

# HSR

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## *Hungarian Studies Review*

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Special Volume:

### **HUNGARIAN CULTURAL PRESENCE IN NORTH AMERICA**

PART I:  
PAPERS AND DOCUMENTS

## Hungarian Studies Review

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## Preface

*Exactly a decade ago, plans were made for the establishment of a North American review of Hungarian studies. Approximately the same time but independent of the above action, a campaign was started for the collection of funds to endow a chair of Hungarian studies at a Canadian university. The result of the former effort was the launching of our journal in 1974, while the outcome of the fund-raising drive was the establishment of the University of Toronto's programme of Hungarian studies four years later. In 1981, these two undertakings have officially joined hands, inaugurating what will hopefully be a lasting and fruitful cooperation in the service of Hungarian studies on this continent and elsewhere.*

*To mark this occasion we have published a special volume of our journal and have made a number of changes in its appearance. These include a new title. Hungarian Studies Review is meant to eliminate the awkwardness of our original masthead. It also signifies our belief that we are now ready to shed our geographic limitation and assume the task of serving the interest of Hungarian studies wherever English is a recognized language of scholarly communication. While undertaking these changes, we should stress that we will continue the old policy of providing room in our journal to a variety of scholarly approaches and interpretations.*

*The mutually beneficial character of cooperation between our journal and the University of Toronto's Chair of Hungarian Studies is indicated by the fact that most of the papers in the first part of this special volume derive from a conference which was held at the University of Toronto on May 15-17 in 1980.*

*This gathering, the first of its kind at a Canadian university, was co-sponsored by the University of Toronto, the Multicultural History Society of Ontario and the American Hungarian Educators' Association. It is hoped that such conferences will be repeated periodically in the future, and our journal will serve as a regular forum for their proceedings.*

*Cooperation between the Review and Toronto's Chair of Hungarian Studies will bring some changes in our editorial and financial affairs. Starting with 1981 the Review will have an*

*editorial office, complete with an editorial assistant and office equipment. Through this office it gains affiliation with a university of international renown. This change will also mean a slight reduction of our financial burden, as the expenses of the editorial office, including the salary of the editorial assistant, will be born by the University of Toronto's Chair of Hungarian Studies. The printing and distributing costs of our journal will continue to be the responsibility of the Hungarian community through the Hungarian Reader's Service Inc. of Ottawa. Nevertheless, we believe that, with our new affiliation it will be easier to obtain outside support as well, especially for special projects as this one. Indeed, help has been received for the launching, publishing and advertising of this particular special volume: grants had been made available for the holding of the 1980 Hungarian studies conference by the University of Toronto and the Multicultural History Society of Ontario, and a publication grant has been obtained from the Department of the Secretary of State's Multiculturalism Directorate. Without these grants, this volume would not have been possible, and we are grateful to all of our benefactors for their generous support. We would also like to thank all those individuals who have helped, with their work, advice and encouragement, in the holding of the 1980 conference and in the editing and publishing of this volume.*

*George Bizstray*

*Nandor Dreisziger*

*Toronto and Kingston, 1981*



## Introduction

by *George Biztray*

Hungarian studies have made significant progress in North America in the past two decades. There has been an impressive output of papers, dissertations, anthologies and monographs. Unfortunately, no one has undertaken a systematic examination of this mass of scholarship with the purpose of ascertaining trends, evaluating methods, outlining problems and suggesting guidelines for the future. Nor has this field of inquiry been adequately defined by scholars in North America or elsewhere. Should a suitable definition be arrived at in the future, it will probably emphasize first of all the interdisciplinary, secondly the cross-cultural character of Hungarian studies. Obviously, Hungarian data can be analyzed in the context of the traditional disciplines. But this approach, which still has its advocates, is based on the rigid division of scholarship into disciplines, as if biologists and chemists, historians and engineers, linguists and medical doctors had nothing to do with each other! The result of such stubborn compartmentalization of academic inquiry have been condescending "I-know-better" attitudes in scholarly criticism, and departmental jealousies at universities. The establishment of interdisciplinary "area studies," especially at American universities in the 1950s and 1960s, has successfully challenged disciplinary overspecialization. It has provided further proof that linguists, art historians, film specialists, geographers, political scientists, medical doctors and people of diverse specializations can share interest in particular areas of the world such as Eastern Europe, Scandinavia or South America. Such interest and preoccupation crosses the vertical barriers of the disciplines horizontally.

Any adequate definition of Hungarian studies will have to acknowledge that this field of scholarly inquiry deals with a small, and in many respects, quite isolated part of world civilization. Because of the uniqueness of Hungarian culture, Hungarian studies cannot conveniently be integrated into other "area" or interdisciplinary studies. Attaching them to Finno-Ugrics is an artificial proposition which makes little sense except

in the fields of linguistics, cultural anthropology, and perhaps folklore. Discussing Hungary as a “communist” country may make sense for economists or political scientists, but hardly anyone else. It is even difficult to put under the same lid the blooming present-day Hungarian arts and literature with the sad aridity of the same spheres of creation in some other socialist countries.

Undoubtedly, Hungarian studies are an interdisciplinary as well as a cross-cultural field of inquiry. Throughout history, Hungarians have interacted with their neighbours and with other peoples. Consequently, in the study of Hungarian culture, the influence on Hungary of her neighbors, as well as that of other nations, cannot be neglected. But there is still another reason why Hungarian studies ought to be cross-culturally oriented. Today, one-third of Hungarians live outside of the political unit called the Hungarian People’s Republic. The fact that about one million people of Hungarian background live in North America today, is a compelling reminder that the discussion of Hungarian phenomena without constant reference to and comparison with the rest of the world would be an irrelevant exercise.

The study of Hungarian culture in North America is an even more obviously cross-cultural undertaking. On the one hand, it is a part of Hungarian studies inasmuch as language, traditions and values brought from the Old Country cannot be understood without a knowledge of Hungarian culture. On the other hand, it is also an integral part of Canadian or American studies. That these two fields of inquiry also struggle with definitional difficulties and an insufficient awareness of their scope, is clearly demonstrated by the fact that Canadian or American studies experts tend to relegate the examination of immigrant minorities to “ethnic studies” specialists. Yet, studying Hungarian, Polish, Ukrainian, Japanese, or other similar elements of Canadian or American society and culture is no more an “ethnic study” than scrutinizing the English, Scottish or Welsh component. Ethnic studies, then, is a transitional term: once the two huge North American countries will acquire true national awareness, the term will not be needed any more and the study of the overseas heritage of their citizens will be parts of the newly, and more generously defined field of Canadian or American studies. At the same time, these studies will continue to overlap with the scrutiny of the ancestral cultures overseas.

The title of this volume promises studies and documents on Hungarian Cultural Presence in North America. The word "cultural" was used deliberately instead of the vague and discriminating term "ethnic." "North America" was used to give recognition to the many similarities in the evolution of the Hungarian culture in Canada and the United States. No disrespect was meant to the political separateness of these two countries; nor was it intended to deny the peculiarities of the Hungarian culture in each of them.

One purpose of this collection of studies and documents was to illustrate the variety of preoccupations, approaches and methodologies which exist in the study of the Hungarian phenomenon in North America. Two of the papers focus on the overseas cradle, the Hungarian roots of some aspects of North American society. Maria H. Krisztinkovich traces the Hungarian cultural heritage which some of Canada's German-speaking Hutterite communities acquired during their stay in Hungary where they had sought refuge from religious persecution during the seventeenth century. Mary Boros-Kazai deals with an issue related to the presence of Hungarians in North America: the attitude of Hungary's lawmakers to the exodus from their country to the New World during the three-and-a-half decades before the outbreak of the First World War. Martin L. Kovacs and N. F. Dreisziger concentrate on the fate of immigrants after their arrival in North America. The former focuses on the lot of Hungarian workers in turn-of-the-century Pennsylvania, and their transmigration to the Canadian prairies. The latter analyses the economic and social problems that Hungarian newcomers to Canada experienced in the interwar years. The important theme of immigrant culture maintenance through organizational efforts is touched upon in Susan M. Papp's survey of Hungarian-Canadian organizations in Ontario. In a quite unique study, M. Kontra and G. L. Nehler shed light upon another theme connected with culture maintenance and culture modification: the erosion of the mother tongue with a certain type of Hungarian immigrant. While their interview was conducted in South Bend, Indiana, it probably reveals trends that are present elsewhere in North America as well. Another aspect of culture and language maintenance is treated in the partial text of a panel discussion devoted to the topic of the problems and implications of poets writing in Hungarian while residing in an English and

French-speaking country such as Canada. This is followed by a small sample of historical documents compiled by I. Halasz de Beky touching on the question of the role of the country of emigration in an immigrant community's struggle for cultural survival. Finally, in the second part of this volume, Howard and Tamara Palmer, through a detailed survey of Magyar settlement in Alberta from pioneer days to the present, offer a case study of the Hungarian presence on this continent.

The materials printed here illustrate the potential that various types of scholarship, methods and approaches have for the discussion of immigrant cultural presence in our North American environment. The publishing of specialized articles, papers with general overviews, interviews, documents, and texts of panel discussions, can each enhance our knowledge and understanding of the subject, and can trigger further interest and exchanges of ideas. We hope it will inspire scholars to attach increased importance to more unconventional means of publishing information on their topics of interest, in our journal or elsewhere. In this respect we hope that this volume will not only be a useful contribution to the study of the Hungarian fact in North America, but will represent a modest new departure in the method of presentation of scholarly information on this subject.

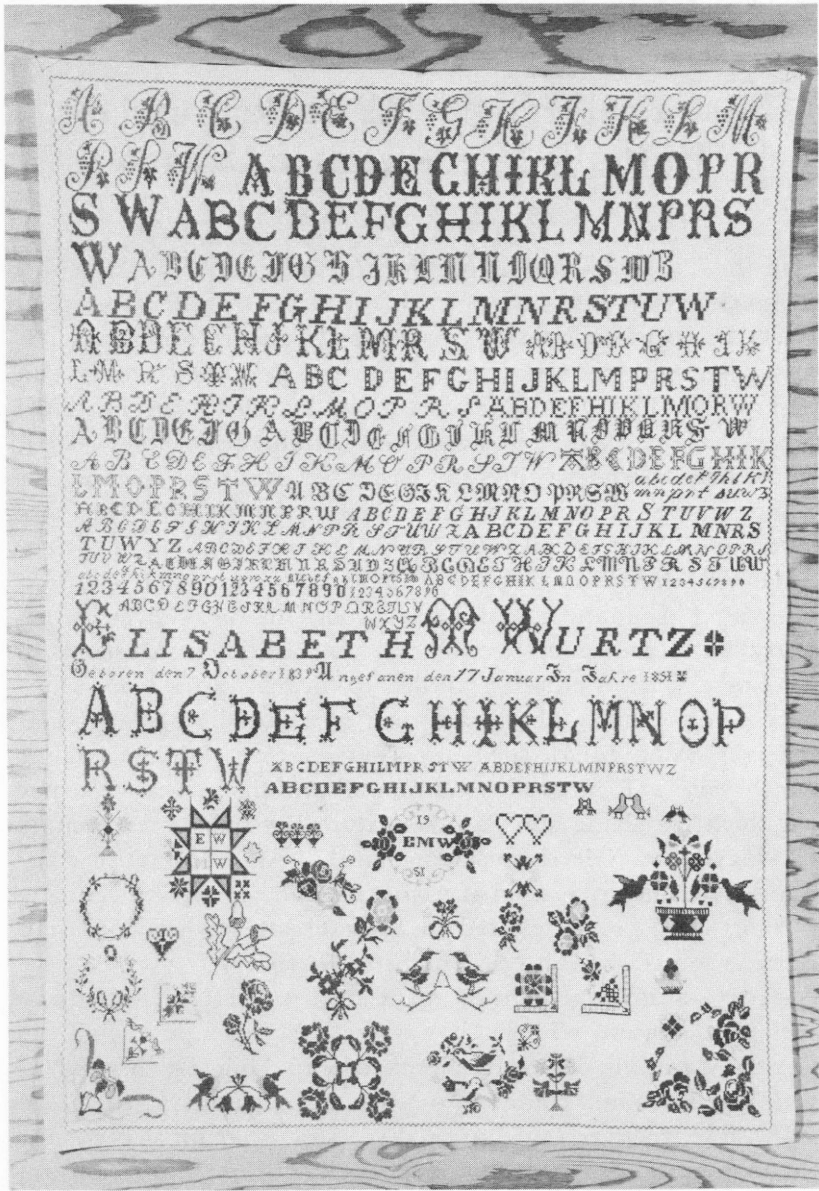
## **Historical Hungary As Background for Hutterite Needlework in Canada**

*Maria H. Krisztinkovich*

"On the Trail of Our Anabaptist Forefathers," a travel report dated Summer 1968, written by Hutterite traveller Reverend Gross, contains the following passages: "A dream come true... It has been an experience more moving than any words can describe."<sup>1</sup> The Hutterite Brethren travelled to historical places where their ancestors, the Anabaptists, once lived. According to the writings of Gross, in Hungary he and his companions were guided by Hans Pullman, a friend of Hutterite extraction, and by my father, the late Béla Krisztinkovich. Together they visited several libraries, examined eighteen illustrated Anabaptist manuscript books in the University Library and three more codices in the National Museum in Budapest. The Brethren travelled to Transylvania from Hungary. In the Batthyaneum, a former episcopal library at Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia), they inspected another eighteen codices which were still in good condition. From there, their journey led them to Alvinc and Szászkeresztúr (Kreutz) in the vicinity of Nagyszeben (Hermannstadt, Sibiu).<sup>2</sup> An Anabaptist commune (Haushaben) existed at Alvinc since the early 17th century. A short-lived colony existed at Szászkeresztúr where Austrian refugees joined the Hutterites in the 18th century.<sup>3</sup>

This sentimental journey made by the Brethren was made with good reason, namely: it was the first attempt to link the German-speaking Hutterite heritage with Hungary instead of with the Germanic countries or Russia. In Hungary, there are still visible traces of four hundred years of Anabaptist presence: the continued stay of the sect left a deep impression on Hungarian folklore. It can also be seen in many relics of the past, in museum collections of Anabaptist pottery, and in historical literature.<sup>4</sup>

The cultural impact was reciprocal. The many centuries spent in the service of Hungarian landlords and among the native peoples did in fact create an impression on the culture of the Hutterites themselves.



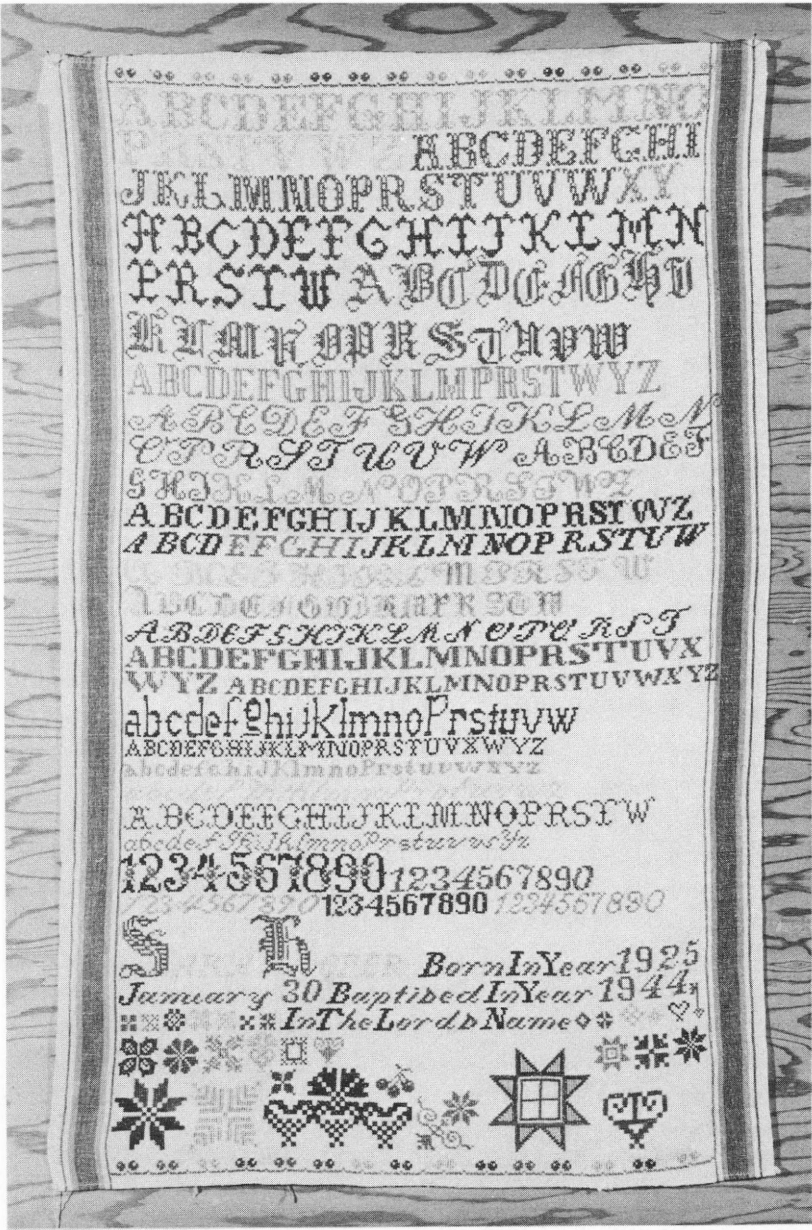
The aim of this paper is to demonstrate that an acculturation of Hutterites took place in Hungary, and that traces of this acculturation can be detected in their Canadian colonies almost four centuries later. Two kinds of relics exist which today make this acculturation discernible: the old manuscripts, and the inscribed artifacts. The specific Hutterite talent for penmanship, reflected in manuscripts, pottery and needlework, has survived to prove this point.

The dominant model of Anabaptist lettering was the Antiqua typeface, or less frequently, the so-called Fraktur. The Fraktur script was used by the early Reformation printers who fashioned this typeface after medieval German manuscripts. In the Middle Ages, Fraktur was produced on geometric principles by means of a compass and ruler; the letters were then broken or fractured into design. This medieval handwriting survived because it was adopted by the first Germanic printers of Gutenberg's time, and has consequently become the best expression for text in a Germanic language. It also became the vehicle for the ideas of the German Reformation.<sup>5</sup>

The first Anabaptist books appeared around the time of the first printing presses, in Fraktur script. That fruitful beginning of the controversial Anabaptist religious literature was, however, followed by a time of persecution which ended in the suppression of the Radical Reformation and in the destruction of Anabaptist books through seizure and burning.<sup>6</sup>

Anabaptists could no longer avail themselves of the services of printers. The first issues of printed books survived for centuries and deteriorated beyond repair. While printing presses continued to develop in the world around them, the Anabaptists were forced to resume the old practice of copying books by hand. They stubbornly used the *Zuric Bible*, published by Christoph Froschauer, a Swiss reformer. Froschauer's work was increasingly digressing from Luther's, therefore his Bible was banned by

*Sampler of Elisabeth M. Wurtz, born 1939; homespun linen, embroidered with red and multiple colours. Worked with initials EMW 1951, and with ten bands of alphabets, Antiqua illuminated with cross, loop, rose, Fraktur and three rows of numerals. Other ornaments: acorn corner motif, fruit basket, love-bird, rose star, tree of life.*





Protestants and Catholics alike. The *Froschauer Bible* survived mostly among the exiled Anabaptists. It was the prototype for Fraktur because of its clear type, pictorial decoration and popular language. Loved by Mennonites and Hutterites, it set for them the model for all calligraphic Fraktur in the future.<sup>7</sup> One such manuscript is now in Calgary, among the Hutterite relics at the Glenbow Institute.<sup>8</sup>

When printing was invented, calligraphy was disseminated by means of manuals, which included pictorial engravings demonstrating the various ways of forming a letter. In the 16th century the calligrapher's equipment consisted of a large number of tools, and the compass was seemingly the chief instrument used in the preparation of ornamental writing. The Hutterites of east-central Europe used to apply calligraphy to many different artifacts made for the Hungarian consumer. These calligraphic inscriptions, monograms, names, coats of arms, dates, biblical quotations on a silver spoon, knife, pewter vessel, pottery or lace, are recognized today as the hallmark of Anabaptist origin.

A *New Testament* of 1541 is a good example of the early phase of Fraktur printing, entirely written in Hungarian language, printed with Fraktur typeface.<sup>9</sup> To read even the title page is difficult indeed: this title was selected because it was printed at Újsziget (near Sárvár) and the owner of the press was the same Count Tamás Nádasdy who is known to Canadian Hutterites from the *Chronicle*.<sup>10</sup>

German persecution of the Anabaptists in the 16th century caused the dispersal of the sect. Mennonites fled towards the west, Hutterites towards the east. Thus not only a geographical but a cultural chasm developed between the two Anabaptist groups. Hutterites went to live in a different environment in Hungary, where they were exposed, to a greater extent than Mennonites, to a different typeface in printing, namely: the Roman letter. This typeface was spread by the advance of Humanism; it flourished in Italy and other non-Germanic countries whose language could be expressed more clearly by

*Sampler of Sara Hofer, born 1925: kitchen towel with striped border. Worked with twenty alphabets, Antiqua and Fraktur, and five rows of numerals. Other ornaments: cherry, heart, key, star.*

THE WORLD IS ROUND AND HAS  
NOW END AND SO IS MY LOVE TO  
YOU MY FRIEND

MY HEART IS TURE THAT I LOVE  
YOU



*B W*



YOU ARE THE 19 350 ONLY ONE I  
LOVE

*JOHN COFER*

forget me not

means of the classical Roman lettering called Antiqua. Although Antiqua lacked the letters K, W and Z, these were substituted by Fraktur letters. The existence of Fraktur lingered on for the simple reason of clarity.

The printer reserved Antiqua for a Latin text, and used Fraktur as an appropriate contrast for the so-called “barbaric” languages (as all non-Latin languages were considered to be). The two typefaces were used, for example, in dictionaries and manuals intermittently. This phase led to the eventual modernization of printing. It is noteworthy that two important contemporary presses used Antiqua typeface, exclusively, and, significantly, both presses disseminated radical Protestant ideas. One press was located at Kolozsvár (Klausenburg, Cluj-Napoca) in Transylvania, where the first Anabaptist book in Hungarian language, entitled: *Könyvetske az igaz keresztyéni Keressztségről* was printed by Heltai’s press in 1570.<sup>11</sup> The other Press using Antiqua was an Antitrinitarian (Unitarian) press at Cracow in Poland, which supplied the literature for religious debates both in Latin and Hungarian.<sup>12</sup>

This resulted in the rich and varied exposure of the Hutterites of Hungary to different suitable models. Hutterite penmanship was also influenced by the contemporary Turkish “Firmans.” These were mandates issued by the Sublime Porte and executed in Arabic calligraphy, or “Khatt.” Turkish writing was much admired by Christian scribes, especially Anabaptists. When the Word had to be rendered, they applied the same reverent approach to the Bible as the Turks applied to the Qu’ran.<sup>13</sup> Some Turkish manuscripts survived in Hutterite possession, as strange mementos of the times when direct contact existed with Turkish authorities in occupied Hungary.<sup>14</sup>

In the 17th century, literacy was not general. The Hutterites came as immigrants from more advanced countries, representing a learned group in a largely illiterate rural society. In Hungary, they had known how to read and write and possessed many skills; their place in society was a special one between the ruling and the subject classes. Hutterites were already maintaining regular schools in the 16th century, and the Anabaptist example was

*Handkerchief sampler; ordinary handkerchief worked with multiple colours (1935).*

DARIUS HOFER

GEBORN IN JAHR

1890 LEN 17 APRIL

SANNA HOFER

GEBORN IN JAHR

1890 DEN 24 DECEMBER

SUSIE HOFER

GEBORN IN JAHR

1877 DAN 23 JULY

PAUL HOFER BORN IN

YEAR 1873 DEN 4 APRIL

KATIE HOFER BORN

IN YEAR 1876 DEN 29

JANUARY

1890 1891 1892 1893 1894 1895 1896 1897 1898 1899 1900

known to have been taken as a model by the noted educator Amos Comenius, a pioneer in disseminating literacy among the common people. In Hutterite schools both sexes were taught to read and to copy the Bible by hand, and young children were instructed in the current scripts. An elaborate alphabet was used for religious exercises, and a simplified script was taught for everyday business in the service of the overlord.

On account of their advanced literacy, Hutterites were not simply tolerated, but protected and eagerly employed by the aristocracy.<sup>15</sup> They utilized their superior education over the rural population to improve their political status. This was necessary because Hutterites could not, and would not, join the trade guilds. Their experience with the different trades was consequently guarded within the community in the interest of the sect. The Hutterite manufacturing processes remained exclusive to them; they held a monopoly. Anabaptists maintained not only their oral traditions, but also their written formulae for the essential crafts, such as: recipes for the healing arts at which they excelled, records of alchemical experiments, notes for the special foreign methods of agricultural and manufacturing technologies imported from their western homelands, namely: Italy, Switzerland, Tyrol, Holland, Silezia and Moravia. Hungarian authorities learned only much later about the Anabaptist libraries in humble rural colonies when, during the Counter-Reformation, the sect's books were seized.<sup>16</sup>

Hutterites drafted Ordinances and communal rules which have been preserved and provide interesting reading. They set up accounting books, composed petitions, copied deeds and privileges, and produced inscriptions on ceramic, metallic, leather and textile wares. The coat of arms of their Protector was usually the decoration, or perhaps a monogram or pious inscription. For all the drawings and writings Hutterites needed experienced scribes, and they trained their scribes for copying, first of all, their religious literature. They imitated the printed text so faithfully that at first glance it looked like veritable print.

Hutterite penmanship continued to flourish in Canada at a lower level of workmanship, in the women's traditional

*Sampler of the Hofer family; homespun linen towel with blue border. Worked with inscriptions and numerals.*

needlework surviving to this day. Young girls first proved themselves as needlewomen by working Samplers, which were decorated with various ancient symbols. The main ornament of such a test-piece of skill was the alphabet. From simple letters to the whorls and spirals of floriated Capitals, twenty or more bands of alphabets and several rows of numerals in different style were executed on a piece of fabric. In old times, the fabric was homespun linen. The Hutterite girl usually embroidered on the Sampler such things as her: name, age, the date of her birth or the date on which her opus was accomplished (usually when she was twelve years old):

SARA HOFER BORN IN YEAR 1925 JANUARY 30  
BAPTIDED (sic) IN YEAR 1944 IN THE LORDS NAME

or:

REBEKKA HOFER GEBOREN IN JAHR 1925  
13 JAHR

or:

ELISABETH M WURTZ GEBOREN DEN 7 OCTOBER 1939  
ANGEFANGEN DEN 17 JANUARY IN JAHR 1951<sup>17</sup>

Later Hutterite etiquette demanded that she embroider a handkerchief for her fiancé. She stitched the name of the chosen young man and further decorated the handkerchief with one of the accepted quotations in lieu of a declaration of love, perhaps:

IF YOU LOVE ME AS I LOVE YOU  
NO KNIFE CAN CUT OUR LOVE IN TWO

or:

THE WORLD IS ROWND (sic) AND HAS NOW END  
AND SO IS MY LOVE TO YOU MY FRIEND

Embroideries found in Saskatchewan contained the following names originally from Hungary or Transylvania: Entz, Hofer, Kleinsasser, Mandel, Stahl, Walter, Wipf, Wollmann and Wurtz.<sup>18</sup> A remarkable towel, collected in Saskatoon, was worked with the names of the Hofer family. The Sampler was probably begun in South Dakota in 1890; the orthography in the stitchery changed gradually to English while the language remained German. The last inscription was embroidered in 1916, entirely in English with—this time—German spelling.

DARIUS HOFER GEBORN IN JAHR 1890 DEN 18 APRIL  
SANNA HOFER GEBORN IN JAHR 1890 DEN 24 DECEMBER  
SUSIE HOFER GEBORN IN JAHR 1911 DEN 23 JULY  
PAUL HOFER GEBORN IN JEAR 1913 DEN 4 APRIL  
KATIE HOFER BORN IN JEAR 1916 DEN 29 JANUARY

This Sampler demonstrates the acculturation process of a Hutterite family in North America.

Many nations can take pride in Samplers, an important collection of which was recently sold at Christie's in New York.<sup>19</sup> The Hutterite Sampler remains undiscovered, however, even though in addition to the special inherent charm of any embroidery it is also a manifestation of a religious creed. The Hutterite Sampler reflects more than ordinary female assiduousness, it reflects the world view of the sect, and because a sect does not change its customs a Sampler is an important repository of a cultural tradition leading back to the early Reformation. When comparing Samplers with other artifacts made by the Hutterite sect in the past, the resemblance is striking.

Through these embroideries, Hutterite art and acculturation in Hungary can be deciphered in retrospect. The symbols the Samplers have in common with Hungarian stitchery include: an amphora or vase, a bird, a bow, a cross, a crown, an eagle, a heart, a tree of life, a tulip or a rose. These patterns have many colors; for alphabets and numerals, however, red was predominantly chosen. While the color of the embroidering thread was the choice of the individual, the lettering was not a matter of preference or personal creativity. This was to be formed after a prototype handed down by generations.

Thus, behind alphabetical embroidery lies the art of calligraphy, which is the art of the cloisters. Adornment of the manuscript page when copying religious literature in the cloister was a custom -- in fact, almost a rule -- with the pious Anabaptists.<sup>20</sup>

One might presume that the state of Hutterite spiritual affairs has changed in Canada, but this is not the case. Hutterite visitors from the Prairies brought modern manuscripts with them. A number of these hand-copied books and documents governing the sect's affairs were microfilmed by the Glenbow Foundation. The interest in this tradition was first aroused in America when two highly important manuscripts, the *Major and Minor Chronicles* were discovered by a scholar in a colony of South

Dakota.<sup>21</sup>

In my essay about a Hutterite bookbinder, Isaac Dreler, attention was drawn to the significance of manuscripts still existing in Prairie colonies. Dreler was a scribe and also a renovator of some codices remarkable with regards to their calligraphy in 17th century Hungary. His copied work has survived in Canada.<sup>22</sup> A systematic inventory of all Hutterite manuscripts in North America and Europe was attempted by the late Robert Friedmann, who published his "finding list" together with an Austrian scholar, Adolf Mais, in Vienna.<sup>23</sup>

Admittedly, since the Radical Reformation four centuries have passed. Different influences from many countries acted in shaping Hutterite tradition. Albeit, the careful observer can discern among the decorative alphabets and numerals the old Fraktur and Antiqua scripts. Even the 18th century affectation of calligraphy can be found in Hutterite Samplers, which could have hardly been learned in Canada. It is, however, remarkable that the hundred years' sojourn of the Hutterites in the Ukraine has left in the Sampler no Cyrillic mark whatsoever.

We heard recently from Saskatchewan that schools in Hutterite colonies are abandoning embroidery for the commercial lettering kit. Perhaps they believe that pushing out letters and numerals from preprinted paper is a more worthwhile occupation than spending years stitching Samplers, working them with twenty or more bands of different alphabets, numerals and patterns. The loss of the art of the cross-stitched Samplers, however, means the loss of an historical tradition.

A Pennsylvania author wrote about Dutch Fraktur: "With strange sensations we rescue from the Pennsylvanian garret evidences indisputable of the passing away in the New World of one of the fairest arts of the cloister, which meeting its deathblow at the invention of printing, crossed the Atlantic to linger among the pious descendants of the Reformers until recent years."<sup>24</sup>

If a Pennsylvanian patriot wished to preserve Mennonite handwriting, how much more deserving of conservation are the Canadian Hutterite Samplers which have an additional historic depth and dimension of fabric, thread and color. As for the Hungarian educator in North America, it seems worthwhile studying such tangible documents of a common past. The political-religious atmosphere of past centuries have left a definite impression upon a colorful folk-art of present-day Canada.



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## **The Emigration Problem and Hungary's Lawmakers, 1880-1910\***

*Mary Boros-Kazai*

The first Hungarian visitor to reach the New World came as early as the sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup> During the next two centuries a few Hungarians did settle in North America, but they represented isolated cases.<sup>2</sup> The aftermath of the unsuccessful war of independence in 1848-49 resulted in several thousand exiles seeking new homes abroad. The names of some of these emigres are linked to the settlement at Új Buda in Iowa and to some events in the American Civil War.<sup>3</sup> But all of these hardly foreshadowed the vast migration which saw a steady stream of Hungarian emigrants arriving in the New World.<sup>4</sup> This movement of peoples reached its climax in the decade preceding the First World War.<sup>5</sup>

Who were the people leaving Hungary at the time? Due to the multinational character of Dualist Hungary, an analysis of the emigrants who left the region presents a patchwork of ethnic identities. Magyars, Slovaks, Germans, Roumanians, Croatians, Serbians, Ruthenians, and others participated in the trans-continental migration during the decades prior to the First World War.<sup>6</sup> The early emigrants around the middle of the century were mostly Germans and Jews. By the 1870s, however, the Slovak and Croat minorities formed a large part of the emigrant population. Statistics show that about one-third of the total number of emigrants were Hungarians. The second largest group to emigrate were the Slovaks who made up about 20 percent of the total number of emigrants. The Germans furnished the third largest number of emigrants.<sup>7</sup>

The sex and age distribution of emigrants from Hungary

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reveals similarities to the patterns of emigration from other European countries. The majority of emigrants were males, although in the decade preceding World War I the proportion of females among the emigrants grew.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps more significant for the possible economic and social consequences was that the overwhelming majority of the emigrants were in the "prime of life," i.e. between ages 20 and 49, and within this group, the 20 to 29 year old constituted an especially high percentage.<sup>9</sup>

According to the information available regarding occupation, those who initially set out for abroad in the 1870s and 1880s were craftsmen freed of guild obligations, merchants on the brink of bankruptcy, miners receiving low pay, and some intellectuals. Viewing the entire pre-World War I period, however, the largest portion of emigrants was made up of landless agricultural labourers and peasants with small-holdings.<sup>10</sup>

The economic and social life of Hungary accounted for the large percentage of agricultural workers participating in the emigration process. Demographic pressure, which was a significant factor in emigration from some West European countries, was not as important in Hungary, even though there was a marked increase in population growth during the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup>

The country was unable to provide adequately for the new growth in population. The nineteenth century in Hungary witnessed a struggle "to overcome psychological and material handicaps of backwardness and belated development."<sup>12</sup> The 1848-49 Revolution in Hungary had been the turning point in the modernization of Hungarian life. It abolished serfdom and most noble privileges, and provided for equality before the law. Furthermore, the right to hold office and to own land were also guaranteed to everyone.<sup>13</sup> With the changes wrought by 1848-49, however, the old system did not die; in large measure it adapted itself to the new political and economic circumstances and maintained, in some cases even intensified, the structuralization in the society.<sup>14</sup>

The Compromise of 1867 re-established Hungary's domestic independence and brought about a marked upsurge in economic development. Investment, initially by foreign capital, later by the growing number of native capitalists, found abundant opportunities in a country blessed with natural resources. Road and railroad building, the regulation of rivers and swamps, along

with the growing number of industrial plants, provided work for a considerable portion of the rural population who may have found themselves displaced within the new, intensified agriculture. It was equally important that the Hungarian peasant, for the first time in the country's history, found himself free to move and to find better opportunities for himself. These economic and social improvements, however, proved to be insufficient to accommodate all of the country's labour force. This became especially clear with the passing of the great *Grunderzeit* at the end of the 1880s, when to a large number of rural poor, emigration appeared to be the only way out of their misery.

Along with the industrial and transportation revolutions, the late nineteenth century also brought with it significant advances in human communications. News travelled fast and even the rural population's horizon widened considerably as the various technological inventions found their way into the villages. The religious, political, and social outlook of people began to change. It was no longer inconceivable even for the poorest of the peasants to have raised expectations concerning their material well-being. The realization that they could improve their lot by moving away from their villages, or, indeed, from their homeland, cannot be ignored as a factor contributing to emigration.

The New World presented a strong attraction to the agrarian population of Hungary. The decades around the turn of the century witnessed the phenomenal growth of newspapers in the country, and in the sensation-seeking penny papers of the period a great number of irresponsible and exaggerated stories appeared about America, the "land of opportunities." Even more influential were the letters and messages sent back by the earlier emigrants; although they did not present a uniformly rosy picture of life in America, their description of better wages, abundant job opportunities, and the more democratic way of life must have made their impact. (This aspect of the "pull" factor is clearly demonstrated by the fact that certain villages became nearly depopulated by successive waves of departing emigrants while others, often only a few miles away, remained untouched by emigration.)

The large-scale outflow of population could not escape the attention and concern of the authorities. Landowners and manufacturers voiced their concern in nationwide forums

organized under the auspices of organizations such as the *Országos Magyar Gazdasági Egyesület* (National Association of Hungarian Landowners), which held four regional conferences in 1902 with the specific purpose of dealing with this increasingly grave problem,<sup>15</sup> the *Gyáriparosok Országos Szövetsége* (National Association of Manufacturers),<sup>16</sup> and the *Társadalomtudományi Egyesület* (Association of Social Scientists).<sup>17</sup> These professional associations and special interest groups publicized their views and opinions on the topic, while the press covered the discussions in a number of articles, ranging from the sensationalist to the philosophical.

Emigration also became a topic in the chambers of the Hungarian Parliament, where the members became increasingly aware that emigration was a problem which could have far-reaching consequences for Hungary's future and which could no longer be ignored. Parliament was a forum in which the complex nature of emigration was discussed and in which a wide variety of opinions were voiced on the causes and effects of the exodus of thousands of citizens.

It is the purpose of this article to provide a sampling of the contemporary official response to emigration, through the opinions expressed in Parliament on the causes, effects, and solutions of emigration within the context of parliamentary debates between 1880 and 1910.<sup>18</sup> In this period the legislators enacted three laws exclusively concerned with limiting emigration.<sup>19</sup> The discussions surrounding the passage of these laws provided the framework for the majority of debates on emigration and provide insight into the social and economic issues and reform facing Hungary in this era.

## 1

Every government of Hungary during the Dualist era, and most political parties, regarded emigration as a basic human right that could not be proscribed by state machinery which pursued liberal aspirations.<sup>20</sup> Expressing his government's view, Minister of Internal Affairs, Kálmán Tisza, in the preamble of the pending emigration bill, stated in April 1881 that "according to contemporary political concepts, emigration cannot be forbidden; indeed, in some countries a right to emigrate is guaranteed by the constitution."<sup>21</sup> In the following year, after the passage of the first emigration law, Sándor Almássy, a

member of the opposition Independence Party, concurred with Tisza, adding that any attempt to stem emigration by force of arms would actually incite more citizens to leave the country, and at the same time would cause more people to become attracted to the ideology of socialism.<sup>22</sup> Views modifying this conviction continued to be voiced in the decades preceding the First World War. Prime Minister Kálmán Széll in 1902 and Minister of Internal Affairs Gyula Andrásy in 1908, when justifying the need for a new law regulating emigration, reiterated the government's stance on the right of the people to leave, to seek to improve their well-being, and on the state's responsibility to limit its interference in emigrant traffic.<sup>23</sup> Very few members of Parliament disagreed with this attitude. One of those who did, the conservative agrarian deputy István Bernát spoke in 1908 of the government's "right and duty" to limit emigration according to the national interest.<sup>24</sup>

Although the legislators cited many diverse causes for emigration, most of them were realistic enough to admit that by and large socio-economic problems were the basic causes of the mass exodus. In the previously mentioned 1881 preamble, Tisza concluded his remarks by pointing out the stop-gap nature of the pending bill and voicing the need for economic measures to alleviate the people's desire to emigrate.<sup>25</sup> Sándor Almásy recounted in detail the economic nature of the misery which was forcing people to leave. He expressed the concern that they must be provided with the means to make a living. Almásy felt that if the state was unable to guarantee basic needs, then it should not limit the right of the individuals to move elsewhere.<sup>26</sup>

During the relatively turbulent 1890s, when agrarian, social, and nationality problems increasingly threatened the stability of Hungarian society, the question of land reform was raised in Parliament. In 1895, Géza Polonyi, oppositionist deputy from Hajduszoboszló, called attention to declining economic conditions on the Great Plains, which were forcing thousands to emigrate. These conditions, he proposed, were the direct results of the existing distribution of land. Polonyi called for the eradication of entailed estates which he saw as "an anachronism in the present era of equality before the law," and he also supported revision of the inheritance laws as an ameliorating measure.<sup>27</sup> Sándor Erdélyi, Minister of Justice, responded to Polonyi by acknowledging that entailed estates were incom-

patible with modern social and legal institutions. He, nevertheless, dismissed further discussion of this issue in the Parliament as "impractical."<sup>28</sup> This response reflected the government's reluctance and inability to face the practical question of land reform, which was skirted throughout the entire Dualist period.

Nevertheless, the question of land reform continued to surface in later emigration debates. Lajos Beck, an Independence Party representative from Vas County and an advocate of political and economic reforms, did not condemn entailed estates as a cause of emigration but emphasized that the existing distribution of land did need to be altered. He pointed out that in a ten-year period the number of the landless had increased by almost half a million and that some seventy-six thousand independent Hungarian landholdings had been lost in the same period, i.e. they were swallowed up by growing latifundia, Church or bank-held estates. Included among his proposals was the creation of a healthier land redistribution program wherein the state would set a fair price for parcelled estates on the basis of their crop yield, and thereby encourage the rural population to continue their traditional way of life within Hungary's borders.<sup>29</sup>

Parallel with the reluctance to alter the distribution of land, there existed the longstanding belief that "land ennobles and industry belittles." This attitude had seriously hindered the development of manufacturing in Hungary. Among others, Pál Mandel, a mercantilist Liberal member of the Parliament, cited the relative lack of industry as a cause for emigration and chastised large landowners for their fear of experimentation and for their reluctance to invest in industrial undertakings. He also suggested that, contrary to centuries-old traditions, the entailed estates should be allowed to be sold, but voluntarily, of course. The resulting circulation of money would encourage native investment, benefit industrial growth, and provide job opportunities for the population.<sup>30</sup>

Those legislators who advocated the expansion of manufacturing in Hungary knew that better working conditions and benefits in factories would contribute to employee satisfaction and might diminish the need for emigration. They recognized the need for qualitative improvement in the lives of industrial workers in Hungary. Lajos Beck proposed more adequate pensions and accident insurance for the factory workers, while



also elaborating on the desirability of an increase in industrial efficiency and quality which could be achieved only if the worker, the employer, and the government were to work hand-in-hand and for mutual benefit.<sup>31</sup>

The landowners, of course, had many spokesmen to defend them. Lajos Bornemissza, a Liberal Party representative from Sáros County, cited numerous examples of how many landowners had initiated industrial undertakings. He also pointed out that no Hungarian factory could compete with the pull that factories in the United States exerted through their high wages. Bornemissza's final, uninspiring observation was that the government had to face the fact that emigration exists, that it must exist, and that Hungary should consider herself fortunate to be able to utilize foreign capital to help her out of her problems.<sup>32</sup>

The accusations of speakers achieved little more than placing the ruling party's leaders in an uncomfortable position. During the 1902 debates, Kálmán Széll and József Kristoffy, as spokesmen for the government party, were forced to defend their record and emphasize their concern for the well-being of the citizens.<sup>33</sup> Bishop János Csernoch, a representative of the Catholic People's Party, meanwhile made concrete proposals for the maintenance of full employment, for the modernization of agricultural methods, and the revision of the tax structure.<sup>34</sup> In the absence of economic reforms — several speakers warned — the effectiveness of the new emigration law would be limited.<sup>35</sup>

## 2

The continuously increasing wave of emigration shocked the nationalist sensibilities of Hungary's lawmakers and led to an examination of non-economic causes behind this population movement. While the age of the slogan "Extra Hungariam non est vita..." was admittedly over, members of Parliament found it difficult to believe that any Hungarian would voluntarily leave his homeland during a time when there was peace and relative prosperity. Some lawmakers were quick to find scapegoats, and allegations were made that people were enticed, cajoled and even swindled into emigration.

This "seduction" was defined in various ways. America exerted a strong pull on the agricultural labourers of eastern and central Europe.<sup>36</sup> The news about the possibilities of high earnings in the United States which enabled migrants to return

home to purchase land or a house,<sup>37</sup> were coupled with the significant piece of information that in the United States individuals were valued and rewarded, both financially and morally.<sup>38</sup> Károly Hencz, a member of the Catholic People's Party and a representative from Sopron County, saw in Hungarian society and government a certain irresoluteness when it came to caring for their people, thus making America even more enticing.<sup>39</sup> The majority of lawmakers dismissed or countered this criticism with quite convincing stories about the alienation suffered by migrants in the faceless huddle of America's factories and mines, thereby attempting to prolong the mystique of the homeland.<sup>40</sup>

The role of paid agents as a significant cause of emigration was emphasized from the beginning.<sup>41</sup> The importance of this role was largely explained by the fact that the mass transportation of emigrants became an increasingly profitable business. The shipping companies employed well-placed local individuals to act as their agents, to provide information and sell tickets. The agents' enthusiasm varied according to the commission offered, so they became in many cases, objects of scorn.<sup>42</sup>

Throughout the period, agents were often cited in Parliament as the instigators of emigration. During discussions related to the passage of the 1881 law regulating agents' activities, Ernő Hedry, a representative from Sáros County, spoke out against agents operating in Eperjes and Kassa.<sup>43</sup> Olivér Szlávy, a Liberal Party representative from Bihar County, referred to reports from local authorities to the Minister of Internal Affairs which documented the illegal activities of agents. According to him, the reports showed that poor people were often at the mercy of crafty agents whose aim was to divest the poor of their meagre wealth.<sup>44</sup> Agents continued to be blamed for the rise in emigration and their profit motives continued to be questioned,<sup>45</sup> even after laws (1881, 1903) had been enacted to regulate their activities. Prime Minister Kálmán Széll emphasized the agents' role in the emigration process and referred to them as "leeches," draining the nation's energy.<sup>46</sup> Hugo Laehne, a large landowner representative from Vas County, proposed revision of the 1903 law to forbid all emigrant recruiting activity and to mete out heavier punishment to agents operating illegally.<sup>47</sup>

The number and activity of Jewish emigration agents, though

never fully documented, contributed to the negative image of that profession. The short-lived Anti-Semitic Party of the 1880s never received many votes during its existence, and organized anti-Semitism was unable to achieve the same results it had elsewhere in Europe.<sup>48</sup> The “danger of Galician immigration” was frequently mentioned, however and the “pernicious activity” of Jewish newcomers as usurers, alcohol-sellers, price-gouging merchants, or emigration agents remained a topic of discussion.<sup>49</sup> Allegations made to incite anti-Semitism, however, were dismissed by government spokesmen, including Prime Minister Tisza himself.<sup>50</sup>

The complicity of local administrators in the emigration process was often referred to in the debates from the late 1880s onward. The opposition spokesman Géza Polonyi spoke of the following practice in his home county of Szolnok: judges and notaries formed renting companies which bought up cheap land at a subsidized price and then leased it to the poor at exorbitant prices, thus driving them into dependence, bankruptcy, and emigration.<sup>51</sup> Bishop János Csernoch cited the corruption of public officials as an additional inducement for emigration.<sup>52</sup> Pál Mandel, a member of the ruling Liberal Party, acknowledged that impoverished, corruptible local administrators were often a contributing factor to the peasants’ alienation from their homeland.<sup>53</sup>

Corruption was taken by many to be a further sign of the general moral and social decline of the country. Csernoch continued his comments by criticizing the previous Wekerle and Bánffy governments for weakening the power of Catholicism,<sup>54</sup> which Csernoch regarded as the mainstay of patriotism.<sup>55</sup> Frigyes Wilczek cited “a desire for adventure” as one of the major causes of emigration, and he considered this a symptom of the times, the effect of an increasingly materialistic world. He criticized universities for promulgating “modern” ideas instead of piety and patriotism.<sup>56</sup> Károly Hencz, on the other hand, blamed agrarian socialism for contributing to dissatisfaction and emigration.<sup>57</sup> Lajos Beck spoke of a “dimming of patriotism and of unwillingness to practice self-sacrifice for the nation.”<sup>58</sup> János Hock, a Roman Catholic clergyman and deputy, viewed urbanization as contributing to the destruction of the social order and resulting in an unprecedented mobility, which if left unbridled, could weaken the country.<sup>59</sup>

Two issues continued to dominate Hungarian politics during the decades following the Compromise: the constitutional framework of the Dualist system itself and the nationalities question, both of which were cited by some legislators as factors contributing to emigration. Ödön Barta, a member of the political opposition, attacked the economic and political policies of the ruling Liberal Party which, he claimed, had lowered Hungary into colonial status within the Monarchy during the preceding thirty-four years.<sup>60</sup> Although this was carefully phrased not as a direct attack on Dualism, but rather on the ruling party, the implication clearly was that the Liberals had failed to use their power effectively in establishing and maintaining a strong, independent political and economic status within the existing system.<sup>61</sup> Hugó Laehne explained that the necessary and desirable expansion of industry was unattainable within Hungary's existing colonial status. As a solution to the nation's economic woes, he advocated the formation of an independent custom area, which would in turn eliminate the need for emigration.<sup>62</sup>

Though less frequently mentioned, nationality conflicts were also believed by some lawmakers to contribute to emigration. For example, a Rumanian deputy, Koriolan Brediceanu, voiced dissatisfaction over the treatment of his compatriots in 1907. When it came to dividing certain select lands, he said, the Magyars were favoured, thus further weakening the minorities' economic situation. The deputy thereby implied that economic necessity forced members of the minorities to emigrate.<sup>63</sup>

### 3

Even though the majority of emigrants were members of the national minorities, the government was interested in keeping all of her citizens loyal to Hungary. György Nehrebeczky, a large landowner from Ung County, sounded warnings which others also voiced, that it was in the interest of the state to keep at home not only Magyars but also the nationalities. He felt that the latter were loyal to Hungary until exposed to the inflammatory rhetoric of American Slavic agitation designed to promote disharmony within the Monarchy.<sup>64</sup> Loránt Hegedüs, who had travelled in the United States in 1898, witnessed the divisiveness along national lines which had arisen at times among the emigrants

from Hungary. He saw this as a potential source of political and social disorder for the Hungarian state.<sup>65</sup>

Another negative effect of emigration was seen in the sizeable loss of manpower. Throughout the period under discussion, the majority of emigrants were young men in the prime of life and often subject to military conscription. Kálmán Török, a Roman Catholic deputy from Heves County, elaborated on the dangers of a massive loss of population as a consequence of emigration.<sup>66</sup> The manpower drain was seen as a threat by employers in both agriculture and industry. The landowners feared a shortage of agricultural labourers and a subsequent wage-inflation among those left behind to do the work. Manufacturers were also apprehensive about the diverting of manpower away from the urban centers in Hungary to those in the United States.<sup>67</sup>

Not all observations addressed the economic aspect of this population movement. The negative social and moral consequences of emigration were also pointed out by some members of Parliament. The Roman Catholic Kálmán Török emphasized manifestations of "moral damage" elicited by emigration: there were villages which were largely depopulated and many homes had to operate without the head of the family present.<sup>68</sup>

Other legislators looked upon emigration in a positive light. As early as 1880, Ignác Helfy argued that although emigration meant a labour loss to both agriculture and industry, it also represented a "spiritual strengthening." He assumed that most people had left Hungary only temporarily and would return with new skills and knowledge which they could not gain if they remained in their villages.<sup>69</sup> This idea was taken a step further by József Madarász Jr., an Independence Party member of Parliament. Around the turn of the century, Madarász travelled in the United States and observed that the lowest paying industrial jobs could not provide the emigrant with a good standard of living. The emigrant had to seek out better jobs, which in turn meant that those who returned would undoubtedly be better-trained members of the labour force. Madarász proceeded to say that the agricultural worker from Hungary who went to the United States

broke with many of his old-fashioned, regressive ideas. These ideas were adhered to by the gentry who discouraged their offspring from entering commerce

or business and would not like to see their sons associated with factories. The practical experience of the emigrant in America would show that rural man had to adjust in order to succeed in modern society, and he would return to Hungary with his conviction.<sup>70</sup>

Tempering the optimism of these views, Lajos Beck proposed that Hungarian industry would profit little from returning emigrants who were largely engaged in unskilled jobs in the United States, and who, in any case, often would not want to return to factory jobs in Hungary. Beck also calculated the financial loss to Hungary caused by emigration and balanced that against the millions of Crowns that the emigrants sent or brought home. Based on his calculations, the losses were greater than the gains.<sup>71</sup>

As the numbers of emigrants became even greater in the 1890s and especially in the first decade after the turn of the century, and as the relative social, economic, and political stability of the Kálmán Tisza era gave way to a multiplicity of tensions and problems, the members of Parliament spent increasingly more time discussing the emigration issue, and the possible solutions to this problem.

Some clear-sighted lawmakers repeatedly suggested that the Hungarian government maintain closer contact with those who had emigrated, in order to retain their loyalty and good will. Ödön Barta called upon the Ministry of Internal Affairs to create organizations to protect Hungarian citizens in America from falling prey to alienating foreign devices and thereby severing ties with the homeland. He praised the newly-proposed law to regulate emigration (1902) as a step toward making the emigrant conscious of his departure as a Hungarian citizen and of the fact that he enjoyed the continued protection of the Hungarian state abroad. Barta felt that these efforts would inspire more to return home. He also emphasized the role of religion in providing a sense of social belonging in the emigrant's life; he therefore encouraged the sending of priests and ministers to America who would remain at least partly responsible to the Hungarian hierarchy. Barta's remarks were specifically aimed at the Greek Catholic Slavic minority who, it was feared, would fall prey most easily to Pan-Slav agitation in the United States.<sup>72</sup> Barta claimed that official measures protecting the emigrants would be effective only if they were comprehensive. For example, if the state would channel emigration via its only port, Fiume, on its own

shipping line, and to predetermined central locations, then the ties with the homeland would have a good chance of being maintained. The shipping companies should purchase all of their supplies from Hungary and employ mostly Hungarians. He asserted that it was not ethically wrong for a state to make massive emigration pay for itself, that it would have been a greater wrong to let the profits go to a foreign country, as had happened in the past.<sup>73</sup> Barta's suggestions were not unprecedented: England, Germany, and most of the other European states that sent emigrants to America had by virtue of geography been able to control and participate in the emigrant trade.<sup>74</sup> Hungary was among the few largely landlocked countries of Europe, and because of this geographical reality, its participation in the transport of emigrants had remained negligible.

In 1902, Loránt Hegedüs, speaking as one who had traced the paths of the Hungarian emigrants for six years, strengthened some of the suggestions Barta had proposed. He felt it necessary to have better-trained, professional personnel serving in the consulates, as well as to develop a network of Hungarian consulates independent of, or paralleling, the Austro-Hungarian ones. Hegedüs felt that a more national representation abroad could provide better service to the emigrants as they would feel more confident entering a building bearing the Hungarian coat-of-arms and flag than one decorated with the double-headed Habsburg eagle. Hegedüs also insisted that in order for the consulates to be effective, more of them should be established, as America was a vast land in which emigrants from Hungary were widely scattered. The need for an organization to assist the emigrant upon arrival in the new land (for example, to provide employment information) was one of his suggestions. He agreed with Barta in calling for the organization of Hungarian churches abroad.<sup>75</sup>

József Madarász Jr. proposed that the state support not only churches, but also schools abroad. In order to preserve knowledge of the native culture and language, better textbooks and good curricula should be provided. In his observation, the Hungarians were not promoting the return of emigrants sufficiently; the campaigns to encourage emigrants to return and to purchase available land in Hungary were not as skillfully or professionally conducted as, for example, the sales campaigns of American real estate brokers.<sup>76</sup>

Some legislators expected the returnees themselves to help reduce the tide of emigration through the relating of negative experiences among their fellow villagers. They might tell of the language difficulties and loneliness they experienced, or of the strangeness of life and culture in America. Perhaps they would remember the humiliations they suffered while in that strange land. Károly Hencz, fearing another harvesters' strike in 1907, suggested that the returnees could not only provide labour, but could also describe the difficult conditions in America and thus serve as deterrents to others.<sup>77</sup>

4

Between 1880 and 1914 Hungary's parliamentarians demonstrated an increasing concern with the growing exodus of people from their country to the New World. Worried about the reputation of Hungary as a liberal state, they rejected the idea of curbing emigration through administrative measures. Accordingly, they hoped to restrict the exodus mainly through a reduction or elimination of the economic causes of emigration. Interestingly enough, despite the lawmakers' liberal pretensions, they proved most reluctant to advocate steps which would have radically disturbed traditional class privileges in their country. Thus, one of the most obvious methods of satisfying the agrarian population, land reform, was never seriously considered by any of the forums dealing with the thorny problem of emigration. As previously mentioned in this study, some legislators did suggest that more equitable distribution of land would benefit the country, and that alterations in the system of entailed estates were desirable.<sup>78</sup> The emphasis, however, was on the power of suggestion and voluntary compliance, which meant that the structure of rural wealth did not significantly change in the years before the First World War. Pál Mandel's suggestion that the voluntary sale of entailed estates would contribute to the freer flow of capital and result in an expanded job market through further industrial development, went largely unheeded.<sup>79</sup>

István Moskovitz, a lawyer and conservative representative from Hunyad County, included among the reforms deemed necessary: progressive taxation, land reform, more equitable consumer taxes, credit reform, the development of rural centers and cities, and cost-effective, swift administrative and judicial proceedings. Moskovitz stressed the desirability of implementing



these measures from a national and a socio-political point of view.<sup>80</sup> As early as 1880, when emigration was just beginning to assume greater proportions, Ignác Helfy pointed out that there was a more urgent need to raise the standard of living than to limit emigration. According to Helfy, this would be the best method of keeping the population satisfied and of assuring stability, or even encouraging immigration.<sup>81</sup> Hugó Laehne, among others, stressed the significance of developing industry for an expanding economy. He cited the examples of England and Germany, which had lost significantly more citizens through emigration *before* they developed their industries.<sup>82</sup>

Bishop Csernoch stressed that measures were needed to provide people with full, year-round employment, which for many did not exist at the time. Summers were filled with work, but there were few wage earning opportunities in the winter for agricultural workers. He suggested cooperation between industry and agriculture to fill this need. Csernoch also complained about the land tax system and called for elimination of the "head-tax", a remnant of the feudal system still existing in certain counties.<sup>83</sup>

Lajos Beck, as previously described, clearly saw the need for land reform and for the development of industry. More importantly, he called for a change in attitude: the worker must realize that it is in his interest to work hard, the employer that he must pay reasonable wages for the work performed, and the government must fulfill its responsibilities in providing protection for workers. Beck also recognized and voiced the need for modernization of agricultural practices through increased investment and through education of the rural population.<sup>84</sup>

The parliamentary debates contained additional suggestions about how to stem the exodus of hundreds of thousands of citizens. The majority of observations were factual and most of the proposals were helpful, but their implementation was dependent on more than the decisions of lawmakers alone. In the 1880-1910 period the lawmakers' concrete measures for the amelioration of the emigration problem manifested themselves in the passage of three pieces of legislation seeking to regulate the emigration process.<sup>85</sup> The first of these was Regulation Thirty-Eight passed in May 1881. The purpose of the law was to limit the activities of emigration agents. The law's fourteen paragraphs included the requirement that permits to

operate as an agent had to be obtained from the Minister of Internal Affairs. A small fine was established for those who functioned illegally, i.e. without permits. The law described who could receive a permit, and gave the Minister the right to revoke permits at his own discretion.<sup>86</sup>

The two laws enacted in 1903 (Regulation Four) and in 1909 (Regulation Two) were more ambitious, in that they attempted to regulate the entire process of emigration. Much of the 1903 law was adapted from the German emigration law of a few years earlier and from the Italian laws of 1901.<sup>87</sup> It was characteristic of these laws that while they made no wholesale attempt to deny freedom of movement, they sought to prevent the departure of young men eligible for the draft, of suspected criminals, of minors, and of parents with children under the age of fifteen. Some of these restrictions complied with United States immigration restrictions.<sup>88</sup> Shipping companies and their representatives, no longer called agents, were regulated under a separate section of the laws. The laws spelled out the legal terms of contract between the transporting company and the emigrant, largely aimed at guarding the latter from fraud and deception.<sup>89</sup> An emigration fund was also established, designed in part to supply emergency aid to those who desired to return but had no money to pay for their voyage.

The lawmakers of Dualist Hungary have often been labelled as shortsighted, narrow, and unimaginative. While there is adequate justification for these charges, it should also be recognized that members of Parliament realized the complexity of the emigration process and its relationship to internal factors, and presented a number of interpretations regarding its origins. They also made proposals in order to regulate and eventually reduce the outflow of people. The failure of their efforts, however, should be judged in the larger European context. The process of mass emigration affected all of the peoples of the continent and arose everywhere for similar reasons: unsuitable economic and social conditions, which in turn were related to the existence or lack of industrialization, urbanization, agricultural mechanization, and political liberalism. The slowness of transformation from feudal to modern society was particularly marked in Hungary.<sup>90</sup> These "push" factors appeared simultaneously with the increased attractiveness of America and the ease of passage. As a result, between 1800 and 1914 some

32 million Europeans who could not meet their expectations in their native land sought new life in North America. Throughout the old continent, the prevailing legislative trend was to restrict the flow of emigration by administrative measures from the late nineteenth century onward.<sup>91</sup> The Hungarian Parliament followed this pattern only reluctantly, and its half-hearted attempts at stemming the tide were unsuccessful. It was finally a combination of external factors — the great upheaval of World War I, the altered economic situation in the United States, and, perhaps most importantly, the restrictive immigration policies of the United States — which put an effective stop to this great mass migration of peoples.<sup>92</sup>

#### NOTES

1. David Quinn and Neil M. Cheshire, *The New Found Land of Stephen Parmenius* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972).

2. For an overview of this early migration, see Emil Lengyel, *Americans from Hungary* (Philadelphia and New York: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1947), 22-30.

3. *Ibid.*: 47-64, and Edmund Vasvary, *Lincoln's Hungarian Heroes 1861-1865* (Washington, D.C.: Hungarian Reformed Federation of America, 1939). More recent studies of interest are Bela Vassady, "Kossuth and Újházy on Establishing a Colony of Hungarian 48-ers in America, 1849-1852," *Canadian American Review of Hungarian Studies*, VI (Spring 1979): 21-46, and John Komlos, *Kossuth in America 1851-1852* (Buffalo: East European Institute, 1973).

4. Up to this time, Hungary had actually been an important immigrant receiving country. For this, see John Kosa, "A Century of Hungarian Emigration, 1850-1950," *The American Slavic and East European Review*, XVI (December 1957): 501-502, and István Rácz, *A paraszti migráció és politikai megítélése Magyarországon 1849-1914* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1980): 9, 72-4.

5. Recent statistical analyses of Hungarian emigration are provided by Julianna Puskás, *Emigration from Hungary to the United States before 1914*, *Studia Historica*, No. 113 (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1975) and Rácz: 20-7, 71-84.

6. For a discussion of urbanization in Hungary, see *Magyarország története*, VII (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1978): 403-13. For a more detailed description as related to emigration specifically, see Rácz: 42-64.

7. Regarding the ethnic distribution of emigrants from Hungary, see Puskás: 18, 28-31, and Rácz: 107-8.

8. Rácz: 101-2. 68% of the emigrants from Hungary between 1899 and 1913 were males. From 1908 to 1913, the number of females emigrating yearly increased from 23.6% to 52.1% of the total annual number.

9. Rácz: 105-6. Statistics regarding the age of those emigrating are available only for 1905-1906 and 1911-1913. They show that the 20-49 age group comprised 73.3% and 75.8% of the total number of emigrants in the periods cited; within this, the 20-29 age group made up 35.4% and 33.8% of the emigrants.

10. Puskás: 7-8; Rácz: 85-101.

11. Puskás: 9-10; *Magyarország története*, 403-7. It should be noted that from 1867 to 1910 the population of Hungary increased by one-third.

12. Andrew C. Janos, "The Decline of Oligarchy," in *Revolution in Perspective*, eds. Andrew C. Janos and William B. Slottman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971): 3.

13. Puskás: 10; Kosa: 502-4; Martin L. Kovacs, "Aspects of Hungarian Peasant Emigration from Pre-1914 Hungary," in *The Peasantry of Eastern Europe*, ed. Ivan

Völgyes, I (New York: Pergamon Press, 1979): 119-20. An extensive and useful work on the peasantry in Hungary is István Szabó, ed., *A parasztság Magyarországon a kapitalizmus korában 1848-1914*, 2. vols. (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1972); see Volume 2 for emigration, especially István Rácz, "Parasztok elvándorlása a falúból," 433-83.

14. Scott M. Eddie, "The Changing Pattern of Landownership in Hungary, 1867-1914," *Economic History Review*, Second Series, XX (1967): 293-309; Kosa, 502-3.

15. Bruno de Pottere, ed., *A délvideki kivándorlási kongresszus tárgyalásai, szervezete és tagjainak névsora* (Budapest: Az Országos Magyar Gazdasági Egyesület, 1903); Zoltán Szilassy, ed., *A dunántúli kivándorlási kongresszus szervezete, tagjainak névsora, tárgyalásai és határozatai* (Budapest: Az Országos Magyar Gazdasági Egyesület, 1902); *Felvidéki kivándorlási kongresszus tárgyalásai, szervezete, tagjainak névsora és határozatai* (Budapest: Az Országos Magyar Gazdasági Egyesület, 1902); Barna Buday, ed., *A székegy kongresszus szervezete, tagjainak névsora, tárgyalásai és határozatai* (Budapest: Az Országos Magyar Gazdasági Egyesület 1902).

16. *A kivándorlás: A Magyar Gyáriparosok Országos Szövetsége által tartott országos ankét tárgyalásai* (Budapest: Pesti Lloyd-társulat, 1907).

17. *Amerikai kivándorlás és visszavándorlás: A Magyar Társadalomtudományi Egyesület szakértekezletén 1908. évi januárius 24.-én és 25.-én mondott beszédek és az által kiküldött tízes bizottság emlékirata* (Budapest: Magyar Társadalomtudományi Egyesület, 1908).

18. A scholar who has researched this topic extensively is István Rácz. His relevant works include "A kivándorlás és a magyar uralkodó osztály 1849-1914," *A debreceni Kossuth Lajos Tudományegyetem Történeti Intézetének évkönyve*, I (1962): 85-106; "Kísérletek az Egyesült Államokba irányuló magyarországi kivándorlás korlátozására," *Egyetemes Történeti Tanulmányok* (Debrecen), V (1971): 53-92; "Attempts to Curb Hungarian Emigration to the United States before 1914," *Angol Filológiai Tanulmányok / Hungarian Studies in English* (Debrecen), VII (1973): 5-33; *A paraszti migráció és politikai megítélése Magyarországon 1849-1914* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1980).

19. These laws, enacted in 1881, 1903, and 1909, will be discussed briefly and summarized in the final pages of this article.

20. Throughout Europe in the nineteenth century, government policies were liberal regarding emigration. Restrictions were comparatively few and citizens were permitted to emigrate. Around the turn of the century was the trend toward restriction renewed. See Ann-Sofie Källemark, "Swedish Emigration Policy in an International Perspective," in Harold Runblom and Hans Norman, eds., *From Sweden to America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; Uppsala: University of Uppsala, 1976): 94-113.

21. *Országgyűlés képviselőházának irományai* (hereafter: *OKI*), 1878-1881, 24, (April 25, 1881): 242.

22. *Országgyűlés képviselőházának naplói* (hereafter: *OKN*), 1881-1884, 7, (November 18, 1882): 133-4.

23. *OKI* 1901-1906, 7, (November 5, 1902): 270 and *OKI*, 1906-1911, 23, (May 9, 1908): 429.

24. *OKN*, 1906-1911, 21 (November 12, 1908): 61.

25. *OKI*, 1878-1881, 24 (April 25, 1881): 245.

26. *OKN*, 1881-1884, 7 (November 18, 1882): 133-4.

27. *OKN*, 1892-1896, 26 (November 6, 1895): 195-9.

28. *OKN*, 1892-1896, 27 (November 30, 1895): 292.

29. *OKN*, 1906-1911, 21 (November 12, 1908): 63.

30. *OKN*, 1901-1906, 10 (December 17, 1902): 86-8.

31. *OKN*, 1906-1911, 21 (November 12, 1908): 63.

32. *OKN*, 1901-1906, 10 (December 17, 1902): 90-1.

33. *OKN*, 1901-1906, 7 (June 17, 1902): 287 and 10 (December 16, 1902): 61-3.

34. *OKN*, 1901-1906, 10 (December 16, 1902): 81-2.

35. Ödön Barta, *OKN*, 1901-1906, 10 (December 16, 1902): 65; Frigyes Wilczek, *OKN*, 1901-1906, 10 (December 17, 1902): 92-4; Nándor Szederkényi, *OKN*, 1901-1906, 10 (December 17, 1902): 95-7.

36. Lajos Bornemissza, *OKN*, 1901-1906, 10 (December 17, 1902): 91

37. Lajos Beck, *OKN*, 1906-1911, 21 (December 12, 1908): 63.

38. Károly Hencz, *OKN*, 1906-1910, 11 (June 22, 1907): 70.
39. *OKN*, 1906-1911, 11 (June 22, 1907): 71.
40. Imre Ivánka, *OKN*, 1878-1881, 13 (May 29, 1880): 392; János Hock, *OKN*, 1906-1911, 21: 82; István Bernát, *OKN*, 1906-1911 (November 12, 1908): 61.
41. Emil Lengyel: 96 considers the agent "an instrument and not a cause" of emigration. Gerald Shaughnessy, *Has the Immigrant Kept the Faith?* (New York: Macmillan, 1925) and Martin L. Kovacs: 121-2 view the agent not as a primary but a contributory cause of emigration. Nevertheless, criticism of agent activity is valid, as documented by, for example, Jenő Hegyi, *A magyarországi kivándorlás állapota és rendezése* (Fiume: "Unio," 1902): 5; József Kanyar, "Kivándorlás Somogyból 1901-1910, in *Somogyi parasztság, somogyi nagybirtok* (Kaposvár: Somogy megyei művészeti tanács 1957): 48; Alfred Lengyel, "Adatok a Győr megyei kivándorlási mozgalom történetéhez, *Századok*, CIII (1969): 722.
42. See Philip Taylor, *The Distant Magnet* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971) for a discussion of shipping companies as related to emigration.
43. *OKN*, 1878-1881, 13 (May, 1, 1880): 93.
44. *OKN*, 1878-1881, 18 (May 2, 1881): 362-3.
45. Sándor Simonyi-Semadam, *OKN*, 1905, 1: 303-4 and Ferenc Udvarý, *OKN*, 1905, 1: 348-9.
46. *OKN*, 1901-1906, 7 (June 17, 1902): 288.
47. *OKN*, 1906-1911, 11 (June 22, 1907): 77.
48. For a recent study on the origins of anti-Semitism in Hungary, see Andrew Handler, *Blood Libel at Tiszaeszlár* (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs, 1980).
49. Károly Nendtwich, *OKN*, 1884-1887, 16 (February 26, 1887): 63-5; Ernő Hedry, *OKN*, 1878-1881, 13 (May 1, 1880): 93; Gyula Margittay, 1884-1887, 11 (April 7, 1886): 142.
50. *OKN*, 1884-1887, 16 (April 2, 1887): 279.
51. *OKN*, 1892-1896, 26 (November 6, 1895): 195.
52. *OKN*, 1901-1906, 10 (December 16, 1902): 81.
53. *OKN*, 1901-1906, 10 (December 17, 1902): 86.
54. For a discussion of reforms during the 1890s which affected the authority of the religious institutions, see *Magyarország története*, VII: 73-106.
55. *OKN*, 1901-1906, 10 (December 16, 1902): 84.
56. *OKN*, 1901-1906, 10 (December 17, 1902): 94.
57. *OKN*, 1906-1911, 11 (June 22, 1907): 73.
58. *OKN*, 1906-1911, 21 (November 12, 1908): 62.
59. *OKN*, 1906-1911, 21 (November 13, 1908): 78-9.
60. *OKN*, 1901-1906, 7 (June 17, 1902): 284.
61. *OKN*, 1901-1906, 10 (December 16, 1902): 65.
62. *OKN*, 1906-1911, 11 (June 22, 1907): 75.
63. *OKN*, 1901-1906, 12 (July 6, 1907): 41. Economic rather than ethnic pressure has been shown as the cause of emigration, for example, by Thomas Capek, *The Slovaks of Hungary* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1906): 154-5 and in recent research by Puskák: 18.
64. *OKN*, 1901-1906, 10 (December 16, 1902): 71-3, 78.
65. *OKN*, 1906-1911, 15 (February 19, 1908): 402.
66. *OKN*, 1901-1906, 10 (December 16, 1902): 73.
67. *OKN*, 1906-1911, 21 (November 13, 1908): 71.
68. Kälvemark: 113 refers to this as a Europe-wide phenomenon.
69. *OKN*, 1906-1911, 21 (November 13, 1908): 71.
70. *OKN*, 1878-1881, 13 (May 29, 1880): 394.
71. *OKN*, 1906-1911, 21 (November 13, 1908): 73.
72. *OKN*, 1906-1911, 21 (November 12, 1908): 64.
73. Through the "amerikai akció" the Hungarian government played a role in dispatching clergymen to serve the Roumanian, Slovak, and Ruthenian emigrants from Hungary around the turn of the century. See G. Gábor Kemény, *Iratok a nemzetiségi kérdés történetéhez Magyarországon a Dualizmus korában*, III (Budapest: M.T.A. Történettudományi Intézete, 1964): 241-64, 519-23 and the final chapter in Mária

Mayer, *Kárpátukrán (Ruszin) politikai és társadalmi törekvések 1860-1910* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1977): 180-204.

74. *OKN*, 1901-1906, 10 (December 16, 1902): 67-9.

75. For a brief survey of government regulations throughout Europe regarding emigration, see Taylor: 107-30.

76. *Ibid*: 71-8.

77. *OKN*, 1906-1911, 21 (November 13, 1902): 74, 76-7.

78. *OKN*, 1906-1911, 11 (June 22, 1907): 74.

79. Eddie: 293-309. Imre Kovács, *Kivándorlás* (Budapest: Cerépfalvi, 1938): 65 points out that the government experimented only with "telepítés" as a method of increasing land distribution in the half century prior to the First World War. This method made available only 140,000 cadastral acres of land.

80. *OKN*, 1901-1906, 10 (December 17, 1902): 88.

81. *OKN*, 1906-1911, 11 (June 22, 1907): 69.

82. *OKN*, 1878-1881, 13 (May 29, 1880): 393.

83. *OKN*, 1906-1911, 11 (June 22, 1907): 75.

84. *OKN*, 1901-1906, 10 (December 16, 1902): 81.

85. *OKN*, 1906-1911, 21 (November 12, 1908): 63-4.

86. This method of dealing with emigration was increasingly practiced throughout Europe from the end of the nineteenth century on. See Kälvemarm: 94-113.

87. Rácz' ("Kísérletek..." :65) notes that the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in the belief that agents' activities would cease if no permits were issued, did not issue a single permit between 1881 and 1902.

88. The Swiss (1888), German (1897), and Italian (1901) emigration laws may be found in Leopold Caro, *Auswanderung und Auswanderungspolitik in Österreich* (Leipzig: Duncker and Humblot, 1909): 242-71.

89. See Robert A. Divine, *American Immigration Policy, 1924-1952*, Yale Historical Publications, 66 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957) for an analysis of U.S. policy toward immigration restriction beginning in the 1880s.

90. The terms called for the signing of a written agreement which included the names and addresses of the contracting parties, the itinerary, departure date, name of the vessel if travelling abroad, condition of accommodations for the trip, and the exact fare. The transporter was, for example, forbidden to raise the fare established at the time of the contract, and had to provide healthy and sanitary room and board throughout the trip, as well as insurance and free medical care for the passenger and his/her baggage. The fare had to be prepaid; and it was strictly forbidden to work off the cost of passage on board ship. The emigrant could break the contract at any time before boarding the ship and would receive a full refund.

91. Imre Kovács: 13.

92. Kälvemarm: 113.

## From Industries to Farming

*Martin L. Kovacs*

It is generally not realized that early Hungarian immigration to Canada represented a cycle, the first two phases of which consisted of peasant farming in Austria-Hungary, left behind usually for work in the factories and mines of the United States, particularly Pennsylvania. The third and final phase, was most frequently homesteading on the Prairies. The purpose of this paper is to throw light on some aspects of this migration sequence, and to explore the very important role that was played in it by immigration agents, foremost among them Paul Oscar Esterhazy (1831-1912).\*

### 1

Andrew A. Marchbin was the first historian who tried to assess Esterhazy's work and take into account the socio-political impact of a rapid industrial and technological revolution in late nineteenth century Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup> He pointed out that most Hungarian immigrants to the United States prior to the turn of the century had been labourers engaged in mining and in iron and steel production, and that the term "Hungarian" was applied at the time to all newcomers from Hungary irrespective of ethnic descent. Marchbin also called attention to some of the difficulties facing immigrants from Hungary, such as inter-ethnic disharmony and overcrowded housing conditions. He explained, for example, that at first Magyars and Slovaks tended to worship together but soon arguments about the frequency and extent of the language to be used in the services poisoned their relationship and led to separation along ethnic lines.<sup>2</sup> Marchbin also noted the ill-effects of life in the *burdos ház* (pidginized Hungarian for "boarding house"), but failed to dwell upon the economic exploitation and social degradation the workers were subjected to, as well as the other evils of life

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\*Originally, *Esterházy*. Diacritical marks will be omitted in this paper from Anglicized Hungarian names.

in contemporary industrial Pennsylvania. The man who did notice these evils at the time was Esterhazy. As much as it was possible for him, he even tried to remedy or eliminate them, first through intercessions with American authorities and then through colonization schemes aimed at enabling his unfortunate peasant countrymen to return to the land.

2

Early in 1883, Esterhazy's energies seem to have been spent on helping immigrants dumped and left at Castle Garden, a major receiving centre for people arriving in the United States. In an interview he gave at the time he assured a reporter that the two hundred and sixty Hungarian immigrants there were given by him extra allowances of bread and that he spent several hours every day among them. Two hundred of the arrivals were being secured work in the construction of railroads or in the mining of coal in Pennsylvania. Esterhazy felt prompted to state that the Hungarians were not "a lazy and intemperate people. The Magyar would sooner starve than to obtain a livelihood by begging. These Hungarians are not paupers, but have been driven out of their native country by the failure of crops... They are in every way desirable immigrants..."<sup>3</sup> Esterhazy's statement was tinged with his romantic outlook, which characterized his public statements on his compatriots and native land.

Slovak and Magyar peasant newcomers were often overwhelmed by the tremendously different social and cultural environment which awaited them in the industrial regions of the United States. The social life of workers in the cities and towns of the mining areas in Pennsylvania was often characterized by heavy drinking, fights, mental and personality problems and accidents. These phenomena frequently indicated a process of alienation in their midst.<sup>4</sup> Neither the immigrants nor Esterhazy could have been aware of the real nature of the predicament of these miners and foundry hands, and were not in a position properly to perceive the relationship between the economic and social changes affecting them. Of course, it could not have been clear to them that practically the same forces of change had been, and were to be, at work in the case of other ethnic groups, as well as later waves of immigrants.



In an era of social Darwinism, immigrants from Eastern and Central Europe were as a rule treated almost as “white slaves.” A headline from the *New Yorker Volkszeitung*, a contemporary ethnic newspaper, seems to reflect this outlook: “Poor Slovaks Deprived of Hard-Earned Wages. Toil, Ill-Treatment, and Miserable Food; No Justice for the Poor Worker.”<sup>5</sup> The “poor Slovaks” were actually about 150 destitute Slovak and Hungarian immigrants who, not being able to find jobs, had to stay at the time in receiving centres at Castle Garden. Some of them had been convicted and jailed for a while a few weeks earlier at the machination of the Pennsylvania, Slatington, and New England Railroad Company. It was alleged that they had caused much damage by tearing up the rails of a track other than the one pointed out to them. On Esterhazy’s intervention in their behalf, the workers were released and were to be paid by the Company not only wages for the duration of their imprisonment, but also indemnity for their unwarranted arrest. When the Company refused to pay, the workers downed their tools to press for their due. The Company then retaliated by having the workers’ bunkhouses demolished. Only those who had some savings could afford to quit the Company. Others had no other choice but to stay on the job despite the shameless exploitation. They were also obliged to purchase their groceries from the Company store often at inflated prices. Later, the immigrants were to approach Esterhazy for legal assistance again, and he did not fail them.<sup>6</sup>

Those members of the group who were still unemployed two months later had to avail themselves of the pitiful facilities at Castle Garden. Their lot illustrates the economic vulnerability of the immigrants of the time. They were destitute to the extent that Esterhazy had to distribute loaves of bread among them. Apparently they had to be contented with meals consisting of bread and water. Furthermore, they could not remain in their common quarters during the day: they had to leave Castle Garden even on a wet day and stay in the open “where they stood in the rain presenting a most forlorn appearance. They had been detained so long at the Garden without work that they were absolutely in rags.” When Esterhazy intervened, the men received permission to re-enter their quarters. The Camp officer’s statement that “I guess a little rain will not hurt them”<sup>7</sup> was characteristic of the official social outlook

of the day. Esterhazy seems to have been a patron of immigrants from Austria-Hungary, or rather, an unofficial liaison officer between the authorities and the newcomers.<sup>8</sup>

3

Despite the contempt most North Americans felt for Central and East European immigrants, the demand for these people grew not only in the United States, but also, from the 1880s onwards, in Canada. In fact, before long, quite a competition developed between the two countries for new settlers. By mid-1884, Esterhazy was sensing the acceleration of the Hungarian immigration movement and was preparing for it. He launched the Hungarian-American Colonization Company, with its headquarters in New York, which aimed at the establishment of extensive Hungarian colonies in New Jersey. The Company's prospectus, dated June 25, 1884, attested to the good quality of "a large tract of land" as well as to the certainty of its returning large profit to future investors. Its signatories included Esterhazy and G.S. Dóry.<sup>9</sup> This undertaking proved also almost fateful for Esterhazy, since it nearly ended in his financial ruin and he only narrowly escaped even more serious consequences a year later.<sup>10</sup>

At first, the venture looked attractive enough and claimed most of Esterhazy's energies. He attempted to attract settlers not only from the old country, but also from Pennsylvania and other states. One gain for him from this venture was the acquisition of Dóry as an assistant from Pennsylvania, to be followed by other "lieutenants" from the same state, who were destined to become his "general staff" in the great adventure of attempting to set up a *Little Hungary* on the Canadian Prairie.

4

The Slav and Magyar peasant immigrants of Pennsylvania knew little of city life and industrial practices. They were "sitting ducks" for political bosses and ruthless organizers. In times of industrial tension, they inevitably became involved in actual violence. Consequently, they acquired the reputation for being wilful troublemakers. The situation deteriorated to such an extent that in 1884 Esterhazy felt compelled to implore the Governor of Pennsylvania to take steps to improve the public

image of Hungarians. He used the opportunity to draw official attention to the "outrages" committed against Hungarians in the industrial regions.<sup>11</sup>

Two years later troubles arose in the mining areas around Pittsburgh. Although workers of all backgrounds participated in the disturbances, both the press and the state government blamed the Hungarians. They became the scapegoats. An incident in mid-January, 1886, illustrates the point. On the 17th, law-enforcement agents arrested six strike leaders at one of the Morewood and Standard mines. Apparently some Hungarians then intervened and forced the sheriff's deputies to let three of the leaders go. In its report on the incident the local newspaper accused the strikers of "drinking freely" and making "ugly manifestations and threatening the company's property." Although the paper admitted that the strikers' wage demands were being pressed by "Americans," it concluded that the "Hungarians have been worked up to a dangerous point, and unless vigorous measures are speedily employed, bloodshed will undoubtedly follow."<sup>12</sup>

Events of the next few days justified some of the reporter's expectations. When the police were ordered to take matters in hand, violence erupted. Hungarian and Polish miners unleashed a "Reign of Terror" on the district, according to the headline of the newspaper the next day. The strikers were also accused of spreading the trouble to neighbouring areas. The troublemakers were described as "hard to handle, the women being worse than the men. They...will fight to death before they will be captured." The Hungarians were blamed even for the militancy of the American workers: "the Huns are alone responsible for what (the American strikers) do." Although the wide-scale industrial unrest that resulted from these incidents involved only some Polish and Hungarian workers, the blame was placed on the latter. No one spoke on their behalf. It was left to the Austro-Hungarian consul to report later:

These men are very different from American workmen, because they do not understand American laws and cannot speak the language of the country. They have been wronged, without a doubt. They have asked for a check weighman and the abolition of the store order system. Both requests have been refused, although the laws compel the company to do just what was asked of them. I know some men who were

told they would get \$1.60 a day. They worked three weeks and got \$4 each, after their lodging had been deducted by the company. Unless something is done to prevent further imposition upon the men, there will be grave trouble.<sup>13</sup>

5

The Hungarian immigrants of the 1880s were mostly former serfs or children of serfs, peasant emancipation having taken place in Hungary in 1848. Conditioned to leadership from above, these immigrants continued to look for leadership outside their ranks. Esterhazy appeared the most suitable candidate. His appearance and demeanour were aristocratic, and he was portrayed by the ethnic press as a generous benefactor of an effective spokesman for all Hungarians. His superb mastery of English, both oral and written, and his ability to deal with the leaders of American society on equal terms, were regarded his greatest assets. It is not surprising that he became one of the most important leaders not only of Hungarian Americans, but from the 1880s to his death in 1912, of Hungarian Canadians as well.

The events of the winter of 1885-86 in the Pittsburgh region reinforced Esterhazy's conviction that the Hungarian peasant miners and workers of America were sorely removed from their normal and congenial environment: the tilling of land.<sup>14</sup> It had been partly this insight that had turned his attention to schemes of agricultural settlement in the United States before, and would cause him to look to the empty spaces of the Canadian Prairies in 1886. He would have probably started work in this connection earlier, but his failed New Jersey settlement scheme and resulting personal difficulties prevented him from launching a new venture. To confound his difficulties, he was also under persistent attacks by certain newspapers in New York and Pennsylvania. These attacks were probably inspired by interests--both employers using immigrant labour and merchants catering to an immigrant clientele--who felt threatened by the prospect of a large-scale out-migration of Hungarians from the mines and industrial centres of Pennsylvania.<sup>15</sup> It is not possible to determine for certain whether the newspaper attacks were the cause or the result of Esterhazy's plans for Hungarian colonization in Canada, but they no doubt reinforced his determination to proceed with the venture. All he had to do was to arouse

the interest of a few influential politicians in Canada, and to prove to them that he would be able to attract sufficient numbers of settlers to establish viable colonies on the Canadian Prairies.<sup>16</sup> The place to recruit settlers was obviously Pennsylvania, a state rife with inter-ethnic tensions and industrial troubles.

After the successful setting up of the Hunsvally colony in 1885, Esterhazy acquired a powerful instrument for further colonization in Canada. This was the Hungarian Immigration and Colonization Aid Society, established in April of 1886. The draft charter of the Society, submitted to the Court of Common Pleas No. 3 of the County of Philadelphia, defined the main purpose of the corporation as the "aiding of Hungarian immigrants and settlers to acquire and settle upon land in America and to protect them from imposition." On receipt from the court of a decree for incorporation, Esterhazy could submit to Ottawa a list of prospective settlers anxious for homesteads.<sup>17</sup> The list contained 705 names. Among these were many of the settlers of the future Canadian communities of Esterhaz and Kaposvar, but most of the people listed failed to emigrate to Canada.<sup>18</sup>

The securing of names for the list had not been an easy task. Prospective emigrants were exposed to much conflicting advice, but the most formidable obstacle to action was probably human nature itself, which tends to dread the unknown. To all these were added the newspaper attacks, denouncing Esterhazy as a fraudulent count and embezzler, and Canada as the "El Dorado of all arch-roguers."<sup>19</sup>

## 6

The setting-up of the first two colonies on the Canadian plains took place in 1885 and 1886: Hunsvally in Manitoba and Esterhaz in the North-West Territories, District of Assiniboia.<sup>20</sup> The choosing of the sites for the settlements was the result of on-the-spot examination of the region and a careful consideration of the climate, including precipitation.<sup>21</sup> As a result, Esterhaz and the other neighbouring Canadian-Hungarian settlements were to have more dependable rainfall over the years and would suffer less from droughts than areas further to the west.

Not all of the immigrants brought to Canada by Esterhazy or his assistants were settled in either of his colonies; some were

taken to work in unspecified places. Nor did they join the settlers of Esterhaz or Hunsvally at a later stage. The last major group of Hungarian immigrants--once again from the United States--intended for and led by Esterhazy in the direction of Esterhaz in October, 1886, had to be diverted owing to a prairie fire and never reached the colony.<sup>22</sup>

János Szabó, the actual founder of Bekevar, still another Hungarian colony on the Prairies, had tried his luck first in Pennsylvania, but on returning to his native village in Hungary, he recalled some of the articles written by the Rev. John Kovacs, the minister of the First Hungarian Reformed Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.<sup>23</sup> Those newspaper items depicted the attractions of farming in the Canadian West, almost in the manner of Esterhazy. Szabó persuaded a large number of his relatives and fellow villagers to follow him to Canada. Szabó arrived at Whitewood in 1898 and in 1900 he found land with the help of János Farahó<sup>24</sup> and promptly advised his fellow villagers of the happy event. Many of these declared their intention to settle in a colony to be established by Szabó in a letter addressed to the immigration authorities in Ottawa, and eventually joined Szabó in the Bekevar area and formed the nucleus of the community.<sup>25</sup>

The origins of Hungarian settlement in Alberta can be traced to the groups of Magyar, Slovak and Ruthenian settlers brought by Esterhazy from south of the border in 1886. The arrival of the first Hungarian immigrants to Canada almost coincided with the beginnings of the Saskatchewan Coal Mines at Medicine Hat which found themselves in great need of miners. The newcomers who went there were no more experienced in mining than the managers of the enterprise in management. Consequently, the group broke up.<sup>26</sup> Even if some Hungarians stayed on for a while, they completely disappeared from Medicine Hat by the end of 1898,<sup>27</sup> according to the report of another settling agent.<sup>28</sup>

Lethbridge, the major Hungarian centre in early Alberta, also received its first Magyar settlers from the industrial areas of the United States as an indirect result of Esterhazy's activities. According to documentary evidence, ten settlers of Esterhaz went to the coal mines of Lethbridge. The fact that their transfer took place at the initiative of the local representative of the Canada North West Land Company, whose interest would have dictated the keeping of the men in the colony, testifies to the

great difficulties the newcomers had to endure in their first few years on the Canadian plains.<sup>29</sup> Nothing is mentioned in the sources of these men's return to Esterhaz. It is likely that--after sojourning in Lethbridge--they took up land somewhere in Alberta, as their names do not appear on lists of Hungarian miners in that city at the beginning of the present century. Another group of Hungarians was brought to Lethbridge directly from Pennsylvania in 1886 by Sir Alexander Galt, the founder of the coal mining enterprises in the region.<sup>30</sup> By the early 1900s there was no trace of these men in Lethbridge either.<sup>31</sup>

7

It was the Galt family who intervened decisively in the development of Lethbridge. Sir Alexander Tilloch Galt (1817-1893), was a man of parts who played a vital role in the bringing about of a unified Canada, but his interests ranged widely, from land settlement to railway building and practical diplomacy, as High Commissioner to the United Kingdom.<sup>32</sup>

The first stage in the emergence of Lethbridge was that of a resource town, that is, a settlement whose existence almost exclusively depended on one major industry, in the present case, coal.<sup>33</sup> In the early years, such a single-enterprise town was very much connected with the activities of one or more entrepreneurs. No doubt, Galt could rightly be denoted as one of the foremost representatives of this category.<sup>34</sup>

Because of his multifarious activities and his prolonged absences from Canada, Galt could not pay close attention to his enterprises in Lethbridge. This state of affairs was further exacerbated by his advancing age. Nor did the years from 1886 on favour the mines. Owing to an economic depression, lasting for about a decade, he had to reduce expenditure, including wages, and to look for additional markets and investors. Thus, Galt could not have focused his attention even if he had intended to do so, on the relieving of the many cultural and social problems that prevailed in Lethbridge and the mines.<sup>35</sup> In other words, the conditions which were bedevilling the lives of the Hungarian workers in Pennsylvania were not much better in Alberta late in the nineteenth century. Galt and later entrepreneurs were introducing Hungarian peasant immigrants into the mines for no other reason than their "docility" and readi-

ness to work at lower wages than their Anglo-Canadian counterparts.<sup>36</sup> Not unexpectedly, a wide gap developed between the mostly Hungarian and Slavic elements of Lethbridge's residents and those of British descent who represented a more permanent component of the city's population. As Lethbridge grew, its Hungarian "miners," who remained peasants in their outlook and traditions, felt increasingly ill-at-ease in it.

The "mining camp" on the Flat, close to but not really a part of early Lethbridge, seems to have been a forerunner of modern resource towns in Northern Canada. The number of young males there exceeded by far that of females and older people. The Hungarian workers were overwhelmed by a sense of geographical, social, and cultural isolation. Being dependent on a single employer, and facing periods of unemployment due to fluctuations in demand for coal, they also felt insecure. It is relevant to contemplate the huge labour turnover (200-300%) in some modern towns of single industries, as also indicative of the state of affairs in the mines of early Lethbridge.<sup>37</sup>

Consequently, another and otherwise not quite noticeable dividing line emerged between the miners and the rest of the nascent Lethbridge society. The Hungarians, just like many other miners, tended to be "sojourners."<sup>38</sup> The basic motive of the emigration for such sojourners was their intention to accumulate savings overseas to return to their native village and to achieve social advancement there through the purchase of land.<sup>39</sup> The Hungarians of Lethbridge were kept together through the identity of their objectives as much as from the sameness of their culture and traditions. Besides, their common purpose lent them tremendous energy and perseverance to work almost at a super-human tempo in an appallingly primitive, unhygienic, and unsafe working environment. With the passage of time, the acquisition of land on the prairie in the amazing size of 160 acres appeared to them as a more effective means of creating favourable impressions in their native communities, even if it was to extend the length of their stay overseas. After the turn of the century, the then Hungarian miners in Lethbridge were informed by their relatives or *földiek* (fellow villagers) about the availability of fertile land at Bekevar and in other Hungarian-Canadian settlements nearby. The same circumstance was a further reason for the miners not to develop emotional ties to Lethbridge, nor to heed too much the opinions of its settled



population.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, the majority of the twentieth-century Hungarians of Lethbridge were to change from *sojourners* into *settlers* either in the city or in its neighbourhood and this fact is perceived as a major difference from the nineteenth-century Hungarian sojourners, none of whom seems to have stayed in Lethbridge.

The peasant immigrants employed in American industries, particularly in the mines, had been thrown out of their socio-cultural context, namely the peasant community. They suffered and tolerated the inhuman conditions of the time, because they had a definite objective, a tremendously powerful ambition: to be approved and regarded as instances of success by their native communities. That is why they became sojourners in *burdos házak* (boarding houses) or with *földiek* or relatives in Lethbridge, hoping that they could save enough to acquire a farm and be able to report the fact to their social networks in the United States and the old country. Many of the early Hungarian miner-*sojourners* ended up as *settlers* in the Hungarian peasant settlements of the prairie, some of them at Bekevar, the closest Canadian replica of a traditional Hungarian peasant community.

## 8

Hungarian emigrants were not only men and women in search of work and savings, but they carried in their minds the cultural and social patterns, the values, and traditions of the Hungarian peasant. They were members of their native communities, who formed networks connected through ties of blood-, marital-, godparental-, or other types of relationships. It was a community in which the members were prompted largely by the same traditions and values and, therefore, were prone to act and respond in like manner in like situations.

The term “community” is often employed today as a synonym for “settlement” or population. However, the “peasant community” implied much more. It managed to preserve, well into the 1900s, a good proportion of its original, very strong *communal* qualities, such as the willingness to act jointly in a common endeavour. This tendency still survived in various processes of farming, in institutionalized celebrations, and merrymaking.

Thus, peasant immigrants to Lethbridge and Bekevar as a

rule arrived imbued with their ancestral culture as expressed in values, mores, and other traditions. They only knew well and trusted the institutions of their native villages. That is why they were inclined to build up, in the new environment, institutions resembling the ones left behind. They almost invariably kept their language, everyday customs, traditional values, working habits, and, for a while, their peasant costumes. However, their greatest passion seemed to reside in their yearning for land of their own.

This is the tenor of a statement by János Szabó the founder of Bekevar:

Also I was directed by God to the mines of America.... I came to realize that...the cultivation of the land in God's open air is much preferable for one minute to a whole day at the bottom of the mine.... The cultivator has the greatest opportunity to observe nature...each sod broken up by the plough is an altar.<sup>41</sup>

The argument was introduced above that Hungarian-Canadian settlements on the prairie often were replicas--in varying degrees--of the native communities, and that their members tended to a smaller or greater extent, to recreate the social and cultural traits of their native communities. Indeed, early Lethbridge and Bekevar may be perceived as opposite ends of a scale, illustrating such a relationship. In the case of customs connected with weddings the characteristics of the peasant community were only moderately institutionalized and, consequently, often misunderstood. Institutionalized customs were the main feature in early Lethbridge without churches or associations founded by Hungarians. Churches were altogether very slow to develop--apart from those of the community at large--even in the early part of this century.

In contrast, Bekevar provided the example of an almost fully-developed peasant community. Most of the newcomers to this settlement grew into "settlers" very quickly after their arrival. The reasons for this include the fact that the first arrivals in the colony had come from the same village, Botrágy. Their records reveal that they undertook their trip to the prairie either in extended families or in even broader groups of kin.<sup>42</sup> The tendency to similar grouping existed also in the case of later arrivals. The people of Bekevar had to rely on their own effort and resourcefulness in the building of their communal organiza-

tions. Indeed, they achieved not only survival, but definite success in a relatively isolated area. A number of institutions evolved in their midst in the first ten years. Their first minister of Reformed persuasion, Kálmán Kovácsi, became a source of leadership and inspiration for the community.<sup>43</sup> Schools and such organizations as the Self-Training Association, a football club, a Hungarian hall, and a Liberal Association, were established in quick succession.

Among the Hungarian colonists of the Canadian Prairies, Bekevarians were the most successful in establishing a peasant community. Other Hungarian settlements also tried to do so. The mainly Roman Catholic Hungarian Canadian communities of Kaposvar and Stockholm, Saskatchewan, developed strong institutions as well, and such prairie settlements as Otthon, Wakaw, Szent László (Prud'homme), Székelyföld, Máriavölgy and others too, had their periods of flourishing communal life and high degree of social cohesion.

The peasant communities of early Hungarian immigrants constituted a dynamic organization which greatly contributed to their success as farmers in the virgin prairie and enabled them gradually to achieve the necessary acculturation. Most of the pioneers rest in Canadian soil and the objectives of their descendants have been transformed in a great many ways. Yet, most of them pay respect to their forefathers, their culture, and to the communities they brought about.

#### NOTES

1. Marchbin published a brief study, "Early Emigration from Hungary to Canada," in the *Slavonic Review* 13 (1934): 127-38, which was issued again with slight alterations by the Canadian Historical Association, in its *Report of the Annual Meeting of 1934* (Toronto, 1935): 110-20.

2. Andrew A. Marchbin, "Hungarian Activities in Western Pennsylvania," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 23 (September 1940): 163-74.

3. *New York Telegram*, January 3, 1883.

4. For a discussion of alienation in connection with immigration adaptation and tension, see M.L. Kovacs and A.J. Cropley, *Immigrants and Society: Alienation and Assimilation* (Sydney, Australia: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1975).

5. *New Yorker Volkszeitung* (New York People's Paper), hereinafter *NYV*, January 23, 1883.

6. *NYV*, February 5, 1883.

7. *New York Telegram*, March 27, 1883; see also the March 19, 1883 issue.

8. For another of Esterhazy's interventions see: *NYV*, January 19, 1883.

9. Dóry was the later founder of the first partially Hungarian settlement in Canada, Hunsvally, Manitoba. A copy of the document is in the possession of the present writer.

10. See notes 15 and 19 below.

11. An executive officer, Thomas T. Everett, Office of the Governor, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Harrisburg, acknowledged receipt of Esterhazy's complaint on

September 23, 1884, "in relation to the alleged outrages against the Hungarians in the coal mining regions of the state;" he further indicated that the same was filed for the Governor's immediate attention. Paul Oscar Esterhazy Papers. Copies in the author's possession.

12. *New York Times*, January 18, 1886.

13. *New York Times*, January 22, 1886.

14. According to Lajos Gönczy--one of the original settlers from Pennsylvania in Esterhazy, Saskatchewan--Esterhazy did live in Pittsburgh for a while. *Kanadai Magyar Újság* (Canadian Hungarian News) May 7, 1927.

15. John Lowe, Deputy Minister, Department of Agriculture--in charge of immigration matters at the time--was in a position to point out to the Department of the Interior: "...with respect of the *bona fides* of Esterhazy...he was very violently attacked by New York and Pennsylvania papers, and described as an impostor. ...Mr. Van Horne, chief executive of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company...caused an enquiry to be made in New York through the CPR agents there, and also as I understand in Pennsylvania. As a result...he was satisfied these attacks were without foundation." — Dated Ottawa, January 17, 1890; RG 15, B-1a, vol. 174, No. 225309, Public Archives of Canada (hereinafter *PAC*).

16. RG 7, G 20, vol. 222, No 395, *PAC*.

17. RG 15, B-1a, vol. 103, F: 90895, No 114820, *PAC*.

18. RG 15, B-1a, vol. 103, F: 90895, No 114820, *PAC*. — Signed at the end of the list: "Ottawa, Ont., Canada. May 8, 1886. Paul O. d'Esterhazy, President." The great difficulty that had to be faced by immigration agents to achieve the actual transfer of prospective settlers is shown by the contrast between the numbers of the original applicants and the actual out-migrants.

19. *Fremdenblatt* (Foreigners' Newspaper, Vienna), July 24, 1885 quoted an unidentified issue of the *Österreichisch Amerikanische Zeitung* (Austrian American Newspaper) New York, as its source for the summary of the case.

20. Esterhazy summarized the essential circumstances of the founding of Esterház in one of his numerous letters, in which he also asked--without success--for the application of the same terms to his third group of immigrants. — P. O. Esterhazy to the Hon. John Carling, Minister of Agriculture, Ottawa. Ottawa, October 1, 1886, RG 15, B-1a, vol. 104, F: 90895, Part 2, *PAC*.

21. Esterhazy undertook a preliminary survey of the area in the summer of 1885, in the company of an assistant of his, G. Dóry, a trained agronomist. Esterhazy was interviewed and he made, amongst others, this statement: "...the literature published in this country does not do it half justice.... I am simply charmed, delighted, enchanted with what I saw. I never saw anything to equal it." *London Gazette*, July 16, 1885.

22. This was Esterhazy's third group of immigrants to which reference was made in fn. 20 above. Part of the settling agent's trouble was that Sir George Stephen refused to grant loans to these newcomers in the same way as he had done in the case of the first two groups.

23. In Gyula Izsák's words ("The History of Békavár," *KMU*, July 19-21, 1925): "John Szabo was at that stage dynamiting coal as a miner in Pennsylvania. It is no longer known nowadays what the Rev. John Kovacs had written about Canada...but surely enough he had won over John Szabo to Canada to such an extent that he departed for Hungary, sold all his belongings and emigrated together with his family to the land of promise in the spring of 1898."

24. János Farahó, an agronomist and a homesteader at Wetaskiwin, moved to Winnipeg, where he met János Szabó. Farahó wrote one of the earliest accounts of Hungarians in Western Canada; Szabó and his companions are mentioned in it. — János Farahó, "Hungarian Emigrants in Canada," *Közgazdasági Szemle* 25 (Budapest, 1901): 816-17.

25. August 15, 1899. RG 76, vol. 145, F: 34274, Part I, *PAC*.

26. See P. O. Esterhazy's letters to John Lowe, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, dated Fordham, New York, December 17, 19, and 20, 1886. F: 57040, 57050, and 57049, RG 17, I-1, vol. 517, *PAC*.

27. *Medicine Hat Times*, December 25, 1886.

28. "I set out on my trip in November 1898.... I continued my travel in every direc-

tion...in Alberta, but could not find any other organized Hungarian settlements, apart from the scattered ones in Wetaskiwin and Lethbridge." Z. Rajcs, "Hungarians in Canada," *Kanadai Magyarorság* (Canadian Hungarians), March 12, 1909.

29. P. O. Esterhazy to J. Lowe, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, December 6, 1886. F: 56780, vol. 515, RG 17, I-1, *PAC*. S. L. Bedford supervised, in the settlement, the erection of the frame houses, the distribution of implements, etc., to the newcomers--on behalf of the Company. A loan was granted to the Hungarians by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company.

30. A. A. den Otter, *Sir Alexander T. Galt and the Northwest: A Case Study of Entrepreneurialism on the Frontier*, PhD Thesis (University of Alberta: Edmonton, 1975), 230 (hereinafter *AGN*). The information derived from the recollection by a grandson of the mine manager (William Stafford) of a letter from Galt directing Stafford to give preference to Hungarians over Nova Scotians because of the former's readiness to accept lower wages.

31. See the lists of names of the members of the First Hungarian Sickness Benefits Association in 1901 and in later years in Jenő Rúza, *A kanadai magyarorság története / A History of Canadian Hungarians/* (Toronto, 1940): 31.

32. Oscar Douglas Skelton, *Life and Times of Sir Alexander Tilloch Galt*, ed. Guy MacLean (Toronto, 1966, 1920): 4, 107, 126. One of Galt's great achievements, not quite recognized thus far, was the commencement of a publicity campaign overseas for immigrants to Canada, including Hungarians. His efforts encompassed the organization of a network of local agents in Hungary. The major wave of immigration from the late 1880s onward was due partly to his initiative (266-268). Also see John Dyke to John Lowe, Liverpool, February 22, 1883. RG 17, I-1, vol. 362, F: 38849, p. 2, *PAC*. For further discussion, see Martin L. Kovacs, "Aspects of Hungarian Peasant Emigration from pre-1914 Hungary," in Ivan Völgyes, ed. *The Peasantry of Eastern Europe*, 2 vols. (New York: Pergamon, 1979): 121-23.

33. Gilbert A. Stelter, "The Urban Frontier in Canadian History, *Canadian Issues*, 1 (Spring 1975): 110-111. Also relevant is Rex Lucas, *Minetown, Milltown, Railtown: Life in Canadian Communities of Single Industry* (Toronto, 1971).

34. One of the heroes of Victorian England and Canada was the entrepreneur. In A. A. den Otter's presentation, Galt appears to be a man of "strength and financial wizardry," who would overcome obstacles and who, when he felt it was required, "brazenly employed his intimate friendship with the Conservative clique in Ottawa to win more Liberal concession...." (*AGN*, 310-311).

35. *AGN*, 314.

36. *AGN*, 313.

37. Norman E. Pressman and Kathleen Lauder, "Resource Towns as New Towns," *Urban History Review*, No. 1-78 (June 1978): 84-86. Other signs of the unhealthy circumstances of resource town are the high incidence of violence, suicide, and over-indulgence in alcohol.

38. Robert F. Harney points out the difference between sojourners and settlers in his study "Boarding and Belonging," *Urban History Review*, No. 2-78 (October 1978): 8-9. Little attention has been directed to the role of the sojourner in the history of the Canadian West.

39. Immigrants other than Hungarians followed similar patterns, e.g. Italians, Macedonians and Greeks. See R. F. Harney and H. Troper, "Introduction," *Urban History Review*, No. 2-78 (October 1978): 4.

40. For the Hungarian immigrants whose minds were still centered in their native land, Lethbridge was mainly a place of work and makeshift accommodation. The Hungarian miners, apart from encounters in the mines had few opportunities for mixing with Anglo-Canadians. Their contact with and knowledge even of their neighborhood was rather restricted.

41. *Kanadai Magyar Farmer* (Canadian Hungarian Farmer) July 26, 1910.

42. Families having the same surnames, as "Szakács" or, in the case of the Bezdedians, "Daku" are characteristic of broader groupings of kinship in the Kipling area.

43. With the arrival of non-British immigrants to Canada (and the United States), some religious denominations set up missions for the newcomers' "Christianization." Dr. Robertson, one of the most energetic and successful of the early missionaries, even

undertook a trip to Debrecen, the "Calvinist Rome" of Hungary and convinced authorities there of a need on the prairie for Hungarian clergymen. That is how Bekevar obtained its first "missionary" minister, Kálmán Kovácsi, in 1901. *KMU*, July 19-20, 1925, and G. Izsák, *A Szamaritánus /The Samaritan/* (Toronto, 1954): 50.

## **Immigrant Lives and Lifestyles in Canada, 1924-1939\***

*N. F. Dreisziger*

Hungarians immigrated to Canada in four distinct waves. At the end of the nineteenth century and during the early part of the twentieth came what might be called the "pioneers." Between 1924 and 1939 came the interwar immigrants. In the late 1940s and early 1950s came the post-war émigrés; and in 1956-57, the refugees. Of these four groups, the second is probably the most important due partly to its size, and partly to the role it played in Hungarian-Canadian history. Nevertheless, this particular stream of Hungarian immigrants to Canada is the least known among Hungarian Canadians today, due mainly to the fact that neither scholars nor amateur historians paid much attention to it.<sup>1</sup>

The immigration of the so-called "interwar stream" of Hungarian newcomers to Canada began in 1924 and lasted until 1939. The bulk of them arrived before the onset of the Great Depression, as after 1930 only immediate relatives of Canadian residents were allowed to enter the country. Numerically, this group was the second largest among the four waves of Hungarian immigrants to Canada. Its arrival contributed to a four-fold increase in Canada's Hungarian population in the period under discussion in this paper. But the importance of this stream went beyond the realm of demographic growth: the post-1924 immigrants greatly promoted the dispersal of Canada's Hun-

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garian population throughout much of the country, and they were mainly responsible for the establishment of Magyar colonies in many of Canada's large cities, especially Montreal and Toronto.

Not many aspects of this immigrant stream's history have been preserved in printed sources. A few "success stories" have been recorded in journalistic accounts and amateur histories,<sup>2</sup> but next to nothing has been written about the everyday lives of the mass of these immigrants.<sup>3</sup> This fact is unfortunate, as the story of the interwar immigrants' lifestyles is interesting and instructive. To the layman it presents a human drama rich in triumphs, achievements as well as failures and tragedies. To the scholar, the examination of these immigrants' lifestyles offers glimpses of the world of the uprooted poor as they made the transition from life in the East European countryside to that of the increasingly industrialized society of North America. In particular, it reveals the multitude of problems that newcomers faced both as members of an ethnic group and as new residents of a strange country.

The study of the everyday lives of newcomers also reveals much that is relevant to the understanding of the processes which affect immigrants and immigrant groups' acculturation, integration, culture maintenance and so on. In the case of the Hungarian immigrants to Canada of the interwar years, the story of their lifestyles tends to indicate that because these people lived in utmost uncertainty and poverty, they could rarely make persistent efforts at hastening their adjustment to their new homeland. At the same time, these same conditions had negative implications on the process of culture maintenance within the Hungarian-Canadian ethnic group. It is hoped that this paper will shed some light not only on the everyday problems that Hungarian immigrants to this country encountered during the interwar years, but also on the difficulties they had in adjusting to and integrating into Canadian society, in establishing their immigrant institutions, in maintaining their community life and, in general, in building the foundations of their individual and collective future in Canada.

1

For a proper understanding of our subject it is necessary to consider briefly some aspects of the historical context of



Hungarian immigration to Canada in the 1920s and 1930s. To do so we must look at the social and economic conditions of contemporary Canada, the nature and geographic distribution of Canada's existing Hungarian communities, and at the social and cultural heritage which newcomers from Hungary brought with them in the period under discussion in this paper.

Three facts stand out about the social and economic environment which confronted Hungarian immigrants to Canada in the years after 1924. First there was the fact that Canada at the time was still very much a "hewer of wood and drawer of water." The frontier still loomed large in most aspects of Canadian economic and social life, and jobs for newcomers were available as a rule only on the country's agricultural, mining and lumber frontier. The second fact which must be kept in mind about contemporary Canada stemmed directly from the above described conditions. Since the Dominion was still a producer of staples and raw materials, its economic life was governed very much by the climate. Canada was an "eight months country," where jobs were almost invariably seasonal. The last important aspects of contemporary Canadian reality was the fact that very little state help was available to the poor, and even less to impoverished newcomers.

Canada's existing Hungarian community, which "received" the Magyar newcomers of the 'twenties and 'thirties, was on the whole a socially underprivileged, economically weak, politically uninfluential and a culturally divided group.<sup>4</sup> It could provide very little help collectively to their newly arrived countrymen; while on an individual basis, it could assist only a limited number of new arrivals. As a result, most members of the post-1924 immigrant stream had to make it on their own in Canada.

As the socio-cultural heritage of any immigrant stream greatly influences the lifestyles of its members in the years following immigration, an introduction of this type should say a few words about the newcomers themselves. In this connection it must be kept in mind that the vast majority of Hungarian arrivals to Canada between 1924 and 1939 were classified as "agriculturalists," most other categories of immigrants having been barred from the country by government regulations. In spite of this, the post-World War I Hungarian immigration stream was socially and culturally more mixed than the previous one. Not all of the newcomers were simple peasants, as had

almost been the case with the pre-1914 arrivals. In the 1920s hundreds of impoverished middle and even upper-class elements sought refuge in Canada from the social, economic and political upheavals which shook Hungary in the turbulent aftermath of the war. Moreover, even those post-1924 immigrants who had a peasant background tended to differ from their pre-1914 predecessors. This was the result of their somewhat better education, their often prolonged service in the armed forces of the Habsburg Empire (or, later, in those of the successor states),<sup>5</sup> and their exposure to new ideologies. The new immigrants proved to be more critical and more impatient than their predecessors. Their greater "sophistication" or "worldliness," their restlessness, their tendency to question accepted traditions and values, were to influence considerably the lifestyles they were to adopt in Canada.

2

The majority of Hungarian immigrants to Canada during the interwar years began their "Canadian careers" on a prairie farm. They were directed there by immigration authorities. But farms in the West failed to provide steady employment. On a prairie homestead there was work in the spring from the middle of April on. This was followed by a period of relative inactivity lasting until August, when all hands were needed to bring in the harvest. After September the demand for farm-help rapidly declined and did not resume until next spring. This pattern was imposed by the West's economy. Wheat was supreme, and there was little diversification which could have provided a somewhat different work cycle. Most homesteads offered year-round work for the farmer and his family, but farm workers could put in only a few weeks' or, at best, a few months' work in any one year. At other times they had to find work elsewhere. Thus, the farm worker became a migrant labourer. Even those who managed to acquire a homestead, often had to supplement their income through outside employment. Only after most debts had been paid, did the farmer stand a chance of making it on his own.

Not many Hungarian immigrants to Canada in the 1920s escaped the fate of being migrant labourers at least for a few years. The life stories of those who did not reveal a variety of patterns. As has been mentioned, the immigrant's "career"

usually began on the farm to which he (or she) had been directed by the agency responsible for his placement. Some newcomers stayed at their designated destination; others, who found the wages or working conditions unsatisfactory, looked for farm work elsewhere. Problems rarely arose until September when most farming operations came to an end, and the immigrant became unemployed. The placement agency was no longer concerned with him, now he was on his own. Some people waited and contented themselves with seeking a few days of work here and there in the region to which they had been directed originally. Often they could supplement their summer savings by odd-jobs such as land-clearing and cutting firewood for farmers or townspeople. Unfortunately these jobs paid very little.

Other newcomers found the prospect of having no full-time work until the spring unsettling, and set out to find work in other part of the country. A few found employment in mines, in particular the coal mines of south-western Alberta. As temporary helper and most recent arrival, the newcomer received the least desirable job and was laid off at the first sign of slackening demand for coal. But if his job lasted through the winter, he escaped having to work in the bitterly cold open air and could supply himself and his family with coal picked from heaps of rock scattered around the mine's entrances. For those who failed to find work in the mines, or didn't try to, there was often casual work for the railways, either in track maintenance or on the construction of branchlines. Still others headed for logging camps, logging being generally the only type of work available in the winter on Canada's vast frontiers. Neither railway construction work nor logging appealed to family men unless they were willing to part with their wives and children for many months at a time. And a part of the workers' earnings was consumed by payments they had to make for meals and lodging in the camps.

Still others headed for the cities. They were often followed by those who had first tried the country's mines, railways, or logging camps and had failed either to find jobs or to keep them. In the cities there was a variety of possibilities: wood-splitting or snow-removal around people's homes and shops, construction work when it was not monopolized by members of another ethnic group, and for a fortunate few, even work in factories. Those who couldn't find work, spent their time looking for it and lived

on their meagre savings or on money borrowed from relatives or acquaintances. Expenses were cut by living frugally, with several people sharing a room in a crowded boarding home maintained usually by one of their countrymen. The proprietor of such establishment, known as the *burdosgazda* ("landlord"), was often a fairly recent arrival who supplemented his family's income by subletting part of his home to permanent lodgers and transients. The city often seemed to promise much, but it gave little in the way of employment. However, it offered a life less harsh than that on the frontier, and it also saved the newcomer from the isolation of the labour camps.

In the spring the cycle would start anew as people returned to the land for farm work, and this yearly pattern would go on until broken through the immigrant finding a farm he could start cultivating, or some kind of urban employment he could count on. If anything was certain in this world of uncertainty, it was the fact that nothing was fixed, settled or permanent. Very few could ever feel ensured against having to lead the life of a migrant labourer. The farmer could fail and go bankrupt; in the city, even the surest jobs could disappear; illness, fire or some other calamity could strike, throwing men and families back into a most uncertain type of existence. For many there appeared only one escape: a return to Hungary and the familiar people and ways of the native village. Hundreds of disappointed newcomers chose this course of action.<sup>6</sup>

The basic feature of new Hungarian-Canadian life in the 1920s seems to have been mobility sustained by economic instability and personal restlessness. Repeated migration became part of the lifestyle for many. Often the travelling was senseless and counterproductive. In the early spring of 1928 a public building burned down in Saskatoon. A decision was made to replace it. As soon as this was announced, Hungarian transients converged on the city in the hope of finding well-paying construction jobs.<sup>7</sup> Such usually useless travel helped to consume many a newcomer's savings, or put him deeper into debt. Later, during the Depression, Hungarian transients learned to save the cost of transport by travelling on the roofs of freight-cars, a practice which cost many lives as cold, numbed bodies fell beneath the wheels. Those who were less enterprising resorted to an ancient method of travel: walking. According to a popular myth, one Hungarian in search of a job walked from

Winnipeg to Toronto barefoot, carrying his only pair of boots in his hand. When he found a job, he went back to fetch his family in the same manner.<sup>8</sup>

3

While climate and general economic conditions affected the lives not only of Hungarians but those of other immigrants and most of Canada's poor, Hungarian newcomers had to contend with several handicaps which were more or less peculiar to their kind. One of these was the fact that a large number of Magyar newcomers to Canada came with money borrowed often at usurious lending rates. Consequently, their first concern was to rid themselves and their families of this debt. In doing so, they often missed opportunities to invest in a farm or to start a small business of some sort. In fact, these debts tended to condemn many a newcomer to years of existence as a migrant labourer. Indebtedness could not be simply forgotten as it had been usually contracted against family assets in Hungary.<sup>9</sup> Closely connected to this state of affairs was the fact that many Magyar immigrants were young heads of families who felt obliged to save for the transportation of their wives and children to Canada. Such hopes were often dashed by economic setbacks. Many Hungarian-Canadian men did not reunite with their families until after the Depression or the Second World War.<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps the most severe handicap new Hungarian arrivals had to contend with was their near-total lack of occupational and language skills. As peasants they had no training in anything but subsistence farming, Hungarian style; and most of them had no knowledge of English. Given the absence of opportunities for learning the language and trades, the acquisition of these skills was a slow and painful process. Furthermore, the lack of knowledge of English and Canadian conditions made the newcomers prey to unscrupulous persons, often of their own nationality, who took advantage of the ignorance of the newly arrived. Older residents of the country would take money from newcomers in return for promises of suitable employment, but the jobs were rarely delivered. Also common was the practice by foremen in mines and factories, and on construction sites, to take bribes when new help was being hired, and to go on exacting a tribute from workers whose continued employment lay within their discretion. Another type

of fraud perpetrated on new arrivals was to promise them passage to the United States, where conditions allegedly were better. The victims were made to pay handsomely and were taken near the border but not across it, or worse, were allowed to fall into the hands of American authorities. A less nefarious, though often equally effective way of helping newcomers to part with their savings was for their *burdosgazda* to provide illegal alcohol for them along with their meals and lodging. In 1929 it was estimated that such a practice could cost a boarder an extra \$15 to \$20 a week. It must be stated that such an arrangement was not entirely the fault of the landlord. Some boarders preferred "wet" boarding houses to "dry" ones, and the pressure to provide drinks was there.<sup>11</sup>

4

The difficulties of New Canadian life were not confined to the male members of the group, just as immigration was not restricted to them. The fact is that, during the height of the post-1924 influx of newcomers, several thousand women came to Canada from Hungary. Most of them arrived to join their husbands or other close relatives. Others came as single persons under Canada's scheme of admitting female domestics. These people were recruited to work as household servants in the Canadian West. After their arrival, they were placed on farmsteads where they were expected to help with housekeeping and other chores such as milking. The scheme did not work without difficulties and disappointments. Some Hungarian arrivals did not know, or refused to accept, what awaited them. A few were not familiar with most aspects of domestic work on the farm. Many seem to have come with the conviction that they could avoid becoming servants and could find employment as sales clerks or factory workers in the cities. In 1930, the Hungarian consul in Winnipeg complained to authorities in Budapest that in 1929 there had been an unusually large number of difficulties in regard to Hungarian female domestics. Many of them had abandoned their assigned jobs. Others did not even show up in their places of destination but insisted on staying in Winnipeg, which offered few if any employment opportunities.<sup>12</sup>

It appears then that the importation of female domestics from Hungary was no more successful a scheme from the immigrants'

point of view than the admission of agricultural workers. Perhaps it was an unreasonable expectation on the part of Canadian policy-makers to suppose that young, unmarried women, usually without any language skills and often without other appropriate skills as well, would take to the demanding life and isolation of prairie homesteads. The whole programme, it seems, added much to human misery and contributed to the influx of unemployed, and in some respects unemployable, people into the cities.

5

Despite the immigration of hundreds of female domestics, most of Canada's Hungarian communities were drastically short of women, especially those of marriageable age. This condition arose as a result of the tradition of young males migrating first, a practice which was responsible for the Hungarian-Canadian ethnic group's skewed demographic structure. The fact was that in most contemporary Hungarian-Canadian communities, young males predominated. The situation was worst in the regions of "new" Hungarian settlement. In Ontario, for example, three out of every five Hungarian males were between the ages of 25 to 39, while in the 30 to 39 age group, men outnumbered women almost three to one.<sup>13</sup>

The predominance of young adult males in the Hungarian-Canadian population meant that many men were denied the blessings of family life, unless they were willing and able to marry outside of their group. No doubt, the quality of life for those Hungarian males who could not marry Hungarian women, or anyone at all, suffered. It may be of interest that the abundance of young adult males, combined with the scarcity of women, had unusual effects on marriage practices and fertility rates. First of all, more Hungarian women were married than females of any other ethnic group, with the exception of Canada's East Asian residents. Furthermore, Hungarian Canadian girls married at a younger age. Close to 13 percent of girls in the 15 to 19 age bracket were married according to the 1931 census. This compared with the national average of slightly over 5 percent, and exceeded by a wide margin the figures for all immigrant groups.<sup>14</sup> The high marriage rates for women, combined with a greater than average tendency for early marriage, and the youthfulness of the male population, resulted

in very high fertility rates for the Hungarian group. Magyar-Canadian society's 6,186 married women in the 15 to 44 age bracket bore an estimated 1,271 children a year, a remarkable figure which was topped only by mothers of Yugoslav and Chinese background, and French-Canadians.<sup>15</sup> It seems then, that while many Hungarian-Canadian men, especially recent arrivals, were denied the blessings of family life, others were busy establishing families almost as if they had to assume responsibility for their ethnic group's numerical growth.

6

The lifestyle of a large section of the new Hungarian-Canadian society was not conducive to the development of any meaningful community life. Hungarian groupings in most cities were made up of transients. There were some rural enclaves in which, for a few years until the Depression struck, Hungarian homesteaders could sustain some form of social life. Most of these were in Saskatchewan, but there were some in Alberta and Manitoba also. Little is known about most of these Hungarian settlements and the community life in them. Much better known is the social activity which was developed by the new urban grouping of Hungarian Canadians.

The style of Hungarian-Canadian social life in cities like Montreal and Toronto was greatly influenced by economic realities. No statistics exist regarding the disposable income of Magyars in the big cities, but there is every reason to believe that they earned much less than the estimated \$1,500 a year needed to keep a family out of poverty.<sup>16</sup> But the lack of adequate financial resources did not mean that social life could not be at times rich and satisfying for the participants.

The new Hungarian-Canadian society's community life revolved around existing or newly established religious or lay organizations. One grouping whose activities are well known, are the Protestants of Montreal. Along with the start of their religious work in 1926, cultural and educational efforts were undertaken. English classes were organized and a library was established with books donated by the Government of Hungary. From 1928 on, an active social life developed, supplementing the religious and cultural work started earlier. Social functions included dinners, dances, plays, picnics, bazaars, and exhibitions of embroidery.<sup>17</sup> Similar activities were carried on by the city's



Roman Catholic Magyars and the members of two lay organizations, the Hungarian Social Club and the Székely Club. Occasionally, larger projects, such as concerts or musical productions, were undertaken jointly with most if not all of these groups and clubs participating. Besides the social activities, two other, closely related ethnic enterprises were initiated: Hungarian school for children and soccer matches for sports-minded youths. The highlight of the group's annual community routine came with the celebration of March 15th, Hungary's national day. The focal points of most of these activities were the churches and a club-room right on St. Laurent Boulevard. Another place of gathering was the Hungarian Consulate on St. Catherines Street. Here, immigrants exchanged stories of their fortunes or misfortunes as they arranged for the transportation of family members to Canada or, in the case of the disappointed, their own return to Hungary. In Montreal, Hungarian presence was noticeable even to the casual passer-by. In the St. Laurent Boulevard - Pine Street area there were Hungarian shops with Magyar signs and billboards on them.<sup>18</sup>

In Toronto active social life developed somewhat later. There, one typically New Canadian organization was the Hungarian Roman Catholic Circle. Established in the fall of 1929, it soon embarked on the holding of regular meetings, dances and English classes in a large room rented in a house on Beverley Street. For some time, the club prospered in every way except financially. Its membership quickly grew from eighteen to nearly one hundred. Public lectures were arranged. In the summer there were ice cream parties and picnics. A small library was started. Next, a house was rented with enough room for larger English classes, dances and even for amateur theatrical productions. The home became the hub of Hungarian social and cultural activity in Toronto. Some functions were held jointly with the city's Magyar Reformed congregation. Other times the dance-hall was rented to another recently established institution, the Hungarian Club, or to a visiting theatrical troupe from Hamilton. For more casual entertainment, magazines, chess-sets, etc. were acquired and a billiard table was rented.<sup>19</sup>

At the time, most of Toronto's Hungarians lived within walking distance of Beverley Street. The area, bounded by Queen and College Streets on the south and north sides respectively, and extending a couple of blocks both east and west, was

inhabited by several East European immigrant groupings. It never became a "little Hungary" the way other sections of the city became "Chinatowns" or "little Italies". Nevertheless, it served as the "home" area of a relatively compact Magyar group, perhaps geographically the most concentrated ever created by Hungarians in Toronto. The district had seen better days, but with the original owners gone to more fashionable sections of the city, the Beverley Street district became a residential area with large, deteriorating rooming houses. In time, the adjoining business districts, located along Queen Street, Spadina Avenue and College Street, also became ethnicized through the establishment of ethnic businesses and institutions on them. In the case of the Hungarians this process took place partly after the migration of Hungarian residents out of the Beverly Street area had started.<sup>20</sup>

7

The new Hungarian-Canadian society was more heterogeneous than the old one had been. In the first place, the social composition of the immigration stream of the 1920s was more complex. Secondly, most of the new arrivals were better educated, public education having made some advances in Hungary since the turn of the century. The new arrivals often had a richer life experience: most of them had served in the war, had travelled, and had been exposed to new ideas and ideologies. Some of them even used "big words" unintelligible to the old-timers.<sup>21</sup> Not surprisingly, the differences in outlook lead to a sociocultural chasm between the new and earlier immigrants. The newcomers, in a typical fashion, resented the material success of the previous arrivals, especially when contrasted with their own apparent lack of progress. At the same time, the older residents disliked what they considered to be "lack of perseverance" on the part of the newcomers. Recounting the great difficulties they had to overcome in their own time, they often reproached their newly-arrived countrymen for their desire to "get rich quickly" and reluctance to do backbreaking physical labour. But the old immigrants' greatest distrust seems to have been directed against the new immigration's gentry and middle-class elements, some members of which tended to treat their lower-class countrymen with condescension, yet tried to act as their leaders and to make a living from them as ticket agents

and insurance salesmen. This situation often gave rise to misunderstandings, and caused ill-feelings toward the “men in trousers” (*nadrágos emberek*), and “gentlemen rogues” (*úri csirkefogók*).<sup>22</sup>

Closely related to this issue of intra-ethnic social disharmony was the problem of leadership within the ethnic grouping. People with good education were rare among the old immigrants. Among the new arrivals they were more common, but before these could rise to positions of leadership they had to earn the trust of their countrymen and acquire a familiarity with Canadian conditions. The absence of capable and tactful individuals who had a good command of English and could have acted as effective spokesmen for their ethnic group in influential Canadian circles was a definite disadvantage for Hungarian-Canadian society. Indicative of the dearth of qualified Hungarian-Canadian professionals is the fact that a search by the Hungarian Consulate of Montreal in 1930 produced only one practicing Magyar-Canadian physician in all of Central Canada (Miklos Sole /Zóla?/ of Hamilton). Three years later a well-informed Hungarian-Canadian newspaperman had reason to complain about the utter lack of Canadian-trained Hungarian lawyers in the country.<sup>23</sup>

Although some students of Hungarian affairs have made various generalizations about the “inability” of Hungarians to provide effective political leadership for their own kind, no convincing evidence has been produced that this is really the case. Hungarian-Canadian society’s failure to produce good leadership appears to have been the result of certain specific causes. Canada’s “agriculturalist only” admission policy restricted the entry of educated, good calibre leaders into the country; and the lifestyle of most old immigrants was not conducive to preparing children for positions of influence and leadership. General conditions existing within most newly established Hungarian-Canadian groupings — especially the lack of residential stability — also hindered the emergence of effective leadership. With the passage of years, leaders did emerge. The fact that they failed to produce the calibre of leadership their fellow Hungarian Canadians expected of them (or they of themselves), was, as shall be seen below, not so much the result of their group’s inherent social or psychological weaknesses but of the brutal conditions which Hungarian Canadians had to face at

the time, and especially, during the Great Depression.

8

Problems plaguing individual Hungarian immigrants in particular, and the Hungarian ethnic group in general, on the eve of the Depression, were numerous. Most newcomers had no steady jobs, no savings, no easily marketable skills, no opportunities for a decent social life, not even a reasonable chance to be reunited with their loved ones or, in the case of single men, of marrying a girl of their own nationality. As a group, the Hungarian-Canadian suffered from increased geographic dispersal and social disharmony. All these problems were exacerbated by the economic slump which began in the fall of 1929.

The first to feel the impact of bad times were the migrant farm workers of the West. These people had their share of difficulties even before 1930, but the Depression made their lot even more miserable. Evidence indicates that their situation became appreciably worse right at the outset of the crisis, during the winter of 1929-30. In his May, 1930 report to Budapest on unemployment among Hungarians in the West, Winnipeg consul István Scheffbeck talked of people who had been unemployed for five to six months, and even of some who had not worked for eight. He explained that the difficulties of the West's wheat economy during 1929 had led to decreased railway traffic and the ending of railway construction work in the northern prairie regions. Manufacturers also curtailed their operations and some of them closed down for months during the winter. The result was wide-scale unemployment. Some of the unemployed found work through municipal relief projects or in bush-clearing, but none of these jobs lasted longer than three or four weeks. In the spring the situation became worse. With the end of the winter's forest-clearing operations, thousands of unemployed flocked to the cities. They were soon joined by the usual spring wave of fresh arrivals from Europe. Unlike in previous years, when the crowds of migrant workers dispersed to work on farms and railway construction sites, in the spring of 1930 most of them remained unemployed.<sup>24</sup>

What happened in the spring of 1930 was to repeat itself for almost a whole decade, the only substantial difference being that, after 1931, the ranks of the unemployed were no longer swelled each spring by masses of fresh arrivals from overseas as Ottawa

had closed Canada's gates to most types of immigrants. Nevertheless, the number of unemployed continued to grow for some years as idle farm workers were joined by others whom the economic crisis deprived of their jobs or livelihood. Many of these were Hungarians who had taken up farming during the 1920s or even earlier. The fact was that the Depression dealt a particularly severe blow to the West's farm economy. The prices of agricultural produce became so low that it did not pay to raise crops. In 1932 wheat sold for as low as 34 cents a bushel. The price of firewood, a staple product of new homesteads in some northern regions, was so low that it was not worth transporting it to nearby towns and cities. In addition to the low prices, many areas of the prairies were afflicted by natural calamities such as prolonged drought, plagues of grasshoppers and soil erosion due to wind action. In some regions farmers suffered nine successive years of total or near-total crop failures.<sup>25</sup> The results were disastrous. Farmers in debt were unable to meet their obligations. Mortgages were foreclosed and settlers had to abandon their homesteads. Thousands of Hungarians drifted away from prairie farms and sought a better life in other regions of the country, often in the big cities.

9

Conditions were not better in most urban centres either. In those days there were no federally financed welfare programmes. In most cases, relief was provided by municipalities. These faced the problem of having to care for more and more unemployed at a time when fewer and fewer people were able to pay municipal taxes. To prevent the influx of unemployed from places where no relief could be provided, municipalities tried to keep out newcomers and to restrict relief to long-term residents. As early as June of 1930, Winnipeg's city council began insisting that unemployed with less than a year's residence should be expelled, and non-citizens on welfare should be deported from Canada.<sup>26</sup> Such attitudes made the lot of the recently arrived migrant worker very difficult. But even those who qualified for relief had a tough time. They received nothing more than handouts of food from public food depots, or food and rent vouchers. Still other city residents managed to find a few weeks of work each year which provided a meagre living for their families. A very few, mainly blue-collar workers whose firms

did not go bankrupt, succeeded in hanging on to a job. They were truly lucky. Even with low incomes — wages were often cut during the Depression — they could provide for their loved ones and even save for a piece of real estate or a farm which in those days could often be bought for very little money.<sup>27</sup>

Whether unemployed or not, on relief or not, everyone lived frugally. Although at first it was believed that things would soon get better, after years of increasing unemployment, people began to believe that economic depression was here to stay. Accordingly, they tried to get by with spending as little money as possible. They lived in crowded, unheated houses, and bought only the most basic necessities. They walked to and from work or church even if it took them hours to do so, rather than spend five cents on streetcars. They even denied themselves the chance to get warmed up by going to a movie in a heated movie theatre, because it cost ten to fifteen cents to do so.<sup>28</sup>

While many of the economic hardships affected immigrant and native born alike, Hungarians often faced problems not shared by Canadians. As recent arrivals they were first to be fired and last to be rehired when it came to employment. As has been mentioned, many of them had come to Canada on borrowed money and had left their families in Hungary. Those among them who had not paid their debts and had not brought out their wives (and children in some cases) before the onset of bad times, faced the prospect of losing their collateral (often a piece of family real estate in Hungary) and no reunion with their loved ones.<sup>29</sup>

## 10

Still another threat that confronted the recent arrival was deportation from Canada if he was found to be a public charge. Not being able to find work, and forbidden to apply for relief, many recent Hungarian Canadians found themselves in a desperate situation. Some solved it by deliberately going on municipal relief and thereby affecting their own deportation to Hungary. Conditions during the Depression were miserable there also, but in the Hungarian countryside people could at least expect to avoid actual starvation. Official statistics give an indication of the size of this more or less involuntary movement back to Hungary. Before the economic crisis, about two dozen Hungarian immigrants were deported from Canada each year (at

the expense of the shipping companies), for various reasons ranging from ill-health to criminality. This was not a large figure considering that in 1929 some fifteen hundred people were returned to the United Kingdom. But in 1930 the figures for Hungarians began to climb. In that year 31 of them were deported; in the next year 121, and in 1932 the number of Magyar deportees reached an all-time high, 170. 86 of these were convicted of having accepted relief. In the following year the number of people returned to Hungary declined to 101, and by 1934 the number of deportees had returned to the pre-1929 levels.<sup>30</sup>

There were definite reasons why deportations declined after 1932. By then, those who were least able or least willing to cope with the adversities had been sent back to Hungary or left Canada on their own volition. The federal government was also anxious to find some solution to unemployment. Its principal measure was the establishment in 1932 of camps for the unemployed under the control of the Department of National Defence. In these camps, young men could get board and lodging plus 20 cents a day in return for working on government construction projects often in some remote part of Canada. The scheme did not solve anyone's economic problems, but it kept many desperate men off the streets where they could resort to crime and violence. We don't know how many Hungarians had lived in these camps, but indications are that there were many. We also know that some were happy with their lot while others had complaints. Many did not like the living conditions and were dissatisfied with the 20 cents a day pay. Others charged that "English" camp-dwellers got preferential treatment when it came to getting leave from the camps.<sup>31</sup>

## 11

The effect of these conditions on individuals are obvious. Probably the most powerful motivating force which prompts people to undertake immigration to a foreign land is the hope for a better future. In the case of the vast majority of interwar Hungarian immigrants to Canada, these hopes were bitterly disappointed. Instead of finding prosperity and personal fulfilment in their new homeland, they were faced by a seemingly hopeless struggle for not much more than physical survival. The impact of this circumstance on people's morale must have been devastating.

The bitterness and the anger of so many Hungarian immigrants inevitably affected their organizational life as well. Given the economic status and the geographic dispersal of Canada's Hungarians, and given the fact of their extremely high residential mobility, it is not surprising that Hungarian cultural and religious organizations made little progress in the interwar years, especially during the Depression. Social activities, cultural efforts, and religious organizational drives all suffered: but none of them were so seriously affected as the group's political life. The fact was that the interwar years, and especially the Depression, witnessed the deterioration of Hungarian-Canadian society's intra-group politics. This deterioration was caused mainly by growing ideological division among Hungarian Canadians. The split's origins go back to the 1920s, and were marked by such events as the establishment of a leftist sick-benefit insurance federation (popularly known as the Kossuth Sick-Benefit Alliance), and the launching of a communist press-organ, the *Canadian Hungarian Worker*. Many converts to the communist cause simply dissolved their links with existing Hungarian churches and lay organizations. Others tried to convert their co-ethnics to their newly acquired radical beliefs, while still others went further and strove to turn the various social, economic and political associations into communist ones. When frustrated in their plans, these people often resorted to obstructing these organizations' work, or to slandering their leaders. The results were unfortunate.

The departure of disillusioned members from existing organizations was only a minor loss. By far worse was the impact of the quarrels and struggles which took place within many organizations. These, no doubt, sapped the morale of both leaders and members. The wrangling and acrimony probably made many people disillusioned in organized ethnic life and caused them to stay away from it altogether. One wonders how many second-generation Hungarian Canadians who had no particular feeling about ideology, shied away from Hungarian ethnic functions simply because they were tired and ashamed to see so much bickering and animosity within their ethnic community. There can be little doubt that in this struggle between the radicals and the conservatives, the real loser was neither the left nor the right, but the Hungarian ethnic group as a whole.



The social and economic conditions which existed in Canada in the interwar years had profound impact on the lives and lifestyles of Hungarian immigrants to this country. The hardships which confronted these people affected them both individually and collectively: they caused personal privations and misery, and retarded the development of healthy community life. Economic difficulties, and the social problems that often accompany these, also tended to interfere with the newcomer's ability to adjust to conditions in Canada. Up to about the last years of the Second World War, most Hungarian interwar immigrants to Canada lived in such economic insecurity that they could not make persistent attempt at acquiring proper language skills or learning trades that were marketable in this country. For most of them the learning of anything more than rudimentary English had to be postponed indefinitely. By the time they could have undertaken this, advancing age and an increasingly defeatist attitude to life made systematic language study or job training well-nigh impossible for most of them.

Through their failure to adjust effectively to Canadian conditions, interwar Hungarian immigrants were bound to shortchange Canada. But the poverty and misery experienced by these people also limited their potential to contribute to the development of Hungarian-Canadian society. The sheer inability of most organizations of interwar Hungarians to maintain proper club facilities, or even to buy Hungarian textbooks for their children, undoubtedly prevented the effective enrichment of Hungarian-Canadian community life, lessened the chances of immigrant culture maintenance, and made the transmission of the ethnic heritage to the second generation more difficult. Especially pernicious were the effects of extreme residential mobility, imposed by a high degree of economic uncertainty. The constant turnover of members made the maintenances of immigrant institutions very difficult. The safeguarding of the immigrant heritage is problematic under any circumstances. The forces of assimilation are there even in times of prosperity. But abject poverty, the kind which existed among Hungarians in the 1930s, can be especially damaging to ethnic life and culture.

There is much evidence that many Hungarians — both newcomers and long-term residents of this country — responded to the challenges of the Great Depression with vigour and

determination. Whenever and wherever they could, they supported each other, and tried their best not to forget about the education of their children both as future Canadian citizens and as members of the Hungarian-Canadian community. But they could do this effectively only in their largest colonies. Individuals and families who lived far from these communities, or who were torn from them by economic circumstances, had to cope not only with poverty, but with social isolation as well as cultural privations. They were faced with the prospects of losing their immigrant heritage — including in some cases their native language — without ever having had a reasonable chance to adjust to the social and cultural environment of their new homeland.

### 13

The advent of the Second World War brought an end to the Great Depression in Canada. From about 1941 on, most immigrants could work to their heart's content in Canada's war-related industries. The war brought prosperity and a great improvement in the immigrants' economic standing. After the war, step-by-step, welfare legislation was introduced, reducing the economic insecurity that faced the immigrant poor in the interwar period. As a consequence of these developments the lifestyles of Hungarians in Canada underwent a gradual but drastic change.

Despite the advent of the consumer society, powerful unions, and the welfare state, the effects of nearly two decades of poverty and degradation remained with Hungarian-Canadian society. The "depression mentality" was deeply imbedded in the minds of the vast majority of those who had lived through the 1930s. For example, no amount of post-war prosperity could make up for the anguish suffered by those who had come to Canada with plans to save for the passage of their loved-ones to this country. Although some men were reunited with their families after the war, the psychological scars of two decades of separation remained.

The impact of the pre-1939 political troubles on Hungarian-Canadian organizational life was equally long lasting. Not even the passage of years could heal the ideological rift which had taken place in Hungarian-Canadian society. That split, caused undoubtedly by the socio-economic conditions in Canada before

1939, would stay with Hungarian Canadians for a whole generation.

In the early post-war period two new waves of Hungarians came to Canada. The new arrivals tended to make rapid and effective adjustment to Canadian conditions. Many of them became so-called "successful immigrants." Some of them also looked down on their interwar Hungarian predecessors. They wondered why the "old immigrants" had made such slow adjustment, why they had failed to preserve the purity of their Hungarian culture, and why even their community life was plagued by issues of a bye-gone era. But those who have difficulty in understanding the mentality, the "world" of the interwar immigrants, should keep in mind the vastly different circumstances that moulded the newcomers of the 'twenties and the 'thirties; they should also remember that these earlier immigrants for a very long time led lives and lifestyles that can hardly be compared to anything known to those who came to Canada in the post-war decades.

#### NOTES

1. The only professional scholar to have published widely on the interwar immigrants is the late John Kosa, the author of *Land of Choice: Hungarians in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957). Kosa's books and most of his articles, however, use the sociological rather than the historical approach. It is only recently that the history of the Hungarian-Canadian experience in the interwar years has started to be explored in publications by the author of this study as well as a young historian, Carmela Patrias. See C. Patrias, "Hungarian Immigration to Canada before the Second World War," in Susan M. Papp (ed.), *Hungarians in Ontario*, a double issue of *Polyphony, The Bulletin of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario* 2, Nos. 2-3 (1979-80): 17-44. Also, by the same author, *The Kanadai Magyar Újság and the Politics of the Hungarian Canadian Elite* Occasional Paper in Ethnic and Immigration studies (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1978). My own articles in this field are "Aspects of Hungarian Settlement in Central Canada," in M. L. Kovacs (ed.), *Hungarian Canadian Perspectives: Selected Papers*, a special issue of the *Canadian-American Review of Hungarian Studies* VII, 1 (Spring, 1980): 45-54; and, "In Search of a Hungarian-Canadian Lobby, 1927-1951," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 12, (Winter 1980): 81-96.

2. Many of these stories are told in Jenő Ruzsa's *A kanadai magyarság története / The History of Canada's Hungarians/* (Toronto, 1940). For a journalistic account of Canada's Hungarian communities in the 1920s see Ödön Paizs, *Magyarok Kanadában / Hungarians in Canada/* (Budapest, 1928).

3. The lifestyles of the interwar immigrants in the post-World War II years are discussed in Kosa's book (*cit.*), while life-stories of several of these immigrants are given in Ruzsa's book (*cit.*), and in Linda Dégh's *People in the Tobacco Belt: Four Lives* (Ottawa, 1975).

4. Divisions within the Hungarian ethnic group are discussed in my article "In Search of a Hungarian-Canadian Lobby" (*cit.*).

5. The interviews with the three interwar immigrants featured in Dégh's book (*cit.*) illustrate this point. It should be mentioned that the Treaty of Trianon of 1920 transferred vast Hungarian territories and large Hungarian populations to Rumania, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. These states often encouraged the emigration of their

newly-acquired Hungarian residents. Thousands of these Magyars made it to Canada in the period between 1924 and 1931.

6. This information is based mainly on the biographical sketches provided by Ruzsa (pp. 441-46), and Dégh (Chapters 1, 2 and 4). For the autobiography of a man who spent many years in Alberta's coal-mines see István Tóth, *23 év Kanadában* /23 Years in Canada/ (Budapest, 1961). For stories of disappointed Hungarians see Paizs, pp. 48-53.

7. Consular memorandum, April 28, 1928. Winnipegi Konzulátus (K 139) Külügyminisztériumi Levéltár, Polgári Kori Központi Kormányhatóságok Levéltárai, Magyar Országos Levéltár /Winnipeg Consulate, Ministry of External Affairs Archives, Archives of the Central Authorities of the Bourgeois Era, Hungarian National Archives,/, Budapest, cited hereafter as Consular Records.

8. Béla Bácskai-Payerle, "A Kanadai Magyarság" /Canadian Hungarians/ *Magyar Szemle* 18, (1933): 221. Interviews with Sisters Mary and Columba of the Sisters of Social Service (1973 and 1976), and taped conversations with old-timers in Lethbridge, kindly placed at my disposal by Father S. Molnár of the St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish in Calgary.

9. Paizs, p. 75.

10. Interview with Sister Mary, *cit.*

11. *Kanadai Magyar Újság* /Canadian Hungarian News/ June 8, 1929. Also, Paizs, p. 51; and Bácskai-Payerle, p. 220.

12. Memorandum, May 28, 1930. Consular Records.

13. Percentages based on figures provided in *Census of Canada*, 1931, Vol. I. table 38.

14. W. Burton Hurd, *Racial Origins and Nativity of the Canadian People*. Census Monograph no. 4 (Ottawa, 1937), table 25.

15. *Ibid.*, tables 73 and 74.

16. Terry Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty: The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal, 1897-1929* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1924), pp. 40f. The average yearly income for an unskilled labourer in Montreal during the 1930-31 period was \$836. It is safe to suppose that immigrants earned less. In Toronto incomes were slightly higher. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

17. Mihály Fehér, *A montreali Magyar Református Egyház Jubileumi Emlékkönyve, 1926-1966* /The Jubilee Album of the Hungarian Reformed Church of Montreal, 1926-1966/ (Montreal, 1966), pp. 23f.

18. Ruzsa, pp. 308-10. Paizs, p. 47. *KMU* May 26, 1928; March 27, and Dec. 4, 1930.

19. A Torontoi Magyar Katolikus Kör Jegyzőkönyve /Minutes of Meetings of the Toronto Hungarian Catholic Circle/ MS Nov. 24, 1929 and after. St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish Office, Toronto.

20. John Kosa, "Hungarian Immigrants in North America: Their Residential Mobility and Ecology," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* XXII, 3 (Aug. 1956): 359f.

21. Paizs, pp. 102 and 169.

22. Paizs, pp. 102 and 169. Bácskai-Payerle, p. 220. Ferenc Grob, *Reminiscences* ms, p. 96.

23. Consular memorandum, Sept. 8, 1930. Consular Records. Bácskai-Payerle, p. 221. The lack of Canadian-trained Magyar lawyers was to be remedied somewhat a few years later when Elemér Izsák, a second-generation Hungarian Canadian, became a lawyer in Toronto.

24. Memorandum by Schefbeck (Petényi), May 28, 1930. Consular Records.

25. For a general introduction to conditions in Canada during the 1930s see H. B. Neatby, *The Politics of Chaos, Canada in the Thirties* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1972) Chapter 2. For conditions among Hungarians in northern Saskatchewan see an interview with Sister Mary Schwartz, reported in *KMU*, Sept. 17, 1931.

26. Memorandum by Schefbeck (Petényi), June 11, 1930. Consular Records.

27. According to the Reverend László Borsay, one-time Calvinist minister in Delhi, Ontario, many of the prosperous Hungarian tobacco farmers in that region had purchased their farms during the Depression for less than a thousand dollars. Borsay, *The Origins of the Tobacco District Hungarian Presbyterian Church*, MS (1977),

in my possession.

28. Interview with Sister Mary, *cit.*, Cf. *KMU* June 4, 1931, Sept. 3 and 17, 1931, Dec. 24, 1937.

29. The regulations against poor immigrants bringing out their families were circumvented on some Hungarian circles. In Montreal there was something akin to a "travelling fund," donated by a generous benefactor of Hungarians, which was deposited in the name of a person who wished to bring out his family. Once the sum had served its purpose, it was transferred to the bank account of another immigrant. The scheme had the covert approval of the local Hungarian parish. Interview with Sister Mary, *cit.*

30. Fiscal statements on deportations" in the Records of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, (RG 26, vol. 16), Public Archives of Canada. According to official Hungarian statistics, 743 people returned from Canada to Hungary in 1932, 444 in 1933, 246 in 1934, 229 in 1935, and 200 in the next year. Thereafter, the number of returnees declined. No statistics are available for the pre-1932 period. Egon Szabady *et al.* (eds.), *Magyarország népesedése a két világháború között* /Hungary's Population between the Two World Wars/ (Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, 1965), p. 328.

31. *KMU* Oct. 31, 1933.



## **The Organizational Development of the Hungarian Community of Ontario**

*Susan M. Papp*

The organizational development of the Hungarian community in Ontario has been and continues to be a complex and many-faceted process. The main reason for this is the fact that Hungarians have come to this province in three different periods: during the interwar years, in the years following World War II, and in the wake of the 1956 Revolution. The primary aim of this paper is to examine the differences and similarities among the organizations of these three waves of Hungarian immigrants to Ontario. To facilitate an understanding of the general trends in the organizational development of each of these waves, a table has been compiled, showing the numbers and types of organizations established by Hungarians in Ontario.<sup>1</sup> Data for this chart and information for this paper have been obtained from the written, photographic and oral history material that has been gathered by the Multicultural History Society of Ontario.<sup>2</sup>

The first Hungarian associations in Ontario were the so-called mutual benefit societies which were created to protect immigrants from uncertainties confronting them in a new and strange social and economic environment. The earliest of these came into existence before the First World War, at a time when no state-sponsored welfare programmes and insurance existed in Canada. As well as providing a modicum security in case of accident or illness, these associations catered to the social needs of their members by holding meetings and social events, where the immigrants, isolated from the host society by language and culture, could find companionship. The First Hungarian Workers Sick Benefit Society was organized in Hamilton in 1907, it later grew to fourteen chapters in Ontario. The Brantford Hungarian Mutual Benefit Society, established in 1913, formed seven chapters in Ontario and two in Nova Scotia. The former became leftist-oriented and later amalgamated with the Independent Mutual Benefit Federation (IMBF). The latter

THE ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUNGARIAN COMMUNITY OF ONTARIO

Type of Organization	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	City Code
1. Community-wide/umbrella			T*	H*	T T	T T			B - Brantford C - Courtland D - Delhi
2. Fraternal/mutual benefit	H B H	We Wi Os G* N	H T N We B* T* N		Ts T T				G - Galt-Guelph H - Hamilton K - Kingston
3. Churches		We Wi H Wi T We T P	We Wi T H We H Wi H Kc T Wi* T	H We D Wi	C C	O	L		Kc - Kitchener L - London N - Niagara Falls O - Ottawa
4. Cultural/community Centres		We Wi Os Kc* T* S	T*Ti* S* Os* T	T* H* B	T T	K O T T	L	St H	Os - Oshawa P - Port Colborne S - Sudbury St - St. Catharines Ts - Tillsonburg T - Toronto
5. Homeland district					Ts T	T T H			Ti - Timmins We - Welland Wi - Windsor
6. Youth organizations			T* We	T*	T	T T	H H T* O* H	T O s* T T L T	
7. Schools			T T* Wi*				T* T H O*	L T St T T Kc* Os	
8. Newspapers * ceased		H	We* T*	T T	T	T T* N* D* T*	T* T H* T* T* T K T T*	T* T*	
Population/Hungarian Community-Ontario	1,003	10,474	16,082	28,182	59,427	65,695			



retained its non-political posture.

After the First World War additional societies were formed, offering similar kind of practical and social service, among these were the Welland Hungarian Self-Culture Society, the Windsor and District Hungarian Society and the Oshawa Hungarian Cultural Club. The aforementioned societies and clubs were independent organizations while others, such as the Brantford Sick Benefit Society and the Hungarian Workers Sick Benefit Society were branches of the larger insurance federations. By the 1930s, Hungarian mutual benefit or self-help societies were active in most cities in Ontario with a sizeable Hungarian community. Interestingly, there were no mutual benefit societies founded in Toronto, despite the fact that this city consistently had one of the largest Hungarian populations in Ontario. At no time were the head offices of the two largest mutual benefit societies located in Toronto. There were, however, various chapters established in the city. The importance of Hungarian mutual benefit societies has diminished considerably, since state-sponsored forms of insurance came into effect. To a certain degree, the fraternal/mutual benefit societies also acted as supra-communal or umbrella organizations as they had affiliates or chapters in many areas and served the function of acting as liaison between the host society and the immigrant community. In particular, the Kossuth Federation (the Hungarian section of the IMBF) maintained such a dual role.<sup>3</sup> The first supra-communal or umbrella organization established in Ontario was the short-lived Canadian Hungarian National Federation, formed in Toronto in 1936.

Usually, umbrella organizations were formed in response to specific needs which arose in the community. For instance, the United Canadian Relief Committee was founded in 1945 to unite Hungarian-Canadians in the sending of clothing, medicine and food to Hungary and to ease the post-war suffering. Similarly, it was not until 1956 that the Hungarian Canadian Federation (founded in Toronto in 1951) could improve its image and influence by heading the protest against Soviet suppression of the Hungarian uprising of that year and through initiating the fund-raising campaign for the victims of the revolution and for the refugees.<sup>4</sup> It can be generally stated that if the short-term purpose for which the umbrella organization was formed was achieved, its impact and influence

thereafter diminished. No one wave or group was outstanding in establishing community wide organizations.

1

The situation is very different in the case of Hungarian religious organizations in Ontario. The number of congregations founded and churches built by the interwar immigrants, as the chart illustrates, exceeded the contribution of any other wave. The first Hungarian congregations organized in Ontario were Presbyterian and were founded in Welland and Hamilton in 1926. In 1928, Hungarian Roman Catholics founded parishes in Welland and Toronto. Hamilton, Toronto, Welland and Windsor, cities which had a Hungarian population of over 1000 by 1931, each had at least four congregations active by the mid-1930s.<sup>5</sup> The size of the community was not always in direct relation with the number and size of the institutions established, however, as was demonstrated in the case of Port Colborne, where there were also over 1000 Hungarians. In this city, only one congregation was founded. Port Colborne's Hungarian community was a more transient one when compared with the communities in Welland and Windsor. Hungarians were attracted to cities largely on the basis of employment availability and security; where this was scarce, the community could not grow or diversify.

Only larger congregations had permanent ministers during the 1930s and 40s, sometimes because they could not, during the Depression, support them, more often because there were few ordained ministers available. The first Hungarian Roman Catholic priest to serve in Toronto, Rev. László Forgach, was a "*sorkosztos*," someone who went to a different home every night for his meals.<sup>6</sup> This was the only way the congregation could support its priest.

Most of the Hungarian priests and ministers in Canada established missions in one community, but spent much of their time travelling to others. The Rev. Eugene Ruzsa, the first Hungarian Lutheran minister in Canada, used to travel to four and sometimes five different communities on each Sunday to hold services. Since the minister had no transportation, each time he completed a service in one location, he had to persuade a member of the congregation who owned an automobile to transport him to the location of the next service.<sup>7</sup>

In the tobacco district of southern Ontario, churches were only built by the interwar immigrants in the late 1940s and early 50s.<sup>8</sup> Despite the fact that most of the Hungarians only came to the tobacco district during the Depression, it took that long until they established themselves financially and felt secure enough to support community institutions. The congregations of Ottawa and London were started as a direct result of the influx of refugees in 1956, following which the Hungarian population of these two cities were each augmented by approximately 800.<sup>9</sup>

The need for cultural expression superseded the need for religious institutions in some cities, such as Niagara Falls, Brantford and Oshawa, where, despite the fact that the earliest Hungarian institutions were founded in these cities, no church was acquired. Hungarians in the northern mining town of Sudbury and Timmins — where again no religious congregations were established — formed several cultural groups.

## 2

The interwar immigrants established numerous community centres. Two thirds of the existing community centres in southern Ontario were founded by the interwar immigrants, though some groups only acquired buildings after the Second World War. One of the reasons for this delay was that during the war there was a great scarcity of building materials, another was that after the war the Canadian Government openly encouraged and assisted conservative segments of ethnic communities to organize and obtain buildings in order to counteract leftist activities.<sup>10</sup>

Most of the early cultural/community centres housed a banquet hall, kitchen facilities, libraries and reading rooms. Groups active within the clubhouses usually included amateur dramatic troupes and soccer teams; dance classes and English language instruction were also offered intermittently. Despite the fact that most of the immigrants who founded these centres had little formal education, much importance was placed on the maintenance of the reading rooms and libraries housed within these club buildings. Initially, organizations held their functions in rented premises. The first group to acquire a building was the *Wellandi Önképzőkör*, or Welland Hungarian Self-Culture Society. Purchase of the building in 1924 was made

possible largely through the donations of English-Canadians. The petition they signed when they made their donation read as follows:

*The undersigned agree to pay the sums set opposite their respective names to form a fund where with to acquire by purchase or otherwise suitable premises to be used by the Hungarian Self-Culture Society of Welland, the object of which is educational so that its members may acquire a knowledge of the English language and thus become useful and successful citizens of Canada. The members of this society, seventy-eight in number, consider Welland as their home.*<sup>11</sup>

The intentions of the English-Canadian donors were commendable, considering that the main objective of such cultural societies was the maintenance and preservation of Hungarian culture.

During the 1930s and 1940s, Ontario's Hungarian community was plagued by sharp divisions and antagonisms between its left-wing and conservative elements. The ideological split permeated even their social and religious organizations. For example, when the Delhi & Tobacco District Hungarian House was built in 1949, the leftist Hungarian language newspaper, *Kanadai Magyar Munkás* (Canadian Hungarian Worker), repeatedly attacked the house's leadership because they founded a community centre and not a *Munkás Otthon* (Worker's Home). The Hungarian contractor who built the house related that there were frequent threats against him and the house's executive. According to the contractor, shortly after the supporting beams of the structure were in place, the leftists hung a rope tied in a hangman's noose on one of the beams and wrote beneath it: "this is where the leaders of the Delhi Hungarian House will hang themselves."<sup>12</sup>

### 3

When the postwar immigrants began arriving in 1948, they established organizations and institutions with somewhat different aims: to maintain the culture and traditions of the homeland, particularly those undermined in Hungary after 1945, and to transmit the Hungarian cultural identity and heritage to the second generation. The Hungarians who settled in Ontario

following the Revolution of 1956 formed over half a dozen new theatre companies, dance groups and choirs. Sándor Kertész founded the Toronto Art Theatre, in response to a need on the part of newly-arrived actors and actresses to practice their craft. The theatre group celebrated its 20th anniversary year in 1981. The Kodály Ensemble, consisting of a choir and a dance group, has become a renowned Hungarian folk dance company. George Zadubán, the founder of the Kodály Ensemble, believed that through such groups the refugees sought to recreate the urban cultural milieu they left behind in Hungary.<sup>13</sup>

Between 1920 and 1980, there was no outstanding decade with regards to the number of cultural organizations established, no one wave or group was exceptional in this respect. The purposes of the three waves in founding cultural organizations were different, however: for the interwar immigrants, cultural groups provided social contacts and a sense of ethnic persistence; the postwar immigrants were provided with a sense that their cultural traditions were being preserved and passed on; the 1956 refugees promoted the fine arts and formed organizations which were an extension of the cultural scene in Budapest.

One of the most significant achievement of the post-war immigrants was the founding of the Hungarian-Canadian Cultural Centre in Toronto in 1974. The Centre was reorganized out of the earlier established Toronto Hungarian House, the sale of whose building made the purchase of larger facilities possible. The Centre is considered to be one of the focal points of Hungarian community life in North America. It houses some twenty organizations, a library of 30,000 volumes and a Saturday language school, encompassing grades one through eight. The Centre also publishes a monthly journal and produces the only Hungarian-language radio broadcast aired in Southern Ontario.

#### 4

Homeland district associations bring together immigrants originating from one country, city or district in Hungary.<sup>14</sup> In the case of Hungarian communities in the United States, homeland district organizations were characteristic of the turn of the century immigration, which was comparable, as far as the background of the immigrants was concerned, with the interwar immigration in Canada. For example, in Cleveland, Ohio, organizations such as the *Szabolcs megyei klub* (Szabolcs

County Club), *Gömör megyei klub* (Gömör County Club) and *Szatmár megyei klub* (Szatmár County Club) played an integral role within the community for decades.<sup>15</sup> It has been postulated that these organizations were a product of a generation of immigrants who distrusted the host society and were drawn into close association with fellow villagers and others from their homeland district because of their rural background and relative difficulty in adjustment.<sup>16</sup>

According to the findings of this paper, there were no associations of this kind established during the 1930s and 1940s in Ontario. The energies of the interwar immigrants were entirely spent on establishing community-wide organizations and institutions. Although large segments of the membership of some of the first organizations were from one area or district in Hungary, they came together to form organizations which would serve a specific need and attract a large number of Hungarians in the community. For instance, originally the Brantford Hungarian Mutual Benefit Society was intended to be named to "County of Zala Sick Benefit Society," as a reflection of the origin of the founding members.<sup>17</sup>

There were several homeland district associations formed after the Second World War by immigrants from urban as well as rural backgrounds. This may be attributed to several factors. The initial and most important needs of the community, namely mutual aid, churches and cultural groups were met by the time of the Second World War. Moreover, after World War II, a significant number of Hungarians immigrated to Canada from Transylvania in Rumania and Bácska-Bánát in Yugoslavia. The groups that had lived as minorities in Europe formed homeland district associations in Ontario following their arrival.

The existence of homeland district associations, therefore, may not simply be attributed to fear, on the part of immigrants with rural backgrounds, of new surroundings and a foreign language. It may be viewed rather as a form of nostalgia or sentimental attachment to one's native region which was characteristic of all immigrants, regardless of period of emigration. Moreover, these organizations were generally formed after the foundations of the community had been established, again demonstrating that they were not first and foremost a defense mechanism on the part of disoriented immigrants.

The contribution of the interwar immigrants with regards to youth organizations and schools was significant, in light of the fact that they encountered considerable limitations with regards to individuals willing and able to teach such classes and textbooks available. Community organizations attracted the second generation through youth clubs, sports divisions and even dance classes. The task of providing Hungarian language instruction, however, remained largely with the Roman Catholic and Protestant clergy. At some congregations, such as St. Elizabeth of Hungary Roman Catholic Church in Toronto, the Hungarian school was organized nearly simultaneously with the founding of the church by the Sisters of Social Service.

In other cities and towns, it was difficult to ascertain, in many cases, whether language instruction was held at a particular church, community centre or under the auspices of an organization. There were several churches which held religious instruction in the Hungarian language, but these Sunday schools could not always be classified as Hungarian language instruction. Hungarian Workers' Clubs in Ontario organized numerous language schools during the interwar years. The exact number or history of these may never be documented as the bulk of the records of the Hungarian sections of the Independent Mutual Benefit Federation and of the Workers' and Farmers' Club seems to have been lost.<sup>18</sup>

The postwar immigrants placed special emphasis on transmitting the culture, language and heritage to their offspring and made considerable progress towards achieving this goal. They did this through numerous Hungarian language schools and the Hungarian scouting movement. The Hungarian Scouts Association was reorganized in displaced persons camps in Europe. Canada comprises a separate region within the Hungarian Scouts Association. There are fourteen troops across Canada, half of which are in the Province of Ontario. The first troop in Canada, number twenty, "*Árpád Vezér*," was founded in 1952 in Toronto. In the youth organizations category, ten of the fourteen entries made after 1950 represent different scout troops, only three of which have ceased altogether. The other youth organizations listed are for the most part social groups affiliated with a community centre, church or larger organization.

During the post-World War II years, several communities

founded Hungarian language schools on the elementary level. The two elementary schools in Toronto, St. Elizabeth Hungarian School and the János Arany School reported a combined enrollment of 500 students in 1979. Outside this city the Hungarian language at the elementary school level is being taught in Hamilton, Delhi, St. Catharines, Kitchener, London and Oshawa. The Toronto Hungarian School Board, founded in 1971, organizes summer camps where children receive intensive instruction in the Hungarian language. It also publishes textbooks used by the Saturday schools and written by the teachers themselves. Since 1971, the "*Kis Magyarok*" series of workbooks for grade levels one, two, three and four has been completed.

At the secondary school level there is one grade thirteen non-credit course in Hungarian studies taught outside the Toronto area, in St. Catharines. In Toronto, two credit courses are offered, grades 10 and 11, in addition to one grade 13 course. These classes were organized under the auspices of the Hungarian Helicon Society and taught in the evening at various locations. The Chair of Hungarian Studies, established at the University of Toronto in 1978, offers courses on Hungarian language, literature, culture, cinema and drama.

## 6

In the last category, that of ethnic newspapers, the interwar period was dominated by a few newspapers, each with a sizeable circulation whereas the postwar era is characterized by the establishment of dozens of newspapers, many of which served a special interest group or political party. Prior to the Second World War, the Hungarian-Canadian readership was served mainly by the *Kanadai Magyar Újság* (Canadian Hungarian News) published in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and the *Kanadai Magyar Munkás* (Canadian Hungarian Worker), a leftist weekly published in Ontario. Thousands of Hungarians in Ontario also subscribed to the *Szabadság* (Liberty), a Hungarian-American daily which had a local office in Toronto.

Following the Second World War, Ontario and in particular, Toronto became the focal point of the Hungarian language press in Canada. Two of the largest newspapers in the Hungarian diaspora, *Magyar Élet* (Hungarian Life) and *Kanadai Magyarság* (Canadian Hungarians) are at present published in Toronto.



There were some 25 newspapers and periodicals founded in the Hungarian community after the Second World War. Of these, it has been estimated that fifty percent are still being published on a regular basis.<sup>19</sup> In addition to the two already-mentioned weeklies, a Hungarian Jewish weekly, *Menora* was founded in 1961. Several monthly magazines were established, such as the *Világhíradó* (World Review) and *Krónika* (Chronicles), the official organ of the Canadian Hungarian Cultural Centre. Numerous organizational newsbulletins were published which served the interest of cultural, political, professional, artistic and sports groups. Outside Toronto, only a few Hungarian-language newspapers were founded after the Second World War: *Egységes Magyarság* (United Hungarians) (1958-62) was published in Niagara Falls and *Élet: Dohányvidéki Kisújság* (Life: Tobacco Country's Little News) (1957-59), which served the Hungarian farming communities of southern Ontario.

7

A number of overall observations may be drawn from the statistical information presented in the chart. According to one model of organizational development proposed by Maurice Freedman about the Chinese, "the greater the size and complexity of the overseas Chinese community, the larger the number and the greater the diversity in its associations." An additional corollary to the Freedman model states: "stability in size and composition of a community should be accompanied by stability in the number and kind of its associations."<sup>20</sup>

This model may be applicable in the case of the Hungarian community. During the interwar period, many of the same kinds of organizations/institutions were established in several municipalities in Ontario. The communities in each of these municipalities were small, and organizational life was relatively stable. Following the Second World War, the majority of the 10,000 Hungarian immigrants of middle class urban background who came to Canada settled in the larger urban centres and founded new organizations to suit their own needs. They brought change and instability as well. The 19,000 Hungarians who came to Ontario after the Revolution of 1956 again settled in large cities and created even more new groups.

A pattern of significant change may be observed in cities such as Hamilton and Toronto, where many of the organizations

founded during the interwar years have ceased and been replaced by others. Smaller cities, such as Brantford, Oshawa and Welland received considerably fewer postwar and post-1956 immigrants. The Hungarian communities in these smaller municipalities exhibited more stability; in many cases the organizations/institutions founded in the 1920s and '30s in these cities continue to flourish.

It may be concluded that the Freedman model applies to the Hungarian community as well, i.e. that the greater the size and complexity of the Hungarian community, the larger the number and greater the diversity in its associations. The following modification should be made, however, if the model is to be applied to the Hungarian community in Ontario: the stability of the community and its organizations is related to the number and background of additional incoming immigrants and to the frequency of the arrival of new waves of fellow countrymen.

This paper intended to give an overall view of the organizational development of the Hungarian community. It suggested that some waves made significant contributions in specific areas, such as the interwar immigrants in the establishment of mutual aid societies and churches, the postwar immigrants in schools and youth organizations and the post-1956 Hungarians in cultural groups and newspapers. It may be argued that each wave simply contributed that which was most acutely needed by the community at that particular time, i.e. the interwar immigrants with regards to mutual aid. The complementary nature of the work of the three waves should be emphasized, however, each wave filled a specific role within the community and made contributions which were unique.

This paper was intended to be illustrative rather than exhaustive. New areas of research will hopefully be stimulated by it in addition to creating interest on the part of the community towards the history of Hungarian organizational life in Canada.

#### NOTES

1. Each symbol on the chart represents one organization and the letters indicate the city in Ontario where the specific organization was founded. The types of organizations are found on the left-hand side.

2. Statistical information presented in this paper with regards to the numbers and types of organizations/institutions in various cities and towns in Ontario were compiled from over 30 taped interviews, Hungarian-Canadian newspapers, organi-

zational minute books and personal papers, which are all in the Hungarian collection of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario. Also used as a reference was Eugene Ruzsa, *A Kanadai Magyarok Története /The History of Canada's Hungarians/* (Toronto, 1940).

3. For more information see N. F. Dreisziger, "In Search of a Hungarian-Canadian Lobby, 1927-1951," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 12 (1980): 81-96.

4. N. F. Dreisziger, "National Hungarian Canadian Organizations," in Susan M. Papp, (ed.) *Hungarians in Ontario*, a double issue of *Polyphony, The Bulletin of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario* 2, Nos. 2-3 (1979-80): 54.

5. Ruzsa, *op. cit.*

6. Interview with Rev. László Forgách, August 25, 1978.

7. Interview with Mrs. Pearl Sojnocki (nee Ruzsa), August 23, 1979.

8. In 1923, Virginia tobacco was first grown at a farm between Delhi and Lyndoch in southern Ontario. Since then Norfolk County has become the tobacco belt of Ontario. During the late 1920s, groups of Belgians, Hungarians, Poles, Lithuanians, Germans and Ukrainians moved into the area.

9. According to Canadian census statistics, the Hungarian immigrant population of Ottawa increased from 137 in 1950 to 1,149 in 1960; London increased from 297 in 1950 to 1,270 in 1960.

10. Interview with Mr. Paul Rapai, August 21, 1979.

11. Original document dated July 8, 1924, in the Géza Kertész collection, Multicultural History Society of Ontario.

12. Interview with Mr. George Gilvesy, August 22, 1979.

13. Interview with Mr. George Zadubán, March 24, 1979.

14. The term "district association" is used in Edgar Wickberg, "Some Problems in Chinese Organizational Development in Canada, 1923-1937," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 11 (1979): 88-98.

15. Cleveland was at one time the city with the second largest population of Hungarians after Budapest. The community was unique because during the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, it comprised a distinct neighborhood, a Hungarian "ghetto." For more information about its history, see Susan M. Papp, *Hungarian Americans and Their Communities of Cleveland* (Cleveland State University, 1981).

16. Alexander Weinstock, *Acculturation and Occupation: A Study of the 1956 Hungarian Refugees in the United States* (The Hague: Publications of the Research Group for European Migration Problems, 1969), demonstrates that the interwar immigrants (in Canada) and the pre-World War I immigrants (in the United States) lived in close community with one another and clung to their ethnic traditions to maintain some continuity with the past. Homeland district associations were but one expression of this phenomenon.

17. S. Papp-Zubrits, "The Brantford Hungarian Mutual Benefit Society," *Polyphony* 2, No. 1, p. 57.

18. Carmela Patrias, "Hungarian Immigration to Canada Before the Second World War," in *Hungarians in Ontario*, p. 38.

19. G. Bisztray, "The Hungarian Canadian Press," in *Hungarians in Ontario*, p. 54.

20. Wickberg, "Some Problems in Chinese Organizational Development," p. 88.



DOCUMENTS

**Language Usage: An Interview with a  
Hungarian American**

*Miklós Kontra and Gregory L. Nehler*

Hungarians may have contributed considerably both to the population and the building of North America, but the study of Magyars in the New World with reference to linguistics has been inexplicably neglected until presently.<sup>1</sup> The *Project on Hungarian-American Bilingualism in South Bend, Indiana\** aims to fill, at least partly, this gap in American and Hungarian linguistic research by attempting to describe both the Hungarian and the English speech of individuals residing in one of America's oldest Hungarian communities.<sup>2</sup>

The first Hungarian immigrants arrived in South Bend in 1882. According to the Census of 1970, the South Bend Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area contained 5,348 people whose mother tongue was Hungarian.<sup>3</sup> It may be assumed that this figure is basically the same as that calculated for the City of South Bend, if such a figure were available.

Field work for the project began in 1980 and continued through July, 1981. While most of our interviewees were from South Bend, an attempt was made to give the study a regionally broader scope through field trips to the Hungarian communities in East Chicago, Indiana and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

At the time this report was written, over sixty hours of taped interviews had been conducted; an additional sixty interviews were planned by the time of the project's completion in 1981.

We have conducted three-part interviews with our informants: the first is an English questionnaire, the second a

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Hungarian questionnaire which is basically a replica of the English one, and the third is a language usage interview.<sup>4</sup> In the language usage interviews we sought to answer such questions as: with whom, when and why does a Hungarian in South Bend use English and/or Hungarian in 1980?

Sociolinguistically, one of the most intriguing aspects of the Hungarians living in South Bend is their great diversity. There are three generations of immigrants, namely: the old-timers, who came prior to or shortly after World War I, the displaced persons, who arrived following World War II, and the refugees of 1956. In addition, there are second and third generation Hungarian Americans in the community.

This interview is published to supplement a Hungarian interview conducted by Nehler forthcoming in *Új Látóhatár*.<sup>5</sup> While Nehler's interview provides the reader with detailed information gained from a prominent second-generation member of the community (attorney Peter F. Nemeth, also mentioned in this transcript), the one published below portrays a different picture, namely the experiences of a Post-1956 Hungarian refugee. This verbatim transcript provides two kinds of data: first, sociolinguistic information concerning the use of English and Hungarian in present-day South Bend, and second, a linguistic corpus, i.e. a dialogue between a native speaker of American English (the Researcher) and a Hungarian American (designated Informant). By publishing this interview, we hope not only to provide sociolinguistic information and a corpus worth analyzing linguistically, but also to serve the general readership interested in the recent past and present of the Hungarian diaspora.

Standard English orthography will be used in this transcript with the following exceptions (meant to retain some phonetic characteristics of the informant's speech):

Standard English Phoneme	Dialect Realization	Grapheme	Examples in Dialect Spelling Used Here**	
/θ/	through, Thirteenth, everything	(t)	t	trough tirteent everyting
/θ/	birthday	(s)	s	birsdai
/ʒ/	the, that, brother, with	(d)	d	de, dat, broder, wid

/ʒ/ with	(z)	z	wiz
/ʒ/ lathe	(t)	t	late
/s/ straight	(ʃ)	sh	shtraight
/ɛr/ downstairs	(e)	ay	downshtays

No attempt is made to transcribe the informant's pronunciation of w's, r's, vowels, the word-final devoicing and other idiosyncrasies of his English speech.

Three dots (...) are used to indicate pauses, and a dash (--) replaces the informant's family name. Italicized are Hungarian words and phares, and Hungarian names, known or unknown in English, if pronounced by the informant according to Hungarian rules. Thus every italicized word or phrase constitutes a code-switched (Hungarian) element in this sample of his English.

Greg Nehler conducted the interview. The informant believed him to know no Hungarian. Miklós Kontra was listening to the two talking; the informant sometimes looked at him, especially when code-switching.

R(eseacher): When were you born?

I(nformant): Born in nineteen tirty-eight, September tirteent.

R: Where were you born?

I: Budapest, Hungary.

R: Where was your father born?

I: Also Budapest, Hungary.

R: Where was your mother born?

I: Also ... no ... my moder was born at ... *Kántorjánosi, Szatmár* megye.

R: Where were you brought up?

I: Budapest.

R: What is your spouse's place of origin?

I: What d'you mean?

R: Your wife's. What is your wife's place of origin?

I: What is de ... word means?

R: Origin? Where's she from?

I: Oh, she's from Arkansas.

R: OK. You were previously married?

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 \*\*We are indebted to Michael D. Linn (University of Minnesota at Duluth) for advice concerning the "transcription for the layman" utilized here.

- I: Yes.
- R: And where was she from?
- I: She was also from Arkansas.
- R: How many years of formal education have you completed?
- I: Well I went through grade ... elementary, went through grade school, and I had two years of college, textile laboratories, den I realized dat I ... I didn't care for ... de trade, so dat's when I went to ... two more years of diesel mechanic school.
- R: And this was all in Hungary?
- I: All in Hungary.
- R: And were you still at school right at the time you left Hungary?
- I: I already ... I was on a job training. I was on a job training as a ... as a ... I was sort of like a farmer. I had to know how to plow, plant, cultivate, use de disk harrow ... Dey wanted me to get all of de knowledge on de field, so if I ... if I experience any breakdowns, den I know how to cope with it.
- R: What is your occupation at present?
- I: You can say I am a machinist. I say machinist because I'm ... I'm a late operator, drill press operator, and I also have a trade on de side as a mechanic. Automobile mechanic or ... any two-cycle or four-cycle engine mechanic. Anyting dat is ... involved motors ... I'm mechanically inclined.
- R: Did you have to learn a lot of your job here in the States?
- I: Yes I learned to be a late man in here. I learned to ... how to operate de gang drills, single spindle drills ... I also learned to be an automobile mechanic in here. By start taking tings apart myself and find out what makes it work and ... how to repair it when de time comes. And I worked in service stations, which got me some experience, den I got into a Ford garage as a mechanic, I was de used-car mechanic, when I had to fix all sorts ... all different makes ... of cars ... I work on all different make ... makes you know. Putting on exhaust system or work on an engine, or tune-up or brakes, transmission ... not automatic transmission ... shtright stick transmission. Differential, front wheel bearings and all a lot in general, mechanical work.
- R: Do you have any monolingual friends who speak only English?
- I: Almost all my friends are ... only speak English.
- R: Do you have any friends who only speak Hungarian?



- I: No, not really, because de ones I know, dey been here almost as long as I have, and dey learned enough dat most of de time we use de English language, no ... not dat often ...  
De only time I can honestly say I use de Hungarian language when I'm over here in my mom's house ... and talking to my mom. Now wid my broder, he speaks Hungarian but I ... I speak English wid him.
- R: Do you have friends here in South Bend who came here about the same time you did and who've learned English about as well as you, and with whom you speak English? That is, with your friends who have been here for about as long a period as you have, do you generally speak Hungarian or English?
- I: Well I would say ... I would say English. We use de English language more. I guess because we wanna practise as much as we can and ... we speak de Hungarian language when it's necessary ... but I feel ... dat anybody come over here de same time I did ... I speak better dan some, and some speak better dan I do but ... we had dis accent dat we can't get away from so we ... we practice, I would say we use de English language more dan de Hungarian.
- R: In which language did you receive your religious education?
- I: Hungarian. Now dat's been my ... I would say ... you can say ... my downfall or how you're gonna say it. When I go to church, and dey use de English language ... on different prayers ... I don't know. De only way I will know if I ... pick up de Bible and would study 'em in English. But I ... I'm a Roman Catholic and I knew my prayers in Hungarian. And I really ... be honest wiz you, I really never took de time to learn ... to learn it in English. I know a little bit in English but not dat much dat I would just say my prayers widout interruption or anything, you know.
- R: If you had to describe how well you speak Hungarian, which would you say of these choices?<sup>6</sup>
- I: How well I speak Hungarian? Oh, I would say very well but not perfect.
- R: OK.
- I: What I mean about not perfect, I don't pronounce my words at times de same way like my mom ... mom does ... but I understand every word in Hungarian. I would say (b).
- R: Do you have any opportunity to speak Hungarian?

- I: Yes, wid my mom, mostly wid my mom, and sometime wiz some older Hungarian ladies dat come visit my mom ... because my mom is a seamstress and she does ... working on a lot of ... she's sewing a lot of dresses for Hungarian woman, you know which is older people, but dey ... dey still speak de language very well, and ... like for instance Mary, Mary downshtays,<sup>7</sup> I speak Hungarian wid her. And my mom, sometime wid my broder but not dat much. Mostly my brother likes to speak English. But my broder understands Hungarian, but he, I dunno why, he don't wanna use it dat much. He uses it wid my mom.
- R: When he does use it, does he use it well?
- I: No, he ... he ... mix dem up wid English and Hungarian bot.
- R: How is his pronunciation?
- I: Of de English or Hungarian?
- R: Hungarian.
- I: De ones dat he pronounce not bad. Not bad. Pretty good. I understand him, my mom understand him very well.
- R: If you were to visit some relatives in, say, Budapest or *Kolozsvár*, so you think people would recognize your speech as markedly different from their Hungarian? If so, can you give examples of the differences there might be?
- I: Well ... OK, I brought up in Budapest and if I go down to *Kolozsvár*, or even in a place where my mom was born like to ... *Szabolcs-Szatmár megye*, dey use some, some slang words or language dere which I haven't been using in Budapest. Like, for instance, OK, I can give you a word like *pulya*. *Pulya* de ... de ... like "baby". A young little boy, you know, dey pronounce *pulya*. Well I ain't used to using *pulya*, you know, I ain't use dat language, or, or for instance, for "bread", dey call 'em sometime like *cipó*. You know, *cipó*, and words like dat, dey got some slang words, especially down in *Kolozsvár*, and *Székes...* *Szabolcs-Szatmár megye*, dey got, now like ... I can't tink of any ... but if I were hear it I could tell right away. But dat's one of de two dat really ... Oh, like for instance, OK, "potato", dey call it *kolompér*. You know, I don't use dat word, in Hungarian I call ... in Budapest I call it *krumpli*. You know, dey call it *kolompér*, down dere, my grandfader call it *kolompér*. You know, dere's one of dose slang words dat ... but I know some ... dere's a lot of ... dat I don'r understand unless dey tell me what it means.

'Cause dey use dese slang words, just like if I would travel ... from here going to Sout, dey use a lot of words, down here I probably don't understand. Because I haven't used dem up in Sout Bend. Depends de ... part of de country you go to. I know in Budapest dey dont't ... dey don't use any *kolompér*, you know, dey call it *krumpli*. Dere's many words like dat, dat slang, dat I haven't used dat much ... not in Budapest.

R: Do you read Hungarian?

I: Yes.

R: What do you read?

I: Oh ... we usually, my mom usually gets a Hungarian newspaper. Or sometime dey ... like when she went home de last time she brought a *Ludas Matyi* back wid her. Dat's comic, funny paper. And I read dose, or like, for instance, when I went ... in '74 when I went back to Budapest, dey give you some information paper, which is in English and Hungarian bot. But I don't read any Hungarian books, no. Except, de last Hungarian book I really had was a Hungarian cookbook, *szakácskönyv*, you know dat's the last one I read. But I know how to read'em, you know.

R: Do you write Hungarian? Letters, anything else?

I: Yes, I write letters, mostly to ... my mom's broder which is my uncle.

R: In Hungary?

I: To Hungary.

R: How often, a year?

I: 'Bout once a year. I'm not ... a letter-writer, you know. I should be better at it, but I'm not ... I should send dem more often letter on ... like on Christmas, or, I don't even know when is my uncle's birsday. See, my mom's been taking care of everyting. My mom has been writing de letters in behalf of my name, and I'm really not in dat much of a contact wid my uncle or his sons. Mostly trough my mom, my mom say well, *Zoli* send you his love or, you know. But I ... dat received a letter from my uncle dat come right to my address, to my house, and den I answer him, mostly about, 'specially now about dat baby, you know ... I have an eleven-mont-old daughter, and dat's a ... dat's de first girl in sixty years in our family. Because my mom has two sons, me and Joe, her broders, bot of de broders had two sons each. And den ... when my mom's moder died, my grandfader remarried, and

dey got boys, so I would say dis is de first girl in sixty years in de *Szűcs* family. Dat's why my mom is ... tink it's great, you know.

R: Do you listen to Hungarian-language radio programs?

I: Yes, Mr. *Wukovics*, I listen to him and ... every once a while, you know, on some days we turn on de radio.

R: That's the five o'clock program?

I: De afternoon program, I listen to him a lot over here, because when I come over here visit my mom, she's ... she have de program on every Sunday, she's got dem on. But I don't turn dem on dat much at home. I mostly listen to it when I'm here.

R: So you would never tune in?

I: Not at home, no. No, because I always felt dat I can improve on de language, on de English language, I can improve ... lot more ... I won't, I don't tink I'm gonna forget de Hungarian language completely, so I will, dunno, you know, everyting about it ... my main concern is right now de English, dat's ... de first ting my uncle taught me when I come here ... "Learn de language, because widout it, you lost in dis country." He told me right out. He says "you cannot get a job, unless you fortunate and you have maybe a Hungarian-speaking foreman, but even den it can't last for ever, you can't boder him all de time in Hungarian eider," so he told me "my main advice to you is to learn de language." I still have a lot to learn but ... I speak enoguh to know how to express myself, you know.

R: Have you ever watched Hungarian-language TV programs?

I: Yes I did. Part of it was when *Béla Lugosi* was ... watched some of his vampire movies of *Béla Lugosi* ... and de first ting dat got me ... like ... I see de name of de place like *Kapuvár*, de place dat de show, or de film, took place, supposedly took place in Hungary in dat town, and dey speak ... I can hear dem talking in Hungarian, from TV, you know, some of his movies. And den anoder one is *Éva Gábor*, dere's anoder one. Green Acres. She uses some Hungarian language in dat, and I understand right away. Den ... well, dat's about it, dat's about it.

R: Do you have Hungarian records?

Yes, I have, many of dem.

R: What kind of records do you have?

I: I don't have many *cigányzene*, any of de ... dey call it I dunno "Gypsy", *cigányzene*, Gypsy music. I don't have many of dose, I have a lot of ... like *Szécsi Pál*, *Kovács Kati*, *Lokomotív G. T.*, you can say a lot of pop records, right? I would say pop. But I ... I remember when my uncle was getting married and I was still home ... we have a wedding dat lasted for tree days, and de *cigányzene* was going on for tree days ... and I was dere at de wedding ... and I got to like a ... a good Gypsy music, you know ... Dat's mostly ... people like to listen to it when dey drinking. Dat's de only time ... 'Cause when I went home visiting, we went to ... a reshtaurant dat is right on de edge of a ... little pond, I would say pond, *tó*, like on a little pond. De reshtaurant is right on de pond ... and my uncle and his sons ... tree of us we used to go over dere and have a good ... Hungarian dinner, I mean a real good Hungarian dinner and on top of it wid a real good burgundy *Egri Bikavér* wine, and den, in de evening, de Gypsy band, you know, come out and dey just ... play all your favorite song and everyting, over de drink ... In dat case I like de music, when I'm in dat atmosphere, but just ... home, when I listen to it, I like ... some of dose pop music dat dey put out. I like rock 'n' roll, I always do, I always did, and, but it depends what ... surrounding are, you know. You gotta be in de mood for Gypsy music and you gotta be in de mood for any oder music.

R: Do you attend any Hungarian festivities, meetings, parties?

I: I used to. I used to be belong to de Hungarian Freedom Fighters' Federation, when Mr. Szalay was de president. Den some reason or anoder, I drifted away, and I ... lost my membership. Cost like ... so much money for a ... a mont for membership, I tink it was only one or two dollar a mont, and you gotta a book and dey put a stamp in it ... for you when you pay your dues. And we used to get togeder...

R: When was that?

I: I would say dat was in de sixties, fifty-nine, from fifty-nine on till middle of sixties. And de oder activities dat I always like to go is ... every once a while ... William Penn, dey had some special movies of *Latabár*, one of de ... good actor, funny guy, his name was *Latabár Kálmán*. And dey used to have some special shows, or a Hungarian dance show ... I like to go to William Penn to some New Year's Eve parties ... which

... most of de people are Hungarian dere. But everybody speak English, almost everybody speak English.

R: Why is that?

I: Well, I guess ... in my tinkin is ... dey wanna show ... dat yes dey are speak English, dey want you to know ... dey want you to know dat dey can speak de language. And dey ... dey wanna exercise it, practise it. Dis is de only reason I can see ... I can't see dat ... anybody not using de Hungarian language because dey tink ... dey ashamed of it, I don't tink so. I'm not ashamed to ... use de language anywhere in downtown ... I had time when I was on a bus when I had my car broke down, and I had to take de bus to work, dat I heard some Hungarian ladies talking on de bus, I just turned around and got into a conversation, you know, I told dem I was Hungarian too. You know, I was never ashamed to use my language because I'm ... I call myself a true Hungarian but still I have to realize dat dis is de country I'm living in ... I had to ... learn more and more about de system in here ... I had to go home as visiting ... but I lived most of my life in dis country. 'Cause I'm forty-two, I come over here when I was eighteen, I lived in Hungary eighteen years, so you figure it out, I lived twenty-four years in here, so I lived most of my life in dis country. And since I got my citizenship, I took an oat ... dat ... I will obey de laws of dis country and so on and so on. But I'm not ashamed to use de language, you know. Every once a while ... I got my wife interested in de language. She ... I use a lot of words, well, some words, we use wid her at home. Every once a while she tell me, well, *jó*, or *nem jó*, you know, simple words, "yes" or "no", or *siess!* or "*hurry up!*", we use dese words, my wife and I, but mainly because my mom started it, de whole ting. And I don't want it to die, I mean she can better off, learn more from me, I welcome, you know, I'm for it.

R: In what language do you pray?

I: Well, when I get de book, de schedule book, when I going to church, I read'em out of a ... church book. But I had times when I prayed at home at night dat I pray in Hungarian.

R: Do you go to the English-language mass or the Hungarian mass?

I: Bot. I don't pick'em. I go to bot.

- R: How often? Is there a preference ...? Would you say you go to the English mass more than the Hungarian, or more to the Hungarian than the English?
- I: I'd say about fifty-fifty. I don't particularly pick it. I went to Hungarian mass wid my mom already, but in de meantime I went to an English mass already when she didn't understand a word dey were saying. Or, she maybe was, but not dat much.
- R: In what language do you count?
- I: English.
- R: In what language do you swear, if you ever do?
- I: English.
- R: Only?
- I: English. I dunno why, I never got de habit like some guys ... one of de Hungarian guy dat come over here de same time, boy, he can swear in Hungarian, and he knows some words dat I never even heard of. But I swear only in English. I don't use Hungarian swear. I don't swear dat much. It's not a habit.
- R: Now I'll ask you some questions about your use of English. If you were to describe how well you speak English, which would you say?<sup>8</sup>
- I: I'd say moderately well, (c).
- R: Why did you pick that?
- I: Well, because I still have problem at times ... at times ... express myself de way I like to, but de way ... I should put my words togeder. And ... I don't tink about it in Hungarian, everyting is automatic in my mind, but I know I have dat accent ... which I never gonna get away from. And still, dere's many words, like doctors and lawyers, you know, use in de dictionary dat I never even heard of and I don't even know what dey mean. So I can't ... I can't say dat I'm good. You know, dat's de reason I picked it. Dere's a lot of words dat even today ... I run into every once a while ... dat my wife ... mention a certain word and I said "Well, honey, what does it mean." You know, because I didn't know ... I never use de word. Like ... like, OK, to give you an example, I watched Romeo and Juliet last night, dat movie. And half of de movie I didn't understand because of de language dey're using. You know, *Sekszpír* type of language, I'm not a *Sekszpír*-fan ...

- R: Can you read English?
- I: I can ... I tink I can read a newspaper pretty decent, you know, I mean I read a newspaper well enough dat I understand what's happening. Unless ... now I'm going right back to it again, dey use words like dis ... out of a dictionary somewhere dat I haven't used. But even den, by reading de rest of de stuff I can put two and two togeder and pretty well understand what I'm reading. Yes, I can read English pretty dec... I tink fair, you know, fair.
- R: Have you ever tried to read a novel or anything like that?
- I: Yes, I used to read a lot of ... detective stories, yeah, I read some books.
- R: Did you find those generally easier than newspapers?
- I: No, I would say newspapers about de easiest ... for me. For some books, like I say, depends de ... on de autor ... what kind of a language he or her, you know, uses in dere.
- R: Do you understand English spoken by Americans? That is, do you understand everything they say to you? All the time?
- I: I would say most of de time I understand everyting, yes. Sometime I might ask to rephrase de question or ... something like dat ... because maybe I really don't understand in my mind what dey mean. And sometime you can take it to anoder way and ... just to clarify it in my mind ... sometime I ask him to repeat de question but oderwise ... I would say most of de time I ... very seldom dat I don't.
- R: Has there ever been any big misunderstanding resulting from not understanding what another told you?
- I: Dat happened, yes, dat happened to me. 'Cause my wife every once a while teasing me, and tell me "Yeah, you told me now you misunderstood again."
- R: Can you think of an example?
- I: Well, OK, sometime I'm maybe trying to tell a story, and at de end it don't come out like I ... like I wanted it, and people can take me de wrong way sometime.
- R: Right, but have there ever been any misunderstanding that resulted from you not understanding what another said?
- I: Yes, it happened to me in de shop. Some union matter came up one day, and de guys was explaining ... telling me aboaut it ... and I really didn't ... misunderstand de whole ting, and I took it just de opposite ... of de issue. So dat happened. Not dat much, not dat much, but it did happen.



R: When was this particular case in the shop?

I: 'Bout a year ago.

R: Do Americans understand you?

I: I would say majority of de time yes. But still, some teasing me dat half of de time dey don't know what I'm talking about. I do ... I tell you de reason ... I have problems wid my w's, and like ... like for instance, I can give you an example like ... "Bahamas", de way I pronouncing "Bahamas", or de way I pronouncing "Olympics", and ... dis one guy was ... well, some of our friends ... dey know what I mean but dey tease me about de way I'm pronouncing it. And den dey say dat's not "Olympics", dat's "Olympics" and dey try to correct me, you know. I do have trouble wid like I say like words like w's, like "when", you know, w's, I can't get my tongue you know de way to roll it ... some certain way which is supposed to roll dat tongue, you know. Certain words, I just have problems, but dat's gonna be stuck wid me, I guess for ever unless I ... would enrule ... enroll, enroll to a ... English class, and ... but dat would take a lot of practice and, in my age now, I don't know if I'd do it because I ... I speak de language good enough ... dat when my mom had a legal matter ... to take care of it wid de attorney ... dat I ran in downtown, got de attorney and took care of de legal matter, and speak ... translate to ... speak in behalf of my mom, and put it from Hungarian down to English, and my attorney understand me very well. So ... let us say it's it all depends ... what words are involved in it ... 'cause de way I like to ... I just explain it de simple way ... I don't try to be ... speak like a doctor or a lawyer ... I just don't ... I just tell'em as it is, de simple way. Instead of ... try to be too technical about certain words, no I ... I just tell'em like I told my attorney, "Dis is de problem, dat's what we want," and I told'im my broder was in a ... accident wid his bicycle, and he got hurt, he lost ... two-tree monts he was laid in bed, his bicycle was totalled, de accident wasn't my broder's fault, and, you know, I just come right to de point and ... we wanted dat insurance company to make good of de bicycle and ... at least pay someting for my broder for de couple of monts dat he lay in bed wid his bad knee, you know. So we come to a settlement, a few hundred dollars' settlement because I ... my mom and I

don't try to get rich on ... somebody else's accident problems, but we just felt dat my broder should not be out of a bicycly because de accident wasn't his fault. And we just went to attorney, and after about ... over a year we finally come to a settlement, and like I say, I had to go and talk to him and ... talk to him on de phone and ... I pretty well get de point across. So, I would say averagewise I have no real problem.

R: Do you write English?

I: A little bit.

R: Letters mostly?

I: Mostly letters but my wife helps me a lot ... 'cause I had to send typed-up letters out ... to ... de bowling associations,<sup>9</sup> and ... what I do if I running into a certain ... words dat I dunno how to pronounce right, I just get a ... like our yearbook and I find de words in it and I copy'em all. I'm not too good of a speller. I don't spell too good. Maybe like a simple words, four-five-letter words maybe I can, but when you running into long words to spell'em, I'm not dat good to spelling'em at all.

R: Is that equally true in Hungarian?

I: In Hungarian I can pretty well spell. And know de difference when to use you ... you o's wid de two point on top of it, when you use dat, when you use double l, or when you use like you double g wid a y, when you use dat, in Hungarian I really don't have dat much problem.

R: Do you watch TV?

I: A lot, a whole lot.

R: Can you name favorite programs?

I: One of my favorite programs is ... Buck Roger's Twentieth Century ...

R: What's that about?

I: Dat's about space age. All about de space age, dat a man ... he was supposedly dead for 500 years and den come alive 500 years later ... and he find himself in completely different surroundings ... and everyting is a push-button space age type of ting and ... adventures I like, I like adventure movies. I like to watch Charlie's Angels, detective movies, police stories, I like dat. Now, my favorites are army movies. I love dem watch dem, World War I, when German, American, Russian against Germany ... I like to watch dose army movies. Green Beret movies, like John Wayne had dat movie

in ... about Vietnam, the Green Beret stories, I like dose. I like a lot of shport ... automobile racing, motorcycle racing, bowling, I hardly ever miss bowling on TV when dey have dese Saturday afternoon programs, tree o'clock ... I hardly ever miss bowling. I'm not dat crazy about baseball ... I don't care for hardly ... baseball I'm not dat crazy about ... golf I'm not dat crazy about ... horse-racing I don't care for ... football I like, I like football ...

R: How about soccer?

I: I like soccer. I watched Tampa Bay Buccaneers playing against a New York team last time on TV, I like to watch soccer, I like soccer. Probably because de reason because I used to play soccer when I was younger.

R: Can you name any favorite programs of the past, ones no longer on TV?

I: Ones are no longer is uh ... well, I used to like Hogan's Heroes, I don't know if dey're still on, Hogan's Heroes...

R: Now I'll ask you a few questions about names around here. Do you know of any cases of changing family names from Hungarian into English?

I: Yeah, I read quite a few Hungarian names dat dey were spelled different.

R: Can you give examples?

I: Like "Kosis".

R: "Kosis", what's that?

I: Uh ... wait a minute. I try to tink of it, one particular name dat brought to my attention, 'cause I noticed, de way dey got dem in de phone book, sometime you can see dem in de phone book ... you know dat's Hungarian, but dey ... dey don't spell ... spell it de way exactly ... de last two letters sometime are different. Like instead of use a c and an h dey use a c only, or use de k instead of a c, and dey de h instead of a k, so ... no like, for instance, I wanted to change ... no like, OK, like in my case, dey called me Tom. I got dat name ... I'm really not sure if *Zoltán* is really related to Tom. But dey asked me "What is your name?"; I told dem *Zoltán László*--. Den he asked me "What is de easiest name in English dat you tink uh..." Well, I guess Tom. So dat's how I got de name Tom. But I did tink about change my name from -- to Rollins. I was tinking about it. But den, when I comes (sic!) around to my citizenship and

dey asked me if I wanna change my name I felt like ... by golly, I born wid dat name and dat was my dad's name and ... I'm not gonna change my name. I change my mind. But I was gonna going to Rollins but I ... 'cause --, dey asked me how to spell it all de time. So I felt if I was changing my name to Rollins, dat'd be easier ... But den I changed my mind ... 'cause even my mom says "Dat's a good ting you did", because ... dat was my family name, dat was my given name and I don't wanna change it. You know...

R: So what's your name now on your driving license?

I: It's *Zoltán* --. Now my Tom, friends, and people in de bowling, dey call me Tom.

R: Then they don't even know your're *Zoltán*?

I: They know *Zoltán*, because a lot of time dey put *Zoltán*, den dey put a little hash mark "Tom" --. Because dey even asked me down at Indianapolis, he says "How'd you wanna be ... have your name put in de yearbook? Is it Tom --, or Zoltan --?" And I told dem *Zoltán*. But I said "Make a note next to it dat it's Tom. So dey know who it is." But on my ... payroll signature is *Zoltán*. Every once a while I have a friend dat write me a check ... or I gotta ... from state bowling I got a check under de name of Tom --.

R: Did you have any problems there?

I: No, because I just signed dem Tom -- at de bank, I sign them de same way de check is written, because dis is de way I have been brought up. Dat's de way I brought up, they told me "You sign your name de way it is written on a check." ... But now like my friends like Bernie and Gary and Dolores, some of our close friend dey just call me Tom. But now like some of my American friends, I mean some of my older friends when I start run around when I first come to dis country dey called me *Zoli* ... *Zoltán* ... *Zoli*. Some calls me *Zoli*. Way back in 20 years ago dey called me *Zoli*.

R: Do you have any children?

I: One, eleven-mont-old girl.

R: And what is her first name?

I: Rayele.

R: How do you spell that?

I: R, a, y, e, l, e. And de reason is for dat ... my fader-in-law's name is Ray. My moder-in-law's name is Helen. So we took ... my wife Shirley ... I left de name up to her. Now if dat was

gonna be a boy dat was gonna be *Zoltán László* --, Jr. But we happened to have a girl, so my wife says "How'd you like her name *Rayele\**" I said "Rayele sound good," she said "I took my fader's name Ray and my moder's name Helen."

R: Please indicate some of the Hungarian first names, most common in South Bend, and their English equivalents.

I: First names. Frank, *Ferenc*, *Emma*, E, m, m, a, uh ... I know some *Zoltán*, uh ... me, what's de oders? I don't know too many ... I don't know too many because well, no, Joe, *József*, John, a lot of John and *József*, dat's ... I would say John and Joe and Frank ... Andy, Andy is very common ... *András*, dat's common.

R: Do you have a middle name or initial?

I: *László*

R: How did you get it?

I: Well, when I was baptized, I guess.

R: Now I'll ask you a few questions about your one child. Have you so far spoken to you child, whenever you do, only in English? Do you ever speak to her in Hungarian?

I: Yes, I say a few Hungarian words to her. My wife and I talked about it, we want her to learn Hungarian, yeah. So she's already eleven mont old and my wife already tells her in Hungarian or I tell her every once a while in Hungarian.

R: How is your wife's Hungarian?

I: She can't put de sentences togeder like ... she knows simple words like "come" and "go", or "I'm coming" or *várjál!*, "I'm waiting", or, you know, she knows de simple ... some of our words like *kalács* ... now she knows *torta*.

R: And she makes it too, right?

I: Yeah, she makes it, she got dat Hungarian cookbook and I read it to her, you know, she can make it and she learns from Mary<sup>10</sup> a lot, too. And mom ... tell us how to do it and we go home and she tries it.

R: Do you understand your mother's English? Have you ever heard her speak English?

I: Yes, I did. She did try to pronounce one time a word, something she tried to pronounce dat I didn't know what she mean, and I ask her repeat it about ten times and finally I tink I knew what she meant and ... finally ... She's got problem pronouncing some of de words. 'Cause she told me on de

- telephone, I said “What do you mean?” I said “I’ve never heard of dat word before” ... you know ...
- R: So you spelled English words over the telephone at that time?
- I: No, I told her in Hungarian ... that *Anyám, én nem értem mit mondsz*<sup>11</sup>... in English.
- R: Finally, I’ll ask you a few questions about both of your languages, English and Hungarian. In your opinion, should people of Hungarian origin living in the U.S. learn Hungarian?
- I: De people living in here?
- R: Of Hungarian origin, living here in the U.S., should they learn Hungarian?
- I: I believe dey should.
- R: Why?
- I: Well, because you look at it dis way, OK, I’m die off, I’m gonna leave a daughter in here dat is born in dis country ... you gotta carry on de tradition, de culture, de Hungarian language. I feel dat, dat don’t hurt ... to know anoder language ... and dere’s a lot of ... dere’s some of de people dat I know dat born here dat visited Hungary and dey was really glad dat their mom and dad taught dem English, I mean Hungarian, because when dey got back dere dey could communicate. Because still dey have some aunts or some far-away relatives back dere which dey never met. I believe dey should, but naturally it’s up to de ... every individual. But ... my wife and I got our mind made up dat our daughter will learn ... will speak Hungarian.
- R: When you meet someone who you know speaks both Hungarian and English, what does it depend on whether you start the conversation in English or in Hungarian?
- I: Well, it depend on ... if you know a fellow like for instance ... we got our attorney Peter Nemeth, *Németh Péter* ... I know Mr. *Németh* speaks Hungarian, and when we had de mayor *Németh*,<sup>12</sup> I know he’s from a Hungarian family because ... I can tell de name ... when it’s *Kocsis, Németh*, when it’s a common Hungarian name ... but you know dey born here ... I approach dem in English.
- R: How do you approach Peter Nemeth, Sr., whom you know to be a speaker of Hungarian?
- I: Well, my mom ... I did call him up already and approached him in Hungarian. Because my mom was asking me to tell

- him something over de telephone in Hungarian and I done dat already, but if I meet him in town or somewhere I will just say, “Hi, Mr. *Németh*, how are you doing?” You know, I speak to him in English. De only time I would use de Hungarian language when it’s a request from my mom ... or if I know it’s a ... let’s just say a Hungarian guy dat just come out ... and speaks very very broken English.
- R: Some people think that English is more comfortable to use than Hungarian, others think just the opposite. Which language do you find is most comfortable for you?
- I: Right now, let’s say English. English, I’m more comfortable wid English. And maybe de reason is for dat ... if I would try to use de Hungarian language too much and ... and some of de people dat knows a little Hungarian language ... but dey don’t know full sentences. Like at work, I met some Polish people ... dat dey know some Hungarian words and dey say a few words in Hungarian, “Hey, I learned dat from so-and-so”, you know, and “what does it mean?” But I feel most comfortable in English, I would say.
- R: When you are at home, what language do you use in talking to your wife?
- I: English.
- R: When you are over here, what language do you use with your mother?
- I6 Hungarian.
- R: It seems that some Hungarians mix more English words in their Hungarian speech than others. Do you agree?
- I: Some does.
- R: Why do you think they do?
- I: Well, let me put it dis way. Some of de old-timers ... my uncle does it a lot. He use uh ... like for instance, *Elmegyünk a káréval*, you know, dat’s “the car”, and *elmegyünk “we gonna go, we leaving”, you know, “we gonna go wid de car”. Or ... let me see, oh, I knew a bunch of dem ... like “Eat your *krumpli!*”*
- R: Eat your potatoes?
- I: Yeah, right. *Vagy*,<sup>13</sup> “*Elmegyünk a rilsztéthez*” ... OK, “We gonna go to de real estate company”, *vagy “Elmegyünk dántánba”,*<sup>14</sup> *vagy ... szóval*<sup>15</sup> ... dey ... dey, you know, dey use half English, half Hungarian...

## NOTES

1. Cf. what Andrew Kerek said about the matter: "In 1966, Lotz pointed out that an all-encompassing synthesis dealing with the Hungarian-English 'symbiosis' within the American 'diaspora' — such as that worked out by Haugen for Norwegian — was yet to appear. As of 1977, it is still nowhere in sight." In "Hungarian Language Research in North America: Themes and Directions," *Canadian-American Review of Hungarian Studies* V, 2 (1978): 66. For a sociolinguistic study of Hungarians in America, see Joshua A. Fishman, *Hungarian Language Maintenance in the United States* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1966).
2. For a brief profile of the Hungarian community of South Bend, see "Ethnic Designations Used by Hungarian-Americans in South Bend, Indiana," *Ural-Altäische Jahrbücher* 53 (1981): 105-11.
3. *1970 Census of Population* I, 16:16-610.
4. The Hungarian questionnaire, along with a discussion of the methodological issues involved, is being prepared for publication in the journal *Magyar Nyelvtudományi Közlemények*, published by Kossuth Lajos Tudományegyetem (L. Kossuth University), Debrecen.
5. Gregory L. Nehler, "Amerikai beszélgetés a magyar nyelvről," forthcoming in *Új Látóhatár*.
6. The choices were: a.) Perfect Hungarian, as well as anyone in Hungary b.) Very well, but not perfectly c.) Moderately well d.) Not adequately e.) Hardly at all.
7. The interview took place in the informant's mother's house. In this instance, the *I* refers to an elderly Hungarian woman who often does cooking and housekeeping for his mother, and who was in the house when the interview took place.
8. Choices were the same as those in note 5 except that (a) read "perfect English, as well as any American who was born in the United States."
9. The informant is an officer of an Indiana bowling association.
10. See note 7.
11. Mom, I don't understand what you're sayin'.
12. Peter J. Nemeth, son of attorney Peter F. Nemeth, was mayor of South Bend until January 1, 1980. Unlike his father, the ex-mayor does not speak Hungarian.
13. or.
14. We're going downtown.
15. I mean.



## **The Hungarian Consulates and the Educational Needs of Hungarian Schools in Canada, 1936-1940: Documents**

*Iván Halász de Békly*  
(translator and compiler)

Culture maintenance is of prime concern to all immigrant groups. One of the most important components of this issue is the passing on to the second generation of the ancestral language. A still more specific problem related to the question of the long-term preservation of the immigrants' culture is the responsibility that the country of origin has for the helping of its former citizens—and their descendants—in their cultural aspirations. Should the native country assist its one-time nationals in the maintenance of their native culture? And if yes, to what lengths should the country of emigration go to achieve this aim? More specifically, should the "mother country" supply communities of its nationals settled in alien lands with educational materials such as textbooks, readers, dictionaries and so on?

These questions seem to have been of considerable concern to Hungarian Canadians in the years before the Second World War. At least, this is what is suggested by the documents presented here, which are letters exchanged between Hungarian consular officials in Canada and Hungarian Canadians from Regina and Welland, two important centres of Hungarian community life at the time in Saskatchewan and Ontario respectively. The documents, which appear in English translation, were collected during a year of extensive research in the Hungarian National Archives.\* Although the holdings of this

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\**The documents are from the following collection: Winnipegi Konzulátus (K 139), Külügyminisztériumi Levéltár, Polgári Kori Központi Kormányhatóságok Levéltárai, Magyar Országos Levéltár, Budapest. (Winnipeg Consulate (K 139), Ministry of External Affairs Archives, Archives of the Central Authorities of the Bourgeois Era, Hungarian National Archives, Budapest.)*

institution had suffered much damage during the Second World War and the Revolution of 1956, some collections have survived which contain valuable information on the economic, political, social and cultural situation of pre-World War II Hungarian immigrants and their settlements in Canada. Most of this information is contained in what might best be called "consular records": correspondence between consular staff and Hungarian Canadians or Hungarian-Canadian organizations, and reports sent to Budapest by the Hungarian consul in Winnipeg, or the consul-general in Montreal. The latter consist mainly of assessments of Canadian economic conditions during the 1920s and '30s and their impact on the Hungarian-Canadian community. These consular records also contain some information on such matters as the establishment of the first Canada-wide federation of Hungarian Canadians in 1928, and contacts between Hungarian-Canadian organizations and authorities in Hungary.

The letters printed here relate to the question of assistance from Hungary for the teaching of the Magyar language to second-generation Hungarian Canadians. They represent a random selection. Nevertheless, they convey the importance that Hungarian Canadians attached to this issue at the time. It is hoped that the printing of these documents will stimulate interest in this important but neglected subject, or might evoke some comparisons. It would be interesting to examine, for example, the respective attitudes to this issue of a number of European countries during the pre-World War II era, or to compare the policies on this question of Hungary's pre-1945 and post-war regimes.

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Royal Hungarian Consulate  
625 Royal Bank of Canada Bldg.  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

2232 McAra St.  
Regina, Sask.  
July 9, 1936

My Dear Sir:

I have noticed with trepidation that the Hungarians of Regina have no future with regard to the continued use of their language and the promotion of a stronger connection with our

dismembered homeland. This hurts many patriotic Hungarians, but unfortunately, we have no true leader. Our fathers do not cultivate unity, therefore, gatherings at which the youth could learn Hungarian are not possible. They (our predecessors) still know the Hungarian language the way they learned it, but we, the second generation, are gradually losing the awareness of how immensely proud we should be, in front of the whole world, of being Hungarians.

Since the majority of Hungarian youth were born here and did not attend Hungarian school, they cannot write and read Hungarian. There is no one to teach them.

My Dear Sir: I would like to perform this great task. I want to transplant into the Hungarian youth growing up here the little knowledge which I acquired in the elementary school back home and in grade twelve in this country, along with the germ of my patriotism. In order to perform this undertaken plan with success, I need Hungarian books; mostly first, second and third grade schoolbooks. Sir, I beg you, if books serving the aforementioned purpose do exist, kindly let me know from where and how I could obtain them.

Most of all, I would like to teach a Hungarian summer school before the English school starts.

Always a servant of our country and our Hungarian heritage,

I remain,  
Jenő Horváth

.....

July 16, 1936

COPY

Mr. Jenő Horváth  
2232 McAra Street  
Regina, Sask.

Having just returned from my official trip today, I received your very commendable letter of July 9. There are no Hungarian elementary schoolbooks on stock at this office, therefore, I cannot send any immediately, because I must request them from Budapest and it may take a few months before they arrive. This means that the plan of a summer school to be held this year will have to be postponed.

Some time ago, the Roman Catholic pastor, Robert Koch

received a few books, and, as far as I know, offered a summer course by utilising these. Kindly visit the Hungarian Catholic church and inquire as to whether these books are still available. Of course, it is also possible that Reverend Koch gave these books away as presents. There is a small Hungarian library in the Hungarian Hall, and it is possible that there are one or two textbooks among those books as well. But I do not know this for sure.

Please let me know if you find any Hungarian textbooks in Regina.

With patriotic greetings,  
(Petényi)

.....

2232McAra St.  
Regina, Sask.  
July 22, 1936

Mr. Petényi, Esq.  
Royal Hungarian Consul  
625 Royal Bank of Canada Bldg.

My Dear Sir:

At the suggestion of your letter no. 2817 I visited the Roman Catholic Church and found twenty-five grade one textbooks. Utilising these, I started the Hungarian school on July 20 and have twenty-five Hungarian boys and girls registered already. I requested the Hungarian Hall to teach the children, but since the board of directors did not support my effort very much, I teach in a room in the Roman Catholic church.

Sir, I ask you most humbly to please let me know whether you see any hope for students of Hungarian origin born abroad who study well but do not have the means to attend a *Hungarian university*.

Yours respectfully,

No. 2817  
Royal Hung.  
ARR. July 23, 1936  
FILE NO. 2919  
ENCL.

Jenő Horváth

.....  
2919

July 23, 1936

Mr. Jenő Horváth  
2232 McAra Street  
Regina, Sask.

COPY

I received your kind letter of July 22nd, and it was with pleasure that I learned that you managed to find a solution for the textbooks required for the summer school by borrowing these from the local Roman Catholic Church. I do hope that the school will prove to be a wonderful and complete success. At the end of the summer school session, please inform me about its course and return the borrowed textbooks to the Roman Catholic Church so that they may be available in the future as well.

I cannot give you information regarding your question relating to Hungarian universities. Please contact the Standing Organizing Office of the World Congress of Hungarians (Géza Street 4, Budapest) directly regarding this matter, since this office is in charge of the tuition-free university education in Budapest of the second generation abroad.

With patriotic greetings,  
(Petényi)

.....  
NO. 2817

Royal Hung.  
ARR. Aug. 25, 1936  
FILE NO. 3314  
ENCL.

2232 McAra Street  
Regina, Sask.  
August 24, 1936

Mr. Petényi, Esq.  
625 Royal Bank of Canada Bldg.  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

You asked me in your letter of June 23 to inform you at the end of the summer school about its course. I finished teaching after one month and am glad to report to you that this tuition free short course was a success. Thirty-seven Hungarian boys and girls registered. This school ended with a short

Hungarian exam to which the parents were invited as well.  
I returned the books to the Roman Catholic church.

Respectfully,  
Jenő Horváth

.....  
3314

August 25, 1936  
COPY

Mr. Jenő Horváth  
2232McAra Street  
Regina, Sask.

Thank you for your kind information of the 24th of this month. Please accept my thanks for your valuable and patriotic activities regarding the summer school in Regina.

With patriotic greetings,  
(Petényi)

.....  
From the Parish Council of the  
Hungarian Reformed Church of Welland  
Welland, Ontario  
Febr. 11, 1939

Royal Hungarian Consulate General  
Montreal, Que.

758  
Febr. 14, 1939  
758

Most Respected Consulate General,

The undersigned turn to the consulate with the modest request that if any kind of books have arrived or will arrive from the beloved Old Country to the office of the Consulate General for distribution among Hungarians, then if possible, kindly do not forget about our Welland Hungarian Reformed Church (which has been battling with many hardships) and please send our share to us at any time (sic). Indeed in 1938,

I was unable to offer a Hungarian summer school session to eighty-two Hungarian children because we have absolutely no Hungarian grammar books; consequently, our children suffered a great setback in Hungarian language and history. Waiting for the precious support of the Consulate General, I remain, in the name of the parish,

With patriotic greetings,

Bálint Kertész  
church caretaker

Welland, Ont. Febr. 15, 1940  
15 Griffith St.

765

FEBR. 17, 1940

765

His Excellency Dr. Károly Winter  
Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary  
Montreal, Que.

Your Excellency,

Allow me to attach, on behalf of Mrs. János Dábi (?), the delivery certificate and twenty-five cent postage.

With your kind permission, let me use the opportunity to request Hungarian grammar books or textbooks or any other Hungarian teaching materials, if such are now available at your office. A sizeable percentage of our people in Welland and Niagara Falls live on social aid and cannot afford such things; the treasuries of our churches are also empty. Experience has proven that it is of no avail if I gather the children for three or four hours a day to teach Hungarian, since I must give them something which occupies their time for homework and learning.

I would be most grateful for Your Excellency's support in this matter.

With best wishes, I remain,

Sincerely yours,  
Károly Farkas

765

February 19, 1940

The Reverend Károly Farkas,  
Minister of the Reformed Church  
15 Griffith St.  
Welland, Ont.

COPY

My Dear Reverend,

In response to your letter of the 15th of this month, I regretfully inform you that the Consulate General has no Hungarian books at the present time which could be suitable for teaching.

If you turned, however, directly to the Royal Hungarian Ministry of Religion and Education, I shall be most eager to forward your request to the proper desk with my supportive recommendation.

With utmost respect,

Envoy Extraordinary and Minister  
Plenipotentiary

.....

Welland, Ont. Feb. 22nd, 1940  
15 Griffith Street

765  
FEB. 22, 1940  
843

His Excellency Dr. Károly Winter  
Envoy Extraordinady and Minister Plenipotentiary  
Montreal, Que.

Your Excellency,

I am most grateful for your kind letter of the 19th of this month with respect to the Hungarian books.

Unfortunately, I cannot turn in this matter to the forum you mentioned, since it was more than ten years ago that I sent a request there related to the same subject, and have not received any answer since.

May I, therefore, stand by my hope that, should Your Excellency receive such books in the future, then, if possible, please think of us.

Asking for your benevolent support for all times, I am

yours sincerely,

Károly Farkas



## **Hungarian Poetry in the Diaspora: A Symposium**

On May 16, 1980, a symposium was held at the University of Toronto which examined the issue of writing poetry in one's native language while living in a North American cultural milieu. Four noted Hungarian poets expressed their views on the issue. The symposium was conducted in Hungarian, however, the statements of the four poets are printed below in English translation with slight modifications. The poets were all born in Hungary; they left their native country following the Revolution of 1956; all but György Faludy came directly to Canada. The poets were introduced by George Bizstray, who also acted as moderator during the symposium.

**GYÖRGY FALUDY** (1910- ) has had an eventful life which is summarized in the appendix to a collection of his poems entitled *East and West*, published in English translation (Toronto, 1978). Canada has been his country of permanent residence since 1967. In 1978, he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Toronto.

**LÁSZLÓ KEMENES GÉFIN** (1937- ) has been a resident of Montreal since his arrival in Canada, working there first as a translator for several years, then initiating a career as a man of letters. He has a Ph.D. in English and is currently teaching at Concordia University.

**TAMÁS TŰZ** (1916- ) is a Roman Catholic priest, who already had two volumes of poetry published by the time he fell into Russian captivity during World War II. He has written over ten volumes of poetry and prose since, one of which is in English: *On Restless Wings* (1966). English translations of his poems were also published in the anthology *The Sound of Time* (Lethbridge, 1974).

**GYÖRGY VITÉZ** (1933- ) began his university studies in Hungary but was arrested and sentenced to hard labour. Upon arriving in this country following the Revolution, he completed his studies. He presently works as a clinical psychologist in Montreal and is on the faculty of Concordia University. Some

of his poems have appeared in English translation in the anthology *The Sound of Time*.

FALUDY: In discussing the Hungarian poet in the diaspora, we have a very general topic to cover. I just hope that all four of us will be able to shed light on one or other major aspect of the topic.

I emigrated twice, once in 1938 and again in 1956. The two cultural milieus which I encountered before the war and after 1956 were entirely different. The first time abroad, I spent one and one-half years in Paris, one in Morocco and the rest in the United States (as a member of its armed forces). The second time, I spent half a year in France, nine years in England, one in Florence, eighteen months in Malta, and the rest here in Toronto, with some stopovers in the United States as well. What was the essential difference between my first and second "emigrant experience"? I feel that I cannot answer this difficult question right away. Instead let me ask whether Hungarian prose—mind you, not poetry, but prose,—has reached the West, or is better known throughout the world presently than it was in the beginning of this century? The answer to this question is unfortunately, negative.

In 1905, Theodore Roosevelt's favorite writer was Kálmán Mikszáth. Does the present president of the United States or, for that matter, the Canadian Prime Minister, have the faintest idea about Mikszáth, Jókai or Móricz? Again the answer is no. This also applies to the public, that is the educated, English-speaking, widely-read public. We have not achieved much in this respect recently, and in the case of poetry the situation is even more critical.

We have, however, made progress in other respects. I remember, when my Hungarian passport was issued in 1938, I was asked about my profession. I said I was a poet; after all, anyone could claim that. Upon arriving at the French border, the border guard looked at my passport and asked, as he spat sideways, "Poète?" The guard repeated this action again when he noticed that I was also Hungarian. This was the general feeling about Hungarian poets.

In another instance which took place eighteen months later, I arrived in the United States with the same passport, which had expired in the meantime. There was no longer an Hun-

garian embassy in Paris where it could be renewed. Fortunately, the Hotel Hungaria had a very nice rubber stamp with the Hungarian coat of arms, complete with the crown, angels and everything; for one dollar, the receptionist renewed my passport for fifteen years. The American immigration officials could not tell the difference. I also had a telegram from Franklin D. Roosevelt, inviting me to come to the United States. Despite this, we had to appear at a hearing where a judge deported my wife and I from the country at our own expense. This occurred when he noticed that I was a poet and a Hungarian one at that. "What are you going to do here?" he said. "You'll die of starvation! I'd better send you back home." As I have already indicated, this was the general feeling about us.

No amount of ignorance could take away or change our shared love, namely that of poetry and literature, which is presently much more prevalent in Hungary than in any other country. If we are invited to Chicago or Los Angeles to speak to a Hungarian-American audience, fifty to one hundred people always attend. If six or eight of the best Canadian poets have a joint program, maybe twenty to thirty people will come.

This still does not change the fact of our isolation. It is almost impossible to translate Hungarian poetry to English. Many are working on it with much ambition, but mostly without success. I haven't seen any totally successful translations since László Gara's French ones, and the bad translations are doing us enormous disservice! It may sound too severe, but we should really apply the highest expectations in spite of the immense difficulties. Some examples of these difficulties are that most Hungarian poems are still written in rhymes while in modern English this is impossible to accomplish. Also, it takes a long time to understand that Hungarian literature is like a river which bends differently and has a different stream and color than English.

What signifies a great change is the support of the state, especially here in Canada. Multiculturalism has helped the development of Hungarian literature in this country. What would happen if I went to the French ministry of culture in Paris and asked for assistance in publishing a volume of poetry in Hungarian? Loud laughter would be heard throughout the office, after which I would be ushered out. This multicultural spirit is alive only in North America and is reminiscent of feudal

times when princes and counts were the patrons of literature. Now the state has taken over this function.

I am leaving some difficult issues to my fellow poets and friends to discuss. I don't like to talk about politics. Personally, I regard my presence in the diaspora as a positive thing. I can write what I could not had I stayed in Hungary. I came out to write on behalf of those who cannot do it. I have tried to write what I felt was true. I feel I have done a service by this to Hungarian literature.

(Following his presentation, Faludy read the following poems: "Honvagy", "Amerikai állampolgárságot ajánlanak", "A kilencvenedik szonett", all published in *Összegyűjtött versei*).

KEMENES GÉFIN: I will attempt to answer two questions related to the central topic, namely: why do we write at all; and secondly, why do we write in Hungarian, but in a manner which is different from the way poets write in Hungary.

We write because we are Hungarian poets. This is simple. A poet is neither a gland in the body of a nation which altruistically gushes out the fluids which move the body, nor is he a vital organ which, similarly to the lungs or the liver, keeps the whole organism functioning. The poet is a metaphysical being, and is therefore able to exist outside the body of the nation, that is, outside the geographic boundaries.

We have brought something with us which we have preserved and even enriched with our experiences outside of our native country. The fact that we live away from our birthplace also serves as a clue to answering why we write differently. We write differently than our counterparts in Hungary because of distancing, which intends no disrespect for noble feelings of patriotism or to the memory of our ancestors and national heroes. But we must view ourselves from a distance and only we, those of us who live outside the physical and metaphysical body of the nation, can do this.

Hungarian poets are being reproached for writing in their native tongue abroad. While James Joyce was living away from Ireland for forty years, no Irishman ever reproached him for writing about Dublin in English. Ezra Pound, Ernest Hemingway and Gertrude Stein wrote abroad in their native language; why is it that we Hungarians cannot? Alas, we are reproached by those who feel that we are challenging the wonderful, perennial

Hungarian falsehood: that there is no life outside of Hungary. We have shot a hole in this lie, because there is existence outside Hungary, existence which is perhaps even more truly Hungarian than in the homeland! Because the distance, the view from afar affords not a loss of contact but a more realistic perception. We look at Hungarian-ness through bifocal glasses, that is what we see is the same but from a different perspective.

This also explains why we write differently from poets in Hungary. We try not to think in terms of the "Hungarian wasteland" and we try to live without the unconditional acceptance of sentimentalism, Hungarian mannerisms, and the Hungarian historical past. This is the first time that a generation of poets grew up in the West who regard not only traditional Hungarian poets as their mentors, but others as well, such as Pound, Breton, Yeats and Neruda.

It is impossible to predict what influence this hybrid-poetry will have on Hungarian poetry. I definitely feel that it is a positive contribution. Distance, perspective, an existence removed from one's native culture results in a type of freedom which we all realize. These factors are, as György Faludy just remarked, the main reason why we live abroad.

They have started writing about us in Hungary. They have also discussed the problems of Hungarian poets living abroad on radio programs. They never ask the real question, however, which is: why do these poets live abroad? We could live in Hungary comfortably nowadays, as do many pseudo-poets who earn about eight forints per line for their poems. We believe that the contribution we are making is more valuable than any promise of an easy income.

(To complement his speech, Kemenes Géfin read the following poems: "Megtérés" and "Metafizikusan," both from *Pogány diaszpóra*; and Part 30 from *Fehérlófia*).

TŰZ: I believe that none of the Hungarian poets who live outside of Hungary can think of changing the mainstream of Hungarian poetry from abroad. We cannot reverse trends, nor can we redirect them. What would be needed for this to occur is for people in Hungary to be familiar with our work and aspirations. This has not happened thus far, although some promising initiatives have been taken already. Increasingly, literary periodicals publish writings of Hungarian poets who live abroad;

thus Hungarians are gradually learning about us. This means that we must not only take into consideration Hungarians living in the diaspora but those living in Hungary as well. Above all, we should consider our fellow poets who are watching with great interest what directions we are taking. Thus, the idea that we can eventually influence Hungarian literature is not unfounded.

Writers and poets in Hungary are especially curious about what novelty we can offer and in what ways the years and decades spent abroad have enriched our insights. The old traditions of Hungarian poetry are alive in our native country. On the other hand, literary tendencies from the West have always reached Hungary with some delay. Until now, Hungarian literature absorbed these tendencies mostly from translations, which is a slow process. Now, however, the emigrant poets, provided that they belong to the literary vanguard, can mediate these tendencies in our native language. We can help our fellow poets in Hungary to incorporate new trends into literature. At the same time, our fellow poets and readers here in the diaspora can also invoke inspiration from this vanguard, since, due to material difficulties, language erosion and disinterestedness, emigré Hungarian literature is perhaps even slower to perceive new developments, and is even more conservative, in the foreign language milieu.

As my small contribution, I would like to emphasize subjectivism as a dominating characteristic of contemporary poetry. Hiltrud Gnüg, the young West German critic who teaches at the University of Cologne, wrote that the self-discovery of poets has opened a new period in lyric poetry. Evidently, this is not such a new phenomenon: the discovery of nature and individual freedom are two poetic motifs which we can find throughout the history of poetry since Eichendorff. But by the time of Goethe, landscape appears as an internalized, subjective object which unites nature and spirit. Poetry opposes its transcendence to the existing order, poetic language diverges from colloquial language, and lyrics expressing a human experience taken on a symbolic character.

A new lyrical universe arises only when the sensuous experience refers to itself and nothing else. This is precisely what happened in modern lyric poetry in that it has abandoned symbolism completely. It has also put an end to the gap between the language of hermetic poetry and the language of everyday

communication. Since the sixties, common everyday experience and language have characterized lyric poetry. Despite this, we should keep in mind that in Hungarian poetry, to write about the ego was frequently regarded as something condemnable. Consider Sándor Weöres' voluminous oeuvre: we hardly find any poem in this piece written in the first person. In the poems of the relatively younger generation, however, the "I" is once again emphasized. In the poems of László Nagy and Sándor Csoóri, the poetic ego is strongly influenced by the Hungarian lyric tradition, whereas in Pilinszky, subjectivity appears, similar to Western European poetry. In the diaspora, we face the great problem that a wide gulf separates the avantgarde aspirations of the poets from the reading public's background, taste, and expectations. This is where I attribute a great role to that young generation of Hungarian poets, who may have started encountering problems with the Hungarian language, but continue to write, while living in the mainstream of a "foreign" literature. They have something to offer us, as we have something to offer them. There are no "lost" generations, for if there were, our symposium would be pointless.

(At the end of his presentation, Tűz read: "Helyzetjelentés," from his volume *Elraboltam Európát* and "Síró szelek," "Magasabb fokon," "Menni vagy maradni," "Keresztút magánhasználatra," and "A Bárány vére, második rész," from *Égve felejtett álmok*).

VITÉZ: I feel that my colleagues have already talked about everything worth discussing. This is the time when one can only make others either laugh or upset; I'll try both.

First, I'd like to make some observations with regards to the "foreign cultural milieu." As is commonly known, Beethoven and Smetana were deaf, they could not hear music of any kind, be that the compositions of others or their own. This demonstrates that the quality of artistic work does not necessarily derive from constant feedback from other people. It may enrich and help some artists but is by no means an absolute necessity. The creative process may take place in a foreign cultural context even if one cannot hear the echo of the mother tongue which he utilizes as the language of his creation. The poet may occasionally feel as if he is in a padded cell or in a room where all the walls echo his own voice, but after a while you can get used

to this and whatever occurred earlier as a frightening hallucination becomes an integrated part of the creative process.

The other day, I was looking at a book about Piet Mondrian. When he was still young and wrote his name with two "a"-s, he painted marvelous landscapes in the style of the great Dutch masters. After 1909, he started painting church facades, and it is obvious that his interest in architecture guided him to the adoption of an abstract style. After he arrived in the United States, he continued in this style. Numerous individuals thought that he had gone crazy and wished that he had continued his earlier style. My opinion is, however, that the world lost one Dutch landscape painter but gained a true modern master.

A Hungarian poet who begins his artistic activity here in the West instead of arriving with considerable experience in writing, passes through some typical developmental stages. The first stage, after the initial cultural shock, is characterized by nostalgia. The poet writes about what he left behind in the Old Country, and tries to relate this in a favorable light. Then, as he looks around in the new world, the past begins to fade and within a few years, the formerly idyllic image is replaced by a completely different one. The latter is usually much less idyllic, the images of the poems reflect something unpleasant. At an even later stage, the poet directs his attention at the language and its elements; what he discovers is that the words often have more than one meaning. In the Hungarian cultural milieu, the spoken language develops a static meaning for each word. Living in another language area, we discover that words not only have a primary but also a secondary and tertiary meaning. Words may even have one or more individual meaning, that is, one which is not generally shared. All these meanings can be integrated into poems, they give the poetic text an entirely new tone and texture. In other words, at least some of us have undergone a process of development in our works, not unlike that experienced by Mondrian. I chose the poems I'm about to read to reflect this process of change.

Before that, however, one final point. Poets tend to return to certain Hungarian topics. They are in our blood, or at least in the cultural "baggage" we carry with us. We are not writing and cannot write the way they do in Hungary. Why should we retell here what poets are relating in the homeland? We must



look at the world and listen to it from another side, from another angle.

(To complement his speech, Vitéz read the following poems: “Tollrajz” and “Jégvilág” from the volume *Amerikai történet*; and “A kentaurak,” “Erről újólag kellene...,” and “Millennium,” from *Jel Beszéd*.



## **The Hungarian Community of Cleveland**

*S. B. Vardy*

*Hungarian Americans and Their Communities of Cleveland.*  
By Susan M. Papp. With an Introduction by Joe Eszterhás.  
Cleveland: Cleveland Ethnic Heritage Studies, Cleveland State  
University, 1981. 324 pp. \$10.00

Even as late as the mid-1960s, the field of ethnic history was still viewed with a degree of scorn by many professional scholars. In the course of the past decade and a half, however, the field was legitimized by the scholarly interests and activities of several successive waves of historians and social scientists. The result was a dramatic change for the better, which also affected the study of the Hungarian-American past. These positive developments do not, of course, mean that we have reached an ideal situation in the field. As a matter of fact, there is still much to be done, both in source collecting and in primary research, as well as in the production of basic monographs and summarizing syntheses on the past and achievements of Hungarian Americans. The last few years, however, have produced many results. Dozens of new research projects have been initiated, and scores of research articles and pamphlets have appeared, along with a number of substantial monographs and handbooks. These new publications will undoubtedly all serve as foundation stones and building blocks of a number of more comprehensive syntheses that are needed and are bound to appear within the next decade or so.

The resurgence of ethnic studies during the 1960s and 1970s have also resulted in the establishment of a number of ethnic studies centers supported by various foundations and governmental agencies. One of these is the Ethnic Heritage Studies Center of Cleveland State University, headed by Professor Karl Bonutti of the same institution. It is one of the few centers that pays particular attention to the history and culture of the Central and East European ethnic groups. This is evident, among others, from its "Monograph Series" that was initiated in 1975 and by 1981 contained well over two dozen volumes. What is most significant about this series, however, is the fact that over

half of its published volumes are devoted to people of Central and East European background, including most everyone from the Byelorussians to the Ukrainians.<sup>1</sup>

The work under review concerning the Hungarian Americans is one of the later volumes in the series. It was written by Susan M. Papp, a graduate of Cleveland State University and a member of the youngest generation of Hungarian-American historians involved in the study of their people's past. Her work displays a visible dedication to her subject, which undoubtedly stems from her own experiences in the Cleveland Hungarian community. At the same time, however, it also shows a scholarly preparation that clearly distinguishes the members of her generation from most of their autodidactic predecessors. Ms. Papp's work certainly speaks well of her abilities as well as of her capacity for historical scholarship. Should she continue along these lines, she is bound to become one of the outstanding practitioners of Hungarian ethnic history in North America.

*Hungarian Americans...of Cleveland* is a sizable work which, in a sense, offers more than it promises. It does so by giving us not only the history of the Cleveland Hungarian-American community (pp. 151-289), but also a brief summary of Hungarian (pp. 7-59) as well as of Hungarian-American history (pp. 61-149).

Hungary's history is summarized in six brief chapters, largely on the basis of a half a dozen readily available popular works. It is basically a traditional interpretation that, until reaching our own century, follows the widely accepted periodization scheme elaborated by nineteenth-century historians. It also tries to avoid all controversies and extreme or unorthodox points of view. As such, it serves its purpose well, although at the expense of leaving unsaid some of the recent and often exciting conclusions of Hungarian historical scholarship that have altered many of our traditional views concerning the nature and course of Hungarian historical evolution.<sup>2</sup> The author's decision to follow the traditional course, however, may have been determined by the brevity of her coverage, as well as by the difficulty of incorporating many of these new views and interpretations into such a short summary of a nation's history. Although traditional, Ms. Papp's historical summary is critical, balanced and well-executed. Her desire to be fair is evident throughout the work, but it is particularly visible in her coverage of such

recent and controversial periods as those connected with the names of Horthy (1920-1944) and Kádár (1956- ) — epochs that are generally subjected to various one-sided interpretations.

The fifty-odd page summary of Hungarian history is followed in Ms. Papp's book by a rather more extensive treatment of the Hungarian-American past; a treatment that stretches from the legendary "Tyrkers" (c. 1000 A.D.) and the very real Stephanus Parmenius of Buda (1583) to our own days. Except for the last few decades, Ms. Papp's summary of Hungarian-American history also follows the traditional path outlined by such earlier researchers as Eugene Pivány, David Souders, Géza Kende, Emil Lengyel, Edmund Vasváry, Leslie Könnnyű, Joshua Fishman, Joseph Széplaki and others.<sup>3</sup> For the more recent period, however, she had made up her own scheme of these developments. In covering these developments she relied increasingly on sources other than the works of the above-mentioned authors, including Hungarian-American newspapers, calendars, anniversary publications, as well as on some of the relevant works of various non-Hungarian scholars of ethnicity, e.g. Victor Greene, Leonard Dinnerstein, Karl Bonutti, George Prpić, etc.<sup>4</sup> (In the section on the Cleveland Hungarian community she further extended her sources by an increasing reliance upon personal interviews.)

Similarly to her coverage of Hungarian history, Ms. Papp's discussion of the Hungarian-American past is balanced and reliable, and it is certainly most useful to those readers who have little or no background in the history of this ethnic group in America. As a matter of fact, it is useful even to those who have studied the past of Hungarian Americans. Its primary shortcoming—at least to this reader—is the fact that the author's coverage of post-World War II developments is comparatively cursory; a phenomenon that also characterizes her coverage of the Cleveland Hungarian community. This may be the result of a lack of adequate treatment of this controversial period by most of her predecessors, but it may also be due to the author's desire to avoid the controversy that a much more extensive treatment of recent developments might have entailed.

Only after having provided her readers with panoramic portrayals of both the Hungarian and the Hungarian-American past does the author finally reach the essence of her work, i.e. the history of the development of the Hungarian-American com-

munity of Cleveland. And it is here where Ms. Papp has contributed most to the field of Hungarian-American history; and she rightfully calls her contribution “the first comprehensive history of this (Hungarian) community in Cleveland.” (p. 5) There were, of course, others who preceded her and who have tried their hands in producing such a history (e.g. H. F. Cook, T. Ács, I. Sári-Gál, J. Kőrösfőy, G. Szentmiklósy-Éles, etc.).<sup>5</sup> But the resulting works were generally too fragmented, too short, too naive, or all of these combined; while others dealt only with certain limited aspects of Hungarian-American life in and around Cleveland. Moreover, a number of them remained unpublished, and most of them lacked the degree of professional preparation and scholarly detachment displayed by Ms. Papp in her own work. While Susan Papp’s *Hungarian Americans...of Cleveland*—as she herself admits—is not the final word on this topic, it represents a quantitative and qualitative step in the right direction.

Susan Papp’s treatment of the history of Cleveland Hungarians combines the chronological with the topical approach. It covers the Hungarian experience in that large center of Hungarian-American life from Kossuth’s visit in 1852 to 1980, and does so in three chronological periods. Of the three periods, however, the last two overlap (1920-1960 and 1945-1980). At first glance this seems strange, but there is a logical explanation for the same. Part II covers basically the development of the Buckeye Road Neighborhood and the lives, achievements and struggles of the first, second and third generation Hungarian Americans of the great turn-of-the-century “economic immigration;” while Part III concentrates almost exclusively on the post-World War II immigrants, including the Displaced Persons and the so-called “Freedom Fighters” or 56-ers. The pre- and post-World War II immigrants represented two completely different worlds, and as such they had to be treated separately, even if it meant a certain overlap in the chronological arrangement of the book.

In addition to detailing the history and development of the various Hungarian neighborhoods of Cleveland (while at the same time characterizing the several waves of immigrants) Ms. Papp has also supplied her readers with a discussion of various internal developments within the Hungarian-American community of that city. Thus, she has covered the development

of Hungarian religious and educational institutions in Cleveland, the foundation of newspapers and cultural, social and athletic organizations, as well as the rise of Hungarian-American literature, theater, specific folk traditions, and ethnic politics. Her coverage is balanced and objective. At the same time—similarly to her discussion of the Hungarian-American past as a whole—it is somewhat cursory when it comes to the events of the post-World War II period. As an example, she devotes very little attention to some of those issues that seem to have moved the Hungarian-American community (including the Cleveland community) ever since the 1950s. These include the long-standing division and antagonism between the so-called “Left” and the “Right” among the immigrants; the inherent conflict between those who have become “Hungarian Americans” and those who still regard themselves simply as “political immigrants” and reject all forms and levels of Americanization; and between those who have established or re-established some contacts (personal, scholarly, official, etc.) with the mother country and those who regard all such contacts as treasonable. And these are only a few of such critical issues with considerable ramifications for all Hungarian Americans. As a matter of fact, one’s position on these and similar issues are of first priority in determining one’s position in or one’s relationship to the Hungarian-American community; particularly to such a large, enclosed and traditional-conservative community as that of Cleveland, where many of the community’s spokesmen still represent views that used to be popular during the 1950s.

Susan Papp’s *Hungarian Americans...of Cleveland* is supplemented both by an interesting personal recollection by Joe Eszterhás, as well as by three separate essays on ethnic politics, on Cleveland’s St. Elizabeth parish, and on Hungarian contributions to world civilization.<sup>6</sup> All of them have their own merits, but it may perhaps been better to simply incorporate the content of the last three essays into the main works. This would have been all the more desirable as the material in the first and second of these essays is somewhat repetitious within the context of the book as a whole. The work is also supplemented by several maps, charts, graphs and statistical tables, as well as by numerous illustrations; all of which enhance the value of the first comprehensive history of the Cleveland Hungarian community. Moreover, the book is relatively free

of factual and typographical errors, which is a major achievement in a work of this type which has to rely on a wide variety of sources, many of which are not in the most reliable category.

Susan M. Papp is to be commended for her scholarly efforts and achievements in having produced this work. Let us hope that she will continue her scholarly endeavours and that, in addition to many other works of similar nature, she will also author the next and even more comprehensive history of the Hungarian community of Cleveland.

#### NOTES

1. The "Cleveland Ethnic Heritage Studies Monograph Series," edited by Karl Bonutti of Cleveland State University includes volumes on the following ethnic groups of Central and Eastern Europe: Byelorussians, Croatians, Czechs, Greeks, Hungarians, Jews (mostly of Eastern Europe), Lithuanians, Poles, Rumanians, Serbians (two volumes), Slovaks, Slovenians and Ukrainians. In addition the series also has volumes on the Arabs, Asians, Blacks, Early Settlers of Cleveland, Germans, Irish and Italians, plus six additional volumes on various aspects of ethnicity.

2. The reference here is not to the so-called Sumerian roots of the Magyars (which is rejected by most learned historians) but to such accepted or at least seriously considered views that the Carpathian Basin had in fact been subjected to several invasions by Magyar or Magyar-like people before the traditional conquest of 896 A.D.; that the ruling prince of the conquering Magyars of 896 was not Árpád (who was only second in command: *Gyula*), but *Kurszán* who had the title of *kende* or *kündü*; that Árpád's or *Kurszán's* conquerors were much more skilled in agriculture than originally presumed and that "nomadism" did not mean the primitive kind of existence that is usually connected with that term; that the ethnogenesis and the national consciousness of the medieval Magyars was far different than portrayed by traditional historiography; that even the meaning and significance of the Ottoman conquest has to be viewed in a different light than traditionally presumed, etc.

3. The reference here is to such works as Eugene Pivány, *Hungarian-American Historical Connections from Pre-Columbian Times to the End of the American Civil War* (Budapest, 1927); David A. Souders, *The Magyars in America* (New York, 1922); reprint, San Francisco, 1969); Géza Kende, *A magyarok Amerikában. Az amerikai magyarság története* /Hungarians in America. The History of Hungarian-Americans/ (2 vols., Cleveland, 1927); Emil Lengyel, *Americans from Hungary* (Philadelphia and New York, 1948; reprint, Westport, Conn., 1974); Edmund Vasváry, *Lincoln's Hungarian Heroes The Participation of Hungarians in the Civil War, 1861-1865* (Washington, D.C., 1939); Leslie Könnnyü, *Hungarians in the U.S.A.: An Immigration Study* (St. Louis, 1967); Joshua A. Fishman, *Hungarian Language Maintenance in the United States* (Bloomington, In., 1966); Joseph Széplaki, *The Hungarians in America, 1583-1974: A Chronology and Fact Book* (Dobbs Ferry, N.Y., 1975).

4. The books in question are: Victor Greene, *The Slavic Community on Strike* (Notre Dame, In., 1972); Leonard Dinnerstein and David M. Reimers, *Ethnic Americans: A History of Immigration and Assimilation* (New York, 1975); Karl Bonutti and George J. Prpić, *Selected Ethnic Communities of Cleveland: A Socio-Economic Study* (Cleveland, 1974).

5. Some of the earlier works on the Cleveland Hungarians include: Huldah F. Cook, *The Magyars of Cleveland* (Cleveland, 1919); Imre Sári-Gál, *Az Amerikai Debrecen: Képek a clevelandi magyarság életéből* /The American Debrecen: Portraits from the Life of Cleveland Hungarians/ (Toronto, 1966); *idem*, *Clevelandi Magyar Múzeum: Riportok, versek, fényképek a clevelandi magyarság életéből* /The Cleveland Hungarian Museum: Reports, Poems, Photographs from the Life of Cleveland Hungarians/



(Toronto, 1978); John Kőrösfőy, ed., *Hungarians in America - Az amerikai magyarság aranykönyve /The Golden Book of Hungarian-Americans/* (Cleveland, 1941); as well as two unpublished works by Géza Szentmiklósy-Éles that were apparently not used by the author of this book: *Hungarians in Cleveland* (M.A. Thesis, John Carroll University, Cleveland, 1972; and *Two Hungarian Immigrations: Victims of Misconception* (Cleveland, 1975). For additional relevant works, as well as for the discussion of Hungarian-American historiography see S. B. Vardy and Agnes H. Vardy, *Research in Hungarian-American History and Culture* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Studies in History, 1981). This work originally appeared in *The Folk Arts of Hungary*, ed. by Walter W. Kolar and Agnes H. Vardy (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Tamburitzans Institute of Folk Arts, 1981): 67-123.

6. The essays in question are: Dennis Frigyes Fredricks, "Ethnicity and Politics The Hungarian Experience in Cleveland," pp. 292-297; Rick Orley, "The Building of a Church by an Immigrant Community: The Case of St. Elizabeth of Hungary," pp. 298-303; and Lél F. Somogyi, "Hungarian Cultural Contributions," pp. 304-310. Joe Eszterhás's introduction to the volume (pp.1-4) contains some rather interesting and delightful reminiscences of his childhood and youth in the Cleveland Hungarian community.



**Articles to be published in forthcoming issues of the**  
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Special Volume:

**HUNGARIAN CULTURAL PRESENCE  
IN NORTH AMERICA**

**PART II:  
THE HUNGARIAN EXPERIENCE IN ALBERTA**

By Howard & Tamara Palmer

## Hungarian Studies Review

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By Howard & Tamara Palmer

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*THE HUNGARIAN EXPERIENCE IN ALBERTA*

*by Howard and Tamara Palmer*



## *Introduction*

Hungarians comprise the third largest central and eastern European ethno-cultural group in Alberta. Their presence extends back to the earliest establishment of coal mining in the southern parts of the province. Hungarian coal miners came to southern Alberta from Saskatchewan and Pennsylvania in 1886; since then, four successive waves of immigration—prior to World War I, during the late 1920s, following World War II, and after the 1956 Hungarian revolution—have maintained the rate of growth of Hungarian-origin people at approximately the same level as the general rate of population growth in Alberta. Since the 1930s, Hungarians have comprised about one percent of Alberta's population; in 1971, there were 16,240 people of Hungarian origin in the province. In addition, they have been sufficiently dispersed to have had an impact on almost every region of the province.

The settlement pattern of Hungarians differs from that of other central and eastern European groups. While nearly all other central and eastern European groups formed rural clusters in the central and northern areas of the province, with their city dwellers concentrating in Edmonton, Hungarians formed pockets of settlement throughout the province and settled in large numbers in southern Alberta, with their urban people coming largely to Calgary. Unlike the Ukrainians, Poles or Romanians whose largest wave of immigrants came to Alberta prior to World War II, the largest wave of Hungarian immigrants came during the 1920s. The Hungarians have also been one of the most mobile groups in a society characterized by mobility.

Hungarians in Alberta were particularly affected by the Great Depression of the 1930s. The depression years were difficult for almost everyone in Alberta, but especially for newly-arrived immigrants who did not speak English, had few possessions, had little time to establish themselves economically and had few fellow-countrymen to depend on for aid and support. The Depression irrevocably altered their lives and exacted an enormous and tragic personal toll in broken dreams and broken families. The newcomers from Hungary were usually among those who were the last hired and the first fired; consequently they faced unemployment and poverty as well as social discrimination based on their uncertain status as "foreigners."

In an attempt to extricate themselves from this hopeless situation, many of these late 1920s immigrants turned to radical politics. However, they found that their political beliefs and activities further jeopardized their already precarious position.

In this study special attention is paid to this second and largest wave of Hungarian immigration in order to illustrate the nature of life during the Great Depression for immigrant farm workers in the sugar beet fields, miners in the coal mining camps, pioneer farmers on the fringes of agricultural settlement and labourers in the towns and cities. We have also tried to show the major differences between the different waves of immigration—important social, economic and political differences which led to strain and conflict within the Hungarian community. Each wave of immigrants viewed the world in a different way, and each wave of immigrants faced a new set of social and economic conditions in Alberta to which they had to adjust.

### *The Vanguard*

Large scale emigration from Hungary began in the late 1870s. This first wave, which continued until World War I, represented the largest Hungarian migration to North America, but of the 640,000 Hungarians who left Europe during this time only about 8,000 came to Canada and many of this number came indirectly via the United States. The Hungarian settlements which these first immigrants established, including several tiny colonies in Alberta, would serve as nuclei for later waves of immigration during the 1920s.<sup>1</sup>

The first wave of immigrants was comprised overwhelmingly of peasants. Peasant landholdings in Hungary had been subdivided so minutely over the generations that they could no longer support a family, and in addition, the mechanization of agriculture had reduced seasonal employment on large estates. Hungary's limited industrial development could not provide enough jobs to absorb the growing number of unemployed peasants and required skilled workers rather than labourers. Many of the displaced and discontented farm workers began to dream of going to North America and saving enough money to return to Hungary and invest in land and property. A number became sufficiently desperate to act upon their dreams:

Young men in their twenties were the most likely emigrants from Hungary. As a rule, they travelled in groups from a particular village and had a particular destination. In Canada or in the United States, relatives or friends had arranged for lodging and employment in advance. On their arrival in the new world, they entered a familiar Hungarian social world, consisting of relatives and kinsfolk from their village or county. This network provided advice on American conditions, assisted them in finding employment, and recruited others from Hungary to emigrate. After the young emigrant had earned and saved sufficient funds, he would return home and assist others to follow his example.

Many of the immigrants who went to the United States worked in that country's eastern coal mines; it was from these communities that the first Hungarians came to western Canada.<sup>2</sup>

The first Hungarians to settle in western Canada did so through the promotional efforts of Count Paul O. Esterhazy (otherwise known as John B. Pach). Through the settlements which Esterhazy helped to establish in 1885 and 1886 at "Hun's Valley" in Manitoba and at Esterhaz, in what was then the Northwest Territories, through his promotional pamphlets, Hungarians in the United States and in Europe became aware of the opportunities which existed in western Canada.<sup>3</sup>

The first Hungarians to come to what is now Alberta, originally arrived as part of Esterhazy's plan to build up the Esterhaz settlement. In October, 1886, 130 men arrived in Esterhaz to help develop the settlement. Esterhazy had planned to quarter the new group in Esterhaz for the winter, but was unable to because of a prairie fire which completely destroyed the new settlement. Esterhazy then arranged for the newly-arrived men to spend the winter working in a coal mine near Medicine Hat, which theoretically would have enabled them to support themselves until they could take up homesteads in the spring. However, this plan also fell through. After a short period, the men left the mine claiming that they had been mistreated and "returned to the immigrant shed at Medicine Hat in a half-starved condition with no hope of getting work or food." The government provided them with food during the winter, after which a few took up homesteads in southern Alberta or went to work in the coal mines at Lethbridge (the rest of them went to Winnipeg). Publicity surrounding the group's initial reaction

to mine conditions had not been favourable and had left the impression on mine owners and management that there were "strong socialistic elements" among the Hungarian immigrants. Some established prairie residents began to view them with suspicion.<sup>4</sup>

Despite these reverses, immigration from the United States and Hungary continued and new settlements were begun in several other areas of Saskatchewan and in Manitoba. The settlers gradually expanded their operations to include not only grain farming, but also cattle raising and dairy farming and by 1891 they had paid all of their original debts and were being praised by the Department of the Interior for being among the West's most successful settlers. Their numbers continued to increase and by 1911 there were 11,648 "Hungarians" in Canada, more than half of whom were living in Saskatchewan. Throughout the history of Hungarian settlement on the prairies, the smaller communities which developed in Alberta maintained numerous points of contact with those in Saskatchewan, many of which were predominantly Hungarian and could therefore maintain the Hungarian language and customs and serve as cultural bases for Alberta's smaller and less homogeneous settlements.<sup>5</sup>

While the Medicine Hat experience was brief and seemingly best forgotten by all concerned, the Hungarian coal miners who came to Lethbridge in 1886 formed a more permanent population. Lethbridge offered a combination of opportunities in coal mining and farming which established it as the major center for Hungarians in the province until the late 1920s. Most of the earliest Hungarian settlers to establish farms in southern Alberta had originally come to the area to work in the Lethbridge mines.

Lethbridge's first Hungarian residents were brought from Pennsylvania in 1886 by Sir Alexander Galt, to serve as a source of cheap labor for Galt's coal mines, which had been developed to supply the fuel needs of the CPR. Later accounts suggest that the immigrant miners, anxious to leave behind the frequent strikes in Pennsylvania's mines, were quite willing to fit into Galt's design. That winter they were joined by ten settlers from Esterhaz who also wanted to work in the Lethbridge coal mines. All of these newcomers, most of whom were originally from the Hungarian countries of Abaúj, Zemplén and Borsod, lived in

a miniature ghetto of shacks which was separated from the main settlement by the railway tracks.

The miners' leisure-time activities did little to endear them to either the local "Mounties" or the established, primarily Anglo-Celtic, business and professional elite of the growing town. For example, in June of 1888 the *Lethbridge News* commented bitterly on the "uncivilized citizens" who had gotten into a fight with the police: "...the existence of such a degraded class cannot be tolerated in a civilized community. If they cannot conform to our institutions, the Hungarians and Slavs must go." The Lethbridge community also criticized the miners and their families for Sabbath-breaking, intemperance and allegedly pushing young girls into early marriages.<sup>6</sup>

This reaction to the Hungarian miners was predictable. For the business and social establishment of Lethbridge, whose roots were in eastern Canada or in Britain, the Hungarian presence provided their first experience with non-Anglo-Celtic immigrants. Even if mine management did not expect to pay Eastern-European miners the same wages they paid Anglo-Celtic workers, they and the rest of the community did expect the newcomers to exhibit the accepted British style of deportment. Thus the conflicts between the two groups were an indication not only of linguistic and residential barriers but also of cultural and social barriers which would persist in Lethbridge until after the Second World War.

Despite the predominantly negative reaction to them, Hungarian miners continued to come to the Lethbridge area and by 1901 their numbers were sufficient for them to organize the first Hungarian Sick Benefit Association in Canada. The organization, which had twenty founding members, would provide insurance to miners in case of sickness, accident or death, a much needed service at a time when mining accidents were frequent and there were no government support schemes. The amount of money in the insurance plan was not large, but it was enough to provide help in time of difficulty. In addition to its economic function, the association also played an important social role, facilitating the maintenance of Hungarian traditions and unifying the Hungarian working-class community. By the 1920s, the club had 240 members and with volunteer labour they were eventually able to build a large clubhouse, which served as the focal point for organized Hungarian activity in

Lethbridge until after the Second World War.<sup>7</sup>

As in many areas of immigrant settlement across North America, the boarding house served as a major institution of immigrant life in the Lethbridge area. Since there were not many families among Hungarian immigrants, the few married women found work in partnerships with their husbands as boarding house keepers. The boarding house provided a familiar cultural setting where immigrants could use their own language, eat familiar food, and participate in occasional social activities. For the boarders, "the cheap rent allowed them to save more of their pay. They could move out on short notice when a better job beckoned elsewhere, and someone else had done the cooking and laundry when they returned exhausted from their work."<sup>8</sup>

By the early years of the twentieth century the Lethbridge coal mines had become a gateway for Hungarians wanting to establish themselves in farming. Many of the Hungarians who took up homesteads and began dryland farming in the Stavely, Retlaw, Taber, Wrentham and Milk River areas during the settlement boom of the mid-1890s to World War I, had first worked in the mines in Lethbridge. Even after they had enough money to finance their own farms, many worked in the mines during the winter and farmed during the summer.

The life of Joseph Nagy, an early homesteader in the Milk River area, provided an example of the Hungarian immigrant experience in southern Alberta. Nagy was a 26 year old farm worker in Hungary when he and a friend were approached in a tavern by a Canadian immigration agent who told them about the wonderful economic opportunities in Canada. Like other land-starved Hungarian workers, Nagy was particularly impressed with the promise of 160 acres of land for ten dollars, and he and his wife, Elizabeth, decided to try their luck in the new country and, in 1906 set sail for Canada. Nagy was drawn to the Lethbridge area and worked in several different Lethbridge mines before deciding to homestead in the One-Seventeen district west of Milk River.

Like other pioneer homesteaders throughout Alberta, Joseph and Elizabeth Nagy found their new life filled with challenges and hard work. The family's first home was a dugout carved out of a hillside, just large enough for a stove, a bed, a table and two chairs. Then they had to begin the heavy and difficult



task of clearing the land of rocks. In order to have sufficient cash to operate their farm the next year, Joseph returned to Lethbridge during the winter to work in the mine while Elizabeth remained to look after the homestead. She was intensely lonely; fortunately, there was another woman living nearby whose husband was also away working in the mine and Elizabeth survived the oppressive isolation of the prairie by moving “herself and her chickens” into the neighbour’s farm house. Soon several other Hungarian families settled in the same area and they gradually formed a community which became a source of mutual help.<sup>9</sup>

By 1916, almost half of the 1,435 people of Hungarian origin in Alberta lived in the Lethbridge area. Although at this time Hungarians comprised only a small minority in the rural communities of southern Alberta, the pioneer settlements near Taber and Milk River would become increasingly visible during the 1920s with the arrival of larger numbers of Hungarian immigrants who would be attracted to these areas.

The first wave of Hungarian immigration resulted in only one other Hungarian settlement in Alberta; this was in the central part of the province in an area known as Manfred (near present day Bashaw) southeast of Wetaskiwin, which had been opened up for settlement when the Calgary-Edmonton railway was completed in 1891. This settlement, which pre-dated the farming settlements in the Lethbridge area, was the first Hungarian farm settlement in Alberta. Three men who had been neighbours in the Dunaföldvár region of central Hungary—John Kerik, John Meister and John Mraz—left their homeland in 1895 and established adjacent homesteads in this newly-opened section of the province. The men fashioned their first dwellings out of logs jutting into a hillside and they had thatched roofs and sod floors; they were soon able to replace these temporary shelters with log cabins. The next job was the back-breaking task of clearing the land. Many years later one of John Mraz’s daughters described their pioneering efforts:

They brought spades, hoes, sickles and scythes, good intentions and a desire to exist as best they could... father cleared land with oxen and a one-shared plough. Wheat was broadcast by hand, cut with scythe and sickle, threshed with a maul, and hauled by ox cart to the nearest mill (Wetaskiwin) /35 miles distant/ to be turned into flour.<sup>10</sup>

In 1900 the settlement which the three friends had established was augmented by the arrival of several more families from Hungary as well as a few from the Hungarian settlements in Saskatchewan. Once they had completed some of the rudimentary tasks of pioneering, the newcomers could begin to direct some of their efforts toward re-establishing familiar institutions. In 1910, nineteen Catholic families, most of them Hungarian, established a Catholic church, known as the Manfred Church. The group was unable to obtain a Hungarian priest, but the area was in a mission served by travelling Irish or German Catholic priests. On those Sundays when the travelling priest could not visit them, the parishioners gathered to read the Bible in Hungarian and sing Hungarian hymns. The group was isolated by the fact that the adults, some of whom were illiterate in their own language, did not speak English.<sup>11</sup>

Some of the homesteaders in the Bashaw area returned to Hungary prior to World War I, either because they could no longer endure the hardships of pioneering or because their plan had always been simply to earn money and then return home to their relatives. However, the majority of settlers stayed and gradually established themselves on the land, developing herds of animals and acquiring machinery to ease the arduous work of farming.

Like all pioneer settlements, Manfred had its share of early deaths caused by extremes in climate, hard work and accidents. In turn-of-the-century Canada, both farmers and industrial workers faced many dangers; with their work pattern of farming in the summer and mining in the winter, the Hungarian immigrants were doubly at risk. John Meister, one of the original three settlers, was killed in an accident in the Canmore mines. Tragedy seemed to stalk the family of Steve Fillinger Sr., who had been born in Budapest in 1867 and had come to Canada with his wife and three children in 1900. Soon after the family's arrival, Steve's wife died. Steve later married Julia Rose, the daughter of another immigrant family living in the same area, and they had sixteen children. A prairie fire completely destroyed their first home. Then, in 1925, Steve was killed when a wagon load of flour he was hauling overturned on him. This left Mrs. Fillinger to raise their large family with only the help of the older children. Each of the pioneer Hungarian settlements had to face and cope with similar tragic losses caused by mining accidents,

prairie fires or blizzards.<sup>12</sup>

The Manfred settlement did not grow after 1910, nor did the Hungarian influence in the area endure. Even in the early years, there were few outward symbols of the Hungarian presence; almost the only visible expression of their old-world culture was that the settlers plastered the outside walls of their homes with clay and chaff, followed by a mixture of yellow earth, cow manure and whitewash, as had been the custom in their homeland. As in many of the province's rural settlements during the early years of the century, educational facilities were minimal. For many years there was no school in the Manfred area and the Hungarian children stayed at home, where they helped with the endless chores of farming and were sometimes taught to read and write Hungarian by their parents.

Although children of the pioneer settlers generally married within the group, Hungarian identity in the area did not survive past the Great Depression. The surrounding community had a mixed population; it had been largely settled by Scandinavian-Americans and Germans from Russia. The small number of Hungarians were isolated from their countrymen and the immigration wave of the 1920s brought no new Hungarian settlers to the region; consequently the Hungarian population remained at less than 100. Gradually during the 1920s, this small group integrated almost completely into the larger rural community. During the depression years and later, during the 1940s, many people left the area for British Columbia or for other parts of Alberta. Today, with the original homes and Catholic Church gone and only a handful of people of Hungarian origin remaining, there are no visible reminders of the settlement.

### *The Impact of World War I*

Although their economic position was still insecure, by 1914 many Hungarians in Alberta were thinking of their stay in Canada as permanent and were beginning to put down roots. But when war broke out, making an enemy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, they found that their situation was precarious. The Canadian government treated them as enemy aliens: they were either interned or required to register with police, and those who had been naturalized were deprived of their vote. Prevailing attitudes toward them were embodied in

that hurtful and ubiquitous slur, "bohunk." Few in number, leaderless, dispersed across the province and without any effective provincial or national organization, Alberta's Hungarian community was ill-equipped to defend itself.

However, some Hungarians in Alberta attempted to change prevailing attitudes by pointing out that Hungarian-Canadians were largely opposed to the Austrian Empire and therefore should not be regarded as enemies. But such attempts were not successful; Albertans continued to regard the Hungarians in their midst as enemy aliens. Given that their status as outsiders was thus emphasized by the wartime situation, it is ironic that a consequence of the war was that the Hungarian-Canadian settlements became more permanent than before, since Hungarians could no longer return to their homeland.<sup>13</sup>

#### *Post-World War I Immigration*

The second wave of Hungarian immigration, which occurred between 1925 and 1930, was to be the century's largest movement of Hungarians to Alberta. Economic and political conditions had combined to precipitate this migration which would re-shape the entire structure of the Hungarian-Canadian community. Although this second wave, like the one which had preceded it, was composed primarily of farmers and workers, it also included a small contingent of middle-class people and a few displaced aristocrats. Some of the newcomers left behind families, degrees, and property in their quest for a better life in Canada.<sup>14</sup>

Virtually all of the immigrants were young men, both single and married, who hoped to make enough money to repay their passage and either return to Hungary with an accumulation of funds, move on to the United States or eventually bring their wives and families to the new land. However, since they arrived just on the eve of the Great Depression, most were to have their dreams crushed. Many of the immigrants would find that not only could they not afford to bring their families to Canada, but that they themselves could not afford to return to Hungary. Indeed, many would not be able to be reunited with their wives and children until after World War II; and for some there was to be permanent separation from the families they had left in the late 1920s, either through death or through one of the partners becoming involved in another relationship after many years of enforced separation. During the depression they could not afford

to bring out their families, during the war their families could not come, and in the post-war era the communist regime prevented their families from leaving.<sup>15</sup>

The majority of second-wave immigrants settled in Ontario, which soon eclipsed Saskatchewan as the center of Hungarian-Canadian life in Canada. However, the prairies, particularly Alberta, received a substantial number of the new immigrants. Approximately 4,000 of the 34,000 Hungarians who came to Canada at this time settled in Alberta, increasing the number of Hungarians in the province from 1,045 in 1921 to 5,502 in 1931. In the background, orchestrating and directing this entire movement was the CPR which, under an agreement with the federal government, recruited, screened, transported and placed the immigrants.<sup>16</sup>

The older settlements at Milk River and Taber grew significantly, new Hungarian farming communities were established on irrigated land in the vicinity of Lethbridge and on CPR land at Brooks, Warburg and other areas of central and northern Alberta. The number of Hungarian miners in the Lethbridge area increased substantially and a large group of Hungarian miners moved into the Drumheller Valley, where they helped to open up new mines. Concentrations of working-class Hungarians also developed, for the first time, in Calgary and Edmonton. In short, the province's major coal deposits, sugar beet fields, unsettled CPR land and areas of urban growth were economic magnets which attracted the second wave of Hungarian immigrants to Alberta.

To determine the forces which had propelled this sizeable migration, one must, of course, look to conditions in post-war Hungary. Military defeat precipitated economic depression and political turmoil thus creating a climate conducive to massive emigration. In 1918, when Hungary's defeat was imminent, a bloodless revolution catapulted a liberal pacifist, Count Mihály Károlyi, to power. In March 1919, allied meddling in Hungarian affairs prompted Károlyi to resign in favour of a left-wing regime led by Béla Kun. Kun had a strong following in the country's coal-mining regions; many of his supporters had been prisoners of war in Russia who had rallied to Lenin's Bolsheviks. Kun's attempts to Bolshevize the economy and to suppress opposition led to economic chaos, profound political unrest and the collapse of his regime in July of 1919. Kun was eventually replaced by

the conservative Miklós Horthy, who restored order but suppressed movements of the extreme left. (Some of the displaced followers of both Károlyi and Kun would later come to Canada.) As a result of the defeat of both revolutions, the Hungarian peasant population lost confidence in social improvements and began looking to emigration as a solution to their problems.<sup>17</sup>

Military defeat also led to the dismemberment of Hungary: the Treaty of Trianon at the end of the First World War reduced the country to less than one third of its former size. Under this harsh treaty, Hungary lost not only land and population, but also many of its important natural resources. Transportation and communication systems were disrupted and there was massive unemployment, soaring inflation and severe agricultural poverty. In addition, those Hungarians who had been incorporated into neighbouring states experienced considerable discrimination. All of these events combined to produce a growing sentiment favouring emigration.<sup>18</sup>

The wave of immigration which had been set in motion by these factors in Hungary was both like and unlike that of the pre-war period. Like the first wave of immigrants, the Hungarians who arrived in Canada during the 1920s were primarily agricultural workers and peasants (75-80 percent), chiefly from the northeastern part of Hungary, the country's most underdeveloped and isolated region. Their educational level was often limited and consequently their understanding of Hungarian culture consisted primarily of an awareness of traditional customs and basic religious concepts.

However, since many of the newcomers had left Hungary for political reasons, their level of political and ethnic consciousness was higher than that of their predecessors. As a result, when they began to establish themselves in Alberta, they initiated more cultural and political activities than earlier immigrants had done. Another difference between the two groups was that while the first wave had been directed primarily to the United States, the second was largely directed to Canada. During the early 1920s, the United States had set quotas which restricted the number of immigrants from central and eastern Europe who could enter the country. Consequently, many Hungarians looked to Canada as a new homeland.<sup>19</sup>

Hungarian immigrants came to Canada under the "Railways Agreement," which had been negotiated between the CPR, the

CNR and the federal government. In the early post-war years, Ottawa had hoped to be able to attract Anglo-Saxon immigrants in sufficient numbers to continue the process of settling the West; however, when it became clear that this would not be possible, the federal government was forced under the pressure of business groups to negotiate the "Railways Agreement" of 1925. This accord authorized the railways to bring in "Agriculturalists, agricultural workers and domestic servants" from the "non-preferred" countries of central and eastern Europe, thus satisfying the railway companies' need for immigrants to guarantee revenue for their steamship lines, traffic for their railways and settlers for the land which had been given to the CPR by the Canadian government when the CPR line was built in the 1880s. CPR officials were well pleased with the agreement since many of them believed that central and eastern Europeans were much more likely than Anglo-Saxons to be able to clear the marginal, heavily-timbered brush land which constituted much of the company's remaining holdings in the west.<sup>20</sup>

#### *Settlement During the Twenties and Thirties*

In examining the settlement of Hungarians in Alberta during the inter-war decades, it is virtually impossible to isolate examples of communities which could be considered as representative of the group's experience. The Hungarians who came did not settle together in large contiguous blocs where a standard colonization process emerged; they established pockets of settlement throughout the province.

The group had some common characteristics. The majority of them went to rural areas. (In 1931, 69 percent of Hungarians in the province were living in farming areas; by 1941, this figure had risen to 75 percent.) In addition, the Hungarian settlers shared a common immigrant and working-class struggle and had to cope, from a very vulnerable position, with the harsh realities of the "dirty thirties;" consequently, all of the major groups of Hungarian immigrants established similar organizations in response to common difficulties. But apart from these general similarities, conditions varied widely from settlement to settlement.

The agricultural communities which the Hungarians entered varied from long-established farming settlements on irrigated prairie land, where they worked as agricultural labourers to

newly-opened bush areas the newcomer from Hungary was cast in the role of a pioneer. These scattered agricultural districts differed widely in terrain and climate and therefore in the kind of agriculture for which they were suited. Hungarian urban settlement was equally diverse; the various urban areas and mining camps developed their own styles of life which were quite different from those in the rural areas and from each other. Each of the communities which the Hungarians entered or established differed in its stage of development, economic base, size and ethnic mix. Focusing on the different aspects of economic and social life in a variety of Hungarian communities allows the emergence of a composite picture of Hungarian immigrant experience.

In southern Alberta the immigrants were placed by the CPR through local colonization boards. These boards helped to put company officials in touch with prospective immigrants and sponsors, arranged to have employment for the immigrants when they arrived and attempted to help them in their adjustment to Canadian life. Several communities in southern Alberta had branches of the Hungarian Colonization Board, which functioned as an extension of the CPR's colonization efforts. Those who sponsored the immigrants had to guarantee their employment for a year and vouch that they would not become public charges.<sup>21</sup>

This sponsorship system facilitated chain migration; earlier immigrants who had begun to establish themselves brought relatives and fellow-villagers to existing settlements. For example, Hungarian-Germans from Polány, Hungary, first arrived in Magrath to work in the sugar beet industry in 1925 and by 1931 there were thirty-one families from the same village living in the Magrath and nearby Raymond areas.<sup>22</sup>

With the re-establishment of the sugar beet industry in 1925, there was a heavy demand for sugar beet labourers in southern Alberta. Consequently, many of the Hungarians who came to the province in the late 1920s went first to this region. The towns and villages of Raymond, Magrath, Picture Butte, Iron Springs, Readymade, Coaldale and Taber, all situated in sugar beet growing areas, attracted sizeable numbers of Hungarian farmers during the 1920s.<sup>23</sup>

Hungarian immigrants who settled in southern Alberta to work in the sugar beet industry faced numerous difficulties since



the work was so arduous; however most of them were able to adjust successfully and to use their experience as a rung in the ladder of upward social and economic mobility. Many of the newcomers already had extensive experience with sugar beet farming in Hungary and all were familiar with the demands of hard work. Although a number soon left the area to try their luck elsewhere, a significant proportion remained. At first they rented small acreages where they lived in crude shacks. Soon they were able to send for their families and through the work of all family members in thinning, weeding and harvesting the beets, they were eventually able to purchase the land they cultivated and then ultimately to purchase additional land and expand their operations. Like earlier pioneer settlers, the Hungarians who came to southern Alberta during the late twenties knew the value of self-sufficiency. They planted large gardens and kept enough livestock and poultry to supply their own needs.

During the late 1920s, sugar beet prices were good and the intensive nature of the industry made it possible for the newly arrived immigrants to make a living on the small parcels of land they were able to buy, either from established farmers or from owners of newly-irrigated land in the areas of Picture Butte and Taber. Families (especially large ones) were a definite asset in making sugar beet operations profitable. The married men among the immigrants were usually able to buy farms, while the single men often remained labourers.<sup>24</sup>

While the Hungarian sugar beet workers were viewed primarily as a convenient labour pool, local government officials, the press and local farmers were pleased with their performance. According to a *Lethbridge Herald* assessment in October of 1925,

These people are experienced beet growers which gives them an exceptional advantage in making good in this part of the West. The Hungarians have shown thrift and ability on the farm coupled with an earnest desire to learn western ways. Employers of this labour have been pleased this season.

The Hungarians were separated from the existing farm community by culture, language and religion and by social prejudices embodied in the concept of the "non-preferred" immigrant; but they began to feel at home in southern Alberta as they learned English from their employers and as their families arrived.<sup>25</sup>

Since sugar beet work and other farm labour was seasonal, most of the immigrants looked for other types of work in the off-season. During the winter, many found jobs on construction, in the coal mines, or in other labouring jobs. Some settled permanently in the mining camps. During the late 1920s, the number of Hungarians living and working in Lethbridge area mining camps, such as Coalhurst, Diamond City, Shaughnessy and Hardieville, increased substantially. In Lethbridge, the principal concentration of Hungarians—most of them manual labourers—continued to be on the north side, where an area of four square blocks was predominantly Hungarian.<sup>26</sup>

Thus the Railways Agreement of 1925 had effected a dramatic change in Alberta's Hungarian community. By 1931, there were 5,502 Hungarian-origin people in the province, nearly half of them living in the region south of Calgary.<sup>27</sup> With this influx of new immigrants, Hungarian cultural and religious activities in southern Alberta flourished. Both the Presbyterian and Catholic churches began Hungarian-language services in several centers. Immigrants in Raymond established a sick benefit society and a youth organization; those in Taber organized a Hungarian society which built a hall where it held harvest dances and national festivals. In Lethbridge, Hungarian-Presbyterian services were begun in 1926, the Hungarian Sick Benefit Society was expanded and a Hungarian language school and a dramatic society for Hungarian youth were established. Describing the activities of the latter organization, a Hungarian Presbyterian minister noted that "the young people take part enthusiastically in Hungarian cultural work, putting on festivals, establishing social contacts with Canadian circles and acquainting them with Hungarian cultural values."<sup>28</sup>

#### *Additional Rural Settlements*

Besides the settlements in the beet-growing areas, the CPR helped to develop several other major rural colonies of Hungarians during the late 1920s in widely separated areas. One sizeable settlement emerged on CPR land at Brooks (which formed part of the Eastern Irrigation District). The area had been put under irrigation just prior to World War I. However, the war had inevitably slowed settlement and although there had been a proposal after the war to settle a group of returned soldiers in the area, this plan had not succeeded. Consequently in

1928, 1929 and 1930 the CPR, anxious to settle its irrigated land between Brooks and Tilley, turned to Slovak and Hungarian immigrants.<sup>29</sup>

Approximately seventy Hungarian farm families settled near Brooks with the help of the Colonists Service Association (CSA), which was an extension of the CPR's Colonization Department. The CSA helped the settlers to establish themselves by plowing the land and advancing seed grain and twine, but these services were not free and many of the farmers soon found themselves enmeshed in a web of debt; their beginnings in farming had coincided with the drastic drop in prices for farm products which occurred in 1930. The problems those men who had left their families in Hungary and had come to Canada alone were especially serious. With an income of \$300 to \$500 per year, they could not keep up the payments on their land and yet the CPR had to certify that they were doing well before the Department of Immigration would authorize them to sponsor their families as immigrants. The CPR provided work for some of the debt-ridden farmers on its extra railway gangs, but there were nevertheless a number of men who simply could not afford to bring out their families and could not get the CPR to give them credit to pay their passage.<sup>30</sup>

Despite these initial hardships, the Hungarians at Brooks persisted. As rural people accustomed to self-sufficiency and hard work, they knew how to survive. Indeed, the community even grew during the 1930s as the CPR encouraged unemployed immigrants in Calgary to relocate on the land. Irrigation enabled the farmers to grow grain and fodder and many raised paprika and corn—traditional Hungarian products—in their gardens. The settlers did not organize many Hungarian activities; community-wide events were largely restricted to the occasional visits of Hungarian-speaking Catholic priests and Presbyterian ministers. However, after surviving the privations of the depression decade, the Hungarian farmers were able to achieve prosperity during the 1940s and 1950s and many of their children remained in the Brooks area to continue successful farming operations.<sup>31</sup>

Another group of Hungarians, which consisted of just over 100 farm families, settled in the Warburg district east of Leduc in the late 1920s and early 1930s. They came to this area under a plan devised by the CPR to enable it to settle its brush-covered

land. Hungarians settled throughout the area from Genesee to Breton, but the largest concentration was at Warburg.<sup>32</sup>

Most of the families who came to this area followed a common immigration and settlement pattern. While the settlers were from several different regions of Hungary (as well as a few who were ethnic Hungarians from Romania and Czechoslovakia), they all came to Alberta in groups of families. In several cases, such as with the Fodors, the Fritzs and the Gaydars, groups of two or three brothers immigrated together or one brother helped bring over the others. The settlers included many who had first tried their luck elsewhere, either on Saskatchewan farms, in Drumheller coal mines or in southern Alberta beet fields. The men came first and worked for a couple of years to establish themselves before bringing their families to join them. Almost all were young people in their twenties or thirties and most were married.<sup>33</sup>

The Warburg settlers had to perform the same back-breaking tasks of pioneering as the pre-World War I immigrants, but they were faced with the additional burden of having to accomplish these tasks during a time of severe economic depression. The newly-arrived immigrants knew virtually no English and often possessed little more than their families and the clothes they were wearing. They had no cash reserves to see them through difficult times, yet they still had to make payments on their CPR owned land. While the railway had offered easy terms and reasonable repayment terms, payment had to be made nonetheless and cash was not easy for the newcomers to acquire. A few eventually lost their land. However, by the late 1930s, the settlers' economic prospects were improving. Clover and honey were becoming important cash crops and agricultural prices were beginning to rise. By the end of the decade, most of the Hungarian newcomers had established themselves successfully.<sup>34</sup>

Since they had settled on unbroken bush-land, the immigrants had to clear it acre by acre. One of the early settlers, Frank Kovach, remembers that

Clearing land at that time was done by hand with an axe, spade and grub hoe. To remove the trees you had to remove the dirt around the roots with the spade or grub hoe. Then you had to cut them off with the axe. When you cut enough of the roots, the tree would come down; a bit of wind would make the job easier.

The settlers broke the land with horses and, at first, seeded it by hand. They attempted to practise mixed farming but initially their operations were at best marginal. Early frosts lowered grain quality and the land was still full of roots. It took ten years of cultivation before it produced good crops. However, while it kept cultivated acreages small and was a fire hazard, the heavy timber provided logs to build homes and most of the farmers supplemented their incomes during the winter by hauling timber to Leduc for use as fence posts and lumber. Some supplemented their incomes by working outside of the settlement, in the fall as harvesters and in the winter in the coal mines of Drumheller or Edmonton.<sup>35</sup>

Living conditions were primitive during the first years of settlement and families had to make many sacrifices to survive the Great Depression. Even the children worked hard. Wives and children picked and sold blueberries in the summer, kept large gardens and made and sold butter. Since they had so little cash, families had to “make do” with what was available: coffee sometimes consisted of roasted wheat run through a coffee grinder and porridge was made from barley run through a grist mill. Because they had so little cash to buy livestock, some families shared horses and a cow. Transportation and communication were also problematic. Roads were poor and, in any case, very few of the settlers had cars or trucks. There were no telephones and mail arrived only once a week.<sup>36</sup>

Despite these hardships, perhaps because of them, the settlers helped each other to cope with the demands of pioneering and the problems of isolation. In so doing, they developed an active social and cultural life. In the winter of 1931-32, a group of the settlers formed the Petöfi Club, named after a famous Hungarian poet. During the winter, the club held frequent dances and plays in the community hall and established a Hungarian library. The club’s activities were open to the entire community and some of the older Anglo-Saxon pioneers and other newly-arrived immigrants (most of them of Polish, Czech or German background) participated. One of the area’s pioneers remembers that

Around that time there was a great influx of emigrants from all parts of Europe and other parts of the world. When newcomers joined the earlier pioneers in the area, the dances took on the atmosphere of a small

United Nations party. Some people came to dance; others came to watch, but everybody came to visit. It was the place where you could meet most of your friends and neighbors and make new friends and find out how everybody was doing.<sup>37</sup>

One of the highlights of the year was the annual Harvest Fruit Festival, a traditional Hungarian celebration that became a major community-wide event. Members of the Petőfi Club would decorate the community hall in red, white and green streamers to represent the colours of the Hungarian flag, the young women would dress in Hungarian costumes and a Hungarian gypsy orchestra would supply the music. Everyone participated in the dancing and in the traditional efforts to grab the fruit which had been strung on a rack overhead. The Hungarian immigrants found that their non-Hungarian neighbors not only willing to participate in these cultural activities, but also friendly and helpful in day-to-day matters.<sup>38</sup>

While the Hungarians in the Warburg settlement were becoming a cohesive community during the 1930s, forces were at work which inexorably moved the newcomers toward acceptance and, ultimately, assimilation into the larger society of north-central Alberta. The settlers in the area had much in common. Even as late as the last years of the 1920s and the early years of the 1930s, the region was still in the midst of pioneering and all of the various peoples who came there were involved in the early stages of community building. Many of the area's settlers shared a common religion since most were Catholic; they also shared the experiences of being immigrants and of having to struggle to survive the depression. In addition, the Social Credit movement cut across ethnic lines to unite them in a common cause. While the Hungarians were one of the region's largest groups—the 1941 census reported about 300 people of Hungarian-origin, or roughly 10% of the population in the municipality—they were nevertheless a minority and they began to blend in with the other settlers. This pattern was in sharp contrast to the situation in southern Alberta, where most Hungarian settlers came to previously established, predominantly Anglo-Saxon communities and for many years remained on the margins of these communities.

In addition to Warburg, the north central region of the province attracted two smaller Hungarian settlements—one in

the area of Heatherdown, a post office northwest of Stony Plain, and the other at Cosmo, near Sangudo. The Hungarian experience in both of these settlements was similar to that in Warburg: the remote and bush-covered terrain bred a pioneer culture of survival which dispelled ethnic boundaries.<sup>39</sup> The Cosmo settlers developed some Hungarian group life; there was a concentration of Hungarian Presbyterians in the area and they were visited periodically by the Hungarian minister from Calgary. However, since the number of Hungarians was smaller than in Warburg, Hungarian institutions did not emerge as fully.<sup>40</sup>

There were several other concentrations of Hungarian immigrants in east-central Alberta. During the late 1920s, a few Hungarian farm families settled on CPR land at Hardisty, Provost, Mannville, Dewberry, and Vermilion. For example, in the Dewberry-Heinsburg area north of Vermilion, the late 1920s saw the settlement of twelve Hungarian families. One of the men, Vincent Varyu, who had been a machinist, came with his brother and brother-in-law in 1926 from south-eastern Hungary. Mr. Varyu had hoped to work as a machinist, but when he arrived in Canada, he discovered that he had to farm to comply with Canadian immigration regulations. He had little choice as to where he would settle. Immigration officials directed him to Saskatchewan and at the railway stations across northern Ontario and Manitoba, the car in which he and his companions were travelling was locked to prevent their early departure. Later, Mr. Varyu recalled his impressions of "going west":

As we moved on west we began to feel more down-hearted as it was now we began to feel the hugeness and loneliness of this great big country called Canada.

As I look back now I marvel at the courage we must have had to go on as we did. We didn't know what lay ahead of us and on top of that our English was limited. But we were young and full of vim and vigor and nothing looked impossible.

Together with the other two young men, Mr. Varyu purchased and cleared 480 acres of raw CPR land and, to earn extra money, worked on the railway's branch line, which brought his wife to join him one and a half years later.<sup>41</sup>

The most remote of the province's Hungarian settlements was in the Peace River district. During the late 1920s, this northern

region of Alberta was experiencing its major settlement boom. Several hundred Hungarians were attracted by this northward rush and they established two major settlements—one at Warrensville a few miles northeast of the town of Peace River, the other at Notikewin, just north of what would become the town of Manning. Some of these Hungarian immigrants had previously lived in Saskatchewan or the United States. Like all new Peace River country settlers in those years, they were faced with difficult conditions. During the 1930s, the region's isolation, harsh weather and primitive stage of development motivated many to migrate yet another time, to other parts of Alberta or to British Columbia, where a number of Hungarians began fruit growing in the Okanagan Valley. Nevertheless, by 1941, there were still 280 people of Hungarian background in the Peace River district, with about eighteen families in each of the two major settlements. Farming was so marginal however that even as late as 1949 a Hungarian-speaking priest visiting Warrensville found only three families who could afford cars, the rest came to church services in horse-drawn buggies.<sup>42</sup>

### *The Mining Experience*

Many of the Hungarian immigrants who came to Alberta during the 1920s found work in the province's coal mines, particularly in Lethbridge and Drumheller, but also in the Crow's Nest Pass and Edmonton. Most who did so were from the northern regions of Hungary, where there are numerous coal deposits; consequently, they had previous mining experience. Others moved from farm labour into mining as part of a seasonal work cycle and then remained in mining during the depression when jobs in other industries became scarce. They were attracted by the relatively high wages in mining; however, work in the industry was always sporadic.

In addition to the large group of Hungarian miners who had settled in the Lethbridge area, another major concentration of Hungarians developed in the Drumheller Valley, which was one of the province's foremost coal-producing regions in the late 1920s and early 1930s. In 1928 a railway line was completed between Drumheller and Rosemary, which made way for the opening of a series of coal mines from Rosedale east. Four of the biggest mines—Empire, Atlas, Murray and Aetna—were opened at East Coulee and the mining camp boomed from virtually



nothing in 1927 to a town of 1,200 by 1933, approximately two-thirds to three-fourths of the population being of Hungarian origin. In the Drumheller Valley as a whole during the late 1920s, there was a population of 10,000. This number included approximately 2,000 miners working in 29 different mines which were producing over a million and a half tons of coal annually, primarily for domestic use. Hungarian miners were scattered throughout the twelve Drumheller Valley towns and worked in all of these mines, but their greatest impact was in East Coulee.<sup>43</sup>

East Coulee was a typical Alberta mining camp, composed overwhelmingly of young men, whose work was difficult, dangerous and seasonal. In light of their strained economic circumstances and the sporadic nature of coal mining, most of them felt no permanent attachment to the community and the town's physical and social milieu reflected both their dominance and their transience. Most of the houses were one-room shacks for bachelors, though there were also some two and three-room houses for married men. That the community grew almost overnight, unconstrained by municipal bylaws, gave it a jerry-built character, with helter-skelter streets and an absence of paint and other aesthetic amenities.<sup>44</sup>

The mines operated on a seasonal basis and people would come and go accordingly. The mines worked steadily throughout August and September. Then, they remained open for one or two days a week, until February or March, when they closed for the year. Thus, beginning in October, the miners would find out if they would work on a day-to-day basis: a light on the mine tippie or the sounding of a horn would be the signal that there was work. Rose Kovacs, the wife of miner Charlie Kovacs (better known as "East Coulee Charlie"), remembers that the women did a lot of "cussing and swearing" when the mine signalled "No Work," since they needed the money to clothe and feed their families. When they were working, the miners considered their pay to be good: on a first-rate seam of coal a miner, working with a partner, could earn five to seven dollars a day. Thus the problem they faced was not low wages, but unsteady work. When the mines were closed, many of the miners quickly used up their meagre savings and were forced into debt to the town storekeeper. Consequently, they looked for work elsewhere, on the railroads, on farms or in the cities as labourers.<sup>45</sup>

Social life in the mining camps, such as East Coulee, provided

a marked contrast to the quiet, conservative nature of life in the province's agriculturally-based small towns. Transience, the predominance of males, most of whom were recently-arrived immigrants, and economic insecurity led to a lifestyle characterized by poverty, heavy drinking, explosive political discussion, occasional violence, mental depression and family instability. Unlike their counterparts in most other small Alberta towns, the Catholic priest and RCMP officer in East Coulee were two of the community's most unpopular figures. Women and children sometimes went to Mass, but in general organized religion played very little role in the community. When an Hungarian-speaking Catholic priest arrived in the Drumheller Valley in 1946, he found only three adult Hungarian males attending Mass. The major social center was not the church, but the Hungarian hall. The left-wing Hungarian Sick Benefit Society, which the Hungarian miners established, held twice-monthly activities in the union hall, including concerts, plays and dances, complete with Hungarian music. These events attracted both Hungarians and non-Hungarians from throughout the valley.<sup>46</sup>

Over half of the population of East Coulee was comprised of single males; consequently, it was very common for families, though already living in cramped, three-room quarters, to take in one or two boarders. Given the nature of the mining community, the only way that women could supplement family income was by taking in boarders or by washing and ironing shirts for bachelors at ten cents apiece. The presence of boarders destroyed the privacy of the family and the absence of unmarried women in the community occasionally led to the dramatic and conflict-laden situations associated with the "star boarder" syndrome—part of the experience and the folklore of the immigrant working-class culture in urban areas and mining camps across North America.<sup>47</sup>

In the mining towns, as in the rural areas, self-sufficiency was crucial to economic survival. Miners and their families kept large gardens and from nearby farmers they bought pigs and cattle which they butchered, smoked and cured. However, the relationship between family size and self-sufficiency was markedly different for the miners than for the farmers. The latter had large families, but the miners, usually limited their families to two children. This difference was a reflection partly of religious outlook, since the farmers tended to be more heavily

influenced by the views of organized religion than the miners, but primarily of the differing economic implications of family size for the two groups.<sup>48</sup>

### *Urban Communities*

In addition to its impact on the province's mining communities, the immigration of the 1920s led to small concentrations of Hungarians in Calgary and Edmonton. These formed the beginnings of the communities which, in the post-war era, would overshadow the rural settlements. The Hungarians who settled in both cities were poor, they were members of the working class and they faced immense difficulties because of depression conditions.

Calgary had six times as many Hungarians as Edmonton in 1931 and three times as many in 1941. Hence a more vigorous Hungarian community developed in Calgary, with a variety of religious, social and political organizations and activities. There had been almost no Hungarian residents of Calgary prior to 1921; in that year there were only twenty-one people of Hungarian origin in the city and its vicinity. But by 1931, the number of Hungarians had increased to nearly seven hundred in a population of 84,000. Most of the newcomers arrived in the latter half of the decade. Although many Hungarian immigrants established permanent residence in Calgary and acquired industrial jobs—in the sawmills and wood-preserving companies, in meat-packing plants, iron works and foundries—many others only came to Calgary for casual employment during the off-season, when work in the coal mines, sugar beet fields and railways in other parts of southern Alberta was at a standstill. That Calgary emerged as the largest centre of Hungarian population in the province was partly due to its being a major CPR divisional point. Immigrants arriving in the city by train could quickly find jobs on railway gangs through Calgary's CPR offices. In addition, Calgary was centrally located in relationship to the labour-intensive coal mines and sugar beet fields of southern Alberta.<sup>49</sup>

During the 1920s, immigrants were ostensibly coming to Canada as agricultural workers; nevertheless, the CPR made use of the Hungarian Colonization Board in Calgary to secure workers for its section gangs. An excerpt from a 1927 report of the Dominion Land Settlement Branch shows how this was done:

Those arriving under the Canadian Pacific are met on Train No. 1 arriving at four o'clock in the morning by a Mr. Schwartz, Manager of the Calgary Hungarian Colonization Board. They are directed by him to a rooming house and they are invited to register with him for ultimate naturalization. These people "mill" around Mr. Schwartz' office and the streets until they are placed...

Mr. O. Hanson, who keeps the Canadian Pacific Employment Office one block away, whenever he requires men of Extra Gangs, telephones over to Mr. Schwartz who sends him the number of men required.<sup>50</sup>

While this procedure may have been beneficial to both the CPR and the newly-arrived immigrants, it quickly engendered conflict and controversy. As substantial numbers of immigrants continued to arrive in 1928, 1929, and 1930 under the Railways Agreement and as the number of jobs available in railway work declined dramatically with the depression, conflict developed in Calgary between immigrant workers, between immigrants and the manager of the colonization board and between immigrants and the CPR over the allocation of scarce jobs. The CPR's colonization department correspondence during the period reveals a great deal of contention surrounding job allocation and also shows the desperate circumstances of many Hungarian immigrants in Calgary during the early years of the Great Depression.<sup>51</sup>

Those immigrants who were unable to find jobs were forced to go on the relief rolls, which made them subject to deportation. Andrew Davison, Calgary's mayor, in November of 1930, initiated deportation proceedings against all unnaturalized immigrants on relief, including twenty-two Hungarians. Mayor Davison's policy had fairly substantial public support since, as one CPR colonization official noted in an internal memo, "...considerable antagonism prevails against continental immigration in Calgary..."<sup>52</sup>

Some of the Hungarian immigrants, unable to get jobs in industry or on the railways but too proud to go on relief, found work in the Chinese-owned greenhouses. In the days before refrigerated trucks brought in produce from California, these enterprises which were located near the river just below the Calgary General Hospital, conducted a bustling trade. But the

work was hard, the hours were long and the wages were low. The greenhouse worker's day, for which he or she was paid ten cents an hour, began at four a.m. Many of the women employees remember that in winter, they worked with gunny sacks tied around their legs to help them withstand the cold. In summer, many of the immigrant men cut the lawns of wealthy homeowners in Mount Royal. Their wives worked as domestics or in restaurant kitchens. Since they had so little capital and no business experience very few Hungarians were able to establish their own small businesses during these years.<sup>53</sup>

During the late twenties and the thirties, Calgary's Hungarian community was transient, male-dominated and residentially segregated. As with many other immigrant groups, residential segregation developed because of economic circumstances and a tendency to congregate for mutual support. The area of Hungarian concentration was in the east end of town, between Ninth Avenue South and the Bow River and between First and Sixth Streets East. Four grocery stores were established which catered to the district's residents by selling Hungarian garlic sausage, liver sausage, pickled herring sauerkraut, paprika, rye bread and other Hungarian specialties.<sup>54</sup>

Within this community, Hungarian bachelors could board with Hungarian families. Many of these followed a common pattern of residential upward mobility. Typically a family settled initially in a small apartment-bloc suite. Then it moved into a larger suite with another family, often close friends. In a few years the two families jointly rented a house, then in a few more years bought first one and then a second house so that each family could have its own home. Real-estate investment was, in fact, a major entrepreneurial activity for many of Calgary's Hungarians. They would purchase run-down houses and renovate them, turning them into small apartment houses. Large two-story houses were often divided into several suites, housing two or more families and a few boarders. Families living in the same house shared not only the rent, but also babysitting services. Boarders in such a situation had surrogate families who could fill otherwise lonely evenings with card playing and socializing. This lifestyle was common in the Hungarian community for a number of years, since unfavourable economic conditions curtailed opportunities for mobility and prevented most families from purchasing their own homes until the 1940s.

Facing poverty, prejudice and problems of cultural adjustment and living in close proximity, Calgary's Hungarian immigrants developed a closely-knit community. In 1932, several of the community's leaders organized the Hungarian Canadian Club of Calgary to provide a social focus for the group and to keep alive Hungarian traditions. It sponsored a wide range of activities, including a youth organization, a women's group, a summer school, a library and a burial society, as well as organizing plays and dances. Maintaining the Hungarian language was not a major concern, since the Canadian-born spoke Hungarian as their mother tongue. The club crossed religious lines by uniting both the Catholic majority and the Presbyterian minority in a common effort. An Hungarian speaking Catholic parish and an Hungarian Presbyterian church were also established in Calgary during the 1930s.<sup>55</sup> Relations between Catholics and Protestants were generally cordial and they cooperated in many community activities.<sup>56</sup>

Although Edmonton emerged as the unofficial capital of organized ethnic life for several central and eastern European groups in Alberta during the inter-war era, Hungarians comprised only a tiny proportion of that city's population and they had virtually no organizations in the city until World War II. During the late 1920s, immigrants from the mining regions of northern Hungary began arriving in Edmonton in the hope of finding work in the nearby coal mines. The 1931 census reported only 119 Hungarians in Edmonton, and the 1941 census reported 237. But mining was seasonal work, so the number of Hungarians in the city fluctuated erratically. During the twenties and thirties, the factors of size and transiency made it impossible for the Hungarians in Edmonton to establish either religious or social organizations.<sup>57</sup>

### *Surviving the Great Depression*

The Great Depression was particularly difficult for the newly-arrived Hungarians. Except in the Lethbridge area, there were no existing Hungarian communities which could help the newcomers in establishing themselves. Nor could they turn to the government for help; its concern was to design strategies (including deportation) for keeping immigrants off relief rolls. Immigrants in urban areas and mining camps were faced with unemployment, under-employment and low wages. Farm work-

ers in southern Alberta faced back-breaking work in the sugar beet fields and those who went to northern Alberta found harsh pioneering conditions on isolated, bush-covered terrain. All of the immigrants had to cope with the simultaneous impact of economic crisis, family separation and culture shock. Many found the spiritual strength they needed from religious and cultural activities. Another sizeable group took solace from the discussion and advocacy of radical political solutions to world-wide economic crisis. In the mining towns and in some of the rural areas, Hungarian immigrants were attracted to the ideology of left-wing socialism and communism. They established and supported Hungarian-language organizations which were linked to the Communist Party of Canada and subscribed to left-wing Hungarian newspapers, and some became actively involved in political issues at both national and international levels. The support of a number of the new immigrants for communist ideas split the group. In several Hungarian communities tension developed between the conservative, nationalist and church-oriented faction, and those who supported the left.

Strong leftist support in several of the province's Hungarian settlements resulted from a combination of local economic conditions, old-world political beliefs and outside organization and support. In 1927, Hungarian leftists in Hamilton organized the Canadian-Hungarian Mutual Benefit Federation to provide both health insurance and political education for Hungarians across Canada. The group organized branches among Hungarians throughout the country, including branches at Calgary, Lethbridge, Picture Butte, Taber, Shaughnessy, Hillcrest (in the Crow's Nest Pass), and in the Drumheller Valley at East Coulee, Midlandvale, Nacmine, Newcastle and Rosedale. Most members of the organization also subscribed to the left-wing newspaper, *Kanadai Magyar Munkás* (Canadian Hungarian Worker), which began publication in 1929.

Support for the left among Hungarians varied in each community, depending on economic conditions, leadership and political experience in the old world. One outside observer who, in 1942, was sent by the federal government to give a report on Hungarian communities across the country, estimated that the left had won the adherence of the following percentages: 20% in Calgary, 40% in Edmonton, 50% in Lethbridge, and none

in Raymond. (The Hungarians in Raymond were not attracted to leftist views since almost all were mixed farmers and were more economically secure than the miners and labourers in urban areas.) The left had support from some of the farmers in the Milk River, Taber and Peace River districts, but its strongest support came from the mining camps, particularly those in the Drumheller Valley. Many participated in the cultural activities of the Sick Benefit Federation, including a number of dramatic productions which were strongly proletarian and anti-clerical.<sup>58</sup>

The growing class consciousness among many Hungarians found expression in their support for mine strikes and sugar beet strikes and for the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War. A portion of the Hungarian miners supported the attempt of the Mine Workers Union of Canada, which was linked to the communist-dominated Workers Unity League, to displace the more conservative United Mine Workers of America in the coal fields, and participated in strikes in several coal towns in 1932. However the Great Depression was not a propitious time for the formation of a new union, and the Mine Workers Union of Canada was ultimately crushed by the existing union, the coal operators and the police.<sup>59</sup>

Hungarian support for the Communists in the mining camps, along with intensified job competition during the depression, precipitated a wave of discrimination, which in turn merely served to confirm the miners in their communist beliefs. Hungarians thus became part of the larger pattern of conflict between conservative Anglo-Celts and radical non Anglo-Celts in the Drumheller Valley. Like other "foreign born" people in the valley, the Hungarians found themselves subject to several kinds of discrimination. First, there was job discrimination. Anglo-Celts were given the best positions in the mines and when production was cut back they were the last fired. Then there was discrimination in the distribution of "relief" money. One of the men who worked in the relief office in Drumheller during the 1930s recalls that "any man with a foreign name that came up there" faced a systematic pattern of delay intended to keep him off the relief rolls or to keep at a minimum the amount allocated to him. Relief officers simply assumed that "...everybody from eastern Europe were communists...that's all you could hear—REDS."<sup>60</sup>

Discrimination also extended to acquiring Canadian citizen-



ship. The Mounted Police searched the homes of any Hungarians who applied for citizenship. If the police found copies of *Kanadai Magyar Munkás*, or if the applicant was known to be a communist supporter, it was almost certain that he or she would be denied citizenship papers. "Some of them gave up trying to get their citizenship papers after being refused five or six times." Thus, by keeping the major source of leftist support—immigrant workers from eastern Europe—off the electors' lists, the more conservative and more powerful factions in the community were able to curtail dramatically the electoral influence of Communists in the Drumheller Valley. The Hungarian leftists found a few allies among left-wing Anglo-Canadians, but the predominant mood during the depression was one of tension between Anglo-Celtic and non-Anglo-Celtic workers.<sup>61</sup>

The class consciousness of Hungarian sugar beet workers in southern Alberta and the deterioration in relations between the newcomers and the host society is reflected in the strikes of 1935 and 1936, in which workers refused to sign contracts with beet growers until their demands were met. Among the beet workers, Hungarians were the largest single immigrant group. The Beet Workers Industrial Union (BWIU), which was affiliated with the communist-dominated Worker's Unity League, tried to organize them, along with other immigrant beet workers. The workers were receptive to the idea of a union since the growers, in response to a reduction in the price the sugar company paid for their beets, had reduced the amount they paid their workers for each acre of beets cultivated. The beet growers condemned the strikes on the ground that they were conducted by a communist union and in May of 1935, striking workers were given notice that unless they signed their contracts immediately, they would be evicted from their shacks on the growers' properties. A few workers were in fact evicted before the two sides came to terms. In 1936, the BWIU again tried to gain recognition as a bargaining agent and attempted to negotiate a better contract for the beet workers, but the growers remained obdurate in their refusal to recognize the union. When the growers' association began bringing in strikebreakers and evicting workers from their homes, the workers called off their strike and signed their contracts. The union remained impotent; however, because of the strikes the image of Hungarians and other central-European beet workers shifted during the mid-thirties from that of hard

workers to potentially-dangerous Communists, a stereotype which embodied both class and ethnic conflict. However, labour conflict was not sufficiently long-lived to effect a permanent worsening of grower-worker relations. The absence of serious violence during the strikes, the improved fortunes of the industry in the late thirties and early 1940s and the growing presence among the growers of former immigrant workers, all created an improved labour climate in the industry.<sup>62</sup>

In addition to unionism, one cause which captured the loyalty of many who supported the left during the 1930s was the Spanish Civil War. Tired of being unemployed, weary of criss-crossing the country looking for work and anxious to become involved in the struggle against the fascist threat in Europe, about fifty Hungarians from Alberta joined the contingent of Canadian volunteers who went to Spain to fight General Franco's forces. Among the casualties in Spain were a Hungarian from Taber, three from Lethbridge and four from the Drumheller Valley.<sup>63</sup>

The decade of the 1930s was a trying time for the Hungarians in Alberta. The group was economically insecure, linguistically and residentially isolated from the larger society, and it experienced sharp internal conflict because of political differences. Ironically, one factor in the group's ability to survive the depression was its isolation since it engendered a spirit of cooperation and spurred the growth of economic, social and cultural institutions that helped the immigrants to cope with their situation. The decade of the thirties marked the heyday of Hungarian cultural activities in the province.

#### *The Exception to the Rule: Barons on the Prairies*

Unlike most Hungarians who emigrated to Alberta during the 1920s, Barons Josef and Endre Csávossy did not flee a life of toil and poverty. The young barons were descendants of a wealthy and influential family. Josef, born in 1894, and Endre, born in 1897, had spent their boyhoods in Austria-Hungary where their father owned five estates, the largest of which encompassed 5,000 acres and employed three hundred men. The Csávossy property had been passed down through the family for four generations and the family had earned a place in the Hungarian House of Magnates (similar to Britain's House of Lords). The boys grew up being multilingual, since their mother was Austrian and their tutors were English and French. After attending private

schools and university, the young men assumed they would take their places managing the family's estates; but the aftermath of the war interfered with their plans. When the Romanian government took over their property with minimal compensation, they were immediately faced with the decision of where to emigrate. North America was not their first choice; according to Endre, "only the destitute came here." However, after unsuccessful attempts to purchase land in India and South Africa, they were eventually convinced by a CPR agent in London to settle in Canada.<sup>64</sup>

Although the Csávossy brothers knew very little about Canada, they had little trouble choosing their Canadian destination. They had heard about the Cochrane area from a farmer they had met at agricultural exhibition in London. They remembered his descriptions of the nearby Canadian Rockies and they thought such a setting would remind them of their boyhood home in the Alps. CPR officials made a special effort to facilitate their emigration and introduced them to a number of influential Canadians, including the president of the CPR. The Csávossys arrived in Calgary in March 1925 and soon purchased the Bow River Ranch at Springbank, southeast of Cochrane. Later that year they assisted in the emigration of four Hungarian families from their estate to help them with the work on their new land. They wished to recreate something of their previous lifestyle and were anxious to remain on the land.

The young aristocrats had virtually no practical experience in farming, but they made the most of their adventurous life in Alberta. Their new home, an abandoned ranch house, provided a marked contrast to the commodious manor house they had left in Hungary. "When we came to the house on the ranch for the first time," Endre remembers "it was full of cows and there was three feet of water in the basement." Although their previous experience with farming had been solely in the realm of administration, they soon became involved in day-to-day ranch operations. They converted the ranch into a mixed farm and were among the area's first large grain growers. They also became involved in dairying, then sheep and hog raising. They expanded their holdings from two-and-a-half to six sections and by the late 1920s, a time of high grain prices, they had a prosperous operation. In 1928, their buildings and crops won prizes from the local agricultural society. Riding this crest of

prosperity Baron Joseph purchased a Gypsy Moth airplane, took flying lessons from Freddy McCall, Calgary's aviation pioneer, and was soon exploring southern Alberta as a barnstormer.

But when the Great Depression hit, its impact was felt by those who had been flying high, as well as by the recently-arrived Hungarian who had not yet gotten his feet firmly planted on Canadian soil. Limited markets for grain soon shriveled the Csávossys' income, which of course reduced the scope of their operations. They were forced to abandon sheep raising because they could not afford a shepherd. According to Endre, "...the depression was very, very bad. We lost an awful lot of money... We were trapped, we couldn't go anywhere." Their Hungarian workers left to establish their own sugar beet farms in southern Alberta, so they worked the land themselves, relying for help on transient workers. In 1936 the brothers' fortunes hit their lowest point when a prairie fire devastated their crops and machinery.

Andrew and Josef were well-educated, were fluent in English and were readily accepted as colourful additions to the class-conscious, elite social circles of Calgary and Cochrane. Despite their few contacts with Calgary's working-class Hungarians, they did not sever their Hungarian connections. They hired Hungarian cooks, maintained frequent contact with their homeland and kept a multilingual library of over 2,000 volumes. After the Canadian Hungarian Federation (a national organization whose aim was to represent Hungarians throughout the country) was established in 1928 with the support of the CPR and the Hungarian consulate, Josef was asked in 1929 to act as its president. Josef was, however, merely the titular head of the organization; his brother, Endre, represented him at the 1929 conference in Winnipeg since Josef was travelling in Europe at the time. In any case, the organization was defunct by the early 1930s, a victim of the depression, the geographical dispersion of its membership and executive, political, religious and personal rivalries, and a not entirely unfounded suspicion that it was little more than an auxiliary to the CPR's colonization schemes. Living as they did within the charmed circle of Calgary's ranch-based elite, the Csávossys were able to maintain something of their old-world life. But like other Hungarian immigrants, they also had to change considerably in order to

adjust to their new home; and, despite experiencing their share of hardships, like many other Hungarians, they did not regret coming to Canada.<sup>65</sup>

### *The Impact of War: the Turbulent Forties*

The 1940s brought new opportunities and new challenges for Hungarians in Alberta. The war, with its accompanying mobilization and renewed economic activity in the province's mines, factories and farms, solved the problems of unemployment and poverty. It also enabled farmers to expand their holdings and, often for the first time, to purchase tractors, trucks and cars. The 1940s also brought a strong urban trend as some of the immigrants and many of the second generation responded to economic opportunities in the cities. Relative wartime prosperity enabled many immigrants to begin to feel established and settled in Alberta; many in the cities were able to purchase their own homes.

But circumstances for the Hungarians were not all sanguine. Between 1939 and 1941, Hungary had been neutral, but in 1941, in response to German pressure and to a fear of Russia and communism, Hungary joined the Axis cause and declared war on Russia. This immediately placed Hungarian immigrants who had not taken out Canadian citizenship in a difficult position. The Canadian government treated them as "enemy aliens;" they were fingerprinted and subjected to police surveillance. However, unlike such groups as the Japanese, the Germans and the Hutterites, most Hungarians passed through the war years unscathed. Indeed, the war offered the opportunity for second-generation Hungarian-Canadian men to prove their loyalty in the armed forces and many did so.<sup>66</sup>

With depression and war having virtually stopped new immigration, the second generation assumed a growing importance during the 1940s. One member of this new force recalls that "...there was a great difference between the first and second generations." The views and concerns of the children were inevitably different from those of their parents and their experiences during the 1930s and 1940s pushed them overwhelmingly in the direction of assimilation into Canadian society. The older immigrant generation had remained segregated in close-knit Hungarian communities during the 1930s; many of the younger generation felt constrained by this world and wanted

to leave it behind. The 1940s presented them with the opportunities to do so.<sup>67</sup>

A variety of social and economic factors facilitated the assimilation of the second generation—those who were born in Canada or had immigrated as children. English was their first language and sports their passion. Their parents continually stressed the importance of education as a means of getting ahead. A sizeable number of the second generation went on to become professionals—doctors, lawyers, social workers, nurses. The prejudice that many of them encountered had convinced them that assimilating to an English-Canadian norm was the only way to find acceptance and economic success in Canada. John Marlyn's novel, *Under the Ribs of Death*, the story of a young Hungarian-Canadian boy growing up in Winnipeg during the inter-war years, portrays graphically the dilemma of the second generation. The protagonist assures his father fervently that

...the only people who count are the English. Their fathers got all the best jobs. They're the only ones nobody ever calls foreigners. Nobody ever makes fun of their names or calls them bologna eaters or laughs at the way they dress or talk. Nobody, cause when you're English it's the same as being Canadian.<sup>68</sup>

A change of name was one way of escaping limitations on mobility and some young Hungarian-Canadians in Alberta did this to improve their chances for economic success and social acceptability. But the war provided opportunities for many to establish a new life without concealing their identities. Joining the armed forces not only provided a job but also helped to dispel the taint of disloyalty which left-wing political activities during the depression and Hungary's wartime alliance with the Axis powers had given to the image of Hungarians in Canada. The war brought together Canadian young people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and removed social barriers; for Hungarians, as well as for others, this meant increased friendships and marriages outside of their group.

Thus, a number of factors, including patriotism, prejudice, mobility, urbanization and intermarriage, combined to foster assimilation of the second generation. Given existing negative attitudes toward ethnic diversity in the province and the dispersion of Hungarians in widely-scattered settlements, the

1940s would have been in any case a period of growing assimilation among young Hungarian-Canadians, but the war hastened the process. These striking demographic trends are reflected in the 1951 census. By that year, the urban ratio of Hungarians had increased from 25% in 1941 to 43%. Because of wartime mobility, the number of people of Hungarian origin in the province actually declined slightly, from 7,892 in 1941 to 7,794 in 1951.<sup>69</sup>

The war and post-war years saw a decline in Hungarian cultural and political activities in Alberta. This was not merely the result of generational differences; rather, it was a reflection of a complex of economic, social and demographic developments. In Lethbridge and Calgary, growing economic prosperity and consequent mobility precipitated the breakup of the urban “Hungarian” neighborhoods. Support for the war effort temporarily united both religious and communist factions within the Hungarian community, thereby reducing internal political conflict. The war precipitated a decline in the numbers of Hungarians involved in specifically Hungarian churches, since war made it more difficult to get Hungarian clergy to serve the various Hungarian communities scattered throughout the province. And, by the end of the war, Hungarian left-wing political activity and commitment had ebbed. A number of the leftist leaders had returned to Hungary hoping to participate in building an Hungarian socialist state; war and post-war prosperity blunted the radicalism of those who remained. The cold-war atmosphere of the late 1940s and the 1950s also undermined support for the left.<sup>70</sup>

In the province’s farming areas and mining towns, the decline in Hungarian group activities was irreversible due both to out-migration and to increased integration of individual Hungarians into rural Alberta society. With the post-war influx of two new waves of immigrants, the Hungarian ethnic community of the post-war era would be dominated by new people and new issues, and would be almost exclusively urban.

### *A New Era: The Impact of Post-World War II Immigration*

The third wave of immigration from Hungary—the movement of “displaced persons”—was very different from the two previous waves. It was composed of urban, educated, middle-class people fleeing the threat of Soviet occupation and communist domi-

nation. There were three different groups: those who had been removed as forced labor to Germany during the war; those who left with the retreating German armies in early 1945 in the face of Soviet invasion; and those who escaped the communist reign of terror in 1948 and 1949. Included in all three categories were former government bureaucrats, members of the army's officer corps and middle-class professionals.<sup>71</sup>

Through the International Refugee Organization (IRO), the immigrants were admitted to Canada under sponsorship in quotas set by the Canadian government. The Hungarian clergy in Canada, both Catholic and Presbyterian, played a central role of arranging for sponsorship of the displaced persons by members of the Hungarian-Canadian community. Between January 1946 and June 1956, the number of Hungarian refugees in Canada reached a total of 12,332; approximately 800 of these came to Alberta. Because they were mobile and would not make severe demands on the Canadian housing market, the federal government gave priority to single immigrants. Before their families could join them, married men "had to accumulate enough capital to satisfy the investigating officials that all dependents would be adequately maintained on their arrival." As a consequence of these regulations, most of the Hungarian immigrants to Canada were young and men outnumbered women by a ratio of three to two.<sup>72</sup>

Les Bondar, now an oil company executive in Calgary, is in many ways typical of the refugees who came to Alberta as part of the post-war migration. Les was born in 1924 in a small community in the heart of Presbyterian eastern Hungary. His father was a bricklayer of modest means. Les had originally planned to follow his father's profession; however, after attending a Presbyterian high school, he had a chance to enter military school. Both church and military schools instilled in him an intense dislike of communism and a deep fear of Soviet domination. At age twenty, Les became an officer and served on the Russian front. The ill-equipped Hungarian army suffered heavy losses at the hands of the Russians and, with some of his companions, Les escaped westward to Poland, Czechoslovakia and finally, Austria.

In Austria, Les worked for three years at odd jobs in an American military camp, where he was befriended by an American soldier of Hungarian origin. His new friend helped to



teach Les some English and also discussed with him the possibilities of emigration to North America. In a field near the camp where he worked, a small group of Hungarian refugees often gathered for church services. Les began attending these meetings, which were presided over by a Presbyterian minister who had connections in Canada. Les wrote to the minister, literally on a scrap of paper, that he was interested in emigrating to Canada. The minister promised to pursue the question, but since there were no Canadian immigration officials in Austria and since his application had been so informal, Les held little hope of actually getting to Canada. Consequently, he left Austria, first for Holland and then for a displaced-persons camp in England.<sup>73</sup>

In the meantime, Les's clergyman friend was in contact with Dr. Kalman Toth, the Presbyterian minister in Calgary. Toth, who had a weekly religious broadcast in Hungarian over a Calgary radio station, arranged for potential sponsors of Hungarian immigrants. The sponsors had to be willing to advance \$250 for each immigrant's transportation costs and to provide farm work for one year. Reverend Toth was able to make such an arrangement for Les. The latter was in England, where he had re-trained as a male nurse, when he received news that he had been accepted as an immigrant to Canada. He sailed for his new home in April 1949.

Les had been sponsored by an Hungarian farmer in central Alberta, so he began his Canadian career as an agricultural worker. The Hungarian couple who employed Les had been part of the 1920s wave of immigration. They had no children, so the amount of farm work left for the hired hand on two sections of land was monumental. Les worked almost steadily from three in the morning until ten-thirty at night, doing jobs which were completely unrelated to any of his previous training. He did not feel exploited, since the farmer and his wife, who were determined to acquire more land and were saving every penny they could, kept the same hours as he did and the wife worked in the field with her husband. However, the farmer was forced to sell out because of ill health; so Les left the farm before his one-year contract was up and came to Calgary looking for work. Since his contract was not finished and because he was qualified as a nurse, the government sent him to work at the tuberculosis sanatorium in Calgary.

Owing to the high incidence of tuberculosis in Alberta and the difficulty of recruiting workers willing to expose themselves to this contagious disease, there was a strong demand for immigrant employees at the sanatorium; indeed, eighty percent of its support staff were immigrants. Though he had been trained in England and was proficient in English, Les was put to work cleaning floors and washing windows in a ward where the patient death rate was eighty-five percent. Obviously, this kind of setting created considerable anxiety for the workers; however, most had virtually no other options. While the previous wave of Hungarian immigrants did all they could to help the newcomers, they were unable to provide jobs, since most were themselves labourers. Les was eventually able to obtain a job as a draftsman for an oil company. In the meantime, he married a young woman of Hungarian origin from East Coulee. Over a number of years, Les progressed to head draftsman and finally became executive assistant to the president of a major oil company.

As soon as he arrived in Calgary, Les became involved in the Hungarian Presbyterian church, of which he is still an active member. Working all week in English, he feels at home once a week with the familiar hymns and a sermon in his mother tongue. He has also been an active member of the Hungarian Club in Calgary and was involved in providing help for the immigrants who arrived in 1956 following the political uprising in Hungary. His activity in the Hungarian community has not isolated Les from the larger Canadian society. Like many other post-war immigrants, his education and fluency in English enabled him to develop much closer contact with English-speaking Canadians than had been possible for the immigrants of the earlier wave. For example, in the mid-1950s Les became involved in politics, joining the Liberal Party since it had been in power when he had immigrated to Canada and he felt that at that time, immigrants were more welcome in the Liberal than the Conservative Party. Les served three terms as president of the Calgary Center riding, which gave him an opportunity to meet many prominent Canadian politicians. Through his organizational involvements, Les had played one of the essential roles in any ethnic community—that of “broker” between the group and the larger society.

Perhaps due to his youth when he arrived, Les was able to adapt to Canadian society more easily than some of the other

displaced persons, his Presbyterian affiliation put him in the minority among the immigrants and the extent of his involvement in Canadian politics had been unusual. However, many other aspects of this story illustrate experiences which were common among the post-World War II wave of displaced persons: spending several years in European refugee camps; experiencing hard physical labor and an uphill struggle for social standing and economic security in Canada; finding great difficulty transferring previous job skills and professional qualifications; becoming involved in the existing Hungarian community and finding both help and a sense of community within it.

While the adjustment faced by the post-war immigrants was much less traumatic than that of the immigrants of the 1920s, nevertheless, the process was not easy. The displaced persons who went into farm work or mining when they first arrived seldom remained after their contracts were over, but left for the cities, either in Alberta or elsewhere in the country.

That the newcomers stayed only temporarily in rural areas is not surprising, since most were educated people with urban backgrounds. Nor were they alone in their decision to move to the cities; during this period, some of the 1920s immigrants and most of their children were also leaving the farming and mining communities for expanding urban centers. However, once they arrived in the cities, they encountered barriers to mobility. In post-war Alberta, immigrants did not find universal acceptance. They discovered that employers expected them to speak English and to have Canadian work experience; that use of their native tongue with fellow-countrymen on the job was resented; and that they were constantly stigmatized by the pejorative label, "D.P." They were often isolated from the mainstream of English-speaking society and there was little inter-marriage with non-Hungarians. While many were able to find work as labourers, particularly with the railways, they often found that they were locked into these jobs because their previous education was unrecognized. The most adaptable among them were eventually able to improve their positions and some ultimately met the exacting standards of Canadian professional associations, thereby re-qualifying to enter their former professions. But such advancement required tremendous effort.<sup>74</sup>

The post-war immigrants had grown up during a period of

strong nationalism in Hungary and tended to be intensely nationalistic; consequently they usually joined the existing Hungarian institutions in the cities. Their interest and participation re-vitalized these organizations and a number of the newcomers soon found themselves in leadership positions. In addition, despite their small numbers, they established several new Hungarian organizations. Those who went to Edmonton helped to energize the Hungarian Cultural Society, which working-class immigrants from the earlier wave of immigration had established in 1945. For example, two displaced persons, Dr. Bela Biro, who has for many years worked as head of a City of Edmonton department, and Dr. Eugene Szekely, who was a physician in Hungary before coming to Alberta, where he worked as a farm labourer before being allowed to practice medicine, have played prominent leadership roles in the Hungarian Cultural Society from shortly after their arrival to the present.

In both Calgary and Edmonton, the post-war immigrants established branches of the Hungarian Veterans Association, an international organization founded to provide comradeship among former members of the royal Hungarian Army and "...to promote, preserve, and protect Hungarian culture and social life." Veterans like Tibor Rada in Calgary played an important role in keeping Hungarian cultural activities alive in the post-1950 era. In the early 1960s, members of the Hungarian Veterans Association in Calgary were instrumental in creating the Széchenyi Society. It is national in scope and it has raised funds tirelessly in order to contribute books about Hungary to Canadian universities and to establish a Hungarian chair at a Canadian university; it is dedicated to raising Canadian awareness of Hungarian culture, history and language. Leslie Duska, a former officer in the Hungarian army and a Calgary geophysicist, was a major driving force in this organization. Branches of the Hungarian-Canadian Scout movement also emerged in Alberta during the 1950s. Many of the new immigrants were particularly dedicated to scouting since it had been suppressed in post-war Hungary.

In contrast to the anti-religious views or religious indifference of the left-wing immigrants who came to Alberta during the 1920s, the post-war immigrants tended to place a high priority on religion. They came from a society in which religion had been very important and where there was an active social life

associated with the churches. This background, coupled with staunch anti-communism, predisposed the post-war immigrants to active church involvement. In addition, there were a number of clergymen, both Catholic and Presbyterian, among the displaced persons, who were able to provide leadership for the province's Hungarian churches. Consequently, one effect of the post-war immigration was a revitalization of religious institutions and activities. A new Catholic parish was established in Edmonton and the old Hungarian parish in Calgary, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, was reactivated in 1952. Hungarian Presbyterian churches were also established in Lethbridge in 1949 and in Edmonton in 1950.<sup>75</sup>

### *The Refugees*

Just as the displaced persons were beginning to feel established in Alberta, a new and much larger wave of political refugees from the 1956 revolution in Hungary arrived in the province. On October 23, 1956, the demand by Hungarians for sweeping reforms in the communist regime led to an armed clash. The first battles in the streets of Budapest caused the collapse of the communist government, but the massive entry of Soviet troops on November 4 sealed the revolution's fate. Soon, over 200,000 refugees poured over the border into Austria. By the end of the year, thousands of the refugees had come to North America; between July 1, 1956, and June 30, 1959, 37,000 Hungarians were admitted to Canada. The Canadian government took unprecedented steps to facilitate the entry of these refugees, removing almost all the usual restrictions. The classes of persons in Canada eligible to sponsor refugees were widened, normal medical examination procedures were reduced and free transportation by sea or air was provided.<sup>76</sup>

This new wave of immigration brought approximately 3,000 refugees to Alberta. Like those who settled elsewhere in Canada, those who came to Alberta were primarily young people; half of them were under twenty-nine and many were students. Nearly half were single and men outnumbered women by a ratio of three to two. Of those who had been in the work force prior to fleeing Hungary, the majority were either skilled workers or professionals. Their youth, education and motivation to succeed proved to be major assets; while they all experienced the inevitably thorny period of adjustment, learning the language and working

at menial jobs, their adaptation to Canada was less painful than that of previous waves of immigrants. A more receptive social climate, better economic opportunities, the presence of an already well-established Hungarian-Canadian community and their own values and skills combined to produce a striking success story.<sup>77</sup>

Some of the 1956 refugees were placed as farm workers throughout the province, but the majority were placed as labourers in the major cities. Given the shortage of industry in Alberta, technical workers had difficulty finding positions related to their backgrounds, but there were many jobs available in the construction industry. Because Calgary's Hungarian community was the largest in the province, it received the largest number of refugees. The government established temporary reception centers to accommodate the influx of newcomers and members of the Hungarian community supported the effort by providing additional accommodation, finding jobs and working as translators. Much of the task of helping the refugees was organized through the Hungarian churches, but other groups, such as the Knights of Columbus and Citizenship Councils were also involved in the effort. In total, nearly seventy civic groups in the province participated in the resettlement programs.<sup>78</sup>

In spite of the Canadian government's response to the Hungarian refugees of 1956, the refugees experienced problems and dissatisfaction during the first year after their arrival. Accustomed to a welfare state in Hungary and cherishing the exaggerated promises made to them by some Canadian immigration officials in Europe, many were discontent with the primitive accommodation in the hurriedly-arranged reception centers, and resented being expected to take whatever job was offered regardless of their educational or occupational background. Most were members of Hungary's educated middle class, but they found that in Canada they were being welcomed as unskilled labourers and domestics. A few, due either to ignorance of Canadian law or to their being among the handful of criminals who had escaped along with the political refugees, ran into trouble with the law. Press and editorial comment occasionally reflected on all of the refugees. For example, after some of the refugees had protested their living conditions, the *Calgary Herald* gave a stern warning: "The Hungarians Must Behave—or Else." The *Herald* also hinted darkly that the protests were being

instigated by the communists.<sup>79</sup>

A few of the newcomers were overwhelmed by the process of adjustment, and either returned to Hungary, or became locked into low-paying jobs, under-employment and welfare. The degree to which a refugee was able to adapt to his changed circumstances depended on a number of factors, including his age, his occupational background and his personality. The transition was particularly difficult for people whose professions were not easily transferable, such as teachers and lawyers; tradesmen and engineers had less difficulty. Some of the discontented left for what they hoped would be better conditions in the United States. But most made the adjustment to Canadian society, completed their educations and established themselves in the new milieu. Being married was often an asset for male immigrants, not only because of the personal security it provided, but also because the income of working wives was often crucial to a family's economic mobility.<sup>80</sup>

Beginning in the early years of the Great Depression, Hungarians had been changing from one of the most rural groups in the province to one of the most urban. Like the displaced persons, the 1956 refugees contributed to this trend toward urbanization. Most of those who at first went to rural areas moved to the cities as soon as possible. By 1961, the refugees had helped to swell the number of people of Hungarian origin in Lethbridge to 1,497, in Calgary to 4,168 and in Edmonton to 2,225. Between 1951 and 1961, the total number of Hungarians in Alberta had almost doubled, from 7,794 to 15,293 and the percentage of urban-dwellers among this number had climbed to 67%. Edmonton acquired a sizeable concentration of the Hungarian intelligentsia and professional class, since the University of Alberta made special arrangements to help some of the refugees complete their educations.<sup>81</sup>

The 1956 refugees helped to effect a striking change in the class composition of the Hungarian community in Alberta. Prior to 1950, Hungarian communities in the urban centers were working class; they are now overwhelmingly middle class. This is partly because of the mobility of second generation Hungarian-Canadians, but primarily because of the impact of post-war immigration. Hungarians can claim their share of Alberta's millionaires. The Edmonton community includes many medical doctors, lawyers, engineers and some university pro-

fessors. Calgary attracted many refugees who had training as geologists and geophysicists. The Calgary community now includes a number of businessmen and engineers who work in the oil industry and some who have established private engineering firms. Among the latter in Calgary are 1956 refugees Joseph Lukas, Joseph Sefel, Steven Illes, Bela Balaz and Tibor Fekete. Tom Kennedy, radio broadcaster and business journalist in Calgary is also among the 1956 refugees who have carved out a notable place for themselves in Alberta's urban life. Kennedy fled Hungary when he was seventeen, then went to England where he completed his education in journalism before coming to Canada.<sup>82</sup> Arpi Burdin, a refugee who left the Hungarian speaking part of Yugoslavia in 1954, has with the help of his two brothers, been able to develop Arpi's Industries in Calgary into a major mechanical contracting enterprise, currently employing three hundred men. Another sizeable business employing many Calgarians is C. K. Steel, established by two refugees who came in 1956, L. Czepregi and M. Kiss.<sup>83</sup>

Like earlier Hungarian immigrants, the 1956 refugees initially encountered a number of difficulties in Canada; however, several factors promoted their predominantly successful adjustment. Their image as "freedom fighters" during the cold war era tended to minimize prejudice against them. Their education and skills were welcome in a booming economy. They did not have to hide their origins in order to succeed. On their arrival, the refugees found a well-established Hungarian-Canadian community, which was able to offer them considerable help. Unlike the post-World War II displaced persons, they were not haunted by the long trauma of war.

Some of the 1956 refugees joined into the activities of the Hungarian community, but many did not; rather, they made a conscious decision to become assimilated into the larger Canadian society as quickly as possible. Many who came as singles often intermarried with Canadian women and their children seldom developed strong bonds with the Hungarian community. Historian Paul Bódy has attempted to explain the relative lack of attachment of the 1956 refugees across Canada to the established Hungarian communities:

...experiences of these people in Hungary predisposed them to question established social and moral ideals. This does not mean that they abandoned moral and



social commitments, but it suggests that as emigrants they reconsidered such commitments in the light of their painful disillusionment with ideological systems. When they settled in western societies, they sustained deep skepticism toward traditional values. In many cases, their search for new values did lead to the rejection of ethnic, community and religious relationships and to the pursuit of predominantly individual career goals.

Perhaps the refugees' outlook had also been influenced by the hostility to religion and nationalism which was an integral part of Hungarian school curricula during the late 1940s and early 1950s. In any case, estimates suggest that less than twenty percent of the "56ers" involved themselves in the Hungarian community.<sup>84</sup>

Nevertheless, this new and large wave of immigrants did give impetus to existing Hungarian social and cultural organizations, language schools and churches and some were involved in establishing new dance groups and choirs. The refugees founded only one of their own organizations, the Hungarian Freedom Fighters, a branch of an international association. Like branches of the organization elsewhere, it is strongly anti-communist in its orientation and is dedicated to bringing freedom to all countries, but particularly to Hungary and other nations presently under Soviet domination.

### *Conclusion*

While members of the pioneer wave of Hungarians have now passed into history, people from the three later movements—the 1920s immigrants, the post-war displaced persons and the 1956 refugees—are very much a part of present-day Alberta. Almost forty percent of those of Hungarian origin in Alberta are immigrants, the highest percentage of any central and eastern European group in the province. Because of significant differences in class backgrounds, conditions left behind and Canadian circumstances when they arrived, the character of each of these last three waves of immigration has been distinct. In the words of two Hungarian Presbyterian ministers in Alberta, "...difference in attitudes in these three groupings are enough to make them appear as three ethnic groups with a language link."<sup>85</sup>

Relationships among the different waves of immigrants have

been marked by both cooperation and conflict. The “oldtimers” did as much as they could to help the refugees when they arrived; however, a feeling of mistrust developed between some members of the two groups. There was a tendency among some of the post-war refugees, who were educated and middle-class, to look down upon the earlier-wave immigrants as “peasants.” The newcomers were disdainful of the limited financial position of the “oldtimers” and were baffled and irritated by the leftist political orientation of some of them. For their part, the earlier immigrants felt that their struggles in times of severe economic hardship were misunderstood and unappreciated by the recent immigrants, who not only arrived during a time of economic prosperity, but also received aid from the government and from the Hungarian community. This inevitable conflict, however, has been blunted with the passage of time.

In addition to class differences among the different waves of immigrants, the Hungarian community has also been split along political and religious lines; however, despite these differences, the community has developed a wide range of common activities. The churches acted as equalizers, keeping dissension within church-related activities to a minimum. Cultural and social organizations in Calgary and Edmonton have multi-purpose facilities and a wide range of activities for all age groups, thereby embracing all the waves of immigrants. The Hungarian Cultural Society in Edmonton and the Hungarian Cultural Center in Calgary, established in 1978 as an “umbrella organization for all Hungarian organizations in the city,” provide a year-round calendar of events, including dances, bingos, bazaars, fashion shows, arts and crafts classes and other activities. Two of the most active Hungarian organizations in the province are the Hungarian Senior Citizen clubs in Calgary and Lethbridge which are recapturing some of that vitality and sense of community which was so important to many of the immigrants who arrived in Canada in the late 1920s.<sup>86</sup>

Many of the dilemmas, concerns and opportunities currently facing Hungarians in Alberta are common to all of the central and European minorities in the province. For all of these groups, the church occupies an important part in their institutional life and conservative, anti-communist sentiments form the basis for political attitudes and activities. For all, the question of relations with the homeland government and their Canadian embassy

representatives is a difficult one that strongly divides the community. The Hungarian government is anxious to promote Hungarian cultural activities abroad and to support cultural exchanges; but some Hungarian political refugees have built their lives around opposition to the communist regime in Hungary and adamantly oppose any cultural links with the Hungarian government. Other leaders in the community feel that it is impossible to keep Hungarian culture alive in Canada without ongoing and creative contact between the two countries particularly in such areas as folk music and folk arts.

A more crucial dilemma, which is also shared by other central and eastern European groups, is posed to the very future of organized Hungarian life in Alberta by the paucity of new immigrants and the assimilation of the Canadian born. Some Hungarian refugees are still arriving; immigration statistics during the 1970s show about 30 Hungarians per year coming to Alberta. But they are too few in number to have any significant impact on the community. For most Hungarians, those who are anxious to have their children maintain a sense of Hungarian identity and a knowledge of Hungarian folk culture, face an uphill struggle. Saturday morning language schools are seldom popular with ethnic youth, and Hungarians are both too few in number and too indifferent to the question for the Hungarian language to be introduced into the school system. Nor is the group's demographic structure conducive to vibrant youth activities: the 1971 census showed the Hungarians to be one of the groups in the province with the smallest percentage of its total numbers in the under-fifteen category.<sup>87</sup>

However, the prognosis for the youth involvement and continued group vitality is by no means altogether bleak. The Hungarian community has considerable leadership talent, which has promoted the continued development of several dance groups, as well as other folk arts such as embroidery and cooking. This, along with several other factors, including travel to Hungary, and the federal government's multicultural policy, has promoted a continuing interest in ethnic heritage among Hungarian-Canadians and their children. Canadian-born leaders of the Hungarian community, such as Ann Lazlock, who has played an active role with youth groups in both Edmonton and Calgary, have perceived the need to adapt folk traditions to modern circumstances and the need to share their culture

with other Canadians if it is to be kept vibrant and meaningful. Many second and third generation Hungarian-Canadian youth find value and meaning in the social and cultural activities which keep them in touch with their roots.

Hungarian organizations in the large cities have been among the most responsive in the province to the new opportunities provided by the growing public acceptance of multiculturalism. For example, the annual Hungarian fashion show in Edmonton expresses this new philosophy of cultural sharing; the culture which is shared is not a static gift from another time and place, but rather, one which is alive and reflects the influence of both modern needs and Canadian conditions. The show has recently expanded to include the participation of additional ethno-cultural groups. Edmonton's Hungarian community also sponsors an annual Csárdás Ball, which has become an important social occasion not only for Hungarians, but for many other people in the large community. This represents a marked contrast to the types of social relations which existed between Hungarians and Anglo-Canadians in the cities and mining camps prior to the Second World War.

A number of factors, including the increased educational levels of Albertans, the improved social and economic status of Hungarians and the heightened awareness of Hungarian culture promoted by greater efforts at cultural sharing, have combined to change drastically the image of Hungarians in Alberta. The negative stereotype embodied in the epithet, "bohunk" has given way to a positive stereotype reflecting an appreciation of their contributions to *haute cuisine*, and high culture, particularly through such musicians as Bartók and Kodály, and a respect for their courageous stand as "freedom fighters." The Hungarian-born conductor of Calgary's philharmonic orchestra, Árpád Joó, has contributed to this appreciation of Hungary's rich cultural tradition.

Like the larger history of Alberta, the Hungarian experience in the province is of pioneer struggle, mobility, social and political conflict during the Great Depression and urbanization and growing prosperity in the years following World War II. While geographic mobility has been a dominant theme in Alberta history generally, it has been accentuated in the Hungarian experience. Their particular vulnerability as seasonal workers contributed to the substantial movement of Hungarians

between mining camps and farms at the turn of the century, and later, during the 1920s. That a number of Hungarian immigrants arrived in the late 1920s, on the eve of global economic disaster, meant that a particularly high percentage of them would be caught up in the search for scarce jobs—a restless quest which came to symbolize a decade of despair.

The war effected a dramatic change on the economy, but in so doing, uprooted many people once again. The decline of coal mining after the war led to a wholesale departure from the mining camps and into the cities. Farm workers too, including the post-war refugees who had been placed in rural areas, decided to seek better opportunities in the cities, thus becoming part of the widespread urbanization which was changing irrevocably the profile of Alberta. Frank and Rose Kovach, a Hungarian-Canadian couple currently residing in Calgary, exemplify the mobility of Albertan Hungarians. Rose who had, as a young girl, accompanied her parents to Manitoba in 1907, and Frank who arrived in Alberta during the late 1920s, met in Alberta and were married in 1936. Since then, they have moved eighteen times, between farm, mining camp and city.

Given the mobility of Hungarians, the degree of viability of their organizations in the province is remarkable. The organizations they established were crucial in helping the Hungarian immigrants to adjust to their new environment and to cope with the prejudice they encountered, the hardships of pioneering, and the difficulties of the depression, and in helping later waves of immigrants to establish themselves.

Although they established a number of organizations, the Hungarians in Alberta have not been highly visible. One reason for this has been that they were scattered in small pockets throughout the province and there were few communities which were predominantly Hungarian. Today, rural settlements provide little evidence of the Hungarian presence. For example, there are no rural churches reflecting distinctively Hungarian architecture since, because of their small numbers, the Hungarians usually shared churches with other Catholics or Protestants.

Despite their relative invisibility, the Hungarians have had a significant impact on Alberta's development. The first two waves of immigrants played important roles in the coal mining camps, the sugar beet fields and the pioneer agricultural settlements.

Post-war Hungarian immigrants have, in a very concrete sense, contributed to the building of the urban centers and many immigrants and second-generation Hungarian-Canadians are currently involved in various facets of the province's professional, business and economic life. Hungarian-Canadians are proud of the achievements of the post-war refugees and the children of the immigrants who arrived in such trying circumstances during the 1920s. In the apt phraseology of historian N. F. Dreisziger, the Hungarian-Canadian experience has been one of "struggle and hope." Each wave of immigrants has had to struggle to overcome major obstacles; but at the same time, Alberta has, at least for many, provided economic opportunities and political freedoms which they could not have enjoyed in their homeland.

#### NOTES

1. N. F. Dreisziger *et al. Struggle and Hope: The Hungarian Canadian Experience* (Toronto, 1982) Chapter 2. For an overview of the Hungarian experience in Ontario which has many parallels with the Alberta experience see the special issue of *Polyphony, Hungarians in Ontario The Bulletin of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario*, Vol. 2, # 2-3, 1979-80.

2. Paul Bódy, "Emigration from Hungary," in Dreisziger, *et. al. Struggle and Hope*. See also the paper by M. Boros-Kazai in Part I of this volume.

3. Martin Kovacs, *Esterhazy and Early Hungarian Immigration to Canada* (Regina, 1974); Norman Macdonald, *Canada, Immigration and Colonization: 1841-1903* (Toronto, 1966) pp. 224-228. See also Kovacs' paper in Part I of this volume.

4. *Ibid.*; Andrew Marchbin, "The Origin of Migration from South-Eastern Europe to Canada," *Canadian Historical Association Report*, 1934 pp. 110-123; *Medicine Hat Times* Dec. 25, 1886.

5. Kovacs, *Esterhazy*; Merle Storey, "Hungarians in Canada," *Canadian Geographical Journal* August, 1957, p. 48; Martin Kovacs, "The Saskatchewan Era: 1885-1914," in Dreisziger *et al. Struggle and Hope*, Chapter 3; The 1911 census figure included an undetermined number of non-Magyars from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, as well as "Moravians" and Lithuanians.

6. A.A. den Otter, "Sir Alexander T. Galt and the Northwest," Unpublished Ph.D. University of Alberta, 1975 pp. 230-232; H. Palmer, "Nativism in Alberta, 1880-1920," Unpublished M.A., University of Alberta, 1971 pp. 39-41; A. A. den Otter, "Urban Pioneers of Lethbridge," *Alberta History* Winter, 1977 pp. 15-24. Information on Hungarian farmers from Pennsylvania and from Esterhazy arriving in Lethbridge from Martin Kovacs, "A Comparison of Hungarian Communities in Early Alberta and Saskatchewan," in H. Palmer and D. Smith, eds. *The New Provinces: Alberta and Saskatchewan 1905-1980* (Vancouver, 1980), pp. 101-130.

7. Dreisziger, *Struggle and Hope*, Chapter 4; Jenő Ruzsa, *A Kanadai Magyarság Története* (Toronto, 1940); Paula Benkart, "Hungarians," in Stephan Thernstrom, ed. *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980), p. 466.

8. See Kovacs, "Hungarian Communities in Early Alberta," pp. 114-116 for a discussion of the significance of the boarding house in the Lethbridge area. Quote from Benkart, "Hungarians," p. 466.

9. Alice A. Campbell *Milk River Country* (Lethbridge, 1959), pp. 363, 390-397, 400, 404, 406; Women's Institute, *Drybelt Pioneers of Sundial, Enchant Retlaw* (Lethbridge, 1967) pp. 250, 264, 274, 275-276, 301-302; *Census of the Prairie Provinces*, 1916.

10. Mecca Glen Centennial Committee, *Mecca Glen Memories* (Ponoka, 1968), p. 235, 236, 237, 243, 244, 272-273. Quote from p. 236.

11. *Ibid.* Interviews, Mrs. Rosie Toth, Bashaw, Feb. 15, 1980, August, 1980. Mr. Julius Mraz, Edmonton, Feb. 12, 1980.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 243, 253, 272-273; Interview, Julius Mraz, formerly of Bashaw; Edmonton, Feb. 12, 1980.
13. H. Palmer, "Nativism in Alberta, 1880-1920," Chapter 3; *Lethbridge Herald*, Nov. 18, 1914.
14. Dreisziger, *Struggle and Hope*, Chapters 2, 4, 5.
15. In 1936, by which time most families who were going to be reunited had been, among Hungarian immigrants men outnumbered women more than 2:1--2,464:1,048. *Census of the Prairie Provinces*, 1936, Vol. 1, p. 1025.
16. *Census of Canada, 1931*.
17. Dreisziger, *Struggle and Hope*, Chapter 1.
18. *Ibid.*, Chapter 2. One-fourth of the 150,000 Hungarians who emigrated abroad during the 1920s and 1930s came from outside the post-war boundaries of Hungary.
19. *Ibid.* Information on regional origins of Hungarians in Alberta in Ruzsa, *op.cit.*
20. J. B. Hedges, *Building the Canadian West* (New York, 1939), pp. 361-362. H. Palmer, "Nativism in Alberta, 1920-1972," Unpublished Ph.D. York University, 1972, Chapter 2.
21. Donald Avery, *Dangerous Foreigners* (Toronto, 1979), p. 102; Glenbow Archives, CPR Colonization Papers, files 291, 438, 523, 728, 829-933, 836, 839, 1001, 1017, 1035, 1823, 1824.
22. Magrath District Historical Society, *Irrigation Builders* (Lethbridge, 1974), p. 347; CPR Colonization Papers, file 682.
23. For an account of the life of sugar beet growers see John Thompson and Allen Seagar, "Workers, Growers and Monopolists: The 'Labour Problem' in the Alberta Beet Sugar Industry During the 1930s," *Labour*, 1978 p. 154.
24. Glenbow Archives, CPR Colonization papers.
25. *Lethbridge Herald*, October 8, 1925. See also L. H. May 21, July 17, 1925.
26. Interview, Father Steven Molnar, Calgary, December, 1979; Interviews, Lethbridge, 1967.
27. *Census of Canada, 1931*.
28. Ruzsa, *A Kanadai Magyarság*; Interview, Joe Molnar, Calgary, Jan. 18, 1980.
29. *The History of the Eastern Irrigation District* (Brooks, 1960).
30. Glenbow Archives, CPR Papers, Nominations Repayment Papers, f. 835. Quotes from Memorandum, William Schwartz to H. S. Kent, Jan. 11, 1933; "Report for Mr. H. S. Kent," Brooks Nov. 24, 1932.
31. Interview, Rev. Steven Molnar, Calgary, December, 1979.
32. J. B. Hedges, *Building the Canadian West*, p. 317; Warburg and District Historical Society, *Golden Memories* (Warburg, Alberta, 1977); CPR Colonization Papers, file 760.
33. *Golden Memories*, pp. 179, 214, 226-227, 253-254, 258-259, 260-264, 279, 282-285, 330-333, 347, 353-356, 380-381, 412-413, 417-418, 428, 451, 452, 455, 462; Interviews, Charlie and Rose Kovacs, Calgary, Dec., 1979; Mr. and Mrs. John Fritz, Edmonton, Jan. 1980.
34. *Ibid.*; J. B. Hedges, *Building the Canadian West*, p. 319.
35. *Golden Memories*, p. 259. Quote from p. 333. Interviews, Charlie Kovacs, John Fritz.
36. *Golden Memories*, pp. 323, 50, 353.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.
38. *Ibid.* Interviews, Kovacs and Fritz.
39. On the Heathdown settlers see Hills of Hope Historical Committee, *Hills of Hope* (Spruce Grove, 1976), pp. 259, 482-484.
40. Sangudo District History Society, *The Lantern Era* (Winnipeg, 1979). Quote from p. 802. See also pp. 85, 581-582, 611-613, 629-631, 669-670, 686-688, 802-803.
41. Interview, Mr. V. Varyu, Edmonton, Alberta, Jan. 23, 1980; Quote from Greenlawn Centennial Committee, *In Retrospect*, 1967 (Winnipeg, 1968), 239.
42. *Census of Canada, 1941*; Interview Father Steven Molnar, Calgary, Dec. 1979.
43. Drumheller Valley Historical Association, *The Hills of Home: Drumheller Valley* (Calgary, 1973), pp. 454-459; *Calgary Herald*, Nov. 1, 1930; Special section of

*Edmonton Journal*, Dec. 30, 1933; Interviews, Father Steven Molnar; Rose and Charlie Kovacs; Arthur Roberts, Calgary, January, 1980.

44. Interviews.

45. *Ibid.*

46. *Ibid.*

47. For a discussion of the social order of the boarding house in North America and the "star border" phenomenon, see Robert Harney, "Boarding and Belonging," *Urban History Review*, 2, pp. 8-37.

48. Interviews.

49. *Census of Canada*, 1921, 1931.

50. Quote in Avery, *Dangerous Foreigners*, p. 102-103.

51. CPR Colonization Papers, file 1039, H. S. Kent, District Superintendent of Colonization to Joseph Schwartz, March 21, 1931; *Ibid.*, file 1039; H. S. Kent, Memorandum for Mr. Bosworth, Calgary, April 25, 1931; *Ibid.*, J. S. Schebeck to H. S. Kent, Sept. 11, 1931.

52. *Calgary Herald*, Nov. 27, Dec. 8, 1930. CPR Colonization Papers, file 1824, James Colley to Joseph Schwartz, October 11, 1927.

53. Interviews, Ann Lazlock, Calgary, June, December, 1979; Father Steven Molnar, June, 1979.

54. *Ibid.*; Interview, Margaret Lorincz, Calgary, June, 1979; Ruzsa, *A Kanadai Magyarság*. For discussion of Hungarian ethnic "colonies" in other urban centers in North America during the 1930s, see John Kosa, "Hungarian Immigrants in North America; Their Residential Mobility and Ecology," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, August, 1956, pp. 358-365.

55. Interviews, Ann Lazlock, Father Steven Molnar, Mrs. Gyula Koronghy, Calgary, Dec., 1979; Ruzsa, *A Kanadai Magyarság*.

56. *Ibid.*

57. Ruzsa, *Ibid.*; *Census of Canada*, 1931, 1941; Interview, Charlie Kovacs.

58. Dreisiger, *Struggle and Hope*, Chapter 4; István Szőke, *We Are Canadians* (Toronto, 1954), pp. 64-68, 71-72, 76-82. Interviews, Kovacs and Molnar; Bela Eisner, "A Survey of Selected Canadian-Hungarian Communities," Department of Citizenship and Immigration, 1942, (located in library of the Department of the Secretary of State, Ottawa) pp. 34-37.

59. Allan Seagar, "A History of the Mine Workers Union of Canada, 1925-1936," Unpublished M.A., McGill University, 1977.

60. Interview, Arthur Roberts, Calgary, January 1980.

61. For a discussion of the connection between support for the left and discrimination among immigrants generally in Alberta during the 1930s, see H. Palmer, "Nativism in Alberta, 1920-1972," Chapter 3. For the background on pre-1930 ethnic relations in the Drumheller Valley see James Gray, *Roar of the Twenties* (Toronto, 1975), pp. 288-89; David Bercuson, *Wise Men and Fools* (Toronto, 1978), Chapter 8; James Gray, *Red Lights on the Prairies* (Toronto, 1971), pp. 207-12. Interviews, East Coulee, Drumheller, Calgary.

62. Seagar and Thompson, "Workers, Growers and Monopolists," pp. 159-171. Glenbow Archives, Interview, Peter Meronik, Coleman, Alberta, June 19, 1977, pp. 17-22.

63. Victor Hoar, *The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion* (Toronto, 1969); Szőke, *We Are Canadians*, p. 80; Interview, Charlie Kovacs. For the life history of one of the volunteers see *The Delta and District Historical Society* (Lethbridge, 1970), pp. 470-71.

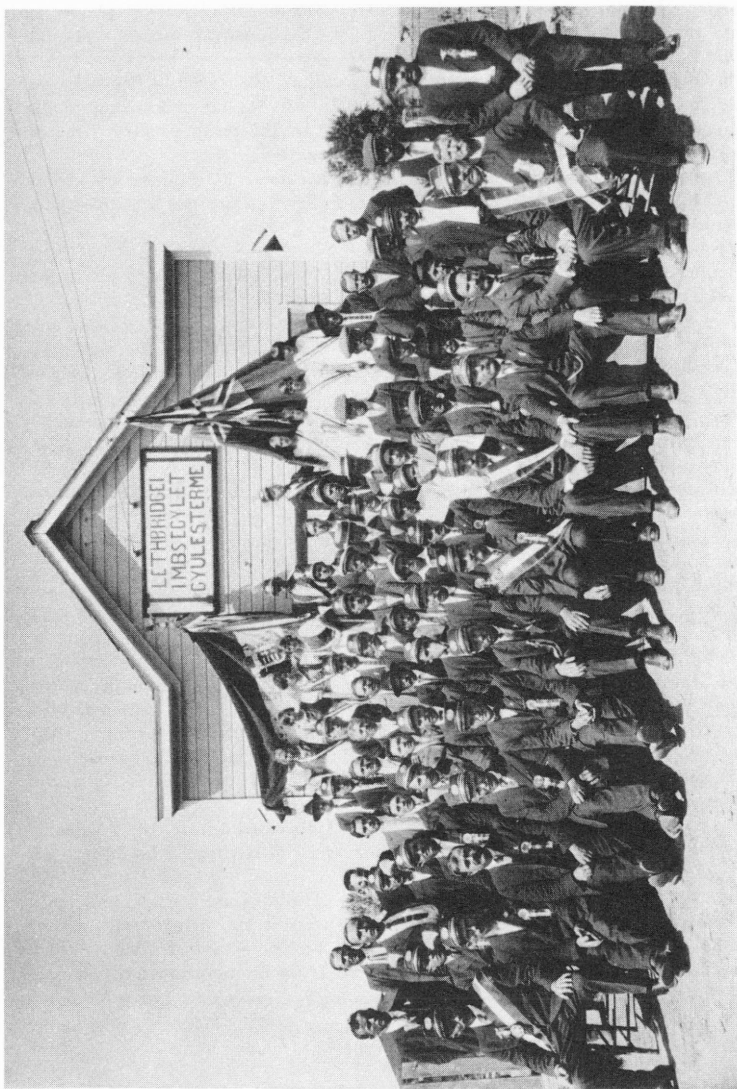
64. Material on Csavossys from two interviews and their own account in a local history. Glenbow Archives, G. A. Dunsmore (collector) "An Interview with Baron Josef and Endre Csavossy," April 17, 1973; Interview, Marianne Fedori with Endre Csavossy, Jan. 4, 1980; Foothills Historical Society, *Chaps and Chinooks, A History of West Calgary* (Calgary, 1976), p. 543-544; See also *Calgary Albertan*, Oct. 8, 1928; *Calgary Herald*, Oct. 8, 1928.

65. Interview, Endre Csavossy, Jan. 4, 1980.

66. Dreisiger *Struggle and Hope*, Chapters 1, 6. For the overall context of ethnic relations in the province during the Second World War, see Palmer, "Nativism in Alberta, 1920-1972," Chapter 4.



67. Interview, Joe Molnar.
68. Interviews; Quote from John Marlyn, *Under the Ribs of Death* (Toronto, 1957).
69. *Census of Canada*, 1941, 1951.
70. For the general pattern of the break-up of Hungarian urban/ethnic "colonies" in the early post-war era, see John Kosa, "Hungarian Immigrants in North America," p. 361; Other generalizations based on Dreisziger, *Struggle and Hope*, Chapter 6, and Interviews. Some of the leftists who had gone back to Hungary returned to Canada disillusioned.
71. John Kosa, "A Century of Hungarian Emigration, 1850-1950," *The American Slavic and East European Review*, December 1957, pp. 511-13. According to data from the International Refugee Organization, 57% of the refugees were from the Hungarian middle-class and 16% were from the working class.
72. Dreisziger, *Struggle and Hope*, Chapter 2; Department of Immigration, Annual Statistics, 1946-56; Gerald Dirks, *Canada's Refugee Policy: Indifference or Opportunism* (Montreal, 1977), p. 153.
73. Interview, Les Bondar, Calgary, Dec. 27, 1979.
74. Interviews, Les Bondar, John Zold, Calgary, June, 1979; Tibor Rada, Albert Siebert, Calgary, June, 1979.
75. Interviews, Dr. Bela Biro, Dr. Eugene Szekely, Edmonton, Jan. 2, 1980; Father Steven Molnar; Dreisziger, *Struggle and Hope*, Chapter 7. For details on the Hungarian-Catholic Parish in Calgary see M. B. Byrne, *From the Buffalo to the Cross* (Calgary, 1973), p. 177-79.
76. *Struggle and Hope*, Chapter 7; Dirks, *Canada's Refugee Policy*, Chapter 9.
77. Dreisziger, *Struggle and Hope*, Chapters 2, 7; *Census of Canada*, 1961.
78. Interviews; *Calgary Herald* Aug. 12, 29, 1957.
79. Interviews; *Calgary Herald* May 18, March 28, June 15, Sept 12, 1957; Editorials in *Calgary Herald*, June 30, Aug. 3, 1957.
80. Interviews; Farkas, Molnar, Biro; Sandor Zsitvay, Calgary, June, 1979; M. Hajnal, Edmonton, January, 1980.
81. *Census of Canada*, 1951, 1961.
82. Interview, Tom Kennedy, Calgary, June 1979.
83. Interview, Arpi Burdin, Calgary, Dec. 1979.
84. Dreisziger, *Struggle and Hope*, Chapter 2. Interviews, Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge; Evidence of the fact that Hungarians are more assimilation prone than other eastern European groups like Ukrainians and Poles can be found in Ken O'Bryan et. al. *Non-Official Languages: A Study in Canadian Multiculturalism* (Ottawa, 1976).
85. Rev. K. C. Doka and Rev. B. D. Nagy, "Calvin Hungarian Church-Calgary," in Synod History Committee, *Growth: A History and Anthology of the Synod of Alberta of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (n.p., 1968), p. 124.
86. For an overview of the range of activities which exists within the Hungarian community in Edmonton and Calgary see the entire issue of *Heritage*, May-June, 1977; *Edmonton Journal*, May 5, 1979.
87. In the under-fifteen category, 24% of those of Hungarian background in the province compared to 34% of the total population were in this category. A number of factors have created this demographic structure. The post-war refugees tended to have small families; also, many of the men from the 1920s immigration did not marry or re-establish families in Canada.



*The Hungarian Sick Benefit Society of Lethbridge,  
founded in 1901.*



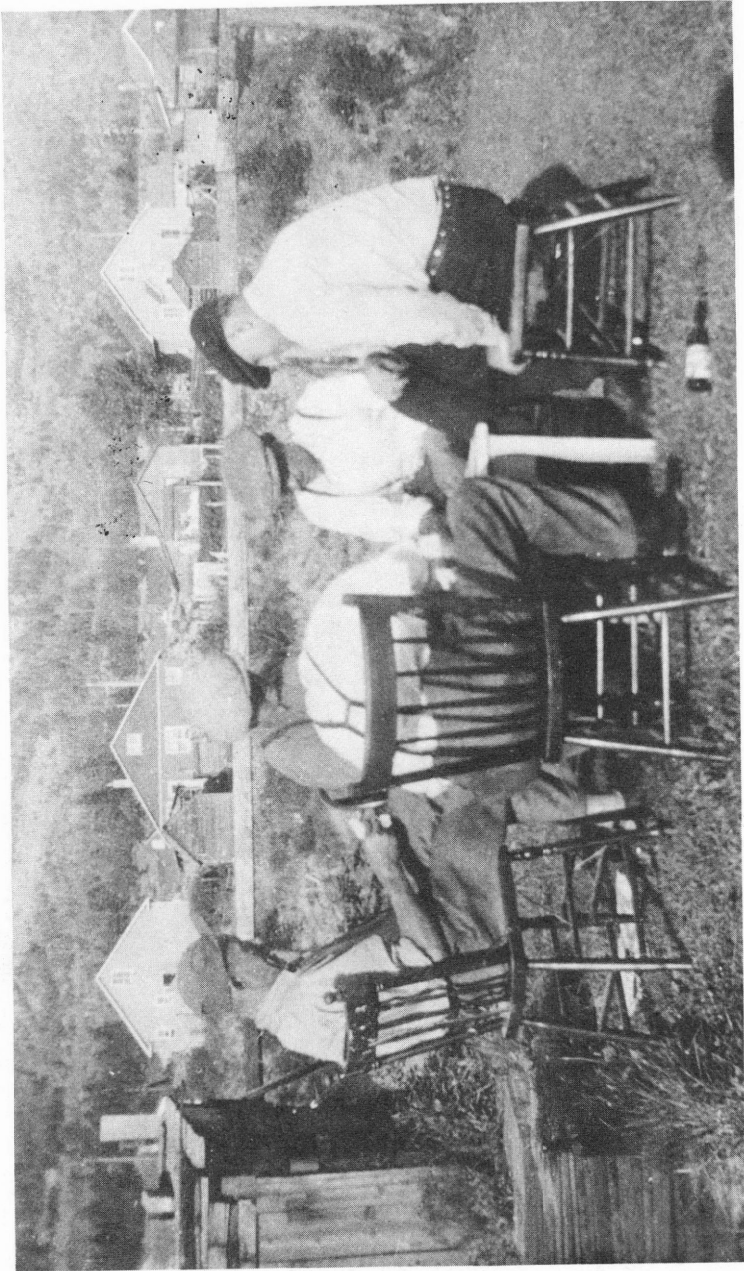
*Hungarian Protestant church in Manfred, Alberta  
(near Bashaw) c. 1920.*



*Hungarian community of Calgary with Bishop Carrol  
on occasion of the blessing of a Hungarian flag; 1936.*



*May Day Parade, Drumheller, Alberta. c. 1940.*



*Hungarian miners of Crow's Nest Pass. c. 1944.*

**Articles to be published in forthcoming issues of the**  
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