sup>

The Inquiry Committee of the Assembly of Vojvodina (further on referred to as 'Inquiry') was the first institution that attempted to give an overview and index of all war casualties, though of limited geographic coverage. During the period from 2003 to 2008, the Inquiry indexed around 90 000 casualties.<sup>6</sup> However, the research had significant methodological loopholes resulting in inaccurate (duplicate entries) and regretfully inconclusive accounts. It was a failed attempt to index all WW2 and post-war casualties following the one done in the 1960s.

Almost seventy years later, the mere mentioning of the death toll of the Communist regime is still a taboo. The Serbian State Commission in charge of the location of concealed graves of the victims killed by the Communist regime after September 12th, 1944 had a difficult task to annul uncertainties and assumptions about the number of people killed in communist purges during and immediately after the WW2. The Commission was established in 2009. By 2015 its researchers indexed 59 525 people who were either executed or died in camps across Serbia in Communist purges after the end of the war. Out of this number, more than 40 000 killed were from Vojvodina. This database of the casualties, compiled from the State Security Archive documentation, military archives and other relevant sources,<sup>7</sup> is the most accurate and the first electronic index of the victims available to the public in the region to this date.

Many estimates of the death toll in Vojvodina under the Communist regime in the past decade were often given under political pressure and by politicians. Terms like "*genocide of Hungarian minorities*" in Vojvodina were often used and the number of people killed was exaggerated to as much as 40,000. The indexing of the killed Volksdeutscher made by the Volksdeutscher associations in Germany and Austria was also done in a similar manner and concluded 50,000 civilian war casualties together with those killed at the end of the war.

The Inter-Academy Commission (further on referred to as 'Commission') set up by the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences and Hungarian Academy of Sciences was thus established to eradicate doubts and accusations by politicians, to eliminate

manipulations and the misuse of the number of casualties. The Commission's mission was to index civilian casualties in Vojvodina between 1941 and 1948, to continue research and to give an accurate number of civilian casualties at the end and after WW2. Besides its scientific significance the Commission had a clear political importance in the process of international reconciliation, which was initiated by the presidents of Serbia and Hungary.<sup>8</sup>

### **WORK ORGANIZATION, METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH IN ARCHIVES**

The Commission was established in 2010 following discussions of the representatives of the respective top level institutions of the republics of Hungary and Serbia. It was agreed that the states' academies should work together on the joint project to establish the number of civilian casualties in Vojvodina during and after WW2 (1941–1948).

The Commission's main aim was to give an accurate and objective insight into the casualties in Vojvodina which would also contribute to international reconciliation, to improve and intensify relations between the two countries, which in the recent history had several vexed questions. The Commission had a well-designed project plan and research methodology with concrete tasks. The Serbian side was responsible for the conduct and research of indexing all casualties during this period (1941–1948) in Vojvodina regardless of nationality. The research team was divided in the following manner: (1) Regional Archive of Vojvodina, (2) Research team Novi Sad, (3) Research team Belgrade.

In nine regional archives of Vojvodina twelve researchers were engaged and their work was coordinated by archivist Ištvan Fodor. The research team included: Slobodan Stanić (Historical Archive of Kikinda), Tibor Molnar (Historical Archive of Senta), Miljan Garčević (historian, Historical Archive of Srem), dr. Zoltan Mesaroš and Stevan Mačković (Historical Archive of Subotica), Jugoslav Veljkovski (Historical Archive of Novi Sad), Ilija Jovanović (Historical Archive of Bela Crkva), Nada Boroš (director, Historical Archive of Zrenjanin), Rozalija Nađ (archivist, Historical Archive of Pančevo), Milka Ljuboja and Tatjana Stevančev (Historical Archive of Sombor).

The research team of Novi Sad included seven archivists employed by the Archive and the Museum of Vojvodina whose work was coordinated by Dr. Agneš Ozer.

The Belgrade research team of four researchers coordinated by Dr. Srdjan Cvetković was responsible for work in the Historical Archive of Serbia, the Military Archive and the Historical Archives of Belgrade.

Coordination of the research in Srem was conducted by Dr. Drago Njegovan.

Each research team had a designated person for data entry into Excel tables or direct entry into the online indexing register. They were also responsible for the indexing of the researched archival materials.

Due to good relations with many regional archives and museums across Serbia members of the Commission and researchers enjoyed undisturbed and assisted work.

During its initial sessions, the Commission members agreed on the following research methodology and indexing principles:

1. Indexing only of civilian casualties with place of residence on the territory of the autonomous region of Vojvodina (according to the borderlines of 1945).
2. A basic indexing model was also adopted. To facilitate the comparison with the data of other European countries, for each victim the following data was collected: name, surname (family name), year of birth, place of residence (after April 6th, 1941), place and location of death, nationality, political and class affiliation, age and gender. Notes of source reference, testimonials and literature details for each casualty were taken.
3. Concerning means of death: civilians in extrajudicial executions, those convicted to death penalty, persons who died in camps, prisons and casualties of bombing and other way were indexed.
4. Members of military formations and prisoners of war are also included who were killed by firing squads – their number can easily be extracted from the index (only 2–3%).
5. The number of those persons who were killed in battle is excluded.
6. Main sources of reference are:
  - all available primary archival sources from state and local archives,
  - registers of the persons sent to camps and evidences of their death,
  - research studies of the state institutions (The Inquiry Committee of the Assembly of Vojvodina 2003–2008, The Serbian State Commission in charge of the location of concealed graves of the victims killed by the Communist regime after September 12th, 1944) and many other studies done by individuals and researchers,
  - personal testimonies,
  - various publications including newspapers, memoirs, literature etc.
7. Table indexes of soldiers killed during bombings were also examined and could be used for further specific scientific study of all war casualties. These can be added to the existing database and studied at a later stage.
8. Researchers faced many dilemmas regarding marginal, complex and dubious cases which were noted and could be further examined. However, this is only the case with a small percentage of casualties and has no real significance concerning the final results of the research.
9. The indexes and databases of civilian casualties in Vojvodina are methodologically accurate and transparent. Records are available to public and institutions via the internet site, which was established in 2012. The website's easy administration enables fast updates and corrections, therefore, in time, its accuracy will be heightened making it a reliable and resourceful source.

**RESEARCH IN ARCHIVES**

From June 2010 until mid-September 2015, the Belgrade research team focused on archival materials in Belgrade. The Secret Police files (BIA) in the Archives of Serbia (including collections: “*Hostile activities of the Hungarian citizens in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia during the Second World War*”; “*Political circumstances, political parties, movements, population structure, economy and industry in Hungary 1918–1945*”; “*Activities of the Fascist organization »Hungarian Cultural Association of the South Land«*” etc.), the archival material of the State Commission for crimes of the occupation forces and their collaborators in the Archives of Yugoslavia, BDS archive files and the Special police files in the Historical Archive of Belgrade, and the Military Court files of the Military Archives, and also the Chetniks’ and NDH files are worth mentioning.

Research teams in Novi Sad and Vojvodina focused their research on the *Historical Archive of Vojvodina*, the *Museum of Vojvodina* and a network of local archives and funds. Among the most interesting and worth mentioning are the following:

- the list of those who were executed by firing squads and convicted as collaborators and war criminals, and the archival material of the Commission for crimes of the occupation forces and their collaborators in Vojvodina (Historical Archive of Vojvodina);
- registers of persons sent to camps and registers of those who died in the camps of Gakovo, Sremska Mitrovica, Bački Jarak; military court archival files from 1944–1945; regional courts files from 1945–1946, and funds of the Inquiry Committee for truth and the Calvary of citizens of Vojvodina between 1941–1945 (Museum of Vojvodina);
- local, district and city archival files of the national liberation committees; command posts files; district and regional civil and military court files; local commissioners’ files of the Commissions for war crimes (local archives in Vojvodina).

Compared to previous research reports from individual researchers and institutions, the novelty of this research is in its reach and data collection from archives that were unavailable to researchers for decades for political reasons.

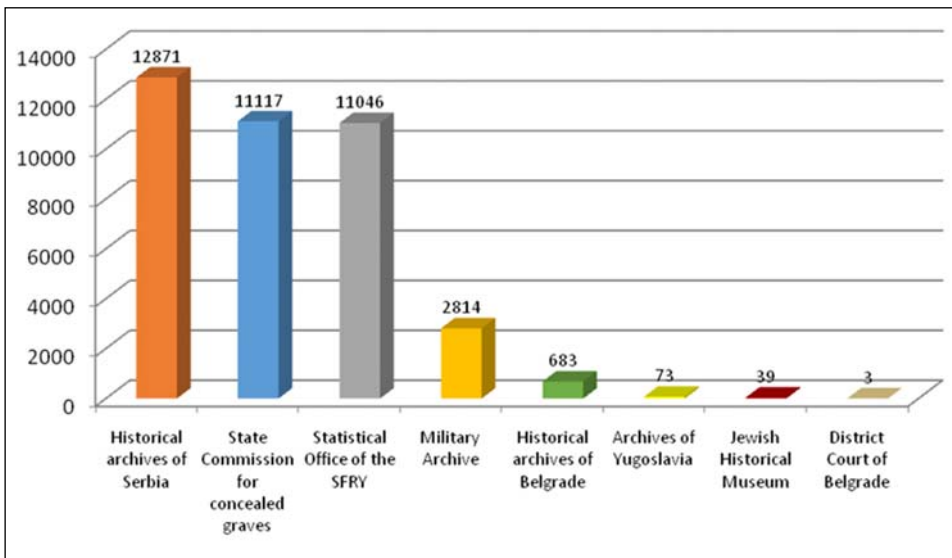
Some state institutions previously dealt with the issue of mass killings of civilians in Vojvodina and Serbia during WW2, and their research findings were of great interest to the Inter-Academy Commission. Therefore to rationalize the resources and speed the research an agreement was made between these institutions and the Inter-Academy about the takeover of the existing database, and the analysis and systematization of the findings.

More than 13 000 names of killed and missing persons in Vojvodina, and casualties of the post-war purges were obtained from the database of the Serbian State Commission in charge of the location of concealed graves of the victims killed by the Communist regime after September 12th, 1944, which was founded by the Government of Serbia.

The database of victims indexed during the recent research activities in local and state archives in Vojvodina and Belgrade were added to the database of casualties from the Inquiry Committee of the Assembly of Vojvodina compiled during 2003–2008. However, the newly compiled database required the systematization and careful revision of 90 701 entries (names of the killed) some of which containing incomplete information about method, time and place of execution. In the final death toll breakdown there are 50 099 newly acquired entries, 4341 updates, 20 647 victims killed during battle, 6740 duplicates and 5441 unclassified. There are also 4641 casualties with place of residence outside Vojvodina.

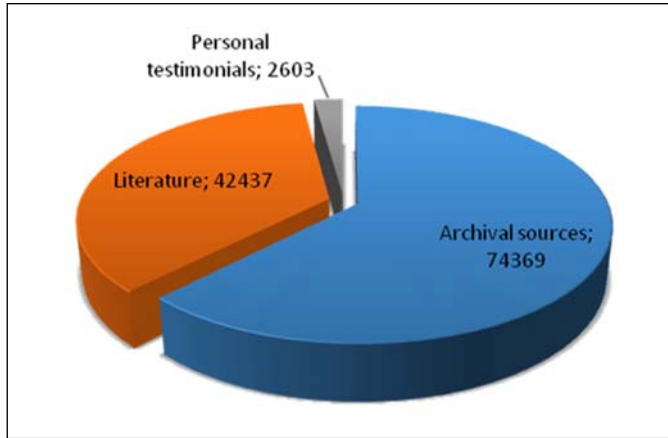
*Table 1. Classification of entries from the database of the Inquiry Committee of the Assembly of Vojvodina*

Category	Total: 90 701
New entries (names of killed or dossiers)	50 099
Killed in battle or died of consequences	20 647
Duplicates	6740
Unclassified (insufficient information, etc.)	5441
Place of residence outside Vojvodina	4641
Updates	4341

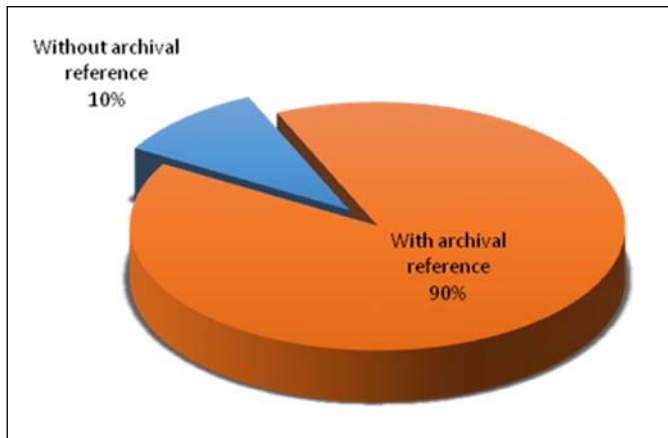


*Graph 1. Breakdown of entries from archives by archive / database*





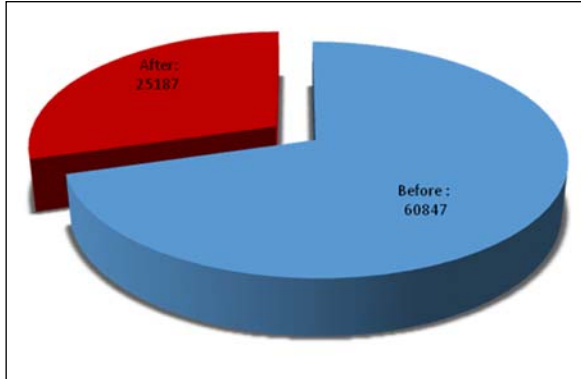
Graph 2. Entries by source



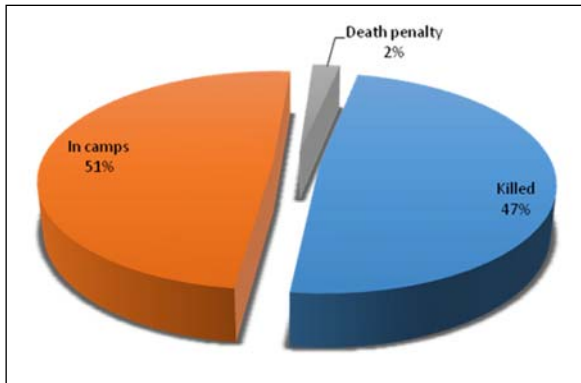
Graph 3. Percentage of entries with archival source

### PRELIMINARY INDEXING RESULTS OF CIVILIAN CASUALTIES IN VOJVODINA 1941–1948

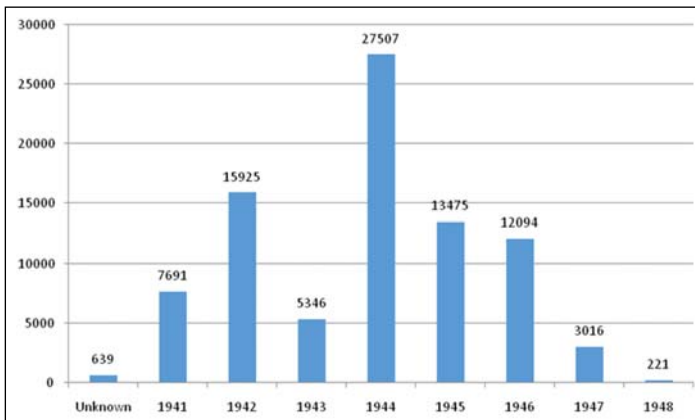
Total number of civilian casualties or persons killed during the Communist regime in the Inter-Academy database for Vojvodina is 86 492 (as of September 15th, 2015). Out of that number 79 369 persons are presumed *killed* and 6853 *missing*. This means that 51% died in camps, 47% in extrajudicial executions and 2% was sentenced to death. So the number of victims until the formal end of WW2 (May 15th, 1945) is 60 847; 25 187 died after that date and for 458 persons it was not possible to ascertain the exact date of death.



Graph 4. Casualties until May 15th, 1945 and between May 15th, 1945 and 1948

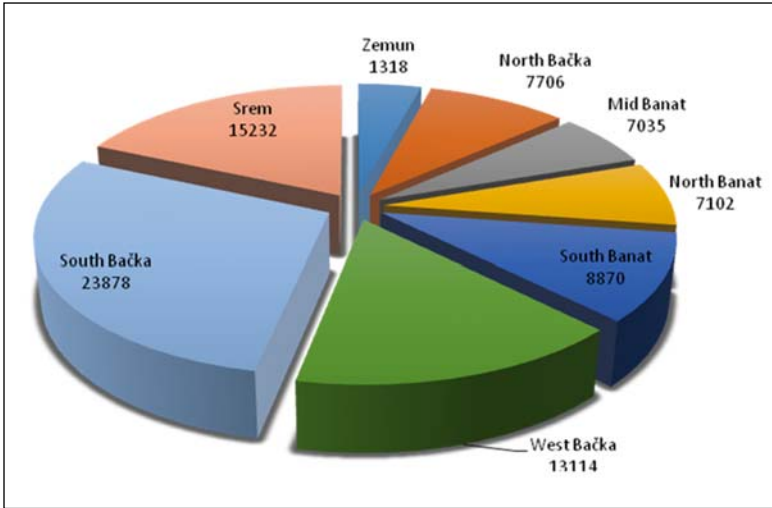


Graph 5. Civilian casualties by “means of death” criterion 1941–1948

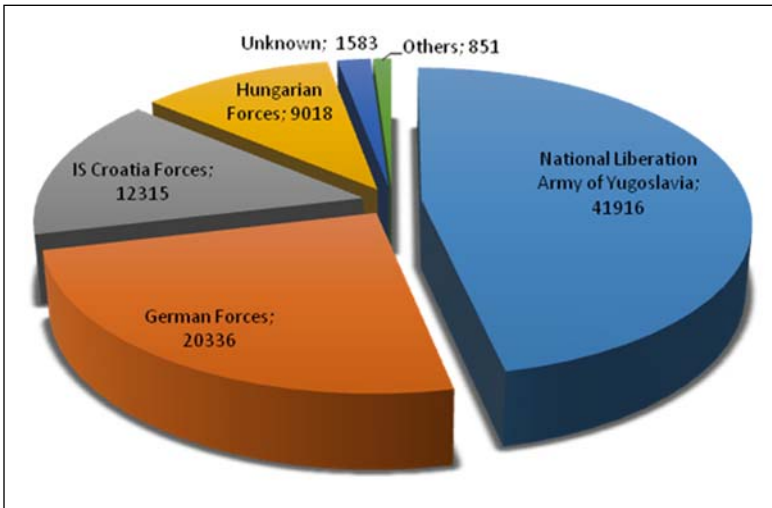


Graph 6. Casualties by years

Most civilian casualties were during 1944, then during 1942 and in 1945. According to territorial representation of the victims, the greatest numbers were on the Hungarian administrative territories of Bačka (South-Bačka district), followed by Srem and South Banat.

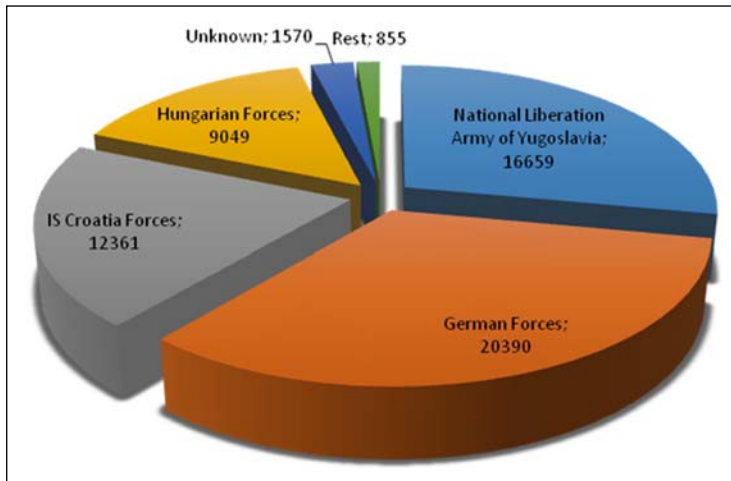


Graph 7. Casualties in Vojvodina, 1941–1948 by nationality according to present territorial division

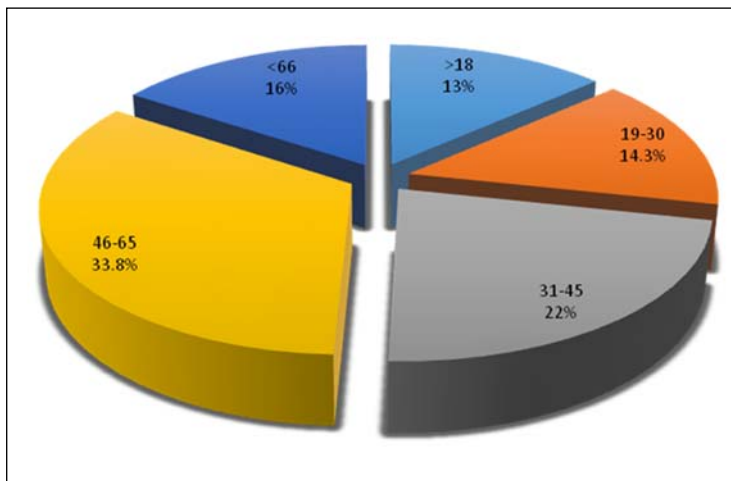


Graph 8. Breakdown of civilian casualties by the “killed by” criterion, 1941–1948

Until 1948, the majority of the victims were killed by the National Liberation Forces of Yugoslavia (NOVOJ), most of which were the Volksdeutschers who died in camps. Following them were those who were killed by the German Occupation Formations (NOF), then by military formations of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) and by the Hungarian occupation forces (MOF). However, until the formal end of the war (May 15th, 1945) the majority of the casualties were killed by the German occupation forces followed by NOVOJ, then the Ustasha and the Hungarian forces (MOF).

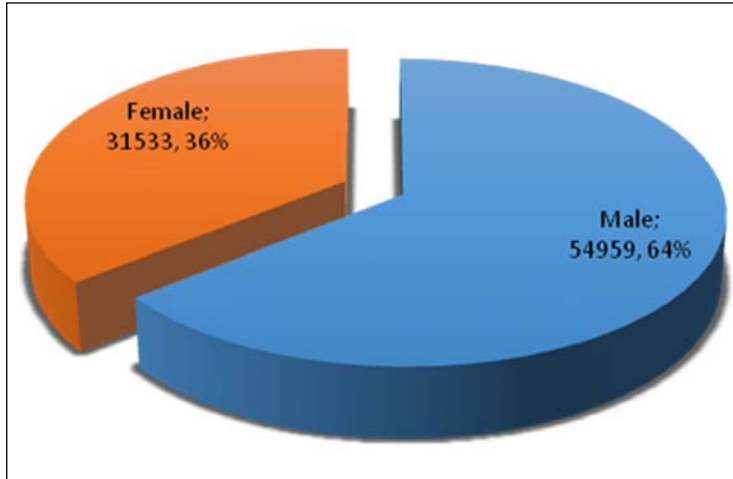


Graph 9. Breakdown of casualties by the “killed by” criterion, 1941–1945

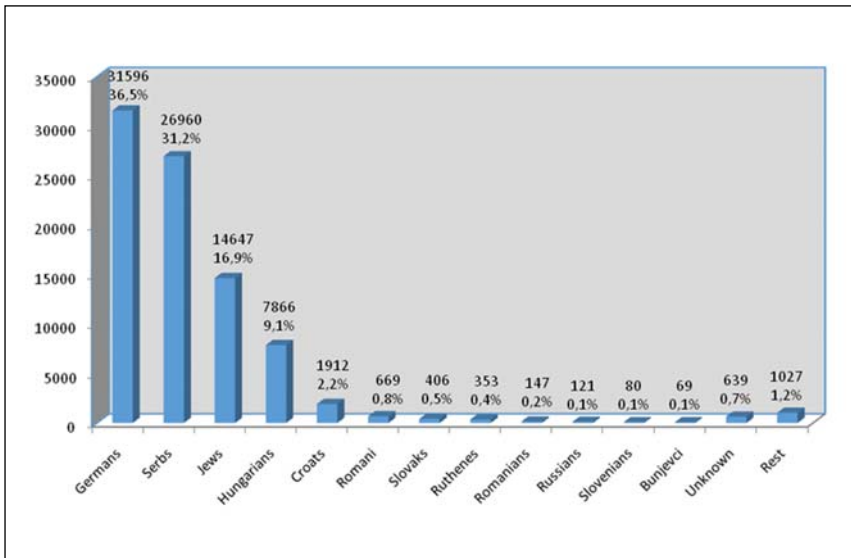


Graph 10. Breakdown of civilian casualties by age, 1941–1948

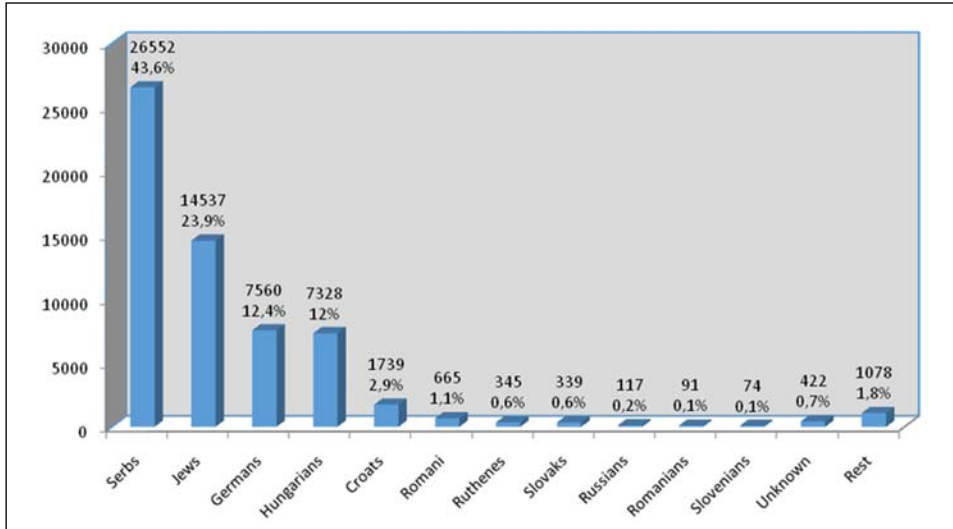
Age breakdown statistics indicate that the majority of casualties were those between 46–65 year of age, then those between 31–45, and a great number of people were over 66 years of age (16%) and finally, children under 18 years of age (13%). According to gender statistics, 64% were male casualties versus 36% were female. Women, children and older than 66 years mostly died in camps and were rarely executed.



Graph 11. Breakdown of civilian casualties by gender, 1941–1948

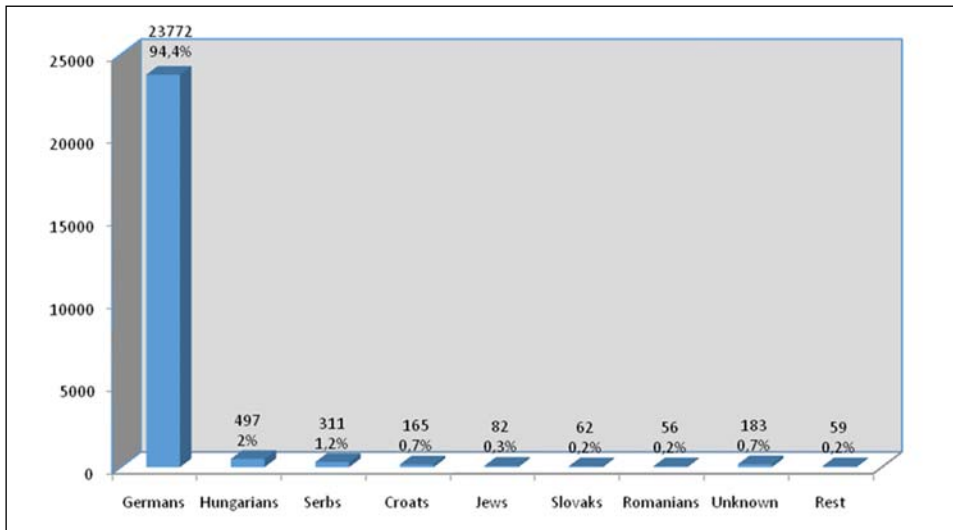


Graph 12. Breakdown of number of casualties by nationality, 1941–1948



Graph 13. Breakdown of number of casualties by nationality, 1941–1945

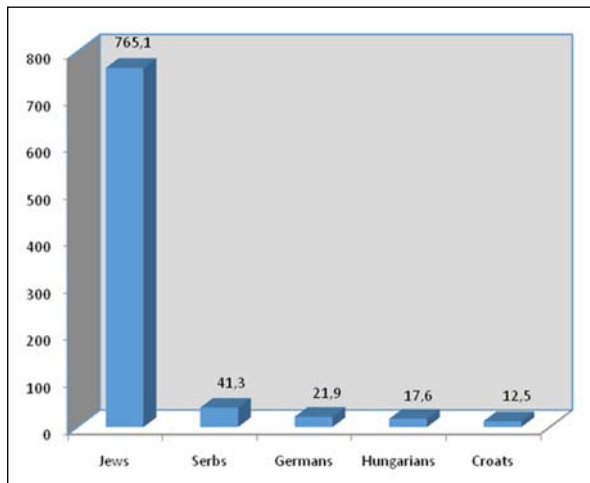
Statically, until the end of WW2, most casualties were Serbian nationals (26 552), then Jews (14 537), followed by Germans (7560), Hungarians (7328) and Croats (1739). However, until 1948 due to deaths in camps, the number of Volksdeutschers (Germans) is the highest (31 596).



Graph 14. Breakdown of number of casualties by nationality, 1945–1948

Table 2. Casualty index by nationality 1941–1945

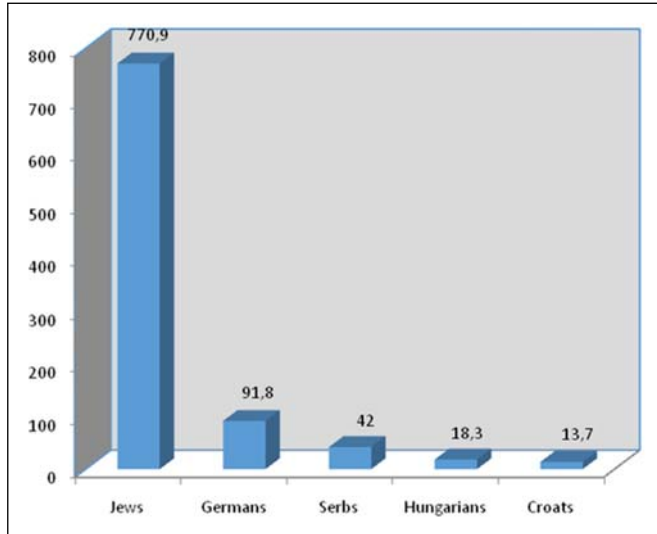
Nationality	Estimated number of inhabitants in Vojvodina in 1941 <sup>9</sup>	Civilian casualties until September 15th, 1945	Number of killed per 1000
Jews	19 000	14 537	765.1
Serbs	642 000	26 552	41.3
Germans	344 000	7560	21.9
Hungarians	429 000	7560	17.6
Croats	139 000	1739	12.5



Graph 15. Comparative analysis of indexed civilian casualties in Vojvodina, 1941–1945 per thousand

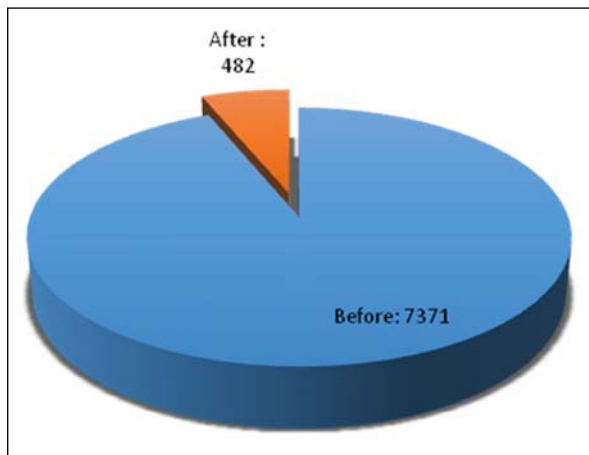
Table 3. Casualty index by nationality in Vojvodina, 1941–1948

Natioanlity	Estimated number of inhabitants in Vojvodina in 1941 <sup>10</sup>	Civilian casualties 1941–1948	Number of killed per 1000
Jews	19 000	14 647	770.9
Serbs	344 000	31 596	91.8
Germans	642 000	26 960	42
Hungarians	429 000	7866	18.3
Croats	139 000	1912	13.7



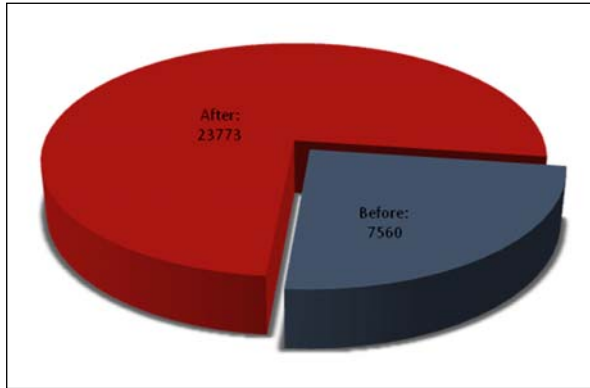
Graph 16. Comparative analysis of indexed civilian casualties in Vojvodina, 1941–1945 per thousand

As the above diagram shows, the breakdown of casualties by nationality varies significantly depending on the analysed period i.e. until May 15th, 1945, the formal end of WW2, or the entire war period inclusive of 1948. Enormous number of civilian Volksdeutsche died in camps (40 across Vojvodina), out of which as much as 150 000 civilians have been killed during 1944–1948.<sup>11</sup>



Graph 17. Scale of Hungarian civilian casualties by the end of the war and later





Graph 18. Scale of German civilian casualties by the end of the war and later

Table 4. Casualties by nationality and by year, 1941–1948

Natioanlity	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	Unknown
Serbs	4686	11 665	4333	5184	938	148	50	9	27 013
Germans	45	62	25	5794	11 110	11 311	2870	203	31 420
Hungarians	172	93	62	6454	670	286	32	3	7772
Croats	144	88	79	1216	296	102	15	2	1942
Jews	2290	3274	677	7954	227	51	11	1	14 485

During 1941, 1942 and 1943 victims were mostly Serbs and Jews. However, in 1948, the majority of casualties were German.

Table 5. Casualties by nationality and by means of death, 1941–1948

Natioanlity	Missing	Death sentence	Died in the camps	Killed	Rest
Jews	179	10	9047	3819	1592
Hungarians	879	538	482	5617	350
Germans	225	161	24 211	5569	1430
Serbs	664	450	5890	19 199	757
Croats	100	362	114	1104	232

According to the above statistics, during WW2 most casualties lost their lives in camps (Jews, Serbs and Germans). However, most of the Hungarian casualties were killed in extrajudicial executions or were sentenced to death.

*Table 6. Casualties by nationality and by “killed by” criteria, 1941–1948*

<b>Natioanlity</b>	<b>Yugoslav Army in the Homeland</b>	<b>Hungarian Forces</b>	<b>IS Croatia Forces</b>	<b>National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia</b>	<b>German Forces</b>
Jews	17	2210	828	131	11 168
Hungarians	24	200	35	7038	157
Germans	265	27	26	31 042	160
Serbs	98	5746	10 566	1294	7936
Croats	54	264	102	1229	120

Jews and Serbs were mostly killed by Germans; Serbs and Croats by Hungarians; Germans and Hungarians by National Liberation forces; and in the Independent State of Croatia among the highest number of killed were Serbs and Jews.

*Table 7. Serbian casualties by “means of death” and year*

	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Deathsentence</b>	<b>Died in the camps</b>	<b>Killed</b>	<b>Rest</b>
1941	175	18	741	3516	138
1942	135	18	2740	8543	120
1943	117	6	929	3003	138
1944	152	238	910	3497	245
1945	36	127	380	304	60
1946	4	15	69	32	18
1947	1	13	12	19	3
1948	0	3	0	6	0

According to the statistics, the most Serbs were killed during 1942, followed by 1941, and then 1944.

Table 8. Jewish casualties by “means of death” and year

	Missing	Deathsentence	Died in the camps	Killed	Rest
1941	73	4	372	1257	573
1942	29	0	699	2239	301
1943	29	0	90	61	493
1944	20	5	7571	185	173
1945	4	1	174	32	16
1946	1	0	43	4	9
1947	0	0	6	0	5
1948	0	0	0	0	1

As figures show, Jewish casualties were highest in camps during 1944, then in 1942, followed by 1941.

Table 9. German casualties by “means of death” and year

	Missing	Deathsentence	Died in the camps	Killed	Rest
1941	2	0	1	35	4
1942	3	0	4	53	1
1943	1	0	2	20	2
1944	114	76	657	4880	53
1945	48	59	10 690	232	49
1946	17	8	9886	246	1130
1947	1	8	2660	14	181
1948	0	3	184	8	6

German death toll was highest during 1945, followed by 1946 and then 1944 in camps due to famine, disease, and lack of medical treatment.

*Table 10. Hungarian casualties by “means of death” and year*

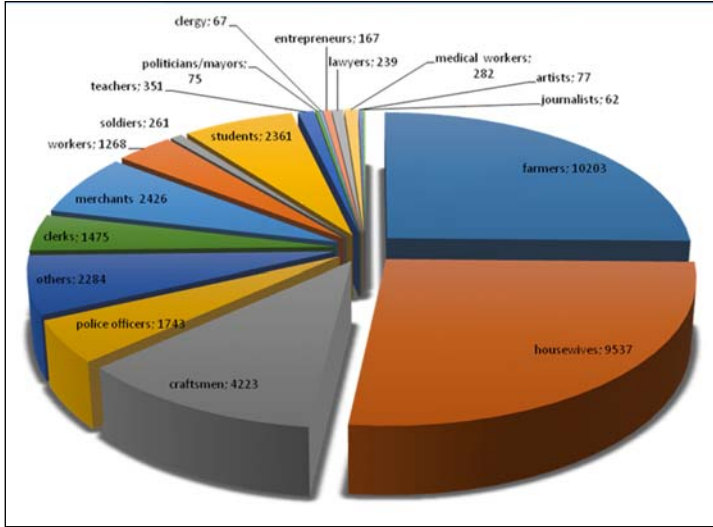
	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Deathsentence</b>	<b>Died in the camps</b>	<b>Killed</b>	<b>Rest</b>
1941	11	2	2	131	17
1942	3	0	1	77	9
1943	4	0	16	21	20
1944	753	294	123	5068	209
1945	36	212	231	173	18
1946	24	10	81	99	66
1947	0	13	16	0	3
1948	0	2	0	0	1

Hungarian death toll was highest during the mass executions in 1944, followed by high number of death sentences in 1944 and 1945.

*Table 11. Croatian casualties by “means of death” and year*

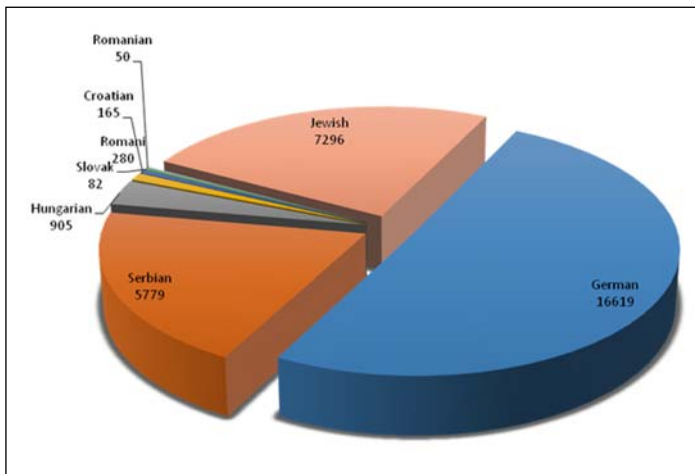
	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Deathsentence</b>	<b>Died in the camps</b>	<b>Killed</b>	<b>Rest</b>
1941	4	1	11	107	14
1942	2	0	11	67	4
1943	10	0	3	42	18
1944	65	140	22	821	146
1945	15	191	29	44	20
1946	3	20	32	19	25
1947	0	6	6	1	1
1948	0	1	0	0	1

Most Croats were killed during 1944 and then in 1945. They were mainly sentenced to death.



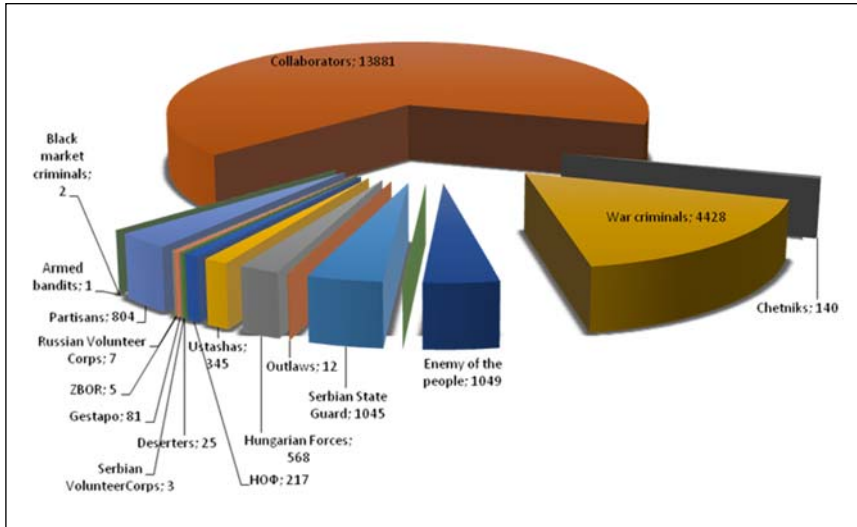
Graph 19. Social structure of casualties 1941–1948

Above results show that the most dominant social category among the killed were craftsmen, students, tradesmen, policemen, clerks, housewives etc.



Graph 20. National structure of female casualties 1941–1948

Out of total number of casualties, 31 533 or 37% make women; 16 619 were German nationals, 5799 Jewish, followed by 5779 Serbian and 905 Hungarian.



Graph 21. Original affiliation of casualties

The victims had the following affiliations based on original documents: collaborators, war criminals or “enemies of the state”, members or sympathizers of various military formations etc.

## CONCLUSION

According to preliminary Inter-Academy research results 86 492 people were killed during 1941–1948. Out of this total number 60 847 people were killed before the formal end of WW2. 45 575 were killed during the war, and 41 916 people lost their lives after the liberation. 16 659 people were killed before May 1945, and 25 257 people died in camps during the period of retaliation against German and Hungarian nationals between 1945 and 1948. Final results include all previous works of relevance for this study, and additional sources that were formerly unavailable (Secret Service files, Military Archives, Historical Archive of Vojvodina and some from several local archives) are also included. The most important findings of this research are newly discovered books and execution registers by OZNA, the department for the protection of people, and camp books for Bački Jarak, Molino, Sremska Mitrovica, Zrenjanin and some others.

The nationalities who had most casualties during the war are beyond any doubt the Jews and Serbs. However, after the war, the Volksdeuschers and the Hungarians were the dominant nationalities who died in camps after May 15th, 1945. Serbs and Jews constituted the majority of casualties in camps during 1941–1945 (Serbs during

1942 and Jews in 1941). However, among those who died in camps in 1945–1948 were most of the Volksdeutsche. The majority of Hungarians and Croats were killed by firing squads or in extrajudicial executions after the war. In general, German forces were responsible for killings of Jews and Serbs, Hungarian forces for Serbs and Croats, national liberation forces for killing Germans and Hungarians, forces of the Independent State of Croatia for killings of Serbs and Jews.

All in all, compared to the size of the population, the greatest human losses were during 1941–1945. Among the most affected nationalities were Jews (765.1%), Serbs (41.3%), Germans (21.9%), Hungarians (17.6%), Croats (12.5%) and some other in smaller proportions. During 1941–1948, compared to the size of the population, the greatest death toll was by far among the Jews (770.9%), Germans (91.8%), Serbs (42%), Hungarians (18.3%), Croats (13.7%) and others in insignificant number.

It is important to stress that the results reached are not final and are subject to some modifications and change. They can be accessed on the Commission's site for indexing civilian casualties in Vojvodina 1941–1948 (<http://vojvodinakom1941.org.rs/lt/>).

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Historian, Senior Research Associate, Institute for Contemporary History, Belgrade
- <sup>2</sup> Associate Researcher, Institute for Contemporary History, Belgrade
- <sup>3</sup> Seventy volume index of war casualties, published in 1992. However, in 1966 Federal Bureau for Statistics published results for internal use. According to those results, total number of casualties in Vojvodina were 41 370; 26 426 Serbs, 1266 Croats, 91 Slovenians, 29 Macedonians, 208 Montenegrins, 16 Muslims, 9488 Jews, 1748 Hungarians, 734 Slovaks and 1305 other nationalities. *Casualties od war 1941–1945. Index results*. Belgrade, 1966. pp. 22–23.
- <sup>4</sup> Bogoljub Kočović: *War casualties in Yugoslavia*. London, 1985; Vladimir Žerjavić: *Loss of population in Yugoslavia during WW2*. Zagreb, 1989
- <sup>5</sup> Aleksandar Kaszas: *Mađari u Vojvodini 1941–1946*. Novi Sad, 1996; Enike Šajti: *Mađari u Vojvodini 1918–1947*. Novi Sad, 2010; Zoran Janjetović: *Nemci u Vojvodini*. Beograd, 2009
- <sup>6</sup> Ljubivoje Cerović – Dragoljub Živković – Milan Micić – Tibor Pal – Enike Šajti – Dušan Vuletić – Nenad Maurić – Đorđe Spernjak: *Na putukaistini*. Novi Sad, 2008
- <sup>7</sup> <http://www.otvorenaknjiga.komisija1944.mpravde.gov.rs/#10>
- <sup>8</sup> <http://vojvodinakom1941.org.rs/lt/articles/o-nama/>
- <sup>9</sup> Bogoljub Kočović: *Sahranajednogmita. Žrtve Drugogsvetskog rata u Jugoslaviji*. Novi Sad, 2005. p. 166.
- <sup>10</sup> Bogoljub Kočović: *Sahranajednogmita. Žrtve Drugogsvetskog rata u Jugoslaviji*. Novi Sad, 2005. p. 166.
- <sup>11</sup> More in *Nemci u Vojvodini* by Zoran Janjetović (Beograd, 2009).

## THE PROCESS AND ADMINISTRATION OF PARTISAN RETALIATIONS IN MAGYARKANIZSA AND ITS AREA

LAJOS FORRÓ

### “PARTISAN FILES” IN THE VOJVODINA (VAJDASÁG) ARCHIVE

#### **Introduction**

The Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia held its first meeting in Jajce on November 29th and 30th, 1943. Apart from the dethronement of the king and the establishment of the people’s government, the council also established the State Commission for the Determination of Crimes of the Occupiers and their Collaborators, who were given the task of investigating and seeking out those who had committed war crimes during WWII and holding them accountable for what they did.<sup>1</sup>

Translation of the decision:

*“Decision to establish the State Commission for the Determination of Crimes of the Occupiers and their Collaborators:*

*1. In addition to the Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia, as the means of determining, finding and bringing to justice those who are responsible for the war crimes perpetrated by the occupiers and their supporters during wartime in Yugoslavia, the State Commission for the Determination of Crimes of the Occupiers and their Collaborators is established.*



2. *The Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia will appoint the members of the Commission and lay down the regulations.*

3. *This decision is immediately in effect.*

*November 30th, 1943, Jajce, Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia,  
Secretary: Rodoljub Ćolaković<sup>2</sup>  
President: Dr. Ivan Ribar<sup>3” 4</sup>*

The set of regulations comprising 13 points was finalized on the May 6th session (1944) of the Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia.<sup>5</sup> An excerpt from the regulations:

*“Article 9: The State Commission works independently or with support from the commissions of federal units, who will immediately appoint their executive commissions (boards) to this aim, who will then establish the necessary implementing bodies.*

*The State Commission unites, coordinates and controls all federal commissions. The federal commissions must provide all collected material at the State Commission’s disposal for further measures.”*

*“Article 11: The State Commission is accountable for its work in determining the crimes of the occupiers and their collaborators to the Council for National Liberation, which they are to inform during their work process.”*

The document was signed by Josip Broz Tito, President of the Commission.

After the regulations were completed, Dr. Dušan Nedeljković,<sup>6</sup> a Belgrade University professor was named president of the Commission. The secretary became Dr. Vlada Jokanović, a lawyer from Sarajevo and the members were Dr. Svetozar Rittiga, Dr. Maks Snuderla, Jakova Avsić, Pero Krstajić, Pavel Sateva and Pero Mijačević.<sup>7</sup>

The commission operated from the island of Vis and only after October 20th, 1944, (after the liberation of the capital) did it move its seat to Belgrade. After this date it was able to expand its power as well as become fully operational, which resulted in 439 people working for the Commission by the end of 1945. Operation was implemented within the framework of sub-commissions serving legal, investigative, notification, executive, registration and personnel related purposes.<sup>8</sup>

The federative units of the State Commission for the Determination of Crimes of the Occupiers and their Collaborators were formed in the constituent territories between February and November, 1944 in accordance with the Council for Liberation’s decision and the regulations laid down on May 6th, 1944. The Slovenian was the first on February 19th, 1944, then the Crna Goran (May 19th), after that the Croatian (May 19th), followed by the Bosnian-Herzegovinian (July 1st), the Macedonian (August 14th), Vojvodinan (September 18th) and finally, the Serbian (November 18th). The State Commission, the federative units and other investigative bodies collected a countrywide total of 938 828 allegations of war crimes committed by the

occupiers and their collaborators. After questioning the witnesses and the defendants 550 000 records were taken, photographs of the crimes and posters were collected, victims were exhumed and approximately 20 000 original documents were found that had been left behind by the seceding army and administration. Based on these, the State Commission made 120 000 decisions and registered 66 420 war criminals and collaborators.<sup>9</sup>

The Vojvodina Federative Unit was founded on September 18th, 1944 in Miškovci, Syrmia. Its members were Spasoje Čobanski, Petar Mijačević, Andrija Kardelis, Milan Gavranov, Milka Mijatov, Stevan Ilić, Milorad Balač, Aleksandar Jovanović, Stevan Pavlekić and Isailo Ivančević. Work regulations were completed on November 21st, 1944. Local, regional and district sub-commissions operated under the Commission.<sup>10</sup>

The Subotica Regional Commission had three district statistical councils working under it: the Councils of Szabadka (Subotica), Zenta and Topolya.<sup>11</sup> The Topolya Statistical Council was in charge of Topolya, Bajsa, Bácsfeketehegy, Kishegyes, Pacsér, Bácskossuthfalva and Csantavér. Aside from the local Szabadka Commission, there were 21 local commissions<sup>12</sup> working under the Szabadka Statistical Council. The Zenta Council had, apart from the Zenta Commission, Ada, Mohol, Magyarkanizsa, Martonos and Horgos under its jurisdiction.

## **Fonds 183**

Among the researchable material of the Vojvodina Archive several fonds attest to the anti-Hungarian atrocities committed between 1944 and 1945, as well as providing us with insight into the early days of the Tito Era. The documents of Fonds 183 reflect the process how the partisan powers created their enemies (war criminal or enemy of the people) and created an ideology for their retaliation. The fonds also provides insight into the crimes committed by Tito's partisans throughout Vojvodina.

The fonds' title: State Commission for the Determination of Crimes of the Occupiers and their Collaborators. Little has been written about the documents it contains. Merely a few researchers, among them Aleksandar Kasas, were given access to the documents, and only a small number of Serbian books, among them, the works of Drago Njegovan, contain the lists of people declared war criminals based on reports filed against them (the original documents). Unfortunately, these documents were adopted by the writers without criticism, implying that everyone who was accused at the end of 1944 and the beginning of 1945 was indeed a war criminal. Thus, these works do not count as milestones of objective historical research. However, we cannot equate the work of these two researchers because while Kasas's work – although one-sided – contains true academic research, Njegovan does not even attempt objectivity.

We must mention the work of Zsuzsanna Mezei, who is an employee at the Vojvodina Archive and is occupied with the collection and analysis of the list of the names of the victims.

The above mentioned fonds of the Vojvodina Archive contains the documents of the commissions investigating war crimes, which are at present available for historians to research. Aside from the documents of the commission examining the Novi Sad war crimes, we can find material, although somewhat incomplete, from the municipalities in the region. We can also find several lists of persons liquidated listed by municipality among the fonds' documents. It can be considered a serious deficiency that the list of people liquidated from Novi Sad is missing. The situation is similar regarding some other municipalities as well. A portion of the documents, mainly the liquidation registers, have been transferred to the Museum of Vojvodina. During our research into this subject, we have been able to find a good number of such lists. The list of victims from, for example, Palánka,<sup>13</sup> Szilbács,<sup>14</sup> Verbász<sup>15</sup> and Torzsa<sup>16</sup> are available here. There surely are, or were, lists of people liquidated from Novi Sad and its area among the documents kept in the museum. An entry (K-3008/111) which suggests that the document still exists was found, the document, however, was not in its place.

There are other interesting and valuable documents apart from the registers, such as the files dealing with the issue of war criminals. Upon examining the documents we can determine that the categorization of war crimes and "*enemies of the people*" were done in a similar manner throughout the whole region. From the documents it becomes obvious that the process of partisan judgment showed tendencies contrary to modern normal European practice. In the majority of the cases liquidation preceded any proceedings to prove guilt, so we can certainly say that innocent people, and those who should have been given the assumption of innocence, were victims of the retaliation.

The Commission divided the alleged crimes into the following categories:

1. marching in/arrival (ulazak) – crimes committed by the local Hungarian population at the time of the Hungarian army's arrival;
2. army (armija) – criminal acts committed by the Hungarian army;
3. raids (racija) – crimes committed in Novi Sad and its vicinity in 1942;
4. camps (logori) – crimes committed in different internment camps;
5. forced mobilization (prisilno mobilisanje) – crimes committed during military mobilization;
6. forced labor (prisilni rad) – crimes in relation to forced labor;
7. displacement (iseljivanje) – crimes relating to displacement;
8. crimes against property (protiv imovine).

Enemies of the people were regarded as a separate category. The list of those 8640 individuals who were declared enemies of the people can be found in the Register of Enemies of the People.<sup>17</sup> Names and data (the person's name, remarks and possibly the sentence) were all written up in one file; the formerly mentioned two-volume work was compiled based on these.

Those who were found in the autumn of 1944 to have held office during the Hungarian era could easily find themselves on the list of war criminals as enemies of the people, along with levente instructors, members of the Arrow Cross Party (regardless of whether they were guilty or not), Turanian Hunters, those who served in the Hungarian military or those who simply welcomed the arrival of the Hungarians in 1941. Apart from this, many became victims of the personal vengeance of their Serbian compatriots.

The partisan power's retrospective self-justification began with collecting reports and drawing up lists categorized by the crimes "*committed*". This was followed by records being drawn up and people being declared war criminals (F-Decision); in some cases trials were also conducted in court.

## **Reports**

The majority of the fonds' documents are the reports – 284 boxes by locality in alphabetical order.

The commission investigating war crimes collected allegations from almost all townships in the Southern Region based on which they declared local residents war criminals or enemies of the people. Fonds 183 consists largely of these documents. The majority of the allegations can be found in it listed according to townships. A part of the documents are missing. Some have been lost, another portion of them could be found attached to other documents during the course of our research, for example, they were placed in the sub-fonds of judicial decisions and verdicts.

Since war crimes were recorded based simply on "*say so*", it was enough to simply accuse someone with a crime. In many cases the contents of the reports would have normally fallen under the category of petty civil disputes. Such are the property disputes arising in large numbers among the Martonos and Magyarkanizsa allegations in which reporters resented the fact that their livestock and movable assets were purchased at reduced prices by the reported individuals. Since these allegations also served as the basis for the determination of the reparations that Hungary would have to pay, and due to the whole ordeal being seen by many as an opportunity to easily gain money, it is entirely possible that the data in the documents was intentionally exaggerated.

The majority of the local Hungarians who were named in the lists did not commit crimes that warranted death penalty. This is proven by the fact that the accused

who could not be found during the days of the atrocities were not held responsible later or only received sentences of a few months, possibly a few years.

Examining the documents pertaining to the matter of Magyarkanizsa, Martonos and Horgos, we can ascertain that the reports were often written without any basis at all.

Reports could be filed by filling a form provided by the commission investigating war crimes. The majority of the documents were filled in on a typewriter; there are only a few handwritten forms. The forms contained the following data:

- Perpetrator:
  - name;
  - father's name and mother's maiden name;
  - age, nationality, place of birth;
  - position, occupation;
  - last known place of residence;<sup>18</sup>
- The injured party:<sup>19</sup>
  - name;
  - father's name and mother's maiden name;
  - age, nationality, place of birth;
  - religion, nationality, marital status;
  - place of residence;
  - number of dependents;
- Where the crime took place:
  - region, district, municipality;
- The crime:
  - type;
  - time and place the crime was committed;
  - method and means used in committing the crime;
  - evidence;
- Material damage caused:
  - type;
  - value in Dinar;
- Remarks;
- Signature of reporter.

In Martonos, between December 6th, 1944 and November 5th, 1945 there were a total of 843 reports received by the commission investigating war crimes. (Considering the population, this is quite a high number. According to data from 1948, the residents of the township numbered 3361, whilst Magyarkanizsa, from where 577 reports were received, had a population of 11 139 at the time, Horgos, which had a larger population than Magyarkanizsa, counted 432 reports.)

Locality	Number of identified victim	Number of reports
Magyarkanizsa	72	577
Horgos	66	432
Martonos	33	843

Among the accused, there were many residents of Martonos who were liquidated on November 21st, 1944. In light of this, the veracity of the documents is questionable, since the judgment preceded the reported crime. In an example of tragic irony, on December 10th, 1944 in the case of local police officer, Kálmán Sáfrány, attached to his report was an order to have his case further examined by the Military Court of Szabadka (Subotica).<sup>20</sup> Said police officer had already been liquidated 19 days earlier. Since the mentioned documents were written after the murders, it is possible that reports on certain people were drawn up only to justify murders after the fact.

173 of 843 documents are missing; however, there is a recapitulative document set up by the local commission of Martonos<sup>21</sup> which contains the list of all the accused as well as the serial number of the report which was filed against them. Based on this information we can accurately determine who was accused of different crimes in the village. Most of the reports, a total of 309, were against Mátyás Fehér, notary-in-chief of the village. We must note that in the original documents, in many places, the perpetrator was not named. For example, the indications “*occupier*” and “*Hungarian army*” were used in 58 cases. The many allegations against the notary-in-chief were, quite probably, due to the fact that he was second central official in charge after the vice lord-lieutenant (vice-ispán). These forms were corrected in accordance with a February 26th,<sup>22</sup> 1945 order. The following quotation is from the Zenta Statistical Office’s order sent to the local commission of Martonos: “*We are sending you back the reports attached with the requirement that in the cases where the perpetrator is listed as occupier, army, etc. the document must be corrected so that the individual giving the order should be named, possibly along with the names of the notary or other public officials*”. On most of these corrected reports, we can read the name of Mátyás Fehér. Besides him, the document often names township judge János Sörös, notary Kálmán Katona and Sándor Szél. Thus, the people named above received the most reports against them: Kálmán Katona (87), János Sörös (63), Sándor Szél (60), János Werner, physician (43) and Gábor Nagy, township treasurer (22).

152 people received only one report, and in the case of 22 people, a total of 2 reports were filed. Of all the people liquidated in Martonos, 14 had reports against them. János Sörös had 63, Gábor Nagy had 22, János Gruik 8, Sándor Sörös 7, Kálmán Sáfrány 5, Pál Varkulya, Károly Józsa and Mihály Werner each received 2 reports, whilst in the cases of János Kéri, Ferenc Fejős, Lajos Forró, Antal Szabó, János Török and Péter Ószvár only one report was registered each. None of the later recorded allegations against those who were liquidated are severe enough to merit the death penalty.

Compared to how the reporting documents were handled in Martonos, management of the documents was quite chaotic in Magyarkanizsa. There was a total of, as we have mentioned before, 577 reports registered.<sup>23</sup> The reports up to number 176 are not in chronological order. The report bearing serial number 1 is dated December 8th, 1944, number 2 is dated October 22nd, 1944, and number 3 is dated December 12th, 1944, etc. According to the date the first two reports in Magyarkanizsa occurred on October 19th, 1944 (serial number 13 and 14). Two local Hungarians were reported at this time: István Cseszkó and Péter Remete. Cseszkó's name is on the list of those liquidated in Magyarkanizsa. According to the date, the last report (serial number 558) was filed in Magyarkanizsa on December 10th, 1945. It can be ascertained about Magyarkanizsa, too, that the majority of the reports were filed after the murders have already taken place.

The most reports, 194, were filed against Oszkár Kulay, Pál Lehel, Sándor Mály, Péter Nagy, Károly Szommer, Lajos Bata (all 6 names are present on one form). Apart from these, there are 31 distinct reports against Pál Lehel, mayor. Similarly to Martonos, in many cases they have also revised "*occupier*" to the names mentioned above. Out of the currently known 127 persons liquidated from Magyarkanizsa,<sup>24</sup> 16 had reports filed against them, a total of 24. János Almási, 5, István Cseszkó, Ferenc Kossányi, Pál Takács, József Vajda 2 each, Antal Bagi, János Bicskei, József Bicskei, István Koncz, Antal Kostyán, János Kovács, György Nagy, János Rekecki, Sándor Remete-Rajics, István Szecsei each had 1 report filed against them. János Almási, a farmer, received the most, 5 reports against him, all of which cited forcible purchase; according to the allegations, the reported individual had paid below market price for a farm animal.

It is an interesting fact that there was only one report received, on November 4th, 1944, against István Apró, who was tried and convicted by a court in 1945. He allegedly physically abused an arrested individual on the way from his home to the prison on April 13th, 1941. István Apró's case will be discussed further on in a separate chapter.

There were 432 reports filed in Horgos. The first one was registered on December 19th, 1944. In the first days reports against individuals were common, however, later on (apart from a few exceptions) reports were filed against the Hungarian state, the occupiers and the local occupying power. The largest number of reports (42)

was filed against István Tillinkó, township president. Many reports in Horgos are accusations of murder. According to the available documents, such atrocities against the Serbian population did indeed occur after the regime change.

We can find data regarding the Horgos case in a separate sub-fonds, Victims and Injured Parties. The list of victims between 1941 and 1944 has been compiled and broken down by localities in these documents.

The regional commission of Szabadka (Subotica), in a report on June 15th, 1945, informed the Novi Sad people's commission that during the exhumations carried out on April 28th and 29th, they had excavated six graves in Királyhalma<sup>25</sup> in which they found 24 bodies out of which they were able to identify 16.<sup>26</sup> In fonds 183 of the Vojvodina Historical Archive there is a document entitled List of Victims and Injured parties in the Zenta District (Spisak žrtava i oštećenika Srez Senta), which notes 13 victims in connection with Magyarkanizsa, (12 Serbians, one Jewish). These victims are documented by name. This same document does not mention victims in connection with Martonos but according to the document Aleksandar Brankov<sup>27</sup> went missing on the battle field following forcible conscription. A recapitulative list at the end of the document mentions 7 victims in Martonos, without names. Out of these 4 people (one man, two women and one child) fell victim to the bombings, whilst two men and one woman were executed.<sup>28</sup>

According to the documents and personal accounts, there were no bombings in Martonos. The locals, however, related, and it was later published in a summarizing work about the victims of World War II, that during the advancement of the Soviets, the Red Army attacked the village with rocket launchers. Mátyás Böröcsök, Verona Böröcsök, Emília Luncz and Mihály Luncz<sup>29</sup> were victims of these attacks. It is probable that they are the ones listed as bombing victims. We have no further data on those, two men and one woman, who were allegedly executed. According to the report of the Martonos commission for investigating war crimes,<sup>30</sup> notary Mátyás Fehér was responsible due to forcible conscription for the deaths of Radomir Rajić<sup>31</sup> and Kajica Petrić,<sup>32</sup> who were sent to the front lines, because of mandatory Hungarian mobilization, from where they disappeared. The notary's name was added to the list of war criminals.

According to later examinations there were some cases of excessive measures taken by the Hungarian army but the local Hungarian population only slightly took part in these. The majority of those who had taken part in similar war crimes had left with the seceding Hungarian army.

Research verifies that liquidations preceded allegations in other places, too, not only in those we have mentioned. Post liquidation an "L" was marked for last known place of residence on the person's form to indicate that the individual had been liquidated. This is apparent on many documents.



The correspondence concerning these documents is quite interesting. In these letters the Martonos commission for investigating war crimes informs the Zenta Statistical Council that they do not have the reports against all those who were executed (marked “L” for *likvidirani*, i.e. liquidated persons, in this document as well); these persons were probably reported to the OZNA.<sup>33</sup> However, what is truly interesting is the answer, which states that those persons who had been executed had already been declared war criminals anyway, and if there was no report against them, it was not important because their case was closed accordingly. The document virtually admits that there was no report filed at all against a number of people who were executed.<sup>34</sup>

As regards the form used to file reports, it is also a true document of the period. The partisan document management of the time does not recognize the concept of “*suspect*”. The field where the name of the person should be written was labeled “*criminal*” (zločínac), assuming that the person who had been reported must necessarily be guilty.

In the examined area we can find citizens from practically all layers of society among the reported. However, the largest portion of reports was filed against town officials and police officers. The allegations themselves seem to follow a certain template. I would like to note that there were only a very small number of reports against priests in the area I have examined. This is interesting in itself because the retaliation in general did not spare clergy.

### **Determining war crimes**

After collecting the reports, the local commission compiled the list of alleged war criminals grouped according to the type of crime they had allegedly committed and sent the list to the superior body, in the case of Martonos, Magyarkanizsa and Horgos this was the Zenta Statistical Council. Aside from collecting reports, the commission for investigating war crimes also conducted interrogations, collected witness testimonies, carried out exhumations (mostly Serbian victims who were executed between 1941 and 1944), took into account all events that took place against the Serbian population, collected (sometimes greatly exaggerated) lists of victims from 1941 to 1944, compiled all the photographs taken at ceremonies held during the Hungarian era (for example that which was held to commemorate the arrival of the Hungarian army) in order to identify persons who took part in them; they searched for party lists, took into account defaced cultural values, etc.

The local commissions for investigating war crimes in Magyarkanizsa, Martonos and Horgos also compiled a list of alleged war criminals categorized by the nature of the crime. The documented material is most certainly incomplete, especially in the case of Horgos, since in some cases only a supplementary list was found.

### **1. Marching in/arrival**

There are 54 names on the Magyarkanizsa report pertaining<sup>35</sup> to alleged war crimes committed during the arrival of the Hungarian army, as well as another 43 on a supplementary list.<sup>36</sup> Among the crimes are arrest, robbery, assault, battery, torture, murder, attempted murder, use of force, (false) reporting and use of threats. The list contains not only the names of locals but those who were with the Hungarian army, such as Lieutenant Colonel Oszkár Kulay, military commander of the city. 6 people were accused of murder or conspiracy to commit murder: József Beszédes, Antal Bagi, János Gubás, Lajos Bata, Ferenc Kocsis and Kálmán Mihaljkovity. There are 44 names in the Martonos document<sup>37</sup> and an additional 7 on a supplementary list.<sup>38</sup> Since the names of Sándor Sörös and Lajos Kabók are on both lists, there are 49 persons accused of all manner of crimes in regards to the arrival of the Hungarian army: robbery, abuse of power, confiscation of assets, arrest, battery, torture, (false) reporting, offending people based on ethnicity, arson and shooting, rape, internment and masterminding the arrest and internment of Serbians. According to the documents, nobody is accused of murder. Out of the persons listed 10 have already been liquidated on November 21st, 1944.

The Horgos report incriminates<sup>39</sup> 28 people, among them 13 – including one woman – were accused of murder or incitement to murder.

Further crimes included in the documents are (false) reporting, arrest, battery, theft, rape and destruction of property. Almost all people who were alleged to have committed murder were said to have acted alongside the Hungarian army. We have already indicated regarding the Serbian victims that there were indeed excessive measures taken by the Hungarian army in Horgos but whether the local population took part in these cannot be unequivocally proven.

### **2. Army**

In connection with crimes committed by the Hungarian army 45 year-old László Körmöczi<sup>40</sup> of Magyarkanizsa was accused reporting Nevenka Trnajićo, who led the protest against the Pact on March 27th, 1941. This is why he was held hostage by said Hungarian military officials. We have found no documents citing crimes of this category in Martonos or Horgos.

### **3. Raids**

No-one from Magyarkanizsa, Martonos or Horgos was attributed with any of the crimes committed in Novi Sad and its area in 1942. We must note, however, that in the case of Ferenc Holló, the Ledger of Executed War Criminals<sup>41</sup> indicates taking part in the raids. According to current research Ferenc Holló had not taken

part in any sort of anti-Serbian acts, there was no filed report or incriminatory record against him. It is obvious in his case that false accusation was made to justify his murder. The Ferenc Holló case will be discussed later in a separate chapter.

#### **4. Camps**

There is a supplementary list<sup>42</sup> of different crimes committed in camps in Magyarkanizsa which names 7 people (4 from Hungary and 3 local persons). There are no such reports from Martonos or Horgos.

#### **5. Forced military mobilization**

Crimes committed during military mobilization. The documents from Magyarkanizsa and Horgos do not accuse anyone, whilst in Martonos, notary-in-chief Mátyás Fehér and Kálmán Katona are on the list.<sup>43</sup> According to the document Mátyás Fehér fled to Hungary, while Kálmán Katona committed suicide before the partisans marched in.

#### **6. Forced Labor**

No perpetrators of crimes in connection to forced labor were found among the documents of the local commission in Magyarkanizsa. There are 9 names listed in regard to Martonos.<sup>44</sup> The list contains the names of Martonos locals as well as people from Hungary, such as Imre Simonyi of Baja, commander of a forced labor unit. There are no reports in connection to Horgos.

#### **7. Displacement**

There were 4 persons accused of the crime of theft on a supplementary list<sup>45</sup> from Magyarkanizsa, stating that they had stolen the assets of displaced persons. There is no list of crimes in connection with displacement in the case of Martonos. There is a supplementary list<sup>46</sup> containing 4 names from Horgos. Two people were accused in connection with displacement and the other two Hungarians were indicted in the document for morally supporting the authorities.

#### **8. Crimes against property**

15 were accused in a supplementary list from Magyarkanizsa,<sup>47</sup> 12 of them were local Hungarians, and their crimes were forcible purchase of livestock, destruction of property and robbery. There is no-one accused of such crimes in Martonos. In Horgos 8 people were named in the document,<sup>48</sup> however, instead of specific crimes there are only references to further documents.

A portion of the documents were drawn up using the filed reports, whilst a few other documents contain lists based on records as well as the reports.

The Zenta Commission for Investigating War Crimes examined the documents and wrote a new list which – compared to the local list – had further names added to it as well as some names taken off. In this case the material was transported from Zenta to Szabadka, and was then taken to Novi Sad during the course of similar document transportation. It is interesting to note that some of the liquidated persons are without any reports against them, only to appear later on higher-up lists with absurd, sometimes “*stock*” accusations against them. Several liquidated persons’ crimes were exaggerated in the higher administrative levels in order to justify the murders of these people who originally only had reports of trivial offenses filed against them.

The so-called *elaboratums*, which contained the names of all persons declared guilty of crimes in any category in the whole of Vojvodina, were drawn up as a summary of the documents above, as well as the reports from other regions in Vojvodina. While the reports against those victims who were liquidated were often marked with the letter “*L*” (indicating that said person had already been liquidated) on the lists of war criminals, on the *elaboratums* and the ledger of enemies of the people, this was indicated by “*presuđen*”. We must note that in the ledger of enemies of the people, contrary to previous findings and publications, the word “*presuđen*” does not necessarily mean that the individual was liquidated.<sup>49</sup> Two of these *elaboratums* have been published in the form of books.<sup>50</sup> Publication of the source<sup>51</sup> is in process under the editorship of Drago Njegovan. However, here we can only speak of document publication because these works lack any critique of the source. In addition, the volumes may give the false impression that everyone whose name the list includes is guilty when, in fact, many individuals have since been exonerated.

## Records

During the mentioned process, if a person’s case was found to require additional investigation, *zapisnik*, i.e. records were drawn up based on witness testimony, which examined the actions of the reported citizens in greater detail. Often, not all of the reported names were present, so they pertain to fewer people than against whom reports had been filed. Occasionally, we can find names of people in the records against whom no report was filed at all.

Fonds 183 of the Vojvodina Historical Archive consists largely of these documents.<sup>52</sup> Part of the records numbered 1 to 33 904 (from 1944 to 1947) is missing but even so, there are 94 boxes of researchable material. There are two systems of numbering on the documents, which makes research even more difficult. One type of numbering was the registration number, the other was according to date, so some documents are quite difficult to find. A list broken down by municipalities aids the research.

By examining the records in connection to Magyarkanizsa, Martonos and Horgos, we can ascertain that like the reports, these were also drawn up post-liquidation. We can also find persons among the witnesses who previously – either directly or indirectly – took part in the liquidations. In these cases we cannot rule out the possibility that certain individuals were only entered into the records as perpetrators in order to justify a murder after the fact.

Between March 8th and 31st, 1945 6 records were drawn up in Martonos in which Hungarians – András Gruik, Sándor Szél, Boldizsár Betyák, Ferenc Habi, János Sárfány and Vendel Kassai – give their testimony about the period following the regime change of 1941.

Those named in the records<sup>53</sup> do not give account of crimes as much as they present the post regime change situation, as well as naming the members of the local administration and police force. According to the record Dr. János Werner was elected local commander on April 12th, 1941, his deputy became Gábor Nagy, and then after a few days Gábor Nagy was appointed commander. After 8-10 days János Sörös became president of the municipality and Ferenc Gubi his deputy. The jury were: Péter Kiss, János Sáfrány, Ferenc Habi and others, whilst the national guardsmen were: István Mészáros, Mátyás Dömötör, András Dömötör, Márton Dencs, Károly Józsa, Illés Dukai, Lajos Kabók, Frigyes Túrú, József Berényi, Ferenc Barany, Mihály Mészáros, Péter Szarapka, Antal Lendvai, and József Dani.

According to the records Lajos Kabók, Illés Dukai, Károly Józsa, Lajos Csikós, Ferenc Tót and Pál Galgóczi took part in beating the Serbians. Vendel Kassai claims that all anti-Serbian actions originate from Mátyás Fehér. Apart from him Kálmán Katona and József Németh are responsible as well as Gábor Nagy, municipality treasurer, who blocked financial aid that was due to the Serbians.

Of the mentioned perpetrators, Lajos Kabók fled the regime change in 1944 along with Pál Galgóczi, Lajos Csikós and Mátyás Fehér; Kálmán Katona committed suicide. So it is characteristic of Martonos as well that perpetrators of smaller or greater crimes left with the seceding Hungarian army with innocent people perishing instead of them.

The veracity of these witness testimonies is still questionable, though, because those named in the documents probably gave their testimonies under a considerable amount of pressure. Of the witnesses, we know that András Gruik and Boldizsár Betyák, along with those who were later liquidated, were locked in the town hall's basement, where captives were brutally abused.<sup>54</sup>

However, records which were made with local Serbian residents later on also contain names of local Hungarians who had allegedly taken part in the abuse of the Serbian population. Comparing these two records, we find that there are certain names which are present in the majority of the documents. These are: Illés Dukai, Lajos Kabók and Sándor Sörös. Several also mention Kálmán Bagi, Lajos Csikós and Károly Józsa.

It is worth examining separately Veljo Šećerov's testimony of March 29th, 1945 in Martonos, because the tried case had been previously brought before a military court in December of 1944. We will discuss this trial further on. Why it was necessary to draw up a new record four months after the trial remains a mystery to us.

The record shows<sup>55</sup> that Šećerov stated that while he was returning from the Yugoslavian army István Koncz<sup>56</sup> and Ferenc Fodor, two fugitive national guardsmen, attacked him just outside the village. He fought them off but 15 more people came to their aid from the village. Márton Dencs beat him the hardest, and then they threw him into the Tisza from where János Török<sup>57</sup> rescued him. They escorted him to a prison cell where he was detained with 20 other Serbians, who were beaten by Sándor Sörös, Illés Dukai, Lajos Kabók but most of all by Lajos Csikós.

Živoljin Putnik, who according to several accounts took part in the retaliations against Hungarians, gave his testimony on April 1st,<sup>58</sup> 1945, in which he tells of 64 Serbians being forcibly conscripted during the occupation.<sup>59</sup> Those who were the city leaders at the time, János Sörös municipality president, Mátyás Fehér notary-in-chief, Kálmán Katona notary and József Németh, military rapporteur were named responsible for this. The advisors were Mihály Werner, Dr. János Werner, Sándor Szél, István F. Kovács, István Jakab Kovács and Lajos Salamon.

The most credible source of facts about the atrocities committed against the Serbians is perhaps Ferenc Dongó. According to him, post-arrival, the Hungarian National Guard made arrests in order to investigate the earlier atrocities against Hungarians. Dongó, who was later reported three times, said there were national guardsmen who protected the captives as much as they were able to, such as Mátyás Dömötör, András Kukkli, József Berényi. There were those who sought revenge for past grievances and some who "*gratified their desire to harm others by abusing the captives*". Such were Károly Farkas, Sándor Csikós and Pál Galgóczi.<sup>60</sup> Among the filed reports there are two against Károly Farkas, three against Pál Galgóczi, whilst there are none against Sándor Csikós. We cannot find his name in further documents, however, a man named Lajos Csikós is mentioned several times in the documents as well as the records, as someone who took part in the atrocities against the Serbians; there were two reports filed against him. It is possible that there was an accidental switching of names.

The report of the local commission<sup>61</sup> for investigating war crimes in Martonos gives an account of war criminals who have fled. By name they are: Orbán Gruik, István Takács, Ernő Kapás, Lajos Csikós, Péter Bata, István Bite, István Kovács, Károly Szárics, Dezső Kriszt, István Gubi, István Szarapka, Kálmán Bagi, Gyula Betyák, Ferenc Dongó, Lajos Kabók, Pál Galgóczi, Károly Farkas, Frigyes Túrú, Lajos Bite and József Döringer. Of those mentioned, Galgóczi, Farkas, Csikós, Kabók and Bagi took part, according to accounts and the records, in the abuse of the Serbians.

When examining the documents, we can see that similarly to other municipalities, in Martonos, the majority of those who had committed some sort of crime, were likely to leave with the Hungarian army.

In a record from Magyarkanizsa dated April 11th, 1945, 10:30, Stefanović Andrija, 55 year old restaurant<sup>62</sup> owner gives an account of the mass arrest and abuse of Serbians. He claimed that Milovan Savelić and Bogdan Radivojević died in prison as a result of the abuse. According to the witness, apart from the officers, Lajos Bata, commander of the National Guard and József Koncz took part in the abuse. Tibor Cseres mistakenly calls him Lajos Barta in his work *Vérbosszú Bácskában* (Vendetta in Bácska), in which he names him as a perpetrator of atrocities against Serbians.<sup>63</sup> According to several personal accounts from locals, the mentioned persons did indeed abuse Serbian captives and fled Magyarkanizsa after the partisan arrival; Bata went on to live in Szeged, Koncz in Monor.<sup>64</sup> Later partisan documents cite Lajos Bata as a war criminal who had fled and sentence him to 3 years of forced labor.<sup>65</sup> The sentence cannot be found and we do not know whether he was sentenced in absentia or if he was eventually captured.

On the above mentioned day, Andrija Stefanović testified in front of the same commission at 2 pm.<sup>66</sup> He mentioned the displacement of the Serbians, accusing 21 local Hungarians, among them several who had already been liquidated. Next to a few of the names is the word “*umro*”, meaning deceased.

A record from Szabadka dated July 2nd, 1945 gives an account of the events that took place in Oromhegyes.<sup>67</sup> 44 year-old farmer Dane Basarić, who had arrived as a settler to the village in 1924, tells the story of displacement involving 27 local Serbian families. On April 24th, 1941 Hungarian authorities locked the Serbian men of age 16 and older in a barrack in Magyarkanizsa, where they were often abused. Later on they were taken to Sárvár along with the other members of their family, where they were held captive until the liberation. By his account military commander Oszkár Kulay signed the displacement order.

The witness tells the story of several murders in the records, thus the story of the murders of Đuro Polovina and Jovo Ciganović, who were – according to him – murdered by the national guardsmen of Adorján. The witness knows that the Hungarian authorities also investigated this case, and also has written documentation, which is attached to the record.<sup>68</sup> According to Basarić, resident of Felsőhegy, Mile Teslić was murdered by local national guardsmen. In Oromhegyes 19 year-old Magyarkanizsa student Savo Maravić was murdered along with 55 year-old farmer Milan “*Pilje*” Mandarić, and a man named Nikola, who originated from Bosnia. The witness’ testimony states that the village’s entire Hungarian population was hostile toward the settlers and endeavored to drive them away. The document lists the names of 75 alleged criminals. Up to number 34 there is a note beside each name detailing

their crimes, the rest are merely listed and at the end of the document it is noted they were either national guardsmen or Turanian Hunters or Arrow Cross Party members, possibly all three at once. Among the guilty, he emphasizes Dezső Koncz, minister, who was said to have persecuted the Serbians.

Ignjat Borisavljević, a 48 year old farmer testified on July 3rd, 1945 giving an account of the deportation of the Zimonić settlers.<sup>69</sup> He claimed that on April 14th, 1941 local Hungarian national guardsmen escorted men above 12 years of age to Magyarkanizsa and locked them into a basement. Physical abuse was common. 24 families, a total of 123 people were deported first to Zenta, then to Begecs and from there to Serbia and Hercegovina. The witness claims that he himself was taken to Serbia and his family to Croatia. He mentions that Lukács Faragó, József Koncz, Lajos Bata and Antal Kostyán assisted in carrying out the internment order. Koncz and Bata are cited in several places as perpetrators of the atrocities against the Serbians. At any rate, neither of them stayed for the regime change since they left with the Hungarian army.<sup>70</sup> An interesting fact about this record is that the text is perfectly composed using colorful expressions even though the person filing the report is illiterate and signed his name with a cross.

Another noteworthy element of the records is when a portion of the witnesses try to make the measures carried out by Hungarian authorities (e.g. displacement) seem to be the crimes of the local population. This phenomenon is common in other similar documents as well. In many cases the whole town/village administration is accused of the state's measure taken against Serbian nationals. As we know, the Serbians who settled after October 31st, 1918 were displaced on state orders<sup>71</sup> and the local authorities did not have much of a say in the matter. Yet, many were liquidated because of this and they were later added to the registry of war criminals.

### **Commission Decisions**

The next group of documents is the so-called *F-odluka* documents, i.e. decisions. There are 7900 of these commission decisions in 19 boxes kept in the Vojvodina Archive. These documents basically declare people to be war criminals based on the filed reports and the records. Often not every name cited in the record will have a commission decision next to it, so there was some selection made when declaring someone a criminal or not. Retroactive documentation is common here as well; commission decisions regarding persons liquidated were made after their murders. The people named were entered into the Register of War Criminals with the same serial number as the number of the decision.<sup>72</sup> In the two books there are a total of 7739 names.



## Files/Cartons

Among the archived material there are the so-called “*karticas*” meaning the files kept on war criminals. These are 10×7 centimeter carton pages containing the names and possibly the data of the war criminals of Bácska, Bánság and Szerémség (Syrmia). They are divided into three groups. “*I*” means under investigation (*pod istragom*), “*O*” means convicted (*osuđen*) and “*P*” means liquidated without trial (*presuđen*)<sup>73</sup>. Generally, the cartons of those who were liquidated without a trial do not contain any data besides the name and place. In rare cases the number of the F-decision is indicated. The cartons of those who were under investigation contain more data, in fact, in most cases the verdict number is also present.

## Enemies of the People

Enemies of the people are a separate category. The expression “*enemy of the people*” originates from Stalin. In theory those who committed smaller crimes were added to the list of enemies of the people. War criminals were usually sentenced to death, whilst enemies of the people received prison sentences, however, as time went by the number of years spent in prison decreased.<sup>74</sup> In any case, even though the “*enemies of the people*” did not commit capital offenses, they still had to be stigmatized in some way because they did not fit into the ideology of the power elite. Thus, former Chetniks and Ustashas were added to the list en masse. The term enemy of the people has more of a political meaning: “*who is against us, that is, against communism, is an enemy of the people*”. They also used this term against those who committed lesser crimes so that they could begin to confiscate their assets just as they had done with the war criminals. Apart from this, many people became enemies of the state as retroactive justification for their liquidation. There was a fine line between the two categories of war criminal and enemy of the people. This is underlined by the fact that many were placed into both categories. Denoting people as war criminals and confiscating their assets was a common practice on Serbian territory, among Serbian nationals, especially against those who were supporters of the king.<sup>75</sup> The registry of the enemies of the people can also be found in fonds 183 of the archives. Just as with war criminals, there were cartons on the enemies of the people as well.<sup>76</sup> There are a total of 8640 names on the list out of which 371 were names of Magyarkanizsa residents. Several names can be found twice under a different serial number in the material. Unlike the war criminals’ cartons, where we did not find any specific correlation with other summarizations, the names on the cartons of the enemies of the people were entered into the Register of Enemies of the People<sup>77</sup> (Registar Narodnih Neprijatelja) with the same serial numbers. These cartons and ledgers generally contain the name, age, occupation and alleged crime of those who were declared enemies of the people. In a few cases it indicates that the person had already been liquidated.

**Verdicts**

There were some further persons who were tried before a court in accordance with the commission decisions, or had court proceedings against them in absentia (due to having already been liquidated). In the majority of these cases no court decision was made, the matter simply ends at this point. Only in a few cases was there a verdict, often the trial documents are unavailable only the verdict, which in many cases is just a reference to the conviction of the person. We know of only two death sentences in connection to the municipality of Magyarakanizsa. One is István Apró, Magyarakanizsa merchant who was sentenced to death by the Szabadka Military Court Council acting in the first degree on February 26th, 1945.<sup>78</sup> Apró's sentences can be found in the Zenta Historical Archive. We will discuss his case in detail later. The other was Pál László Kiss of Martonos. Our persistent research into his case did not bring any result. We could find neither the verdict nor any other documents relating to his trial in the material on Magyarakanizsa. It is possible that Kiss was born in Martonos but later moved and was convicted in his new place of residence. In the case of Veljko Šećerov, who we have mentioned and introduced when first discussing the records, there was also a trial before a court. The verdict was reached on December 27th, 1944,<sup>79</sup> which sentences József Bús, Károly Kovács and Károly Kaszermajer to 3 months of forced labor each, Mátyás Sörös and István Holló to 4 months each, whilst Antal Sáfrány was given 6 months. The names of perpetrators István Koncz and Pál Galgóczi can be found in the verdict's text but the court determines that they are fugitives and thus, cannot be convicted. Let us note that István Koncz was liquidated on November 21st, 1944. We can be certain that the court knew this, since the trial documents contain the report in which the gendarmerie of Martonos gives its account to the Szabadka Military Court that István Koncz was convicted by the OZNA.<sup>80</sup> This leads us to conclude that the partisan powers sometimes attempted to destroy evidence of unlawful liquidation. In the documents of the same trial we can find the name of Márton Dencs; his name is not mentioned, however, in the verdict. There is only an indictment in connection to him.

From a later report we can determine that Dencs was also held in prison. According to a report sent to the courts written from Sremska Mitovica, Márton Dencs was discharged from prison on September 21st, 1945, after serving 9 months of forced labor.<sup>81</sup> Earlier research – mainly conducted with the means of oral history – mentions in regards to Adorján that several of the local murderers were convicted. The court material indeed contains the verdict in which Aleksandar Oluški, Nikola Radaković and Svetozar Knežević are convicted by the court for taking part in the Adorján massacre.<sup>82</sup>

Translation of the document:

*“Verdict*

*In the name of the People of Yugoslavia!*

*The Military District Council of Bácska and Baranya, president: Major Pavle Gerenčević, members: Brankov Lazar and Opačić Milan as well as Potkonjak Milka, stenographer. The criminal court case against Zenta resident, Oluški Aleksandar, Radaković Nikola of Móric and Knežević Svetozar of Magyarkanizsa based on the indictment of court-martial attorney Starčević Svetozar with the charge of grievous abuse of power. The verdict subsequent to the trial of February 5th, 1945 is the following:*

*Verdict*

*Oluški Aleksandar defendant I. former Magyarkanizsa police official, 36 years old, Serbian [national], born in Zenta, married with two children, no criminal record*

*Radaković Nikola defendant II. former municipality day laborer, born in 1914 in the village of Móric, municipality of Medak, district of Gospići, Serbian [national] married with one child, has no assets, has no criminal record*

*Knežević Svetozar defendant III. former municipality clerk, born in 1921 in Magyarkanizsa Serbian [national], follower of the Russian Orthodox Church, unmarried, no criminal record*

*are found guilty.*

*Oluški Aleksandar defendant I.,*

*who, as an enemy of the people’s liberation movement, infiltrated into Magyarkanizsa directly after the liberation, where by exhibiting despicable hypocrisy he gained a position of responsibility and wickedly abused the trust that was afforded [in advance] during a search in the village of Adorján carried out by the Magyarkanizsa squad of the gendarmerie, which was bestowed with the task of searching the [village] in order to find hidden weapons and to arrest wrong-doers. The defendant, although it was not his duty, joined this squad of the militia and before the task was carried out he had convinced defendants II. and III. to feign an attack against themselves so that they could kill the arrested persons immediately on the spot in retaliation instead of escorting them to Magyarkanizsa as per the commander’s orders. Based on his evil plan they carried out a feigned attack, shot at Radaković, defendant II. after which they arrested 50 local Hungarians, who they killed in a fascist manner on a road beside the Tisza, while escorting them to Magyarkanizsa;*

*Radaković Nikola, defendant II.*

*as the political commissioner of the Gendarmerie in Magyarkanizsa and the [person] entrusted to carry out the task, he allowed defendant I., Oluški to convince him to commit the crime, in which he himself took part despite having orders to escort the arrested wrong-doers to Magyarkanizsa;*

*Knežević Svetozar, defendant III.*

*Because he agreed to defendant I., Oluški's evil plan and took part in carrying it out with which they committed serious abuse of official power stipulated in Section 15 of the order on courts-martials, because of which the military court sentences defendant I., Oluški Aleksandar to die by gunshot, lose his honor as a citizen and have his assets confiscated, Radaković Nikola, defendant II. is sentenced to a year of forced labor and Knežević Svetozar, defendant III. to 6 months forced labor.*

*Explanation:*

*Based on confessions from the accused we determined that the Magyarkanizsa squad of the Gendarmerie received an order from their commander to search the village of Adorján in order to find hidden weapons and capture criminals, who were to be escorted to Magyarkanizsa. The Political Commissioner of the Gendarmerie, Radaković Nikola was made responsible for carrying out the task. Oluški Aleksandar, defendant I. (who at the time was head of the housing department) joined them. Upon reaching Adorján, Oluški hatched an evil plan unworthy of the fighters of the liberation movement, by means that were only used by fascist evil-doers, [and] succeeded in convincing defendants II. and III., Radaković Nikola [and] Knežević Svetozar to assist him. During the search of the [village] they feigned a shooting attack against Radaković, which gave the evil-doer, Oluški motive for revenge, murdering 50 arrested Hungarians. The plan was carried out: en route to Magyarkanizsa, on a road beside the Tisza, all 50 arrested persons were massacred. In the process of evaluating the crime and determining the punishment the court considers in the case of Oluški, defendant I., the bad reputation he gained among the people as a former police officer and his hostile attitude toward the people's liberation movement, due to which he perpetrated this crime, to be aggravating circumstances. The court did not find any attenuating circumstances. In the [case] of Radaković Nikola, defendant II. the court considers the fact that he did not want to fully admit being guilty to be an aggravating circumstance, the fact that he was deceived by the evil-doer defendant I., Oluški, an attenuating circumstance, along with his previous good behavior; and in the case of Knežević Svetozar, defendant III., that he admitted being guilty and conceded that Oluški, defendant I. convinced him so the determined punishment is justified. Death to fascism, freedom for the people!*

*Stenographer:*  
[signature]  
*Milka Potkonjak*

*Council President:*  
[signature]  
*Major P. Gerenčević*

*Vojvodina Commission for the Determination of Crimes of the Occupiers and their Collaborators,*  
[registry] number: 1372  
March 12th, 1945  
*Novi Sad*<sup>83</sup>

This document clearly stated in 1945 that the people of Adorján were liquidated unlawfully, without any court judgment on October 31st, 1944. According to the document there was no way the Adorján victims could have been war criminals, much rather the innocent victims of the war. There is no credible information on the execution of the sentences. The Zenta District People's Tribunal makes an inquiry to the Magyarkanizsa Local People's Commission regarding whether Aleksandar Oluški had been executed by the authorities and if not, then they wanted to know his whereabouts.<sup>84</sup> According to the report from Magyarkanizsa, the Local People's Commission had no knowledge of Aleksandar Oluški Jr.'s place of residence. They only knew that he had been shown on public posters as sentenced to death but they had no knowledge as to whether that sentence was carried out or not.<sup>85</sup>

### **List of Liquidated Persons**

Among the rest of the documents to be examined the reports which list liquidated persons can be found. There are many and many kinds of such reports, which were handled with the already known kind of chaotic document management, bearing many spelling mistakes and factual errors, which was characteristic of the initial partisan period. These documents were probably not made for posterity but to serve as a basis for confiscating the assets of those who were murdered.

The lists of liquidated persons of Magyarkanizsa municipality (the region we have examined) went through several stations before arriving to Novi Sad. The Novi Sad Province Commission urgently requested on October 15th, 1945 that the Szabadka Regional Commission for Investigating War Crimes send them the list of people who had been liquidated or otherwise sentenced to death.<sup>86</sup> After this, the data was collected by Szabadka from Zenta and from the local commissions by Zenta.

The Magyarkanizsa report was drawn up on October 18th, 1945 and reported 96 disappearances<sup>87</sup> from the municipality.<sup>88</sup> The local commission of Martonos drew up its list on October 19th naming 24 liquidated persons<sup>89</sup> in the document.<sup>90</sup> On the same day the local commission of Horgos reported 37 disappearances<sup>91</sup> adding that *“these persons were probably liquidated after the liberation from the fascist occupation. There is no real proof of this. Most of the persons were from Horgos, whilst a number of them remain unidentified based on the above mentioned names. There will be a detailed investigation into this at a later time and we will provide more accurate data.”*<sup>92</sup> The Zenta Statistical Office, curiously enough, began writing the list meant for Szabadka on October 17th, 1945, more accurately, this is the date on the document. However, it is obvious that the document has been covered, rewritten and expanded in several places. It is probable that it was corrected based on the local reports arriving in the meantime and the list of 391 names was only sent to Szabadka later.<sup>93</sup> The document contains a list, most certainly incomplete, of 391 names of persons liquidated from Mohol, Zenta, Magyarkanizsa (including Adorján, Tóthfalu and Oromhegyes), Martonos and Horgos.<sup>94</sup> The list of liquidated persons from the Szabadka region was sent to the Novi Sad People’s Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Committed by the Occupiers and their Collaborators on December 4th, 1945.<sup>95</sup> The document mentions a total of 829 names.<sup>96</sup> Besides the lists from different reports, fonds 183 of the Vojvodina Archive contains the ledger of executed war criminals from between 1944 and 1945,<sup>97</sup> which lists the names of 1105 liquidated Hungarians.<sup>98</sup> Most places include the date of the murder but research into local history shows that in many places this is erroneous. Since most of the documents were written after the executions, it is probable that the goal was not accuracy but registration.

## **DOCUMENTS IN CONNECTION TO THE RETALIATIONS FOUND IN THE ZENTA HISTORICAL ARCHIVES**

### **Introduction**

The archival material in connection to the region I have examined, i.e. today’s Magyarkanizsa and its area, can be found partially in the Zenta Historical Archive. The fact that the administrative division of the region was different at the time than it is today makes my research a bit more difficult because, for example, the material regarding Adorján is among the Magyarkanizsa documents, whilst the Martonos and Horgos material is separate.

## The Magyarkanizsa, Horgos and Martonos People's Liberation Councils' Documents

After the implementation of military administration<sup>99</sup> the people's liberation councils assumed only advisory roles. The documents do not contain very much exact information about the retaliations. However, we did find a few interesting documents when searching through the Magyarkanizsa Municipality People's Liberation Council's materials. The vast majority of these are discussed in connection with the mentioned areas.

### Documents of the Zenta Town Headquarters

The town headquarters set up military bases in the areas that belonged under their jurisdiction. The gendarmeries were established as local armed forces, and were led by the commander of the gendarmerie. The gendarmerie was positioned directly under the authority of the military headquarters acting as its armed executive body.<sup>100</sup>

The Zenta Town Headquarters began its work on October 20th, 1944. Its jurisdiction extended to the whole of the Zenta District, including the towns of Zenta and Magyarkanizsa as well as the municipalities of Ada, Mohol, Horgos and Martonos.<sup>101</sup> Documents regarding Magyarkanizsa, Horgos and Martonos, most of which I discuss in connection to the individual townships, do not contain specific liquidation lists, though they do contain documents referencing war crimes, and indeed, some allude to liquidation. The following report of Janković Đorđe,<sup>102</sup> gendarmerie commander of Martonos is such a document. He informed the Zenta Town Headquarters on November 22nd, 1944 that the raid of the village had come to an end and that during the course of the *punitive expedition*, 25 murderous Hungarians were destroyed.

We know from the documents that during this period several people from the Hungarian population were being held in prison. This was often reported to Zenta in connection with Martonos and Magyarkanizsa, which I discuss in the chapters about the individual municipalities. Tibor Molnár's work, *A zentai városparancsnokság válogatott iratai 1944–1948* (Selected Documents of the Zenta Town Headquarters 1944–1948) in which he publishes 80 original documents along with their Hungarian translations is a very valuable source for researchers.<sup>103</sup>

### Documents of the Zenta District People's Council

The disappearance reports found in the Zenta district people's council's material are a specifically interesting type of documents. The Szabadka Regional People's Liberation Council sent the following order on April 30th, 1945<sup>104</sup> to the township and district commissions operating in the region:

“...Based on the orders received from imperative inspection of The Commission [operating] in the [Democratic] Federative Yugoslavian Government’s Presidency, we order [you] to hear the complaints received about persons who have gone missing from the time of the liberation and remain missing to this day according to the following criteria:

*Regarding the missing person: personal data, data in connection to the circumstance of his or her disappearance, arrest or execution, who carried out the arrest and/or execution, the exact date of the event, place of residence and exact address of the missing person.*

*A separate official must be entrusted with the task of entering the reports into the records. Disappearances can only be reported by descendants or family members, if they do not have any, then neighbors may report them missing. The data must be collected from the local commission in the region and should be sent with indication to our reference number...”*<sup>105</sup>

It was brought to the attention of the citizens of Magyarkanizsa in a public notice that they could report their relatives missing. “... We call on everyone who has had a relation missing since the liberation to report this to the Liberation Council during office hours at the town hall, Room no. 1.”<sup>106</sup>

Between May 14th and 29th, 1945 Alfréd Friedmann, head of the criminal investigation subdivision, compiled 80 records which reported missing 22 Magyarkanizsa residents, 44 people from Adorján, 10 from Oromhegyes and 3 from Tóthfalu as well as one victim from Zombor<sup>107</sup> who disappeared from Magyarkanizsa.<sup>108</sup> Compared to the number of victims, the fewest reports were filed in Magyarkanizsa. It is quite probable that many, fearing some sort of sanctions, did not dare to report their liquidated relations missing. These reports serve as an especially valuable source material for researchers. The person filing the report would describe the circumstances of their relative’s disappearance on a form on the record. Many times they also mention who took the victim.

The first report was filed by the wife of Gyula Körmöczi, née Ilona Czérna of Adorján, on May 4th. An excerpt from the record: “...because we live in Adorján – on the bank of the Tisza to be exact – I saw, on October 31st, 1944, at around 3:30pm, that Oluški Aleksandar and another unknown partisan came for him [and] took him out to the Tisza embankment. I do not know what happened after that, I did not see. I have not heard from him after this point. His hat was found on the Tisza shore by Adorján resident, Péter Takács.”<sup>109</sup>

The records of missing persons from Magyarkanizsa, besides the circumstances among which the person was taken, often also contain the circumstances of detention as well as the date of liquidation. The first Magyarkanizsa resident was reported missing on May 14th, 1945. Mrs. Antal Bagi, née Piroška Vadas reports her husband, restaurant owner Antal Bagi missing. “On October 15th, 1944 members of the local



*gendarmerie, Nikola Radaković, Svetozar Knežević and an unknown person came for him and escorted him to the town hall. They held him there until October 27th, 1944 when he disappeared and I have not heard from him since. I later heard that he was shot and buried in a vineyard on the bank of the Tisza.”<sup>110</sup>*

The testimony of Erzsébet Körmöczi, the wife of Magyarkanizsa victim György Takács is quite shocking: *“On October 17th, 1944 two military officers came for him and escorted him to the town hall and on October 18th, 1944, at the town hall, I was told he was already dead. On the 19th of the same month I heard stories of him being brought out with severe head injuries, beaten dead. From this point forward I never heard from him again.”<sup>111</sup>*

We can determine from this record, as from other archival documents<sup>112</sup> and personal accounts that those who were held captive in the Magyarkanizsa basement were subject to very brutal physical abuse. It is a contradictory fact that in the case of Magyarkanizsa some family members, for example, Mrs. Antal Bagi and Erzsébet Körmöczi, speak openly about the disappearance of their husbands, whilst many are afraid to even report missing loved ones.

There were 21 reports filed in connection with Martonos from August 27th to September 1st, 1945.<sup>113</sup> *“... We are sending you the recorded statements of the wives of the 24 missing Hungarians from Martonos. [Of] the mentioned 24 missing people three cases are lacking statements: Mihály Werner, as he has no relatives to give a statement like in the case of the others. Furthermore, [regarding] László Takács, whose wife is not residing in Martonos and has no other relations who could give statements about his disappearance. The last missing person is Péter Ózsvár, whose wife remarried and he has no other family member to give a statement about his disappearance. Thus, we are enclosing 21 statements regarding disappearances, however, there are 24 missing persons but we have provided an explanation as to why in the case of three persons there is no statement...”<sup>114</sup>*

From a report sent to Zenta by the People’s Liberation Council of Martonos, we can ascertain that these were not voluntary reports but rather the partisan powers took their tasks all too seriously and summoned the family members for questioning. In spite of this, there were wives who spoke very explicitly about the circumstances of their husbands’ disappearance. For example, the wife of Sándor Sörös, police officer, from whose testimony it becomes clear that the Martonos detainees were also subjected to abuse. *“My husband, who was a municipality police officer, left on October 7th, 1944 with the gendarmerie and returned on October 24th, 1944. The next day, as his wife, I went to the town hall and reported his arrival. This time two guards<sup>115</sup> came (to our home) and arrested my husband. The cause of the arrest is unknown to me. While my husband was here<sup>116</sup> in prison, I brought him food. I was able to speak to him once in the presence of a guard. That was when I saw he had been badly beaten and*

*was covered with wounds from the beatings. On his left hand I saw a bandage, which had just been reapplied by another captive. As always, on November 21st, 1944, I was taking him breakfast but the guard said they had been transported to Becse for interrogation. I would like to know whether my husband, Sándor Sörös is alive or not. I have nothing else to say in the matter. The testimony was read aloud and translated to Hungarian.”*<sup>117</sup>

It is clear from the personal accounts that Sándor Sörös was subjected to severe physical abuse. His son, Péter Sörös was, as a small child, a witness to this: *“My father came up the stairs. By this time he had been beaten up severely. Bajić Miloš had punctured his hand with the barrel of his rifle. Later on, he was battered so relentlessly that he could not stand up. He had been whipped. At this time he was taken to the post office building where a Russian (female) doctor attended to him. While the Russians were here, they were not beaten much but when the partisan powers took over, they beat them up. They beat up the minister awfully. It was medieval torture what they did.”*<sup>118</sup> The difference between the Magyarkanizsa and the Martonos reports is that whilst in the case of the former, the reporters identify quite a few individuals by name, the latter contain no such references. The Horgos reports, if there were any, cannot be found neither in the Zenta Historical Archive nor the Vojvodina Archive.

### **Asset Confiscation Documents**

The partisan powers kept quite a precise (even if sometimes incomplete) list of liquidated persons from the Magyarkanizsa municipality area. The reason for this is quite probably that they extended the asset confiscation law to the assets of the unlawfully liquidated. After the end of the war, on June 9th, 1945, the presidency of the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia passed the law on asset confiscation and its execution.<sup>119</sup> The law made complete or partial confiscation possible. Only the property, objects, tools and clothing that were necessary for the survival of the convict's immediate family were exempt from confiscation. In accordance with the law the district's people's commission had to send the district courts an inventory of the assets of people who were liquidated, executed or had fled. This applied to courts-martial as well, who were obligated by law to send the list of convicts. The law itself basically records an existing situation because the liquidated persons' property had, in many places, already been seized by the partisan powers.

Based on reports from municipalities under their jurisdiction, the Zenta District People's Council's Department of Internal Affairs compiled a list of 271 names of people who, in accordance with law, could be sentenced to asset confiscation. The document dated September 12th, 1945, lists, besides the Zenta, Mohol and Ada war criminals, the names of 67 residents of Magyarkanizsa municipality.<sup>120</sup> 22 from

Magyarkanizsa – János Almási, István Balázs, Mihály Bicskei, Imre Csanádi, József Csiszár, Kelemen Filiszter, János Gajda, Lajos Gyalús, Péter Harmath, Tamás Hartman, Miklós Kávai, Miklós Kiss, Zoltán Kocsis, István Koncz, István Medgyesi, Gábor Lonti Milutinovics, Ferenc Muhi, György Nagy, József Nagy, Sándor Remete, János Szilágyi, Ferenc Törteli – 32 people from Horgos – Géza Ábrahám, Vilmos Almer, János Báló, Mátyás Berényi, József Bojnik, János Bordás, Mihály Cocek, Lajos Csehák, Ferencné Csikós, Géza Farkas, János Fazekas, István Fehér, Erneszt Hauk, Mihály Herceg, Valéria Herédi, János Kabó, Ádám Katona, Mátyás Krekuska, Sándor Lajtár, Ferenc Lengyel, Mihály Mnyilinszki, Antal Pataki, Antal Pokal, György Radics, Mihály Radics, István Szabadi, Mátyás Takács, Ferenc Tillinkó Sr., Ferenc Tillinkó Jr., István Tolani, Pál Túri, István Virág; and 13 names from Martonos – Géza Balázs, Mátyás Janucski, Imre Gaál, János Gruik, Ferenc Holló, Miklós Horváth, Károly Józsa, János Kéri, Gábor Nagy, Kálmán Sáfrány, János Sörös, László Takács, Pál Varkulya.

The list of those sentenced to asset confiscation in the Municipality of Magyarkanizsa was most likely extended later on because of the 176 liquidated persons listed in the Zenta Archive's document material, 145 had asset confiscation proceedings pending against them.

The authorities drafted the financial state of those whose assets were to be confiscated, based on which they began the proceedings. The proceedings were initiated in the case of 80% of the persons liquidated from Magyarkanizsa municipality, however, in most cases it was discontinued or only partial confiscation was carried out. Their house and some property essential for carrying on with everyday life was not taken from the family but larger lands, shops and pubs were indeed taken. The reports sent to Zenta by local authorities (Magyarkanizsa, Martonos, Horgos) contain some discrepancies. The forms used for this purpose, in which alleged war criminals were marked "*missing*" (nestao),<sup>121</sup> "*fled*" (pobegao) or "*left their property*" (napustio imanje), were sent by all local commissions. Aside from this only the Martonos commission considered it important to send detailed reports of the real or alleged war crimes of the listed persons. We must note here that these reports, based on present day research, are exaggerated (most often) forgeries lacking any basis whatsoever.

The documents drawn up during the course of the asset confiscation proceedings are very important historical sources for researchers because these also cite personal accounts from the period. Relatives appealing the confiscation proceedings sometimes speak of the circumstances under which their family member went missing, and resent the fact that no court order was brought to prove the person a war criminal. Mrs. István Medgyesi's March 1st, 1946 appeal is also a valuable document of the period. Excerpt from the document:

“The Szabadka Regional Commission<sup>122</sup> acting as appellate court under number P/ 70/1946 made another decision, of which I was sent a notice numbered Vp. 960/1946 from the Zenta People’s Tribunal<sup>123</sup> dated February 18th, 1945. The decision was to confiscate my husband’s (who, according to them, is a war criminal and an enemy of the people) assets. I am appealing the Zenta District People’s Tribunal’s decision within the given deadline, and I am requesting that my complaint, along with the other documents pertaining to the matter, be handed over to the Szabadka Regional Commission, so that they can annul the above mentioned decision and discontinue the asset confiscation proceedings due to the following reasons:

The above mentioned decision determines that my husband, István Medgyesi, is a war criminal and an enemy of the people, who fled/disappeared during the war. I would like to note that during the liberation my husband was in Magyarakanizsa, so he could not have fled. I have no knowledge of my husband being convicted by any court but such a decision probably does not even exist. Immediately following the liberation, when public circumstances were in disarray, my husband was kidnapped by irresponsible elements, by whom [he] was treated cruelly, after that he went missing from prison. Today’s people’s power cannot be in congruity with the [past] actions of those irresponsible elements, this has been established by the fact that a number of such people have been convicted by the [courts] and their [past] actions could not have taken place with knowledge of the people’s power. My husband was a bricklayer, so a physical laborer, he supported his family through his work. He was not a member of any political party neither in the old Yugoslavia nor during the occupation. The one house that is in my husband’s possession is necessary to sustain our immediate family. There are four families, so fourteen people living in this house. These are my daughters’ families, so they belong to my family. There are a number of children among them (from 1 week old to 7 years old), who would be left without a place to live if the house would be confiscated. It is thus clear that my husband’s assets, i.e. that one house, are essential to my family’s preservation. I am a 64 year old woman unable to earn a living, unable to perform hard physical labor. All the people residing in my house (my daughters’ families) are physical workers of low financial status who live on the wages of their labor, one of my sons-in-law is a member of the Yugoslavian Army, which means I support his wife and their daughter, too.

In accordance with paragraph 1. of section 1. and paragraph 1. of sections 2. and 3. of the Asset Confiscation Law, which stipulates that land belonging to the home, residential buildings and tools for performing a trade, which are absolutely [necessary] to sustain the missing [person’s] family, are exempt from the confiscation law. I am convinced that the people’s power will not allow, will not decide to throw 4 families with 16 members out onto the street, just because irresponsible elements took my husband. I know of no such verdict reached by a people’s tribunal that declared my husband

*guilty of war crimes. Based on these, I request that the Szabadka Regional People's Commission<sup>124</sup> make a decision that acquits my husband of these charges of being a war criminal and an enemy of the people and discontinue the confiscation proceeding against his assets. I await the court's order with hope that the Szabadka Regional People's Commission,<sup>125</sup> acting as appellate court, will make a decision in [my] favor."*

The court disregarded the appeal and made the decision to confiscate István Medgyesi's assets.

## Declared Dead

The Yugoslavian courts, following the war – mostly at the request of the victims' families – declared persons gone missing during the war dead. These proceedings were conducted from 1945 to 1952 according to the law on out-of-court cases. After 1952, in accordance with the law passed on March 31st pertaining to declaring missing persons deceased and proof of death,<sup>126</sup> they were handled by the district courts.<sup>127</sup>

Despite the fact that the partisan powers drew up quite precise lists of liquidated persons, in cases where people were to be declared dead, they did not use these probative documents. Aside from hearing witness testimonies, they conducted these proceedings as if they had absolutely no knowledge of the victims' identity.

After the first such proposal<sup>128</sup> the court called on the Vojvodina Executive Commission in a letter to ask if they should pursue the matter at all.<sup>129</sup> *"...Mrs. András Kovács, Magyarkanizsa [resident] propositioned the court regarding her husband<sup>130</sup> being declared dead, who disappeared after the liberation on November 22nd, 1944 [when] the mass liquidations carried out by the OZNA [occurred] in Magyarkanizsa, a fact confirmed by the Magyarkanizsa Local People's Council in certificate number 8383/1946. The court inquires if it may, (like some other matters are handled) prove the death in a regular extra-judicial procedure or are there specific orders, stipulations or regulations for these cases."*<sup>131</sup>

The Regional Department of Internal Affairs, with its headquarters in Szabadka gave the following instructions in the matter: *"...we inform you that the procedure for declaring a person dead must be initiated at the responsible District Court, in accordance with the law on out-of-court proceedings, regardless of the circumstances and time of the persons' disappearance. The cited law allows the missing person to be declared dead. The proposal to initiate such a procedure may be handed in by the relations of the missing person."*<sup>132</sup>

Even though the court practically handled the liquidations as a taboo subject, the matter of declaring a person dead becomes quite clear from a few witness' testimonies.

During the course of the procedure to declare victim Miklós Vajda dead in 1952, the witnesses essentially describe the Adorján murders: *"Witness, Antal Bata of Adorján*

*residing at 85 Marshal Tito Street, farmer, 59 years old, married, father of two, no relation, disinterested, warned, states: I knew the missing Miklós Vajda well, because he lived in his parents' house in my neighborhood, directly opposite my house. On the last day of October, that is on October 31st, 1944 some sort of military arrived in Adorján and after they had held an assembly in the square, the soldiers dispersed in groups among the houses and rounded up several hundred citizens. Among them they chose fifty and led them in an unknown direction. I remember well that the next day was the catholic holiday All Saints Day and five of these people's dead bodies were seen on the Tisza bank that the water had washed ashore. I only saw them in the cemetery where they brought them in order to be buried. Miklós was not among these persons. I attest to the fact that Miklós has not come home since and I have not heard from him either. I have nothing else to say and I am willing to swear to my testimony."*

*"Witness, Béla Bognár of Adorján residing at 1. Dohány Street, farmer, 39 years old, married, father of four, no relation, disinterested, warned, states: I know the missing Miklós well because we were neighbors. On October 31st, 1944 someone's army came to our village and gathered many people in the square, based on a registry, out of which they selected 50 citizens and led them in an unknown direction. I was there in the square at the time. According to several people's account, the next day, which was All Saints', 5-6 dead bodies from among those [persons] who were led away in an unknown direction, were seen on the shore of the Tisza. I did not see these bodies but I know for sure that Miklós was among the citizens who were taken away. Because Miklós has not, [from] this day forth, returned and has not been heard from since, I am certain he is dead. I have nothing else to say and I am willing to swear to my testimony."*<sup>133</sup>

Most often, however, such detailed witness accounts were not written up and the cause of death was composed in a much more nuanced manner, many times making the liquidations seem like accidents. A common description is the one used in connection to the Adorján cases stating that – *"...On the afternoon of October 31st, 1944, around 15:30, although it was forbidden, (Sándor Bognár, Gyula Horváth, Antal Lackó, Gyula Milutinovics, János Pásztor, József Pásztor, József Remete, István Sarnyai and Ferenc Vörös) went out to the Tisza shore in Adorján, where he fell due to an accidental gunshot then disappeared..."*

In Magyarkanizsa the following definition was often used, such as in the cases of István Cseszkó, István Koncz, Imre Kossányi, Ferenc Muhi, János Rekecki, Dezső Sóti as well as in the cases of Pál Szabados and József Gajda – *"...in October [...] 1944, even though it was forbidden, (the victim) went out into the street, where he fell due to an accidental gunshot then disappeared..."*<sup>134</sup>

Of the 176 persons mentioned as victims in the documents of the Zenta Archive, proceeding were carried out in 96 cases to declare them dead.<sup>135</sup>

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Miodrag Zečević – Jovan P. Popović (ed.): *Dokumenti iz istorije Jugoslavije*. Beograd, 1996. (Henceforth: Zečević – Popović, 1996) p. 21.
- <sup>2</sup> Rodoljub Čolaković (Bijeljina, 1900 – Beograd, 1983), Yugoslavian revolutionary and literateur. From 1919 he was a member of the Socialist Party of Yugoslavia, then a member of the JKP, he took part in the Spanish Civil War and the Yugoslav People's Liberation War. After the war he held several important social-political offices.
- <sup>3</sup> Ivan Dr. Ribar (Vukmanić, 1881 – Zágráb, 1968), Yugoslavian politician. Earning a law degree in 1904, he was already involved in politics during the time of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy: he was in favor of a united Yugoslavia. After WWI, he was one of the founding members of the Democratic Party. Advocated for the uprising. He was chosen to be president of the AVNOJ on November 26th, 1942. He was a member of the JKP from 1943 and the president of the Yugoslav Assembly of Peoples' presidency.
- <sup>4</sup> Zečević – Popović, 1996. p. 445.
- <sup>5</sup> Zečević – Popović, 1996. pp. 445–446.
- <sup>6</sup> Dušan Nedeljković (Isakovo, Čuprija, 1899 – Beograd, 1984) Earned a doctorate in philosophy in Paris. A member of the communist party and the Yugoslav People's Army from 1941. An editor of the newspaper called Borba. Professor at the Belgrade Faculty of Humanities. Decorated with a gold star by the OZNA.
- <sup>7</sup> Zečević – Popović, 1996. p. 21.
- <sup>8</sup> Srđan Cvetković: *Izme u srpa i cekica. Represija u Srbiji 1944–1953*. Beograd, 2006. (Henceforth: Cvetković, 2006) p. 250.
- <sup>9</sup> Cvetković, 2006. p. 250.
- <sup>10</sup> Zečević – Popović, 1996. pp. 27–28.
- <sup>11</sup> Vajdasági Levéltár [The Vojvodina Archive] (Further on referred to as: VL.) F. 183. Kut.: 501. 1945. Prepiska. 1–100. Broj: 1.
- <sup>12</sup> The names of the municipalities according to Serbian spelling: Subotica, Ludaš, Bajški Vinogradi, Zapadni Vinogradi, Majšanski vinogradi, Zobnatica, Radanovac, Gornji Tavankut, Dolnji Tavankut, Zapadne ugarnice, Istočne ugarnice, Kelebija, Hajdukovo, Čavolj, Šebešić, Čikerija, Palić, Đurđin, Pavlovac, Verušić, Bikovo, Žednik.
- <sup>13</sup> Vajdasági Múzeum Újvidék (Henceforth: VM.) The Museum of Vojvodina in Novi Sad (VM). K-3001/2.
- <sup>14</sup> VM. K-3001/3.
- <sup>15</sup> VM. K-3001/17.
- <sup>16</sup> VM. K-3001/19.
- <sup>17</sup> VL. F. 183. Box #65. and #66. Registar Narodnih Neprijatelja.
- <sup>18</sup> In the data of the persons against whom a report had been filed in the region I have examined, if an "L" was put at the last known place of residence it meant that the person had already been liquidated.
- <sup>19</sup> In most cases the filer of the report is the injured party.
- <sup>20</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 320. Prijave Martonoš. Broj: 146.
- <sup>21</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 541. 1944–1948. Mesta: K–M. Martonoš. Azbučni spisak i br. prijave.
- <sup>22</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 505. Veće Statističara za srez Subotica. Mesno povereništvo Martonoš. Broj: 22.
- <sup>23</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 421, 422. Prijave Stara Kanjiža.
- <sup>24</sup> Oromhegyes (called Uzunovićevo at the time) Tóthfalu and Adorján belonged to this area.
- <sup>25</sup> Királyhalma belonged under Horgos' administration.
- <sup>26</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 502. 1945. Prepiska. 111–217. Broj: 168.
- <sup>27</sup> Sándor Brankov, officer of battalion 17/III. Born on March 25th, 1920 in Martonos, his mother was Olga L. Disappeared on May 18th, 1943 (HIM, VI.) In: Tibor Molnár: *Zenta és Magyarkanizsa községek II. világháborús hősi halottjai*. [The WWII victims of Zenta and Magyarkanizsa districts] 2003. p. 139. (Henceforth: Molnár, 2003)
- <sup>28</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 546–548. Žrtve i oštećenici.

- <sup>29</sup> Nestor G. Vukov: *Žrtva fašizma sa teritorije opštine Kanjiža 1941–1945*. (Manuscript from the Zenta Historical Archive), 1975. *Žrtve fašizma iz Kanjiže 1941–1945*. The manuscript contains the data of all localities belonging to the municipality.
- <sup>30</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 541. 1944–1948. Mesta: K–M. Martonoš. Masovna grupa “*prisilna mobilizacija*” V. grupa.
- <sup>31</sup> In the army’s casualty register he is listed as Bajić Rado (correctly: Radomir), who died July 24th, 1942 on the Eastern Front as a result of being hit by shrapnel. In: Molnár, 2003. p. 133.
- <sup>32</sup> In the army’s casualty register he is listed as Károly Petrics. He died at Peczenizyn on April 28th, 1944. Molnár, 2003. p. 156.
- <sup>33</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 505. *Veće Statističara za srez Subotica*. Mesno povereništvo Martonoš. Broj: 13.
- <sup>34</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 505. *Veće Statističara za srez Subotica*. Mesno povereništvo Martonoš. Broj: 17.
- <sup>35</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 544. 1944–1948. Mesta: Sremske Laze–T. Stara Kanjiža. Spisak zločinaca srez Senta. Mesno povereništvo St. Kanjiža, grupa I.
- <sup>36</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 544. 1944–1948. Mesta: Sremske Laze–T. Stara Kanjiža. Naknadni spisak zločinaca iz Stare Kanjiže, grupa I.
- <sup>37</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 541. 1944–1948. Mesta: K–M. Martonoš. Spisak zločinaca srez Senta, mesno povereništvo Martonoš, grupa I.
- <sup>38</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 541. 1944–1948. Mesta: K–M. Martonoš. Naknadni spisak zločinaca Martonoš, grupa I.
- <sup>39</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 545. 1944–1948. Mesta: U–Š. Horgoš. Spisak zločinaca srez Senta, mesno povereništvo Horgoš, grupa I.
- <sup>40</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 544. 1944–1948. Mesta: Sremske Laze–T. Stara Kanjiža. Spisak zločinaca srez Senta, mesno povereništvo St. Kanjiža, grupa II.
- <sup>41</sup> VL. F. 183. Knjiga: 73. Knjiga evidencije streljanih ratnih zločinaca 1944–45. Here we must note that the mentioned book is listed under another title in the archive. According to the summarni inventar, that is the inventory book, *likvidirani* (liquidated war criminals) is indicated as the title. The book, however – apparently well after the events –, has a sticker on it, which indicates that the title has been changed to *executed war criminals*. From here on, despite the fact that we consider the term liquidated to be the correct one, for researchability purposes we will use the formula specified on the book.
- <sup>42</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 544. 1944–1948. Mesta: Sremske Laze–T. Stara Kanjiža. Naknadni spisak zločinaca iz Stare Kanjiže, grupa IV.
- <sup>43</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 541. 1944–1948. Mesta: K–M. Martonoš. Spisak zločinaca srez Senta, mesno povereništvo Martonoš, grupa V.
- <sup>44</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 541. 1944–1948. Mesta: K–M. Martonoš. Spisak ratnih zločinaca koji se pojavljuju u zapisnicima Expoziture Anketne komisije u Subotici, grupa VI.
- <sup>45</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 544. 1944–1948. Mesta: Sremske Laze–T. Stara Kanjiža. Naknadni spisak zločinaca iz Stare Kanjiže, grupa VII.
- <sup>46</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 545. 1944–1948. Mesta: U–Š. Horgoš. Naknadni spisak zločinaca iz Horgoša, grupa VII.
- <sup>47</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 544. 1944–1948. Mesta: Sremske Laze–T. Stara Kanjiža. Naknadni spisak zločinaca iz Stare Kanjiže, grupa VIII.
- <sup>48</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 545. 1944–1948. Mesta: U–Š. Horgoš. Spisak ratnih zločinaca koji se pojavljuju u zapisnicima Expoziture Anketne komisije u Subotici, grupa VIII.
- <sup>49</sup> An example of this is the case of Lajos Bata, citizen of Magyarkanizsa, who is listed as *presuđen* with the serial number 647 in the Ledger of Enemies of the People, however, number 2340 is also Lajos Bata, who was sentenced to 3 years of forced labor. The case of Vince Bagi, a butcher’s assistant from Magyarkanizsa, is similar, who despite the word “*presuđen*” was “*only*” sentenced to 3 months of forced labor.
- <sup>50</sup> Zločini okupatora i njihovih pomagača u Vojvodini. III. grupa masovnih zločina, Racija (Ubistvo i pokolji; sistematski teror; mučenja građanskih lica; silovanja; pljačke). Novi Sad, Pokrajinska komisija za utvrđivanje zločina okupatora i njihovih pomagača u Vojvodini, 1945; Saopštenja o zločinima okupatora i njihovih pomagača u Vojvodini 1941–1944. Knj. 1. Bačka i Baranja. Knj. 2. Srem. Novi Sad, Pretsedništvo Narodne skupštine Autonomne pokrajine Vojvodine, 1946.



- <sup>51</sup> Drago Njegovan (ed): *Zločini okupatora i njihovih pomagača u Vojvodini. III grupa masovnih zločina: racija*. Novi Sad, 2009.; Drago Njegovan (ed.): *Zločini okupatora i njihovih pomagača u Vojvodini. V grupa masovnih zločina u Sremu: akcija Viktora Tomića i Pokretni preki sud u Sremu, 1942*. Novi Sad, 2009.; Drago Njegovan (ed.): *Zločini okupatora i njihovih pomagača u Vojvodini protiv Jevreja (istrebljenje, deportacija, mučenje, hapšenje, pljačka)*. Novi Sad, 2011.; Drago Njegovan (ed.): *Zločini okupatora i njihovih pomagača u Vojvodini. I grupa masovnih zločina: ulazak mađarske vojske u Bačku i Baranju, 1941*. Novi Sad, 2011.; Drago Njegovan (prired.): *Zločini okupatora i njihovih pomagača u Vojvodini 1941–1944. VII grupa masovnih zločina: deportacija*. Novi Sad, 2014.
- <sup>52</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 99–192. Anketne komisije, dokumentacija o ratnim zločinima. Inv. Predmeta.
- <sup>53</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 505. Veće Statističara za srez Subotica. Mesno povereništvo Martonoš. Broj: 43.
- <sup>54</sup> Lajos Forró: *Jelöletlen tömegsírok*. Szeged, 2007. (Henceforth: Forró, 2007.) p. 64.
- <sup>55</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 100. Inv. Broj: 680.
- <sup>56</sup> The statement in the record is incorrect because István Koncz was liquidated in Martonos on November 21st, 1944.
- <sup>57</sup> János Török was liquidated in Martonos on November 21st, 1944.
- <sup>58</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 102. Inv. Broj: 1630.
- <sup>59</sup> Conscription affected the Hungarian population also, as this territory belonged to Hungary at the time.
- <sup>60</sup> Ferenc Dongó – József Kovács – Fulgencia Gulyás M. – Zoltán Savelin – Romarika Bagi M.: *A martonosi egyházközösség története*. (ed.: Dr. János Kancsó and Erzsébet Tandari). Martonos, 2011. p. 50. (A preliminary of this volume: Ferenc Dongó – Fulgencia Gulyás M. – József Kovács: *A martonosi egyházközösség története*. Martonos, 1976.)
- <sup>61</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 505. Veće Statističara za srez Subotica. Mesno povereništvo Martonoš. Spisak domaćih ratnih krivaca koji su izbegli u inostranstvo. Broj: 67.
- <sup>62</sup> VL. F. 183. Kutija: 100. Inv. Broj: 683.
- <sup>63</sup> Tibor Cseres: *Vérbosszú Bácskában*. Budapest, 1991. p. 164.
- <sup>64</sup> Forró, 2007. p. 39., p. 88.
- <sup>65</sup> VL. F. 183, Registar narodnih neprijatelja 1–4340.
- <sup>66</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 102. Inv. Broj: 1767.
- <sup>67</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 150. Inv. Broj: 12705.
- <sup>68</sup> Said record could not be found among the documents.
- <sup>69</sup> The township belongs under Magyarkanizsa's administration; its name in Hungarian is Ilonafalu.
- <sup>70</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 150. Inv. Broj: 12706.
- <sup>71</sup> Hungarian troops received orders upon arrival to expel the settlers. The High Military Council's orders contained the general regulations and principles for internment. For more information: Enikő A. Sajti: *Impériumváltások, revízió, kisebbség. Magyarok a Délvidéken 1918–1947*. Budapest, 2004. pp. 187–198.
- <sup>72</sup> VL. F. 183. Knjige: 63–64.
- <sup>73</sup> The word *presudjen* means a person who was liquidated without being convicted, whilst *osudjen* indicated conviction. During the course of my research I have encountered cases where the word *presudjen* did not mean liquidation. In regards to this, see footnote number 48.
- <sup>74</sup> For more information, see: Momčilo Mitrović: *Narodni i državni neprijatelji u Srbiji posle Drugoga svetskog rata*. In: Hans Georg Fleck – Igor Graovac (ed.): *Dijalog povjesničara-istoričara*. 4. Red. Zagreb, 2002. pp. 249–266.
- <sup>75</sup> For more information see: Cvetković, 2006
- <sup>76</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 589. A–G; Kut.: 590. H–M; Kit.: 591. M–C; Kut.: 592. C–Ž.
- <sup>77</sup> VL. F. 183. Knjiga: 65. Registar Narodnih Neprijatelja. 1–4340; Knjiga: 66. Registar Narodnih Neprijatelja. 4341–8640.
- <sup>78</sup> TLZ. F. 127. District Court, Zenta. Vp. 480/1945. Court proceedings against István Apró, Magyarkanizsa resident, for confiscation of assets. Court Martial's verdict 229/44.

- <sup>79</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 593. 1944–1945. Presude vojnih sudova. Broj 176/44.
- <sup>80</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>81</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>82</sup> On October 31st, 1944 armed men arrived from Magyarkanizsa to Adorján and executed 50 people on the Tisza bank. For more information, see: Forró 2007. pp. 73–78.
- <sup>83</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 593. 1372/45.
- <sup>84</sup> TLZ. F. 127. Zenta District Court K. 406/1945 The criminal trial against Aleksandar Oluški and his cohorts.
- <sup>85</sup> TLZ. F. 127. Zenta District Court K. 406/1945 The criminal trial against Aleksandar Oluški and his cohorts. The Magyarkanizsa Local People's Council's Criminal Department's reply number 812/1945. to the court's request.
- <sup>86</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 503. 1945: 218–429. Broj: 303.
- <sup>87</sup> The list also contains victims from Adorján, Tóthfalu and Oromhegyes.
- <sup>88</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 505. Veće Statističara za srez Subotica. Mesno povereništvo Stara Kanjiža. Broj:171.
- <sup>89</sup> The list is missing the name of József Németh, levente instructor, who was murdered after the arrival of the partisans.
- <sup>90</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 503. 1945: 218–429. Broj: 303.
- <sup>91</sup> The list also contains the names of victims from Királyhalom.
- <sup>92</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 503. 1945: 218–429. Broj: 303.
- <sup>93</sup> Local documents that were drawn up based on the lists from Martonos and Horgos have the registration number of the Zenta document on them written by hand at the bottom of the page and the date of October 22nd, 1945 under it.
- <sup>94</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 504. 1945: 150–247. Broj: 240.
- <sup>95</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 80. 1944–46. Strogo poverljivo. 1946: 1–16. Broj: 3.
- <sup>96</sup> Szabadka 273, Bajmok 26, Zenta 79, Ada 21, Martonos 36, Horgos 42, Magyarkanizsa 103, Mohol 159, Topolya 42, Pacsír 8, Moravica 4, Zsednik 6, Kishegyes 2, Radanovac 9, Királyhegy 8, Hajdúkovó 5, Tavankút 4, Verusic 1, Mélykút 1.
- <sup>97</sup> VL. F. 183. Knjiga: 73. Knjiga evidencije streljanih ratnih zločinaca 1944–45.
- <sup>98</sup> The ledger contains names from the areas of Bácska, Bánát and Baranya. The vast majority of the Hungarian names are from Bácska.
- <sup>99</sup> Josip Broz Tito's regulation was made public on October 17th, which was in effect temporarily until February 15th, 1945. The military administration was divided into the Bácska-Baranya and the Bánát zones, as well as local military headquarters, city and village military bases.
- <sup>100</sup> For more information, see: Tibor Molnár: *A zentai városparancsnokság válogatott iratai 1944–1948*. Szeged – Zenta, 2011. (Henceforth: Molnár, 2011)
- <sup>101</sup> Molnár, 2011. p. 5.
- <sup>102</sup> TLZ. F. 109. 3.d. dok. 277. Broj: 11.
- <sup>103</sup> Tibor Molnár: *A zentai városparancsnokság válogatott iratai 1944–1948*. Szeged–Zenta, 2011.
- <sup>104</sup> Lajos Forró – Tibor Molnár: *Tragikus emberi sorsok 1944-ből a partizániratok tükrében*. Szeged – Zenta, 2013. (Henceforth: Forró – Molnár, 2013) pp. 20–22.
- <sup>105</sup> TLZ. F. 132. District People's Commission, Zenta. Presidency, Confidential 42/1945.
- <sup>106</sup> TLZ. F. 115. Municipality People's Commission, Magyarkanizsa. Criminal Department. Reference Number: 117/1945.
- <sup>107</sup> Mirkó Milutinovic's disappearance was reported by his mother, Viktória Vajda of Magyarkanizsa on May 14th, 1945. According to her statement, her son left Zombor for Magyarkanizsa but never arrived and was never heard from again.
- <sup>108</sup> The number of persons liquidated from Magyarkanizsa identified by name, to date, is 49, in Adorján, 57, Oromhegyes, 14 and Tóthfalu, 3.
- <sup>109</sup> TLZ. F. 115. Municipality People's Commission, Magyarkanizsa. Criminal Department. Reference Number:117/1945/1.

- <sup>110</sup> TLZ. F. 115. Municipality People's Commission, Magyarkanizsa. Criminal Department. Reference Number: 117/1945/10.
- <sup>111</sup> TLZ. F. 115. Municipality People's Commission, Magyarkanizsa. Criminal Department. Reference Number: 117/1945/48.
- <sup>112</sup> See also: District Court, Zenta. Military Court Documents. 1945. S. 1139/45. Criminal proceedings against Milutin Preradović, Magyarkanizsa resident.
- <sup>113</sup> Forró – Molnár, 2013. p. 21.
- <sup>114</sup> TLZ. F. 132. District People's Commission, Zenta. Presidency, Confidential. 132/45.
- <sup>115</sup> She is probably referring to two members of the gendarmerie.
- <sup>116</sup> The interrogation took place at the town hall, where the prison also was, that is why Mrs. Sándor Sörös uses the word "there".
- <sup>117</sup> TLZ. F. 132. District People's Commission, Zenta. Presidency, Confidential. 132/45. The records based on Mrs. Sándor Sörös' report filed on August 28th.
- <sup>118</sup> Péter Sörös' personal account In: Forró, 2007. p. 128.
- <sup>119</sup> Zakon o konfiskaciji imovine i o izvršenju konfiskacije. Službeni list, DFJ 40/1945. In 1946 the law was confirmed and complemented: Zakon o potvrdi i izmenama i dopunama Zakona o konfiskaciji imovine i o izvršenju konfiskacije. Službeni list, FNRJ 61/1946, 74/1946. See also: Forró – Molnár, 2013. pp. 26–31.
- <sup>120</sup> TLZ. F. 127. District Court, Zenta. Vp. 1046/1945. Registry of War Criminals. (Spisak ratnih zločinaca.)
- <sup>121</sup> It was people who had been liquidated that were reported missing.
- <sup>122</sup> Accurately: Regional People's Tribunal
- <sup>123</sup> Accurately: District People's Tribunal
- <sup>124</sup> Accurately: Regional People's Tribunal
- <sup>125</sup> Accurately: Regional People's Tribunal
- <sup>126</sup> Zakon o proglašenju nestalih lica za umrla i o dokazivanju smrti. Službeni list, FNRJ 24/1952.
- <sup>127</sup> Forró – Molnár, 2013. p. 32.
- <sup>128</sup> The first proposal was handed in by Mrs. András Kovács, Magyarkanizsa resident, on July 30th, 1946, in the case of her father, István Koncz, who had been liquidated.
- <sup>129</sup> Forró – Molnár, 2013. p. 32.
- <sup>130</sup> The document erroneously contains the name of András Kovács, because the person who handed in the proposal wished to initiate her father being declared dead.
- <sup>131</sup> TLZ. F. 127. District Court. Zenta. Vp. 1286/1946. The case of István Koncz, Magyarkanizsa resident declared death.
- <sup>132</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>133</sup> TLZ. F. 127. District Court. Zenta. R. 711/1952. The procedure to declare Miklós Vajda, Adorján resident dead. The records are dated December 18th, 1952.
- <sup>134</sup> TLZ. F. 127. District Court. Zenta. R. 711/1952. The procedure to declare Miklós Vajda, Adorján resident dead. The records are dated December 18th, 1952.
- <sup>135</sup> Ibid. p. 37.

## HUNGARY AND YUGOSLAVIA BETWEEN 1944 AND 1947

ENIKŐ A. SAJTI

### ABSTRACT

*The study shows, based on archive sources, Hungarian, Serbian and Croatian literature, how the relations between Hungary and Yugoslavia changed from the autumn of 1944 to the end of 1947. It proceeds from the fact that the descent into war not only made Hungary's revisionist efforts fail, but also put severe strain on the relationship between the two nations. Between 1945 and 1947 Hungary had become a country under military occupation, lost its sovereignty and fell under the authority of the Allied Control Commission (ACC), thus the relationships were not rebuilt between two equal nations. The study presents and analyzes in detail the actions of the Yugoslavian delegation which was ordered to work beside the ACC, the problems that arose between the two governments, among other things, the question of transplanting the German ethnicities in Bácska to Hungarian regions.*

*The author discusses in detail the anti-Hungarian sanctions carried out by the Yugoslavian Army and the local Slavic population in the Southern Region, examines the confiscation of Hungarian citizens' property in Yugoslavia, addresses the question of land claims in the Baja triangle as well as the population exchange agreement that was established at the 1946 Paris Peace Conference but was never realized. The last part of the study discusses the establishment of diplomatic relations between Hungary and Yugoslavia, and the Treaty of Friendship signed by the two countries upon Tito's 1947 visit to Budapest. The good relationship came to an end in the spring of 1948, due to international political reasons and suddenly reached an all-time low.*

Gustav Kálnoky, while serving as the joint Secretary of State of the Austro–Hungarian Empire, made a remark regarding the nature of foreign policy that is still valid today. He wrote: “*the freedom in making foreign policy decisions depends on the strength of internal authority*”.<sup>1</sup>

By the end of 1944 Hungary and Yugoslavia were not on equal terms neither in the freedom to make decisions on foreign policy nor in the strength of their internal authority. The post war collapse meant not only that the success of former revisionist attempts would be dissolved, but the revision and the war seriously taxed the relationship with neighboring countries like Yugoslavia, among others.

As we know, the diplomatic relations between Hungary and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia were terminated following Yugoslavia’s military collapse and division in 1941. During the war Hungary maintained its diplomatic relations with the Independent Croatian State through ambassadors. In Serbia, occupied by Germany, there was only a consulate and Serbia had no representative in Budapest. Post-war relations of Yugoslavia and Hungary were rebuilt under radically different internal and international circumstances. The world had changed a great deal by the end of 1944, the power relations had shifted unequivocally in favor of the now internationally recognized Yugoslavia. The defeated Hungary was seated in the defendant’s chair by the great powers. As a consequence of the peace treaty, three million Hungarians found themselves outside their country’s borders again, while Yugoslavia triumphantly took its place on the victors’ side, and reunited the country that had been divided up in 1941. This internationally recognized state reconstruction effectively legitimized the internal power of the new communist elite, the unequivocally Soviet-style (communist) societal configuration.

From 1945 to 1947 Hungary was a country under military occupation regaining its formal sovereignty only after the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty. Before that, just like many of the war’s losing countries, such as Italy, Finland, Romania and Bulgaria, it remained under international control by means of the ACC (Allied Control Commission). The ACC was specified to operate in Hungary in the Armistice Agreement of January 20th, 1945 in Moscow between Hungary and the Soviet Union. The Soviets, the British and the Americans along with Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were authorized to send missions to Hungary as members of a reparations subcommittee working alongside the ACC. The ACC oversaw the whole of Hungary’s internal affairs and foreign policy, economy, railway system and airspace. Hungary’s Federal Control Commission’s work was terminated on September 15th, 1947, on this day Moscow placed the Hungarian peace treaty in trust, and this meant the Armistice Agreement had expired. It was from this hierarchal, victor–loser situation that Hungarian–Yugoslavian relations were rebuilt after WWII.

The first members of the Yugoslavian delegation arrived in Debrecen on March 10th, 1945 amidst a raging storm; the number of people taking part in the mission soon grew to 10. We can assume that the number continued to grow with time but sources cannot determine the rate of this growth. For the sake of comparison: the Soviet delegation numbered about 800 people, the British about 300 whilst the USA was represented by approximately 120-130 people and the initial 20 member Czechoslovakian delegation grew to 90. Both the occupying Soviet forces and the ACC delegations were supported at the expense of the Hungarian state. The leader of the Yugoslavian delegation was Colonel Obrad Cicmil<sup>2</sup>, among the members was Captain Lazar Brankov, who was later to play an important role in the Rajk trial<sup>3</sup>. Lieutenant-colonel Jovan Lončar was Cicmil's deputy. Other members included Major Mihaljo Javorski, Captains Pal Kovač and Grujo Spahič and Lieutenants Djordje Milanić and Rajko Popović. The economic experts were Vladimir Gavrilović and Mirko Vukotić. The Yugoslavian mission's tasks included searching for stolen Yugoslavian assets, the question of restoration between the two countries as well as searching for and extraditing war criminals. Due to the lack of official diplomatic relations, the Yugoslavian ACC mission, in addition to their original function ensured the connection between Budapest and Belgrade. Aside from maintaining the relationship between the two communist parties, the Yugoslavian mission played an important role in reinitiating political, cultural relationships between the two countries as well as in the exchange of information due to the lack of other channels of communication. The fact that Hungary had no official representation in Belgrade until 1947 made the relationship fairly one-sided.

Apart from fully supporting the occupying Soviet troops, the Hungarian state was entirely responsible for the whole ACC administration as well as the Czechoslovakian and Yugoslavian missions (living quarters, offices, fuel, food and entertainment allowances, casinos, cars, car repair workshops and sports facilities were all maintained by the state). This was a serious problem for Hungary, which had suffered severe damages during the war and was paying these expenses in addition to reparations.<sup>4</sup> Neither of the ACC missions exercised moderation. Records show that during one month, the Czechoslovakian delegation ordered 13 thousand (!) bottles of alcoholic beverages and the Yugoslavians ordered 20 Persian rugs in addition to their Baroque style office furniture.<sup>5</sup> The arrival of the mission to Budapest already posed several problems because the building of the Yugoslavian consulate was damaged during the siege of Budapest.

Apart from reparations, other issues concerning both countries were discussed on May 7th, 1945, just a few weeks after the first meeting. Cicmil, accompanied by Brankov, who spoke excellent Hungarian, called upon Gyöngyösi and they held a discussion lasting over an hour on how to improve the relations between

the two countries as well as the problems they were facing at the time. Gyöngyösi brought up the disorganized and inhumane mass relocation of Hungarians in the Southern Region, to which Cicmil replied, in an effort to “*counterbalance*” the issue that he disapproved of Hungary’s expulsion of five Serbian families living by the border. Cicmil also alluded to the, in his opinion, “*unjustified*” searches conducted in the homes of Serbians along the border as well as the armed conflict that had erupted between Hungarian and Yugoslavian border guards. He also mentioned the question of Yugoslavian territories having been “*robbed of certain assets*”. During the meeting, which, according to the report, was conducted in a “*friendly mood*”, Gyöngyösi tried to answer all of Cicmil’s questions with accurate information. Thus, he referenced the fact that Yugoslavian partisans had smuggled weapons across the border and hid them in villages populated by Yugoslavians as a justification for the home searches conducted in the border regions. He also said that the return of Serbian assets was encumbered by the fact that instead of the Yugoslavian mission an unauthorized delegation had attempted to act in the matter recently in Szeged.<sup>6</sup>

On December 31st, 1945 György Heltai, Department Councillor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, handed over the Hungarian government’s memorandum in which Hungary “*acknowledges*” the formation of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the deposition of King Peter II, and the establishment of the Constituent Assembly of Yugoslavia. The meeting lasted almost two hours, during which Heltai inquired primarily about the reason why “*in recent weeks Yugoslavian factors did not deal with us in the friendly spirit in which they had before*”. Cicmil did not deny that they felt that their “*friendly gestures had remained unrequited*”, and then went on to discuss in detail the reasons for their dissatisfaction. Firstly, he mentioned the education issue, stating that there was “*not a single Yugoslavian school established in Hungary*”. Even though, he continued, he had received a promise from the Prime Minister that there will be an inquiry into the matter by a joint committee, this never happened.<sup>7</sup> They had turned to the Hungarian government several times about the extradition of war criminals, but they only received a reply to their memorandum in the press. He went on to say, certain newspapers had reported that officials in Budapest had already scheduled the ringleaders of the Novi Sad raids to stand trial, instead of extraditing them to Yugoslavia in accordance with the armistice because they had committed their “*shameful business*” here.<sup>8</sup> Cicmil also reproached Heltai saying they feel that “*Hungarian revisionist propaganda has been resurrected*” in the Hungarian press, so they “*should not be surprised if because of this the Yugoslavian press, out of exasperation, publishes a few acerbic articles*”. However, this does not influence the Yugoslavian government in “*ensuring Hungarians can exercise the fullest range of rights*”, he added

as if to ease tension. Afterward Heltai tried to convince Cicmil that the addressed problems were not due to a change in the Hungarian government's behavior towards Yugoslavia, but can be traced back to a lack of accurate information and the slow-moving function of state bodies. He requested that they accept what he says "*despite any opposing information*", because in contrast with certain press circles, the Hungarian government believes revisionist propaganda to be "*just as unwise as the Yugoslavians do*". Cicmil, after hearing Heltai's arguments, admitted that the reason behind the problems between the two countries were the North Bácska results of the Yugoslavian election, because "*especially in the smallholders' region, 50% of the Hungarian population voted against the government even though they have no cause for complaint against the modern Yugoslavia*".<sup>9</sup>

József Rex, who was from the Vajdaság and spoke Serbian well, became the liaison between the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the ACC's Yugoslavian delegation. He had received his position in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs explicitly due to Soviet pressure. Rex was a member of the Yugoslavian Communist Party, a partisan and then a lieutenant in the Red Army. He later became the secretary of the Hungarian consulate in Belgrade in 1947. He had played an important role in the establishment of the Yugoslav-Hungarian Association, of which he was the first secretary-general.<sup>10</sup>

The relationship between the two countries, as we know, was already strained by recent events, primarily by the annexation of the Southern Region to Hungary and the 1942 raids in South Bácska and Novi Sad. The effects of the raids on Hungarians living in Yugoslavia were utterly tragic. The government received an increasing number of reports about the retaliations inflicted on Hungarians in the Southern Region, such as the execution of innocent civilians, expulsion, confiscation of assets and labor camps.

Initial news of atrocities committed by partisans in the Southern Region arrived at the Minorities Department of the government from the disintegrating but still functional Hungarian civil service administration in the Southern Region before the collapse caused by the war, during the Lakatos Administration. The first such report came from the gendarmerie of Muraköz and Iván Nagy, Member of Parliament<sup>11</sup> on August 31st, 1944, who forwarded a letter written on August 7th by Rózsi Lajkó of Csáktornya to the ministry. The woman had written an account of the circumstances surrounding their father's death to her brother living in Doroszló. According to the shocking letter on the night of July 23rd, partisans invaded the village, rounded up 68 people, forced them to the edge of the village to a swampy area where they shot the elderly, among them Lajkó's father.<sup>12</sup>

József Grósz, the archbishop of Kalocsa and Bács, brought the expulsions and executions to the attention of János Gyöngyösi, Minister of Foreign Affairs,



in a longer report at the end of April 1945 on behalf of the bishops of the Catholic Church. He urged the government to take effective actions regarding the issue of expulsion. As we can read in his letter: *“The Hungarians of the Southern Region suffered serious tribulations at the end of last year when, as far as I could determine from the credible information available with strict border closure, thousands and tens of thousands of Hungarians have been kidnapped and taken to unknown locations by Yugoslavian partisans. According to some almost unverifiable reports, the number of Hungarians murdered by Yugoslavians can be estimated to be many thousands. [...]”*

*In addition, in the past few days, Yugoslavian authorities have been expelling Hungarians by the thousands from certain regions who moved to the Southern Region after 1941 and are thus not Yugoslavian citizens, as well as those who fled their homes when the Russian army entered but have since returned. I am aware that in accordance with the armistice the Hungarian government is under obligation to transport all non-Yugoslavian citizens from the Southern Region to Hungary but I object and I must urge the Minister of Foreign Affairs to take effective measures against these proceedings, as these expulsions are indeed taking place. [...] They rounded up those who were to be expelled, township by township, without warning, with only the most necessary items of clothing that they were wearing and allowing only 500 P. to take with them in cash on average. The homes of the expelled were sealed and marked by the Yugoslavian authorities, but in many places they also began to carry away equipment immediately.”*<sup>13</sup>

The arbitrary transplantation of the Yugoslavian Germans to Hungary also caused serious problems in the two countries' relationship. In June 1945 some 3000 Germans were placed over the border in Kelebia, accompanied by 400 partisans. Their commander threatened that if the Hungarians do not let them in, then *“they will have them line up along the border and shoot them”*.<sup>14</sup> On January 30th, 1946 the chief constable of Nagykanizsa sent word to the Ministry of Internal Affairs that 16 days ago the Yugoslavians had transported 4000 Germans in crowded train wagons under inhumane conditions to Hungarian territories with the purpose of handing them over to the Austrian authorities, who did not take them. These people were stranded at the border station in Murakeresztúr, *“there are only 1800 people left of the transplantees, of whom many are ill with typhoid and dysentery. If they remain here we are facing a nationwide epidemic.”*<sup>15</sup>

According to the official record drawn up on August 2nd, 1945, at the border station outside Nagyszéksós, *“a group of about 150 partisans held patrolmen at gunpoint and placed light machine guns and machine guns on both sides of the bridge. The partisans behind the Swabians chased the group of 157 people over to Hungarian territories. When the Hungarian border guard commander requested them to be taken back as per the ACC's orders, the Serbian commander answered that he will prevent the*

*transposal of the Germans even if it means fighting if necessary. He does not take orders from the Russians, because they are nobodies, he only takes orders from Tito and if he must he will beat the Russians back to the Tisza.”* For emphasis, he added, *“if there is going to be a lot of talk, they will be at Rösztke within half an hour and within 2 hours at Szeged (at the cost of fighting if necessary) and the Danube–Tisza line will be the new border”*.<sup>16</sup>

More and more information was relayed to Hungary about the retaliations against Yugoslavian Hungarians as well. On July 17th, 1947 Cardinal Mindszenty, the Archbishop of Esztergom forwarded to Gyöngyösi János, Minister of Foreign Affairs, the anonymous reports titled *“Hungarian Fate in the Southern Regions”* and *“Shedding a Light of Truth on Circumstances of Hungarians Living in Yugoslavia”* that were personally delivered to him by a delegation from the Southern Region. They referred especially to the executions of Hungarians in Bezdán, the deportation of the Hungarian population in Csurog and Zsablya and the tragic death of the former lord-lieutenant of Szabadka, Andor Reök. *“Dr. Andor Reök was deceived into coming over and a few weeks later he was thrown from a balcony of the bán’s castle in the Southern Region. Dr. József Bogner, newspaper editor, was executed after being subjected to lengthy torture. The parson of Torontáloroszi was beaten to death by Tito’s Gestapo in the basement. The 84 year old abbot of Horgos, István Virág, died of fright on the sight of his execution. Lajos Varga, parson of Moholy, was dragged for kilometers after a cart until he died of exhaustion. Afterward his corpse was mutilated. István Köves, a chaplain from Mozsor, was kidnapped from Hungarian territory and was taken down to Novi Sad.”* They gave accounts of Hungarian people being executed for sabotage in a mine in Vrđnik and they also mentioned an infamous *“slave market”* operating in one of the internment camps in Novi Sad. *“In the camp at 5AM men and women must line up separately. At 5:30AM they step out in front of their employers. They choose from among them and take them away. Some of the employees who come only want women and girls. These employees are usually from one army or another. There are an exceedingly large number of people infected with syphilis. Toward the end of April at 3:30AM a soldier came to the camp into the women’s sleeping quarters and chose a girl for himself saying he »only needed her for 2 hours«. Accordingly, she trudged back half dead at 6AM. [...] They use ordained priests to clean toilets and to tan raw horse, cow and pig skin for months on end. They are not permitted to celebrate mass or to anoint the sick (this would be considered reactionary work). They are not even permitted to go out into the streets.”*<sup>17</sup>

The nationwide purges, as we know, were planned and orchestrated by the central military–political circles. OZNA units Yugoslavia-wide received their orders to carry out purges personally from Aleksandar Ranković, Minister of Internal Affairs and OZNA leader. The order was to liquidate the enemies of the people by means

of mass execution: political and class enemies, POWs and civilians, collaborators, Ustashas, Chetniks, Hungarians, Germans, in other words anyone belonging to any nationality or social class, apart from active partisans. The goal of the retaliations against all peoples and nationalities in the last phase of the war was to annihilate possible and assumed enemies, to force political opponents out of power, and to solidify the power of the new, still weak state bodies through intimidation. Regarding this, Serbian literature mentions the “*Forest Psychosis*” of the political elite, meaning that anyone who was not a partisan (i.e. did not go into the forest) was considered an enemy. In 1944, the famous–infamous OZNA Corps, whose 7 divisions and many brigades operated all over Yugoslavia, was established for the explicit goal of liquidating “*the enemies of the people*”. The actions of these Execution brigades were supported by the local Slav population in ethnically mixed territories, such as the Vajdaság, who in many cases took part in the attacks. The executions were initially performed without any formal trial, based only on “*say so*”, in many places according to lists left behind by Hungarian authorities containing the names of Arrow Cross Party members, but anyone who was a member of the Hungarian Renewal Party was automatically considered a war criminal, as well as those who held office during the Hungarian Era – also levente-instructors, clergymen and teachers, in fact anyone who simply enthusiastically welcomed the restoration of the Hungarian Imperium in 1941.<sup>18</sup>

News of the atrocities, which went through from the Prime Minister’s Office to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, were met with the response that “*many reports contain false information*” by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and to speak of 40-45 thousand executed and 30 thousand deported was “*completely absurd*”. “*All things considered*”, writes József Rex, the Ministry’s rapporteur, regarding the matter, “*the Hungarians’ situation is not very bright in Yugoslavia but it could be a lot worse*”.<sup>19</sup>

My recent research has not changed my previous observations that the Hungarian government did not protest against the executions to the ACC or the Yugoslavian delegation. Sources have been uncovered that attest to the fact that American and British delegates of the ACC, however, knew of the executions, and in many cases requested information about these from the Hungarian government. During these conversations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials primarily emphasized that they had no “*official reports*” of the executions even though they had known about them. However, data in connection to these cases, according to their opinion, had been exaggerated to a great extent and was unverifiable. In June 1945, Vladimir Gavrilović, the Yugoslavian delegation’s economic expert, contrary to real facts, had a conversation with the Hungarian government in “*quite a friendly tone*” ensuring that “*there is no persecution against Hungarians in Bácska and never was. Mass expulsion of Hungarians took place in merely two townships, Csurog and Zsabya and only in their own interest, due to the known events in Novi Sad. Hungarians will be grouped into the regions*

abandoned by the Swabians, West Bácska, Hódság, etc. In Óbecse, for example, trials were held by the People's Court which indeed resulted in executions, but only in cases where robbery, murder and complicity in the Novi Sad events were proven." Gavrilović also added: "The Hungarian are very lucky that Tito came to power, otherwise the retroaction and revenge for the Novi Sad events would have been truly terrible. Altogether the Hungarians are doing quite well..."<sup>20</sup> Our sources also prove that the Hungarian government made complaints to the Yugoslavian government via the ACC and the Yugoslavian delegation about the inhumane way the expulsions were being carried out, which also effected the so-called "natives", and also about the illegal transplantation of the Germans of Vajdaság to Hungarian territory. On many occasions they requested that the officials expelled in accordance with the armistice at least be given back their movable assets, allowing these to be brought over. The Yugoslavian government cut the matter short with their reply on November 25th, 1945, stating that "the Hungarian officials who came to Yugoslavian territories during the occupation as members of a fascist central administration did not bring anything with them", therefore there is nothing to be given back to them.<sup>21</sup>

On September 10th, 1946 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs addressed the ACC's Yugoslavian delegation in an oral memorandum regarding legal proceedings against the branch- and establishment leaders of Hungarian companies with locations in Yugoslavia accused of collaboration, although, the memorandum did not mention the accused by name. The government, led by Smallholder Party member Ferenc Nagy, raised objection against the confiscation of assets on the grounds of "the armistice being intended to settle the question of the property belonging to Hungarian natural and legal persons on Yugoslavian territory along with the future of their rights and interests, and said Yugoslavian regulation is obstructing these ordinances". The Hungarian government does not question, the memorandum continues, that the leaders of Hungarian owned companies must be held responsible for war crimes, but they consider the regulation that "the assets of Hungarian legal persons will be confiscated due to the possible guilt of the local company leaders" to be far-reaching and unlawful. They also objected to the fact that the vast majority of company leaders were tried without legal representation and declared people who "did everything in their power to ensure that the occupation could use the plants in the companies' possession in as small a degree as possible" war criminals.<sup>22</sup>

Yugoslavian propaganda regarding territory claims against Hungary began directly after the reoccupation of Szabadka. On November 5th, 1944 at the Yugoslavian Liberation ceremony in Szabadka, orators pledged allegiance to the Baja Triangle and in a telegram addressed to Tito they stated "the commitment of the Bunjevci of the Baja Triangle to the common homeland". They also expressed their hope that "in contrast with past guilty Yugoslavian governments, Tito and his people will not neglect to annex the Baja Triangle".<sup>23</sup>

In Baranya and Vas Counties, in Mohács and Baja, along practically the whole southern border, armed Yugoslavian troops questioned the Hungarian administration's authority. Around Letenye, for example, "*Yugoslavians armed with weapons went door to door to collect signatures*" in the interest of annexing the territory to Yugoslavia. The vice lord-lieutenant of Zala Castle District turned directly to the Minister of Defense for help, because, as he wrote in his letter on May 11th, 1945, a partisan corps of 68 people had been "*vandalizing*" near the oil plants for several days, "*looting daily, they take horses from their carts...*" and they "*bound and kidnapped Hungarian police officers*".<sup>24</sup> In Baja, Csikéria, Tompa and Bácsalmás, Russian soldiers detained "*meddlesome*" Yugoslavian gunmen and "*categorically refused Yugoslavians gaining any ground within Trianon country borders*", reads one of the Provisional Government's reports of January, 1945.<sup>25</sup>

On January 14th, 1945 a Yugoslavian delegation from the Pécs area, whose members were of the ranks of the Antifašistički front Slovena u Mađarskoj (Antifascist Front of Slavs in Hungary), led by, according to Hungarian sources, the Yugoslavian agent and Šokci ethnic writer from Gara, Antun Karagić, called on Josip Broz Tito to request the annexation of the Baja Triangle to Yugoslavia. We also know that the III. Yugoslavian army arriving in Pécs had received the specific order to take over the city's administration, which was, however, prevented by the Red Army.<sup>26</sup>

Land claims regarding the Baja Triangle were on the agenda in Yugoslavian official circles until the Spring of 1946. In February of 1945 Josip Broz Tito, in a letter addressed to Fyodor Ivanovich Tolbukhin, commander of the 3rd Ukrainian Front and veteran of the Serbian and Hungarian battles, on the one part complained of the Hungarian government's "*oppressive politics*" against the Yugoslavians, and on the other, brought to Tolbukhin's attention that he will, at the Yugoslavian Peace Conference, based on "*historical right*", demand the annexation of the Baja Triangle and the Pécs and Arad areas to Yugoslavia. In his letter we can read: "*As much as 50 000 of our countrymen*<sup>27</sup>, *mainly Serbs and Croats have remained within Hungarian borders since World War I. Most of our compatriots reside in the Baja Triangle in the Pécs and Arad areas but there are many living along the whole of the Hungarian–Yugoslavian border, too. During the peace talks we will demand the annexation of these regions to our country, because we are entitled to them on the basis of historical right. Our residents, throughout history, have always been persecuted by Hungarian feudal lords and German conquerors. They have been violently displaced from these territories, violently Hungarianized. Persecution of our residents has especially escalated during this war, which was accompanied by the solidarity of the Slav peoples. Our brothers have still managed to maintain their national identity though. Hungarian officials, even though the situation has changed radically due to the arrival of the Soviet army, continue to pursue their*

*prior policies against our residents. Searches, holding our brothers captive in camps and arrests are everyday occurrences. I urge you to act quickly so that these residents can be freed and please, prevent the Hungarian authorities from preceding in a similar manner against our residents, and so that our compatriots can freely express their national identity, be free to organize and to proclaim their antifascist views, and organize their own military units and join the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia.”*<sup>28</sup>

Yugoslavia used the border issue to put pressure on Hungary in order to aid the communist party's takeover. The main goal of Yugoslavian foreign policy at this time was, as we know, to ensure the solidification of the new political authority, and to which the means were as close a cooperation with the Soviet Union as possible as well as establishing a Yugoslav-led Balkan-, possibly a Balkan-Eastern European Federation.<sup>29</sup> Along the northern border, they wanted to see a communist-led Hungary that would cooperate closely with Yugoslavia.<sup>30</sup>

Apart from border modification, there were ideas in Yugoslavia on how to deal with the “Hungarian issue”. Some saw the solution in the transfer of the entire Hungarian population or a Yugoslavian–Hungarian population exchange, perhaps combined with a smaller land concession for the benefit of Hungary. Vasa Čubrilović, former assassin, later historian and politician, is credited for the first, whilst the latter was devised by Sreten Vukosavljević, Minister of Resettlement, sociologist and expert on Serbian Village Studies (considered the father of Village Studies in Serbia), from the perspective of resettlement.<sup>31</sup>

The issue of land claims against Hungary was permanently taken off the agenda during Tito's last visit to Moscow on May 28th, 1946. During the talks, Tito urged the Soviets to provide economic assistance and assured Stalin that “*the Yugoslavian government does not intend to allow capital from other powers into its economy*”. Finally, almost marginally, he informed Stalin about the Hungarian–Yugoslavian relations. “*Tito said that the Yugoslavian government had decided not to address Yugoslavian land claims against Hungary (in regards to the Baja Triangle) in the Council of Ministers*”. To which Stalin approvingly remarked: “*If Hungary wishes to have peaceful relations with Yugoslavia, then Yugoslavia must support that endeavor*”, especially, he reminded Tito not without any insinuation, because “*Yugoslavia is primarily having difficulties in their relations with Greece and Italy*”.<sup>32</sup>

On August 26th, 1946 Edvard Kardelj, Minister of Foreign Affairs and leader of the Yugoslavian peace delegation, made an unexpected offer of a “*voluntary population exchange of approximately 40 thousand people, within a modest framework*”, to the leader of the Hungarian peace delegation, János Gyöngyösi, in Paris, as well as to sign an agreement on the water supply under Baja. Kardelj first ensured Gyöngyösi that Yugoslavia would make no land claims against Hungary but, as if compensating for this, they should enter into a contract regarding the Baja water supply. Jože Vilfan,

secretary-general of the Yugoslavian peace delegation, let the Hungarians know that if they accept the population exchange proposition, then Yugoslavia will not submit its proposition for the amendment of the Hungarian peace agreement, which would have provided special education and nationality rights to Yugoslavians living in Hungary.

István Kertész, the secretary-general of the Hungarian peace delegation called the offer “*a surprising ultimatum*”, which the Hungarian side should have accepted within 48 hours. A hectic flutter began in Budapest because they did not want to lose the Yugoslavians’ good will at the peace talks, which they were greatly in need of, especially against Czechoslovakia. Ferenc Nagy, Smallholder Party Prime Minister, called the Yugoslavian draft a “*very mild and friendly*” proposal compared to the Czechoslovak–Hungarian population exchange agreement. He called attention to the fact that they should not “*arm the Slovaks*” with a possible refusal. The Council of Ministers essentially accepted the Yugoslavians’ population exchange draft without modification.<sup>33</sup> On September 12th, 1946 Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Kardelj and Gyöngyösi agreed in principal to the population exchange, released a joint bulletin about the agreement and the Yugoslavian delegation withdrew its above mentioned proposal to amend the Hungarian peace agreement. The population exchange agreement was concluded in a unique way, through correspondence, and was quite highly publicized in both countries. The contract comprised 11 sections, which stated that the resettlement was voluntary and pertained to 40 000 people. The contract alludes to the fact that Yugoslavia will have the “*right of recommendation*” regarding the resettlers. These proposals were determined to fall under the jurisdiction of a joint commission. Resettlement propaganda could only be carried out by the Yugoslavian side on Hungarian territory. The Hungarian side, in Yugoslavia, did not have this same right. Resettlers were only allowed to take their movable assets with them, real estate assets left behind would have been mutually credited. The Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs sought to assess resettlement intentions among Yugoslavians living in Hungary. They were surprised to find that there were barely any applicants. The Hungarians of the Vajdaság, however, were “*preparing to leave in droves*”.<sup>34</sup> According to Hungarian archival sources, the population exchange was never carried out.<sup>35</sup>

If we want to answer the legitimate but complicated question of why, out of all its neighbors, did Hungary, despite the afore mentioned problems, form the best relationship with Yugoslavia after the war, furthermore, why Yugoslavia initiated the rapprochement, we must take into consideration the following factors: firstly, among the Hungarian coalition parties, it was primarily the communists who considered it important to build closer ties with Yugoslavia, since they saw in this the outside support of the reinforcement of internal political positions. They considered Yugoslavia’s internal system an example to be followed, going so far as having the

Ministry of Defense's state secretary, in the Spring of 1946, ask the ACC's Yugoslavian delegation to send them the Yugoslavian army's military regulations because "*it would serve as the basis for the Hungarian army's regulations*".<sup>36</sup> Between October 10th and 15th, 1947 a police committee led by Police Lieutenant-General Gábor Péter, who was rising to infamy at the helm of the State Security Agency (ÁVH), and Endre Szebenyi, visited Yugoslavia in order to study the local state security institutions.<sup>37</sup> These internal military relationships would also be worth exploring in detail.

During the period of the armistice, because it was a country with limited sovereignty, Hungary could not officially initiate diplomatic relations with any country. Other countries did this in its stead, among them Yugoslavia. In the autumn of 1945, the ACC's Yugoslavian delegation had already made a promise to the Smallholder Party Minister of Foreign Affairs, János Gyöngyösi, that if Hungary supports Yugoslavia's claims to Trieste, then the Yugoslavian government will support Hungary not only at the peace talks but even at the peace preparations "*in all questions that do not oppose Yugoslavia's interest*".<sup>38</sup> It seemed as though this was not an empty promise on Yugoslavia's part. In the summer of 1945, when Rákosi and Rajk visited Belgrade, they agreed that the Yugoslavian government would moderate Prague in regards to the harsh and inhumane persecution of Hungarians living in Slovakia, which they indeed did in several cases. In 1947 Yugoslavia supported Hungary's admission into the UN.<sup>39</sup> Even then, Belgrade was not neutral on whether or not there is a sympathetic country beyond their northern border, one which, in fact, shares the same social configuration, which in return supports Yugoslavia's supranationalist plans for the Balkans.<sup>40</sup> Yugoslavia's main foreign policy endeavor was to create an external situation that would help solidify the new communist power.

In August of 1945, a few months after the liberation of Belgrade, the Yugoslav-Hungarian Association, led by writer, Lajos Zilahy, who at the time was the leader of the Hungarian-Soviet Friendship Society, commissioned by the Hungarian-Yugoslavian Association's preparation delegation, visited the Yugoslavian capital. Their goal was multi-directional: they tried to establish contacts among the representatives of the arts and cultural world, they wanted to ascertain the attitude toward the Hungarian-Yugoslavian Association in official circles, and to view the building of the former Hungarian consulate on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The report from their travel reads: "*The building of the Hungarian consulate (in Krunska ulica) is, unfortunately, in an unusable condition. The top floor has burned down, in the right wing of the ground floor there are 3, on the left there are 4 rooms in »usable« condition. So, there is severe fire damage in these as well, the roof in the hall has caved in with fallen beams and rubble. At the moment some kind of Fire Guard headquarters occupies three rooms. Renovating the building, if at all possible, would cost millions, but due to today's lack of material, this is almost impossible.*"<sup>41</sup>



The issue of establishing diplomatic relationships was already addressed in autumn of 1945, the deterrence of which was explained by the purposely dark portrayal of the Yugoslavian minorities' educational and cultural situation in Hungary, as well as the "very bureaucratic" Hungarian stance regarding the extradition of war criminals.<sup>42</sup> In Paris, on September 25th, 1946, Stanoje Simić, Yugoslavian Minister of Foreign Affairs, during the peace talks, addressed the Hungarian government in a memorandum, in which he communicated that due to the agreement in principal regarding the water supply and the population exchange they are "willing to establish diplomatic relations with Hungary". The Hungarian government turned to the ACC immediately in order to obtain the consent necessary for establishing these contacts. On October 4th, Ivan Ivanovich Levushkin, ACC chief of staff, who held the rank of major, informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the ACC "had no objection" to the restoration of diplomatic relations between the two countries.<sup>43</sup> In the middle of October 1946, so before the Hungarian peace agreement was signed, technical and political preparations began around the implementation of the Hungarian consulate in Belgrade.

Chosen to be the first post war ambassador, returning from emigration in Moscow, was Zoltán Szántó<sup>44</sup>, a communist belonging to Rákosi's inner circle who was thus a welcomed guest in Belgrade.

The ambassador and his colleagues began their work in Belgrade under very difficult circumstances. The building of the former Hungarian consulate, as mentioned before, suffered a severe bomb strike during the war.

Because of this, at first, they had to reside in hotel rooms that "cost a fortune" but had been deteriorated by the war. Not having any automobiles, the ambassador and his colleagues had to travel on foot. It was obvious that Szántó did not handle easily these quite uncomfortable circumstances. In his reports to Budapest, he often raised complaints and requested that their circumstances be improved. As he wrote in one of his reports in April of 1947, "I had to conduct a series of introductory visits while traveling on foot in the sopping wet streets of Belgrade. I often felt ashamed to arrive in the study of an ambassador or minister with muddy shoes. Sometimes they took pity on me and sent me home by car. It has also happened that, due to bad weather, I had to cancel appointments at the last minute only to have them send a car for me." He then added emphatically, "It is not a good thing if an ambassador's work circumstances incite pity from his colleagues. No less embarrassing is receiving visitors in my cramped, dirty hotel room, where the slush seeps through the cracks in the roof making fantastic frescoes. (...) This afternoon there will be a reception in Avala but first, I have to make phone calls to find out which ambassador will be kind enough to give me a ride."<sup>45</sup> On other occasions he used even harsher words. "I find it very awkward to always be dealing with such financial matters. It is possible

*that our government cannot provide the funds necessary for the consulate's maintenance. If this is truly the case, then we must reorganize our diplomatic representation in Belgrade, the ambassador must be called back, and the most necessary tasks should be carried out by a caretaker and one or two subordinates.*"<sup>46</sup> he writes. At this time Szántó obviously had no idea yet that he would soon be called back but not because of the consulate building's truly desolate state but due to the severe 1948 political crisis around Yugoslavia and the dramatic escalation of Hungarian–Yugoslavian relations.<sup>47</sup>

On February 4th, 1947, a few days before the signing of the Paris Peace Treaties, Ambassador Zoltán Szántó handed over his letter of credence to Ivan Ribar, President of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.<sup>48</sup> Translating Hungarian foreign policy's most important message to Belgrade, he structured his speech around the dichotomy of victorious superiority and guilt. He spoke of Yugoslavia's "*rebirth under the heroic liberating war lead by Marshal Tito*" and clearly dissociated from "*the guilty politics of a system foreign to the Hungarian people*". He emphasized, "*the rebirth of Hungary and the fight against the fascist reaction*" made possible a new basis of the relationship between the two countries.

In 1947, the relations between the two countries became more cordial than ever before, crowned by Josip Broz Tito's visit to Hungary, amid shining formalities, in December 1947. Tito's visit was preceded by Lajos Dinnyés' trip to Belgrade in October 1947, which was not only noteworthy because of the secured cultural agreement, but because this was the first time a Hungarian Prime Minister set foot in Belgrade.

Tito's visit unequivocally signified that this was not a meeting between the leaders of two equal countries at Keleti Railway Station. Prime Minister Dinnyés was basically apologizing to Yugoslavia for the past when in his welcome speech he said: Hungary "*is guilty of a series of serious crimes against the freedom-loving peoples of Yugoslavia*". On the one hand, because "*Hungary kept minorities under relentless oppression*"; on the other, because in World War I they attacked the Yugoslavians; and finally, because they were responsible for the ensuing "*bloodbath*" in the Vajdaság after Horthy treasonously attacked Yugoslavia. After this, the Prime Minister expressed gratitude "*for the full range of human and civil rights Marshal Tito provides the Hungarians of the Vajdaság. The Yugoslavian government's wise Leninist–Stalinist national policy results in completely equal rights for our brothers in the Vajdaság.*"<sup>49</sup>

Tito, when signing a mutual agreement of friendship and assistance on December 8th in the parliament, answered, reflecting on this that: "*Everyone who professes the principles of a true people's democracy, who holds the position that ethnic issues must be solved in the correct, Stalinist way, is our friend, be they Hungarian, Czech, Polish or anyone else, it does not matter*".<sup>50</sup>

József Rex, secretary of the Hungarian consulate in Belgrade, who accompanied the Marshal's train all the way from Belgrade, wrote a rather unflattering episode regarding Tito's trip to Budapest in his memoir: "*Ambassador Szántó and myself were on Tito's private train. It does not give me pleasure to spoil anything but Tito fed ham to his German shepherd, Tiger, with a gold knife and fork from a Rosenthal plate. Barely a week before, I was at the construction site of the Youth Railway in the Bosnian mountains, where the enthusiastic young people were made to work in snow and ice receiving only half a kilo of cornbread and two bowls of soup to eat per day.*"<sup>51</sup>

The treaty of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance was signed in the parliament on December 8th, in the Council of Ministers' hall by Prime Ministers Lajos Dinnyés and Josip Broz Tito. The treaty was to be valid for 20 years starting January 20th, 1948.<sup>52</sup> Unlike the Yugoslavian–Albanian and the Yugoslavian–Bulgarian friendship agreements, the contract did not specify any closer economic, financial or military integration but did not exclude these possibilities. As it says in the agreement in regards to this: "*The Contracting Parties agree that with the aim of solidifying close cooperation between the two countries, they will join forces in the interest of their countries and people in the name of a tried and long-term friendship*". It is no coincidence that the Hungarian Communist Party's newspaper, *Szabad Nép* (Free People) hailed the Yugoslavian delegation as the New Great Power. The article welcomed the integration of the region's seven "*democracies*" (Yugoslavia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania and Albania) as the establishment of a "*unified front*".<sup>53</sup> So, the 1947 Treaty of Friendship still envisioned a regional integration, which though counted on support from the Soviet Union, did not wish for it to assume an exclusive role as leader. However, a few months later, at the time of the Yugoslavian and Bulgarian delegations' visit to Moscow, Stalin made it clear that he laid claim to the direct leadership of the region and did not wish to share it with anyone, not even the Yugoslavs.

One of the most important events in the history of Hungarian–Yugoslavian relations after 1945 is the reparation agreement between the two countries, which was signed on May 11th, 1946.<sup>54</sup> I only wish to reference Hungary's obligation to pay Yugoslavia reparation (7 million dollars) to say that the payments began in order. Following Yugoslavia's, the Soviet Union's and Czechoslovakia's gesture, the original 6 years allotted for delivering the reparation was prolonged to 8 years at Budapest's request on August 8th, 1946. Later, also citing Moscow's example, the Hungarian government requested the remainder of the reparation to be decreased by 50%. This request was, however, denied by the Yugoslavians based on the Information Office's June 27th, 1948 decision and due to the deterioration of the relationship between the two countries.<sup>55</sup> All Hungarian assets in Yugoslavia were nationalized, or more accurately, the previous nationalization of the assets of Hungarian citizens

and legal persons in Yugoslavia was completed. According to a statement by the Hungarian Ministry of Finances, apart from the 5% interest due for late payment specified in the reparation agreement, Hungary had paid 29.8% of the entire reparation sum by August 25th of 1948, when it was discontinued, so Hungary remained 49.2 million dollars in debt to Yugoslavia.

By 1947 economic relations were regulated by a two-sided trade agreement of 2 million dollars for both countries in that year. Yugoslavia primarily transported raw material (iron ore, copper, lead, zinc, mercury, acetic acid, etc.) and Hungary paid in machinery, locomotives, medicine, etc. On May 11th, 1947 a 15 year, 32 million dollar aluminum agreement was signed, which was followed on June 24th by a 5 year, 120 million dollar mutual trade agreement.<sup>56</sup>

Following the international “*show trial*” against Yugoslavia, that is, due to the Soviet–Yugoslav conflict, Hungary went from good neighbor to adversary again.<sup>57</sup> The Rajk Trial saw the Hungarian–Yugoslavian Treaty of Friendship seated at the defendant’s chair, because, according to the prosecution, the treason occurred while Tito was going home to Belgrade. On September 30th, 1949 the Hungarian government terminated the contract. They justified the termination of the contract saying that “*Yugoslavia had already started planning to overthrow the Hungarian People’s Republic during the time the friendship and mutual assistance agreements were signed, and to this end, members of the Yugoslavian government were holding secret discussions with police-spy, provocateur and imperialist agent, László Rajk. (...) The Yugoslavian government has behaved in a hostile manner toward Hungary for years, instead of friendship and alliance they did everything in their power to overthrow the People’s Republic, aided Hungary’s internal and external enemies and dragged the Hungarian–Yugoslavian treaty of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance agreement through the mud. Hence, from this day forth, the government of the Hungarian People’s Republic feels exempt from any obligations named in said contract.*”<sup>58</sup> On October 7th, 1949 Yugoslavia acknowledged in a memorandum that the responsibility for this rests “*solely*” on the Hungarian government.<sup>59</sup> Although they did not follow through with complete termination of diplomatic relations, Hungary, which was now unequivocally under Soviet protectorate, also terminated its economic agreements one by one. The aluminum industry agreement of May 11th, 1947, for example, was done away with on June 15th, 1949, the five year economic treaty of July 24th, 1947 aborted three days later, but practically all economic agreements suffered the same fate. The cultural and other restitutional issues determined in the peace treaty also came to a standstill.<sup>60</sup> On August 25th, 1948 Hungary discontinued its reparation payments to Yugoslavia, which had been secured by international agreements. From 1949 only 15 technical agreements remained in place between

the two countries. Such contracts as the 1926 agreement regarding the maintenance of ironwork bridges connecting the two states' railway lines, the 1928 agreement regulating guardianship, but we can also mention the 1947 air traffic agreement and the 1948 water-agreement. From 1949 the Rajk Trial, the severe, armed border conflicts, the fierce propaganda war, the relocation of the Yugoslav population along the border and other issues veritably criminalized the relationship between the two countries.

This was the low point from which Hungarian–Yugoslavian relations had to be rebuilt following the death of Stalin.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> István Diószegi: *Az Osztrák–Magyar Monarchia külpolitikája 1867–1918*. Budapest, 2001. p. 9.
- <sup>2</sup> Obrad Cicmil (1904, or 1915–?) teacher, communist politician who took part in the Tito-led resistance movement; he was then the leader of the ACC's Yugoslavian delegation in Hungary. He later acted as consul and ambassador to Bulgaria, the United Kingdom, Pakistan and Canada.
- <sup>3</sup> Lazar Brankov (1912–2011), for more information on his work in Hungary see: Péter Vukman: *Tito legszívósabb ügynöke. Lazar Brankov Magyarországon (1945–1956)*. In: Nándor Bárdi – Ágnes Tóth (ed.): *Egyén és közösség. Tanulmányok*. Zenta, 2012. pp. 291–313.; And also: *Egy jugoszláv diplomata Magyarországon (1945–1949): Lazar Brankov*. Századok, 2014. No. 4. (Henceforth: Vukman, 2014) pp. 959–981.
- <sup>4</sup> Margit Földesi deals in detail with the topic of the ACC's actions in Hungary: *A szabadság megszállása. A megszállók szabadsága: a hadiszákmányról, a jóvátételről, a Szövetséges Ellenőrző Bizottságról Magyarországon*. Budapest, 2002 (Henceforth: Földesi, 2002); István Feitl (ed.): *A magyarországi Szövetséges Ellenőrző Bizottság jegyzőkönyvei 1945–1947*. Budapest, 2003.
- <sup>5</sup> Földesi, 2002. pp. 85–94.; Vukman, 2014. pp. 962–963. The records show that there were two cases resulting in death in connection with the ACC's Yugoslavian delegation's activities in Hungary. On October 24th, 1945 the delegation's car was attacked by armed robbers near a Russian barrack in Kispeszt, the Hungarian driver was killed. The other happened on February 18th, 1947 on the road between Kecskemét and Kiskunfélegyháza when an automobile carrying the ACC's documents to Belgrade encountered a truck that did not want to pull off the road. The Yugoslavian soldier, an employee of the mission, who was sitting beside the driver "first fired a shot into the air and then fired a round into the car killing the driver". Since both of them were "serving in a foreign, occupying army" the Hungarian courts could not hold them responsible. Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára (The National Archives of Hungary) (MNL OL) KÜM XIX-J-1-k-Jugoszlávia. 30/e -32 700. pol/1945.; 101 604/10. a-1947. Box No. 50.
- <sup>6</sup> MNL OL KÜM XIX-J-1-n-Gyöngyösi János-szn.-1945. Box No. 23.
- <sup>7</sup> At the beginning of 1946 the Minister of Religion and Education led an inquiry by a joint committee into the language use in the townships populated by Yugoslavians and the Yugoslavian complaints regarding "Yugoslavian native language education" and administration. In 1947 several administrative steps were taken toward native language education. MNL OL Vallás és Közoktatási Minisztérium (VKM) Külföldi kulturális kapcsolatok osztálya 1945–1949. XIX-J-1-e-154-2-31766-1946. Box No. 51.; MNL OL KÜM XIX-J-1-k-Jugoszlávia-16/b-63981-1947. Box No. 22. For a comprehensive look at the regulation of education of ethnicities in Hungary, see: Gizella Föglein: *Etnikum és educatio. A magyarországi nemzetiségek és az alsó fokú oktatásuk állami szabályozása, 1945–1985*. Budapest, 2005.
- <sup>8</sup> On extraditing war criminals to Yugoslavia and holding them responsible there, see Gergely Galántha: *Háborús bűnösök kiadattási eljárásai Magyarország és Jugoszlávia között 1944–1948*. Bácsország Vajdasági honismereti szemle, Vol. 39. (2006) No. 4. pp. 14–23. The committee for determining war crimes already sent its trustee, Triva Militar, to Budapest on January 17th, 1945. His task was to research archives on the matter. In the spring of 1945 the OZNA special internal affairs unit arrested several people in Hungary who were

- pronounced war criminals and transported them to Yugoslavia without the permission of Hungarian authorities. For example, Leó Deák, who was the lord-lieutenant of Bács-Bodrog castle-district from 1941–1944. Aware of his innocence, he voluntarily presented himself at the Soviet military headquarters only to be handed over to the Yugoslavians. For the trials of the ringleaders in the 1942 raids, which were held in the Southern Region in November of 1945 and the verdicts of these trials, see the newly available records. Aleksandar Kasaš (red.): *Stenografski zapisnici sa suđenja glavnoodgovornima za raciju u Južnoj Bačkoj 1942. godine*. Novi Sad, 2008
- <sup>9</sup> MNL OL KÜM XIX-J-1-a-IV-107-66/Bé-1946. Box No. 55.
- <sup>10</sup> József Rex (1920–2004) was arrested in 1949 in connection with the Rajk trial; he was first given a life sentence, which was later reduced to 15 years. Released in 1955, he emigrated to the United States. Enikő A. Sajti: *Egy kommunista káder a külügyben, 1945–1948, Rex József*. Forrás, Vol. 39. (2009) pp. 7–8., pp. 89–109.; József Rex: *A Magyar–Jugoszláv Társaság története. (1946 október–1949 vége)*. Edited, introduction and footnotes written by: Enikő A. Sajti. Forrás, Vol. 41. (2011) No. 2. (Henceforth: Rex, 2011) pp. 29–56.
- <sup>11</sup> Iván Nagy (1904–?), lawyer, right-wing Hungarian minority politician. In the second half of the 1930s he sought out contact with the Croatian opposition. He was one of the founders of the Hungarian Christian right-wing newspaper, *Nép* (The People). From 1941 to 1944 he was a Member of Parliament, in 1945 he was declared a war criminal but he could not be convicted because he had emigrated abroad.
- <sup>12</sup> MNL OL K-28. ME Kisebbségi osztály (Department of Minorities). 1944R-25 965.
- <sup>13</sup> Kalocsai Főegyházmegeyi Levéltár (=KFL) (Archdiocesan Archives of Kalocsa) I.1.a. Generalia de Archidioecesis, 1945. 476.
- <sup>14</sup> MNL OL KÜM XIX-J-k-Jugoszlávia-17/d-31.390 -1945. Box No. 22.
- <sup>15</sup> MNL OL KÜM XIX-J-1-k-Jugoszlávia-16/d-225/pol.-1946. Box No. 22.
- <sup>16</sup> MNL OL KÜM XIX-J-1-k-Jug.-16/f-32.338/pol.-1945. Box No. 22. For information on the great powers' policies in Austria and Germany regarding the Yugoslavian Germans, see: Vladimir Geiger: *HEIMKEHR. Povratak slavonskih Nijemaca nakon Drugoga svjetskog rata iz izbjeglišta/prognaništva u zavičaj i njihova sudbina*. Scrinia slavonica, 2003. br. 3. pp. 521–547.
- <sup>17</sup> MNL OL KÜM XIX-J-1-a-IV-109-1981/Bé.-1946. Box No. 55.
- <sup>18</sup> We are referencing only a few important works from the abundant literature available on the retaliations: Kosta Nikolić: "Kužne jedinke se odstranjaju" *Rana faza rađanja komunizma u Srbiji 1944–1945*. Istorija, Vol. 20. (2004) No. 2. pp. 47–62.; Srđan Cvetković: *Broj i struktura optuženih domaćih ratnih zločinaca i kolaboracionista prema fondu Državne komisije i njena instrumentalizacija*. Arhiv, časopis Arhiva Srbije i Crne Gore, 2004. No. 2. pp. 81–95.; And also: Uloga OZN-e u likvidaciji "narodnih neprijatelja" 1944–1945. *Šta kriju arhivi OZN-e o revolucionarnom teroru 1944/1945*. Arhiv, časopis Arhiva Srbije i Crne Gore, 2006. No. 1–2. pp. 127–136.; And also: *Između srpa i čekića – represija u Srbiji od 1944 do 1953*. Beograd, 2006; And also: *U ime naroda*. Beograd, 2014; Momčilo Mitrović: *Srpska nacionalna čast pred zakonom 1945*. Beograd, 2007; Priredili Zdravko Dizdar – Vladimir Geiger – Milan Poić – Mate Rupić (ed.): *Partizanska i komunistička represija i zločini u Hrvatskoj 1944–1946. Dokumenti. Knjiga 1–2*. 2005–2006; Mate Rupić – Vladimir Geiger: *Partizanska i komunistička represija u Hrvatskoj 1944–1946. Dalmacija. Dokumenti. Knjiga 1–2.*, Zagreb, 2011; Vladimir Gajger: *Josip Broz Tito i ratni zločini. Bleiburg. Folksdojčeri*. Zagreb, 2013; Aleksandar Kasaš: *Mađari u Vojvodini*. Novi Sad, 1996. (Henceforth: Kasaš, 1996) pp. 156–184.; Žarko S. Jovanović: *Nova vlast u Srbiji. 1941–1945*. Beograd, 1993; Slobodan Maričić: *Susedi, dželati, žrtve. Folksdojčeri u Jugoslaviji*. Beograd, 1995; Zoran Janjetović: *Between Hitler and Tito. The Disappearance of the Vojvodina Germans*. Beograd, 2000; And also: *Neslovenske nacionalne manjine u Vojvodini krajem Drugog svetskog rata*. In: Hans Georg Fleck – Igor Graovac (red.): *Dijalog povjesničara – istoričara*. Zagreb, 2001. (Henceforth: Janjetović, 2001) pp. 389–401. Enikő A. Sajti analyzes the Hungarian language literature on the retaliations. Enikő A. Sajti: *A magyarok elleni partizán megtorlások a Délvidéken, a történetírás eredményei és kérdőjelei*. [http://adattar.vmmi.org/fejezetek/1339/04\\_a\\_magyarok\\_elleni\\_partizan\\_megtolas\\_a\\_delvideken.pdf](http://adattar.vmmi.org/fejezetek/1339/04_a_magyarok_elleni_partizan_megtolas_a_delvideken.pdf). (Last downloaded: 2015. 05. 27.) The article contains a detailed Hungarian language bibliography.
- <sup>19</sup> MNL OL KÜM XIX-J-1-k-Jugoszlávia-16/b-1874/1946. Box No. 22.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> Regarding protest against expulsions, see: Enikő A. Sajti: *Impériumváltások, revízió, kisebbség. Magyarok a Délvidéken 1918–1947*. Budapest, 2004. pp. 341–348.

- <sup>22</sup> Ibid and MNL OL PM XIX-L-1-k - 293 981/IV.b./1948. Box No. 33.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>24</sup> MNL OL KÜM XIX-J-1-k-16/b.-30.013/pol.-1945. Box No. 22.
- <sup>25</sup> MNL OL KÜM XIX-J-1-n-Gyöngyösi János - 1945. Box No. 23.
- <sup>26</sup> Branko Petranović: *Istrorija Jugoslavije 1918–1988. Treća knjiga. Socijalistička Jugoslavija 1949–1988*. Beograd, bez. god. Izd. (Henceforth: Petranović, bez. god. Izd.) pp. 173–174.
- <sup>27</sup> The number of Yugoslavians at this time really barely exceeded 30 thousand. The number of Croatians was 20 400 (0.2%), the Serbians numbered 5200 people (0.1%) and the Slovenians numbered 4500 (0.1%).
- <sup>28</sup> Petranović, bez. god. Izd. p. 174.
- <sup>29</sup> For Balkan Federation Branko Petranović: *Balkanska federacija 1943–1948*. Beograd, 1991.; György Gyarmati: *Vámunió, föderáció – új nagyhatalom? Korunk*, February, 2006. <http://www.korunk.org/?q=node/8&ev=2006&honap=2&cikk=8099>. (Last downloaded: 2015. 03. 06.); Árpád Hornyák: *Délszláv rendezési tervek és területi követelések a második világháborúban és a párizsi békekonferencián. Századok*, 2007. No.1. pp. 57–86. This study was also published in the author's collection of essays entitled: *Találkozások és ütközések. Fejezetek a 20. századi magyar–szerb kapcsolatok történetéből*. Pécs, 2010. pp. 162–190.
- <sup>30</sup> Zoltán Ripp: *Példaképből ellenség. A magyar kommunisták viszonya Jugoszláviához 1947–1948*. In: Éva Standeisky – Gyula Kozák – Gábor Pataki – János M. Rainer (ed.): *A fordulat évei 1947–1949*. Budapest, 1998. pp. 45–62.
- <sup>31</sup> Vasa Čubrilović: *A kisebbségi kérdés az új Jugoszláviában*. Híd, 1996. No. 12. pp. 1043–1060. The document was published by Imre Bori. The draft was first published by the *Dnevni telegraf* in the edition of September 18th and 25th, 1996. The plan of Vukosavljević is presented in: Petranović, bez. god. Izd. pp. 176–177. and Janjetović, 2001. pp. 397–398. In this question see also: Aleksandar Kasaš: *Mađari u Vojvodini 1941–1946*. Novi Sad, 1996. p. 194.; Enikő A. Sajti: *Mađari u Vojvodini 1918–1947*. Novi Sad, 2010. (Henceforth: Sajti, Madari...) pp. 269–271.
- <sup>32</sup> Géza Mezei (ed.): *Európa kettészakítása és a kétpólusú nemzetközi rend születése (1945–1949)*. Budapest, 2001. pp. 175–178.
- <sup>33</sup> MNL OL Council of Ministers' Records. XIX-A-83-a-133. Record of August 28th, 1946. The Czechoslovakian–Hungarian population exchange agreement of February 27th, 1946 envisaged an equal number of Czechoslovakian Hungarians displaced to Hungary to the Hungarian Slovaks displaced to Czechoslovakia. However, based on the contract, Czechoslovakia could not free itself of the Hungarians, who were collectively declared guilty; it urged the displacement of a further 200000 Hungarians and continued their deportations to Moravia and the Czech Republic.
- <sup>34</sup> MNL OL XIX-A-1-n-“Z”-3187-1946. Box No. 6.
- <sup>35</sup> For more information on the population exchange agreement, see: Sajti, Madari... pp. 272–273.
- <sup>36</sup> MNL OL KÜM XIX-J-1-k-16/f.-1012/pol.-1946. Box No. 22. They, however, did not receive the regulations on grounds that they are still in the process of being drawn up.
- <sup>37</sup> MNL OL KÜM XIX-J-4/a.-Belgrád TÜK 85/biz. -1947.
- <sup>38</sup> MNL OL KÜM J-1-n-Gyöngyösi János-1947-Box No. 25. Gyöngyösi's speech in parliament during the Foreign Affairs Department's budget debate on March 20th, 1947.
- <sup>39</sup> MNL OL KÜM J-1-Z-Cipher Telegrams 1949–1964. Belgrade. Incoming. Zoltán Szántó's telegrams from March 19th and September 29th, 1947.
- <sup>40</sup> On Yugoslavia's plans for a Balkan-Federation, see note No. 29.
- <sup>41</sup> MNL OL KÜM XIX-J-1-n-Gyöngyösi János-sz.n.-1945. Box No. 23.
- <sup>42</sup> MNL OL KÜM J-1-k-16/c-32. 728/pol.-1945. Box No. 22.
- <sup>43</sup> MNL OL KÜM XIX-J-1-k-1/a.-27845/pol.-1946.; 2591/pol.-1946.; 2681/pol.-1946. Box No. 1. Marshal Voroshilov remained the president of the ACC in Hungary for the duration. In February of 1946 he left the country and was substituted by vice president Lieutenant General Sviridonov.
- <sup>44</sup> Zoltán Szántó (1893–1977) Social Democrat and later Communist politician and diplomat. In 1919, he emigrated

to Vienna, later returned to Hungary and emigrated again to the Soviet Union. He was the ambassador to Belgrade, Tirana and Paris between 1947 and 1949. In 1956 he was interned in Romania along with the Imre Nagy group. There were no legal proceedings against him upon his return to Hungary.

<sup>45</sup> MNL OL KÜM XIX-J-4-a-Belgrád-40-1947. Box No. 1.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Szántó was called home by Minister of Foreign Affairs, László Rajk on January 27th, 1948. Rajk informed him that "his stay would be a long one" MNL OL XIX-J-1-Z-Cipher telegram January 27th.

<sup>48</sup> Zoltán Szántó's February 4th, 1947 telegram. Hungary established diplomatic contact with 15 countries during the armistice period.

<sup>49</sup> MNL OL XIX-J-1-j-4/b-4764/pol.-1947. Box No. 6.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. 532/pol.-1947. Box No. 6.

<sup>51</sup> Rex, 2011. p. 48.

<sup>52</sup> For the text of the Friendship Treaty (No. IV. Act of 1948) see: <http://www.1000ev.hu/index.php?a=3&param=8286>

<sup>53</sup> Miklós Gimes: *Új nagyhatalom! Szabad Nép*, 1947. december 7. See also in this question: György Gyarmati: *Vámunió, föderáció – új nagyhatalom? Duna menti kisállamok különbéke-víziói a második világháború után*. In: *A demokrácia reménye*. Magyarország, 1945. Évkönyv XIII. Budapest, 2005. pp. 42–44.

<sup>54</sup> For the original reparation agreement of 70 million dollars over the course of 6 years see: *A magyar jóvátétel és ami mögötte van... 1945–1949. Válogatott dokumentumok*. Budapest, 1998. Selected, introduction and notes written by: Sándor Balogh – Margit Földesi. pp. 94–99.

<sup>55</sup> For details regarding the question, see: Enikő A. Sajti: *A magyar vagyonok kisajátítása Jugoszláviában 1945 után*. In: Enikő A. Sajti – József Juhász – Tibor Molnár: *A titói rendszer megszilárdulása a Tisza mentén (1945–1955)*. Konsolidacija titovog režima na Potisju (1945–1955). Jenő Hajnal (ed.). Zenta – Szeged, Senta – Segedin, 2013. pp. 133–159.

<sup>56</sup> MNL OL XIX-J-1-j TÜK Jugoszlávia Box No. 27. Notes on the Yugoslavian reparation. July 29th, 1955. For more on the history of the reparations payed to Yugoslavia, see: János Honvári: *Az 1956. május 29-ei magyar–jugoszláv pénzügyi és gazdasági egyezmény*. ArchivNET, Vol. 10. (2010) No. 2. [http://www.archivnet.hu/pp\\_hir\\_nyomatat.php?hir\\_=35](http://www.archivnet.hu/pp_hir_nyomatat.php?hir_=35). (Last downloaded: 2015. 03. 04.)

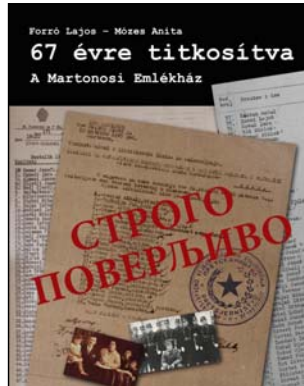
<sup>57</sup> For new information on the issue, see: *Moszkvától Londonig. Nagy-Britannia és Jugoszlávia a szovjet–jugoszláv konfliktus idején, 1948–1953*. Szeged, 2011; Zoltán Ripp: *Magyarország és Jugoszlávia politikai viszályának évtizede 1948–1958*. In: Enikő A. Sajti. (ed.): *Magyarország és a Balkán a XX. században*. Szeged, 2011. pp. 121–136.

<sup>58</sup> MNL OL XIX J-1-n-1945-89. Rajk László - 10411. Box No. 60. The 1947 cultural agreement was not terminated formally by either side but it was never applied either.

<sup>59</sup> MNL OL J-1-n-1945-1989- Rajk László-001926-1963.X.1.Box No. 60.

<sup>61</sup> MNL OL KÜM XIX-J-1-k-Jugoszlávia-25/c-szn.-1949. Box No. 43. MNL OL XIX-J-1-k-Jugoszlávia-23/d-367/biz.-1948., 120 341/1948. Box No. 35. MNL OL VKM XIX-J-1-e-177 Item No. 3., 256 509/1948. Box No. 139. In accordance with the armistice and later the peace agreement, from 1945 on, Hungary was continually returning those assets that were illegally taken to Hungary by civilians or military troops from – to use the terminology of the time – the occupied southern territories. This restitutional work was discontinued in 1948. The Yugoslav Cultural Restitution List contained 5000 objects, and also listed a substantial amount of archival material. Talks began again in September of 1956 and were discontinued again due to the revolution in October. Talks were renewed on October 12th, 1957 and the agreement was signed on June 3rd, 1958. The archival and other papers determined in the agreement, along with microfilms, were only handed over two years later. MNL OL KÜM XIX-J-1-j- Jugoszlávia-23/g- szn.-1958. Box No. 39. and 002 017/6/1960. Box No. 27. The quantity of Hungarian assets taken from Yugoslavian territory by Germans and Arrow Cross Party members was much smaller (equipment from the Pécs firefighters' barracks, 45 tons of electric motors, 50 tons of crude oil, 130 tons of grains, ambulances, etc.). The return of these assets was absorbed by other restitution issues. MNL OL KÜM XIX-J-1-k-Jugoszlávia-23/g-35/KHJ-1947. Box No. 39.





## When strictly confidential becomes researchable

Lajos Forró – Anita Mózes:

**Amikor a szigorúan bizalmas kutathatóvá válik**  
(Classified for 67 Years, the Museum of Martonos)

Foundation for Research of the Délvidék (Southern Region),  
Szeged, 2016. 96 p.

The authors aim to fulfill a dual goal with their work, to present the Martonos Museum as well as the victims of the township of Kanizsa. The book is very reminiscent of Srđan Cvetković's<sup>1</sup> similar book both in size and in its illustrations. This is no wonder because that book was also published for the occasion of an exhibition opening and also grew to be more than an exhibition catalog. And it was also quite a success. Apart from this the mentioned book not only aimed to accompany the exhibition, but to present the reader with the historical period itself. Good books should be taken seriously and it is certainly not a problem in *Confidential for 67 Years* that the balance between illustrations and text is different from what we are used to, meaning there are more pictures and these pictures tell a story in and of themselves. Lajos Forró is an expert on the subject, whilst Anita Mózes has begun dealing with the question recently. She writes the prologue which is about the museum. The museum is thematically structured. The first space showcases the partisan movement and its local aspects. The second room is the “*Hungarian Room*” presenting the period between 1941 and 1944. The third room is dedicated to the Hungarian victims of 1944 and 1945. The next room is the Martonos victim's.

After the Museum Lajos Forró presents the regime change of 1941, this is a story that almost everyone who has dealt with the occurrences is familiar with, however, the author strives to provide precise facts about the losses, which in its own bluntness shows that the numbers game is still going on as the South Slav and Serbian historians speak of 3506 lives, whilst the Hungarians of 1435 (the Hungarian army's loss: 7 officers and 119 soldiers). Then he speaks of those who were expelled. Here, it is worth noting something that the author does not mention, that the population policy was at once the policy of the conquest and one that served the preservation of the regime. They sought to create such a situation in the South Slavic State that left no question regarding the identity of the Vajdaság (Vojvodina), and thus, settling 24 921 people in the region whom the Hungarian authorities wished to evict, but they also wanted to settle 3279 Bukovina Székelys in the Vajdaság. The authors do not analyze the situation in the text as if their goal was to let the simple facts speak for themselves.

We must not leave the the shameful raid<sup>3</sup> of 1942 out of the Délvidék's story. They provide us with precise facts on this as well. The next terrible act was the deportation of the Jews. They were gathered from Magyarkanizsa and Martonos and the loss suffered by the Jewish community was staggering, out of 210 Magyarkanizsa deportees only 189 returned and of the 16 Martonos deportees no-one survived the horrors of Auschwitz. Lajos Forró has published several case studies of personal histories, but in this book Sándor Fejős covers the topic of the Jewish community and takes care to mention the town's chief physician's, Dr. Miksa Dömötör's, tragedy. He was a man active in the scientific community as well as the social sphere who committed suicide in order to escape his fate at the death camp.

On October 17th of 1944 military administration was implemented. The author, presenting a few well chosen quotes, gives us a clear idea of the regime's ideology at the time. Apart from the quotation referenced by Péter Zakar at the beginning of the book, Nikola Petrović calls the Hungarians and Germans a "*horde*". The author presents the decision made about Zsablya, which declared Hungarians to be collectively guilty.

This part of the volume is also richly illustrated, but it is somewhat bothersome that some documents are illegible even though the Zenta Historical Archive has, several years ago, published a book where certain documents can be read clearly. Apart from this, on the 26th page there is clearly a mistake. On a similar note, the picture of the Magyarkanizsa victims of World War II is completely useless as the names are printed with such small letters that they cannot be read.

In the fourth chapter Lajos Forró goes into detail about the partisan documents, which is necessary. He notes which fond he was researching and determines that there is something wrong with the documents. Meaning that the verdict was reached

after the liquidation in the majority of the cases, this was how the Yugoslavian regime justified their heinous actions. The matter of reportings is also confusing, as these in most cases did not contain allegations that were serious enough to warrant the death penalty. But the higher authorities declare those executed to be war criminals. Besides this there are incongruities with the decisions and cartons as well, along with the existence of the liquidation lists. Neither the court documents, nor the execution lists are precise, it is apparent that they were drawn up in a haste.

In the next chapter the author summarizes the contents of the Zenta Historical Archive (in the previous chapters they presented the documents of the Vojvodina Archive). The Zenta Historical Archive's material is relatively well processed, due to Tibor Molnár's thorough work. In chapter 5 the author shows the list documenting the loss of lives from certain townships, these are: Magyarkanisza, Martonos, Horgos and Adorján. In the case of all four towns, the author discusses the Hungarian arrival, the implementation of the administration, the events of war and the following regime change as well as the executions. Apart from this each town has their characteristic details which author discusses, meaning the histories do not entirely follow the same template, even though we can safely say that in 1944 the events were governed by much the same intents.

The book finishes with an exemplary bibliography. This book is recommended to those who would like a brief, simple account and a clear look at the historical events that transpired after the close of World War II in Vojvodina. The book also promises to be especially interesting to those who would like know more about the histories of Martonos, Horgos and Adorján. We can say that in the past quarter century the research on the 1944 events has become a logical, cohesive picture. There may be some missing details here and there, but the quantity and quality of the information makes publishing books such as these possible.

*Zoltán Mészáros*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Srđan Cvetković: *U ime naroda*. Beograd, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> I do not find the word "raid" to be accurate, a raid is a measure taken by police or the military that is still practiced today. However, the 1942 events were, in my opinion, a raid that escalated to mass murder.

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