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‘Malenkey Robot’ in the Carpathian Basin, in Hungary – Data, Facts, Interpretations, Connections

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Abstract. Interpretation problems related to the notion of ‘malenkaya rabota,’ POW, internee, GULAG and GUPVI. Ways of classification of the victims of ‘malenkaya rabota’ in the Carpathian Basin, various groups and types. Determination of the effective number of the groups, and of the total number of those deported as civilians from the 14.7 million inhabitants of the Hungary of the time, based on different data, and the difficulties of definitions. The interpretation and implementation of the central Soviet commands. The connections between the deportations. Similarities and differences between the deportations as internee and as POW. Manageability of the data, interpretation of Soviet and Hungarian archive data and the reasons why they are different. The real value of Soviet archival sources. The determination of the losses attributed to ‘malenkaya rabota’.

Keywords: POW, internee, deportation, ethnical clean-up, German, Soviet, NKVD, GULAG, GUPVI, camps

In the Second World War, as opposed to earlier wars, more civilians were killed than the number of the soldiers killed in military actions. And in the so-called ‘liberated’ areas occupied by the Soviet Union, which named itself a ‘liberator,’ for hundreds of thousands there was not a period of peace and freedom that would come but a period of deportation, forced labour, captivity, and humiliation.

250-300 thousand civilians were deported for ‘malenkij robot’ from the contemporary Hungary to the Soviet Union.

The expression of Malenkey robot originates from Russian malenkaya rabota (маленькая работа), meaning ‘a little work’. The members of the Soviet military forces used this expression mostly to justify the dragging away of civilians. The Soviets promised that the civilians would have to go only for a few days’ work behind the front line or they promised a few minutes’ long identification procedure. In fact, the Soviets deported the civilians to forced labour in the Soviet

Union. They tricked hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians. These lies were told in order to prevent potential protests, defiance, and attempts to flee.

This is why these two words became known in the public mind in Hungary and later, as a consequence, also among historians, to mean the dragging away of masses of civilians and their captivity in forced-labour camps in the Soviet Union, lasting for several years.

However, due to the late access to contemporary Soviet documents, there are many today – even historians researching that period – who mean 'malenkij robot' differently. Most of them mean people deported to GULAG-lagers as political prisoners, or people including them. At the same time, there are some who mean only the deported Germans by this expression, i.e. people who were internally deported, even though more people were deported than the internally deported for forced labour from Hungary to the Soviet Union on the pretext of the lies of 'malenkij robot' (little work).

Most of the civilians captured in Hungary were carried off by the Soviet armed organizations as POWs, while a minor part of them were carried off as internees. Documents found in Russian archives also demonstrate that it always depended on the commands of the higher organizations whether the civilian captives were named POWs, internees or just detainees. So, for example, part of the civilians collected by the commander of the 2nd Ukrainian Front, Marshal Malinovsky, 12,933 persons, were taken out from the register of the POWs and put into the register of the internees. (Varga 2009: 156) The confusion in the interpretation of the difference between POWs and internees was also enhanced by Order No. 1798-800 S. (Secret!) approved by the Council of the People's Commissars of the Soviet Union on the 1st of July 1941, which said: '*The following are to be qualified as POWs:* all persons belonging to the armed forces of the states at war with the Soviet Union who fell into captivity during military actions*, as well as the civilians of these states interned to the Soviet Union*.' [italics – Z. B.] (Varga 2006: 55) And indeed, POWs and internees were no more separated when they were transported back to Hungary. The trains which transported them arrived home uniformly as POW deliveries, while in Hungary, which was under Russian control, the issue of the internees was allowed to be mentioned only in the frame of the POW issue.

But what facts of the civilian population's deportation in large numbers were there in the background; and what are the exact numbers?

First of all, the Soviet Union had a huge workforce demand as the rebuilding of the European part of the country destroyed in the battles needed a lot of workforce too. At the same time, the Soviet Union suffered immense human losses during the Second World War; according to the latest researches, this meant 27-30 million people. Furthermore, it maintained the biggest army of the world, including 11.3 million people in mid-1945. (Gosztonyi 1993: 226) Thus,

the Soviet empire suffered from an immense workforce shortage. The captives, at the same time, meant free-of-charge workforce in large numbers.

The principle of collective guiltiness had been taken as an ideological base for the acquisition of such workforce from abroad by that time. Although the application of this principle against the Hungarians was officially denied by the leaders of Stalin, the principle was still applied in the practice.

Stalin already stated during the discussion he had with the British Foreign Secretary Eden on the 23rd of March 1943: 'Hungary should be punished.' (Ránki 1978: 14) A few months later, the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, Molotov, wrote in his answer dated the 7th of June 1943 upon inquiry of the British diplomacy: 'The Soviet government thinks that for the armed help rendered by Hungary to Germany (...) the responsibility should be taken not only by the Hungarian government but more or less also by the Hungarian population.' (Juhász 1978: 158–159)

In addition, three more reasons or explanations were named for the deportations from the revised Hungary of that time. Accordingly, the civilian persons carried off in large numbers can be divided basically into three groups:

1) supplement to the number of POWs
2) ethnical clean-up
3) being interned as Germans.

1.) There were two motives for the supplement to the number of POWs. One of these was an official one originating from an order of the highest level and the other one was a subjective decision at local levels.

I can see the outlines of a decision of the highest level from the documents available, according to which the Soviet armed organizations had to collect all men who saw service since 1941, and take them as POWs. In this respect, the Soviet town commander of Budapest, Chernishov, did not palter but stated frankly that those 'who saw service since 1941 will be instructed to report and will be taken to prison camps.' (AMH MD 1274/gen. – 1945)

At the same time, the implementation took place without the consideration of the various aspects. The supplement to the number of POWs was achieved in a very varying way, by means of the most various kinds of delusions. Moreover, in many places, not only those were deported who did military service after 1940, but also men between 18 and 50 of military age, and in many cases this age limit was neglected as well.

The Transdanubian POW camps were also filled up by population from the neighbourhood. The Lord Lieutenant of Vas County wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in a letter dated the 8th of May: 'I report that several concentration camps were established in the area of the county by the Soviet troops which marched in. These camps were set up and filled up in the same way as in the

other parts of the country. The whole population of some villages were rounded up under the pretext of setting them to work…' (AVC PLL 75/1945)

But not only men of military age were carried off! In the district of Ivánc, every man between 16 and 45 years had to report at the village hall with 5 days' food and 2 sets of underclothes. (NAH POWD of MFA 27.338/pol. – 1945) According to the order of the Russian security organizations in Szigetvár, the boys and men aged 14 and 50 were also rounded up in the Western part of Baranya County. (NAH POWD of MFA 27.832/pol. – 1945)

In most settlements, the population had to report on pain of being shot in the head, or in case of their failure to report, prospects of retaliatory measures were held out against their families.

Regarding the decisions at the local level, those responsible for the deportation of the population were commanders of higher Soviet units, that is, of fronts, armies, army corps or divisions, who usually explained the delay in the achievement of the goals set by their superiors with the higher than expected staff number of the enemy forces.

So, for example, because of the protracted battle of Torda (in Romanian: Turda), about 10 thousand civilians were deported from the neighbouring towns and villages, among them 5 thousand people from Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca) and more than 10 thousand from the region of Nyíregyháza and Debrecen because of the armoured battle of Debrecen, which ended in an operation failure for the Soviets.

However, the deportation of the population that happened on the ground of the battle in Budapest exceeded all proportions seen until and after that. It seems to be likely that the self-justifying machinations of Marshal Malinovsky lay behind the immense deportations as the main motive.

Stalin urged Malinovsky to occupy Budapest. He wanted them to occupy the Hungarian capital while marching. The Budapest operation dragged on over 108 days, and the Soviets managed to occupy the Hungarian capital as late as the 13th of February. (France could resist the armed forces of the Nazi Germany only for 43 days!) The prolongation of the duration of the operation was very inconvenient to Malinovsky, especially as by that time the armoured spacers of the I. Belorussian Front led by Marshal Zhukov had already approached Berlin within 60 km. And Moscow did not understand what caused the delay and they became more and more impatient. (Rákosi 1997: 141–142) Malinovsky, in fear of the retaliation, explained the prolongation of the duration of the siege with the large staff number of the enemy German–Hungarian forces. According to his report, during the Budapest battle, the loss of the enemy German–Hungarian defending army was in total 188 thousand people, out of which 50 thousand died and 138 thousand were captured. (Zaharov 1973: 262)

As opposed to this, the German–Hungarian defending army encircled in Budapest consisted of around 79 000 persons, and considering the intensity of

the battle and the high death rate of the Germans, only a maximum of 35-40 000 people could be captured by the Soviets. So, around 100 000 POWs were missing, and these were replaced by the Marshal by civilians carried off from Budapest and the surrounding agglomeration. (Bognár 2000: 77–87) Astonishing! However, the figure of around 100 000 is also confirmed by the White book published in 1950 in the western emigration, which was accepted by the UN as authentic. (MHBKH 1950: 9)

By all means, the winner had a serious problem due to the difference between the real figures and the fictitious ones when giving account after the siege, since the general had to hand over the POWs to the GUPVI (Main Department for the Affairs of POWs and Internees) of the NKVD or to send them over to the reception points of this organization within the army. (Galickij 1990: 42)

The civilian population was taken from the air-raid shelters of the already occupied blocks of houses, residential districts or factories, from flats and from the streets with the promise of screenings or just some little work, malenkey robot. Mátyás Rákosi, the General Secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party, also wrote the following in a letter: 'On some days, thousands of workers going to the factory or coming from there are collected in the streets and carried off to various camps as POWs.' (Pünkösti 1992: 77) What is more, the ambulant patients of various medical institutions were not taken care of either.

Civil servants in uniforms, such as postmen, railwaymen, BSZKRT (the public transportation company of Budapest) employees or just policemen, were carried off with special preference, as the persons in uniforms among the large number of civilian captives came in handy to the Soviet military leaders coping with POW-shortage and these men in uniforms could be stamped easily as being members of some special armed body fighting against the Soviets.

The Marshal applied other 'tricks' as well in order to further gloss over his fraud and to make it look more likely. For example, in a letter written to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the following can be read: 'Recently, the Russians dress Hungarian POWs into German uniforms, trying to mislead the world by saying that they are carrying German captives…' (NAH POWD of MFA 30.002./pol. – 1945)

The identity of the captives did not matter for the Soviet soldiers and their superiors; the only thing that counted was the numbers.

Several partisans were captured by some Hungarian soldiers fighting on the Soviet side as members of the Volunteer Regiment of Buda. (NAH POWD of MFA 27.760./pol. – 1945)

What is more, a lot of Jewish people deported into the Nazi Germany, who survived the horrors of the concentration camps, were carried off to the camps of another inhumane empire of a different type, right on their way home or upon their arrival in Budapest, despite the fact that they had a certificate of Russian and English language. And not only men were deported but also children of 13

years old like Dezső Elter and also men above 50 years of age like the father of Dezső; Dezső and his father were carried off together from the air-raid shelter of a factory in Budapest. Civilian residents were deported in large numbers also from the agglomeration surrounding Budapest. (Bognár 2004: 99–112)

By the end of March, the total number had not yet reached the figure reported by Malinovsky, so the deportation of civilians gained a new momentum. Colonel Hátszeghi wrote about this in the following way in his report dated the 29th of March: 'the male population has been deported in large numbers again for the last 4-5 days.' (AMH MD 20.326./pres. – 1945) The deportations from Budapest and the surroundings lasted for more than 2 months after the end of the combats, that is until the middle of April.

As a result, an average 25-30% of the inmates of the POW enclosure in Hungary were from the civilian population, but there were also POW enclosures, such as the one in Gödöllő, where around 85% of the captives were civilians. In addition to the memories of the people concerned, this is also confirmed by the report of the Swiss embassy, which writes that in the POW transit camp in Gödöllő, called a 'concentration camp' by the report, 'around 40 thousand internees are detained and they are deported from there towards the east for an unknown purpose'. (Bognár 2012: 72)

Around 150-170 000 men were taken into Soviet captivity as civilians from the Trianon area of Hungary.

2.) The other reason was the ethnic clean-up. If we examine the deportations in the areas beyond the Trianon borders, which were reannexed in the period of 1938–1941, then we can see clearly that in the areas of the neighbouring countries which entered into an alliance with the Soviet Union or changed sides the deportation in large numbers of the civilian population was tried to be used for the removal and intimidation of the Hungarian population and this way for the 'solution' of the Hungarian issue.

In any event, at least 60-80 thousand Hungarians were deported for 'malenkij robot' with the purpose of ethnic cleansing.

3.) In the case of Hungary, the third specific reason due to which the deportation of the civilian population grew to a considerable size is different from the previous two in two essential circumstances. First, here deportations extended not only to the male population but also to women. Second, these people were mostly not mixed amongst POWs, but they were carried off as internees, or, as named at that time, deportees to separate transit places from where they would be transported in separate trains to the Soviet Union to be placed in internment camps, still separated from the POWs.

The central, documented basis of deportation of German origins was order No. 7161 of the Soviet State Defence Committee (SDC) dated the 16th of December 1944, signed by Stalin himself. This order included the following provisions:

1.) All German men of 17-45 years and women of 18-30 years able to work who are staying in the areas of Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia liberated by the Red Army have to be mobilized and interned for the purpose of directing them to work in the Soviet Union. […]

4.) It shall be permitted for the Germans to be transported to take with them warm clothes, reserve underclothes, bed-clothes, household utensils for personal use and food, in total up to 200 kg per head. […]

6.) All Germans shall be directed to the renovation work of the coal mining industry of the Donyec coal basin and of the iron smelting industry of the South. […]

10.) The collection and internment of the Germans shall be implemented in December 1944 and in January 1945, and the transportation to the workplaces shall be finished until the 15th of February 1945. (Vida, 2005: 65–67)

Stalin gave a command to the People's Commissar of the Interior, Lavrentiy Beria, to take preliminary steps for this order. On the 24th of November, Beria ordered to take the census of the persons of German nationality living in the areas occupied by the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Ukrainian Fronts. For the implementation of this task, three groups consisting of operative officers of the NKVD, the NKGB (People's Commissariat of State Security), and the SZMERS (Soviet military intelligence organization) were commanded to the specified area.

On the results of the action, Beria made his report to Stalin on the 15th of December. According to the report, a total of 551 049 people of German nationality between 16 and 50 years of age were registered in the assigned areas: 240 436 boys/men and 310 613 girls/women. On the following day, the 16th of December 1944, Stalin issued the command for the deportation of several thousand, for the most part innocent people, to forced labour.

On the 22nd of December, the two Ukrainian Fronts which had occupied Hungary made their ill-famed execution command No. 0060 in accordance with the order of the SDC dated the 16th of December.

According to the plan of the generals, the general headquarters were established in Bucharest and the assigned, occupied area was divided into 10 operative zones, out of which 6 fell into Romania and 2-2 fell into Hungary and Yugoslavia. In Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, no zones were established due to the low number of people of German nationality. (Varga 2009: 147–151)

The problem with the 10 districts or zones is that they do not include the South Transdanubian region, densely populated by Swabians, from where a lot of people were deported with reference to command No. 0060.

Deportations were carried out by NKVD auxiliary squads assigned to the front governments. The generals of NKVD made a time schedule for the implementation of the deportations. However, the deportations started earlier as planned, both nation-wide and region-wide, and they also lasted longer than planned.

Deportations in the region commenced in the most western areas occupied by the Soviets and they brought forward the start date of the 'operation' by 6 days.

Thus, deportations from Hungary and Northern Transylvania took place from the 22nd of December 1944 to the 2nd of February 1945 in three waves and with the addition of more than 18 regional centres and collection camps.

According to command No. 0060, 'all people of German origin who are able to work' were obliged to report in the specified place and time 'for communal labour to be carried out in the areas directly behind the front.'

Several problems arose here already. Firstly, the command was not about German citizens or people of German nationality, but people of 'German origin'. So, the basis of the deportation was neither a committed guilt, nor the chosen self-identity or the mother tongue, but the racial discrimination, which was also applied by the Nazi Germany and which was disapproved of by the democratic world, furthermore, also by the Soviet Union – at least in words. The people saw the events at that time in the same way, too. Even Ferenc Erdei, the secret Communist Minister of the Interior of the Temporary National Government stated 'the fact that this is the same as the way Hitler treated the Jews'. (Izsák–Kun 1994: 35)

The criteria of the racial discrimination were not centrally specified, so the commanders who implemented the collection of the people had a wide scope for the definition of 'German origin,' that is for selecting the people to be put on the list of deportees.

József Révai, one of the leaders of the communist party, put it this way in a letter: 'The procedure implemented for the transportation of the German population who are able to work, unfortunately, did not have the effect that it was supposed to. […] What happened was that in most places the commanders took the family names and the fixed quotas as a basis. If there were not sufficient amount of German people available, they carried off Hungarians. They carried off such people who could not speak German or who were provably anti-fascists or who had been imprisoned or interned; all these things did not count. It also happened that secretaries or leadership members of the communist party or even members of the national assembly were carried off, just because they had German names, and furthermore, some people with purely Hungarian names were also carried off. Basically, there were too many local overacting, which is of course unavoidable to a certain extent in case of such a procedure.' (Izsák–Kun 1994: 35)

At the same time, it was included in command No. 0060 – as opposed to command No. 0036, which disposed of the deportation of the Transcarpathian Hungarian and German male population –, in accordance with the central order of the SDC that 'the mobilized persons should take with them: warm clothes, two pairs of shoes in wearable state, three sets of underwear, bed linen and a blanket, kitchen utensils and food for 15 days. The total weight should not exceed 200 kg per person.' (Zielbauer 1990: 33) As a consequence, the civilians

who were deported as persons of German nationality had much better chances for survival than those who were deported on the basis of command No. 0036 or as a supplement to the number of POWs since the latter groups were not prepared for the transportation at all. They were carried off in many cases just in jackets, shoes, without food and kitchen utensils, and their marching and transit camp accommodation was also longer and more miserable. It is likely that this part of the command was included due to the high death rate experienced among the Sub-Carpathian civilians.

Those who were carried off as internees spent maximum one or two weeks in the collection/ enclosure camps, and then they were transported further. Those civilians who were taken off as POWs were taken to POW enclosures, where they spent quite a long time – usually two months but in some cases as many as 6-7 months – before being packed into carriages.

The civilians, who were deported in large numbers – no matter whether they were deported as POWs or as internees –, were taken in GUPVI (Main Department for the Affairs of POWs and Internees) camps. These camps, just like the GULAG camps, were ultimately under the control of the NKVD, but there were significant differences between the two camp systems. The most important difference was the way how people were taken there. The inmates of GUPVI camps were carried off in large numbers, regardless of their personal identity, and the focus was nearly exclusively on meeting the plan figures. On the contrary, the inmates of the GULAG camps were taken off individually under strict escort, mostly on the basis of personal convictions on made-up charges.

According to the report on the results of the deportations, altogether 112 480 persons, including 31 923 Hungarian persons, were started on the way to internment camps in the Soviet Union, while for the transports they used 103 trains with 5 677 carriages. The People's Commissar of the Interior also proposed some awards to be given to the NKVD officers and soldiers since 'they successfully fulfilled the special assignment from the government.' (Polian 2004: 254–260)

At the same time, if we think about the fact that instead of the originally assessed 551 049 Germans able to work 'only' 112 480 people were deported to the Soviet Union from the specified regions, the question can be raised why the NKVD officers and soldiers should have deserved praise, since the number of people 'mobilized' was quite far from the possibilities.

Researchers who became sceptical towards the communist documents due to their earlier experiences have a suspicion that the figures in the Soviet documents are not complete and they are only partly true. As Stalin himself said: 'Apart from the incorrigible bureaucrats, who else on earth would exclusively rely on written documents? The rats in the archives, at the very most!' (Werth 2001: 208)

The completeness and genuineness of the Soviet figures are questioned by the contradictions and 'strange things' mentioned above and in the following sections.

Firstly, Article 6 of Order No. 7161 said that 'All Germans shall be directed to the renovation work of the coal mining industry of the Donets Coal Basin and of the iron melting industry of the South' still during the implementation; part of the deliveries went to the mountains separating Europe and Asia, which is the Ural and the Caucasus.

Secondly, if we take the figures in the reports as basis and divide the number of deportees, that is 112 480, by the number of the trains used for their transportation, we can see that the number of deportees falling into one train is very low (1 092), while a minimum of 1 500 or rather even more people were generally transported in a train. If we divide the number of the 112 480 persons by the number of the 5 677 carriages, then we get an unrealistically low number, somewhat lower than 20 persons as the number of persons per carriages, as opposed to the 35-45 persons mentioned in the recollections. Thus we have obtained half of the real numbers!

Therefore, we must calculate twice the number of Hungarian persons (31 923 Hungarian persons) to obtain a real figure, which is 63 846 'mobilized' Hungarian persons. The well-experienced Hungarian researchers of this topic also obtained similar results.

They estimated the number of persons deported as Germans from the Trianon area of Hungary as follows: Miklós Füzes established an approximate number of 55-60 thousand (Füzes 1990: 39) while György Zielbauer a number of 60-65 thousand. (Zielbauer 1990: 30)

As a result of the privation, the inhumane and anti-hygienic circumstances, and the demanding forced labour, 30-40% of the deportees died, but in some settlements this ratio was 70-90%. Most of them were buried in the neighbourhood of the camps, in unmarked mass graves, rarely in single graves, while a minor part of them were buried along the railways leading to Russia or homewards. And apart from that, there were a lot of people who died within one year after their return to home due to their illnesses contracted during the deportation.

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Exerting the Principle of Collective Guilt against the Transcarpathian Hungarians and Germans (Carrying into Effect the Decisions of the Military Council of the 4th Ukrainian Front in the Light of the NKVD[1] Reports)

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Abstract. In his paper, György Dupka deals with the tragic fate of the Transcarpathian Hungarians and Germans deported for 'a three-day labour' in the period of 1944–1946. During the past twenty years, he succeeded in collecting and, in some measure, publicizing sufficient archival materials to open up the facts of the anomies committed by the Soviet military authorities in the fall of 1944 and at the beginning of 1945. All these facts are supported by cogent data and concrete names of the perpetrators. In his paper, the author shows primarily how in the light of the reports conceived by the NKVD and other Soviet central military administrations Order 0036 of the Military Council of the 4th Ukrainian Front was carried into effect.

Keywords: Transcarpathia, 1944, the 4th Ukrainian Front, NKVD, collective guilt, 'malenkiy robot,' Hungarians, Germans, Szolyva, labour camps

In the past twenty years, I succeeded in collecting and partially publicizing sufficient archival materials to open up the facts of the anomies committed by the Soviet military authorities against the civilian population of Transcarpathia in the fall of 1944 and at the beginning of 1945. All these facts are supported by cogent data and concrete names of the perpetrators. In this lecture, my purpose is to show, primarily, how in the light of the reports conceived by the NKVD and other Soviet central military administrations Order 0036 of the Military Council of the 4th Ukrainian Front was carried into effect.

1 The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (Народный комиссариат внутренних дел, *Narodnyy Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del*), abbreviated NKVD was a law enforcement agency of the Soviet Union that directly executed the rule of power of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It was closely associated with the Soviet secret police, which at times was part of the agency, and it is known for its political repression during the era of Joseph Stalin.

Because of the abundance of the not so far known materials and information connected with a whole circle of questions signalled already above, I am not going to condescend upon particulars, i.e. upon the historical analysis of all the questions of the Soviet occupation, annexation, and Sovietization. It is not my aim to speak about the retaliatory measures of the Communist dictatorship in Transcarpathia which lasted from the annexation of a territory almost as big as four counties until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, i.e. from 1945 up to 1991 (Dupka 1914). Due to time and space limits, I cannot go into details concerning the occupancy of Csonka-Bereg (Беpер in Ukrainean), East Slovakia (Ung and Latorca/Latorica counties), Máramarossziget (Sighetu Marmației) County and their environments from where the Soviets 'nicked' unlawfully all the men of military age of Hungarian and German extraction (about 10,000 people) (Dupka 1912).

1. Military and Political Preparations for the Occupation of Transcarpathia by the Soviets, Carrying Them into Effect, Fly-Bill Actions and Establishing Command Posts

Under the guidance of Stalin, Iosif Vissarionovich, the Marshall Voroshilov, Kliment Yefremovich, the Deputy-Chairman of the State Defence Committee (SDC)[2] together with Beria, Lavrentiy Pavlovich, who in February 1941 was appointed Deputy-Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and in June, following the German invasion, became a member of the State Defence Committee (GKO), on the 30th of June, 1944 – in order to seize and occupy Transcarpathia – made a decision that gave rise to the 4th Ukrainian Front at the juncture of the 1st and 2nd Ukrainian Front. In making this decision, they took into account the military and political importance of the occupation of Transcarpathia and the peculiarities of military operations in mountainous areas (Dovkhanitsh 1997: 69).

On the 5th of August, the general headquarters constituted the four-star (colonel-general) Ivan Yukhimovotsh Petrov the commander of the Front, and Lieutenant-General F. K. Korzhenevitsh the commander-in-chief of the staff. Colonel-General Lev Zakharovitsh Mekhlis, who was notorious for his brutality – one of the principals of the SMERSH[3] and of the NKVD –, started preparing and carrying into effect with elaboration the Carpathian offensive.

2 SDC, Russian: Государственный комитет обороны, ГКО, *Gosudarstvennyj komitet oborony*, GKO, which was an extraordinary organ of state power in the USSR during the German–Soviet War, and held complete state power in the country instead of the Council of People's Commissars.

3 SMERSH (Russian: СМЕРШ, acronym of Russian: Специальные Методы Разоблачения Шпионов; Special Methods of Spy Detection), but also anecdotally referred to as *SMERt' SHpionam* ('Death to spies'), was an umbrella name for three independent counter-intelligence agencies in the Red

The operation was successful due to a single military political event, viz. to the Romanian King Michael's coup (coup d'état). As a result, the Axis front in north-eastern Romania collapsed in the face of a Soviet offensive, and Transcarpathia 'fell into the lap of the Red Army'. On the 27th of October, 1944, the Soviet troops marched into Ungvár (Ужгород / Uzhhorod in Ukrainean). On this day, a festive order signed by Stalin was proclaimed, which mentioned inter alia 'the seizure of an important bridge-head (tête-de-pont) from a military point of view' (Slyakhom Zhovtnya, 6. 1965: 4). On the same day at 9 p.m. in Moscow, 224 guns fired twenty salutes in honour of the 'glorious troops' of the 4th Ukrainian Front on this occasion (Kutsenko 1970: 16). But the Soviets did not manage to keep Csap (Chop) that was taken by them on the 29th of October. The town changed owners several times, and the Hungarian and German troops withdrew only on the 26th of November to avoid full encirclement. In Ungvár, 2,500 Hungarian and German soldiers were taken POWs. 3,730 Soviet soldiers fell at taking Transcarpathia, out of them 2,730 are known, 417 are unknown (Kerecsanyin 1997: 641).

Beginning with the 28th of October, 1944, the military administration of the 4th Ukrainian Front established command posts with town-majors in the occupied towns and larger settlements: Kőrösmező (in Ukrainean: Ясіня [Jaszinya]), Rahó (Рахів [Rahiv/ Rakhiv]), Alsó-Verecke (Нижні Ворота [Nizsnyi Vorota]), Uzsok (Ужок), Hajasd (Волосянка [Voloszjanka]), Felső-Verecke (Верхні Ворота), Volóc (Воловець [Volovec]), Alsóhidegpatak (Нижній Студений [Nizsnyij Sztudenij]), Gernyésmező (Поляна [Gyilova]), Kaszómező (Косівська Поляна/Koszivszka Poljana], and Nagybocskó (Великий Бичків [Velikij Bicskiv/Velykyy Bychkiv]) in order to consolidate military civil service. Lieutenant-colonel and head of the staff Korzhenevitsh had written instructions for the appointed officers as to how to organize their activity and intercourse with the local population, the detection of the hostile elements, and also their 'guarded' co-operation with the Czechoslovak military administration (TSU 2007: 238. doc., 421–422).

2. Decree on Exerting the Principle of Collective Guilt

The archival materials discovered so far unambiguously demonstrate that the designs of the Sovietization of Transcarpathia occupied by the Red Army, the deportation of the Hungarians and Germans were realized under the direction of the NKVD and the active guidance of the 4th Ukrainian Front according to a Muscovite scenario approved by Stalin.

Light was shed on the separate roles of the participants as well. One of the civilian key figures was Ivan Turyanitsa, a communist leader of Transcarpathian

Army, formed in late 1942 or even earlier, but officially founded on 14 April 1943. The name SMERSH was coined by Joseph Stalin.

issue, who was given by Beria the task to be in command of the annexation of Transcarpathia registered as part of Czechoslovakia on partyline with the help of Bolshevik dummies taking as point of departure Benes's promise to resign Transcarpathia to Stalin.

In order to realize Benes's promise, it was necessary to produce a number of political put-up shows. There were, inter alia, the strengthening of the leading role of the Transcarpathian Communist Party, the establishing of the people's commissariats supporting the annexation of Transcarpathia, conducing to ethnic purifications, the organization of the first congress of the people's commissariats, the proclamation of Transcarpathian Ukraine, the electing of the People's Council, the acceptance of the Manifesto justifying the authenticity of Transcarpathia's 'reunion' with Ukraine, organizing campaigns for signing different petitions, the final showdown with the enemies of the people and the Soviet Union, the curbing and ousting of the Transcarpathian activity of the Czechoslovakian governmental offices, conducing to the Soviet–Czechoslovak negotiations on the fate of Transcarpathia, the realization of the Sovietization programme, etc.

On the 28th of October, 1944, in order to launch the operative things to do, Ivan Turyanitsa, the leader of the Transcarpathian communists devoted to Moscow and as the political officer of the 1st Czechoslovakian Army-Corps and a trained agent of the Soviet secret service had a pow-wow with Army General Petrov, the chief commanding officer of the 4th Ukrainian Front, Nikita Khrushchev Ukrainian party leader (TSU 2007: 413. doc. 695–698) and Colonel-General Mekhlis, the member of the Military Council of the 4th Ukrainian Front. Accompanied by the two latter key figures, he arrived at Munkács (Мукачеве [Mukacseve]) on the same day to make a decision on the fate of Transcarpathia (TSU 2007: 364. doc. 593. 599).

At the party meeting that took place there according to expectations, different decisions were accepted; inter alia, there were proposals for 'a total cleansing in Transcarpathia considered a logistical territory'. The document prescribing the provisional isolation of individuals not to be trusted by the Transcarpathian people (Dupka, Korszun 1997: 11) was signed by Turyanitsa on the 11th of November, 1944. According to the proposals of the decree registered by Major General Fadyeyev, Com. of the NKVD squads in charge of the control of the hinterland of the 4th Ukrainian Front, and Colonel Levin, deputy-commander of the staff, prepared a concept for execution and then its military scenario.

Later, with Stalin and Beria's knowledge, they played a significant role in preparing and executing deportations. Fadyeyev personally proposed to the Military Council of the 4th Ukrainian Front the idea (KU 2009: 353–355) of interning the male population of the settlements inhabited by Hungarians and Germans as the representatives of the enemy because they might prevent the introduction of the Soviet system into Transcarpathia. Fadyeyev and Levitin suggested that from November the 14th to the 17th they should execute the military

registering of the Hungarian and German men of the age between 15 and 50. (It is not a mistake. At the beginning, boys of levente[4]-age, i.e. who were born in 1927–1929, were also registered – Gy. D.)

The second official registration was already planned for the 18th of November, 1944, with the apprehension (and deportation to the nearest POW camps) of the former Hungarian and German soldiers, officers, functionaries, gendarmes, policemen, and males of military age between 18 and 50.

On their sitting of November the 12th, 1944, the Military Council of the 4th Ukrainian Front consented to their top secret 0036 Decree and approved of its operative execution. It was signed by Army General Petrov and the members of the Military Council of the Front: Colonel-General Mekhlis, Major General Novikov and Battery Lieutenant-General Kariofilli. The document consisting of nine points prescribed the Transcarpathian exertion of the 'principle of collective guilt and punishment' and was approved of by the summit military leadership: 'At a great number of settlements, there are lots of individuals of military age of Hungarian and German nationality who, similarly to all enemy soldiers, must be apprehended and sent to POW camps!' (KU 2009: 219. doc. 353–355).

The decree designated the time of the execution and the age of those to be drafted more exactly, and ordered the leaders of the operation to pay special attention to the following: from the 14th up to the 16th of November, 1944, the military mayors of towns and settlements independently of their nationality should also keep a record of those soldiers and officers who served in the German or Hungarian armies, and – what was still more important – they should register all those German and Hungarian men of military age between 18 and 50 (i.e. civilians who served in none of the armies) who lived on Transcarpathian soil, and also all the officers and employees of the Hungarian police and gendarmerie.

The military commanders were suggested that during the registering they informed everybody that on the 18th of November they are supposed to show up again for the second time, so that all quota, and among them those who were of military age and eligible, would be escorted in columns to concentration camps for POWs.

The Decree mentioned separately the officers and employees of the Hungarian gendarmerie and police who, after registering, had to be given in charge of 'the units of SMERSH and the reconnaissance organs of the border-wardens guarding the logistic areas'. Here, it must be noted that we learnt from the survivors that they had been at once sentenced to death by court-martials, and executed.

The 4th point of the Decree said that up to November 17, 1944 POW camps had to be established in Perecseny (Перечин [Perecsin/Perechyn]) and the surroundings

4 Levente Associations (Hungarian: *Levente Egyesületek*), or simply 'levente,' were paramilitary youth organizations in Hungary in the inter-war period and during the Second World War. It was established in 1921 with the declared purpose of physical and health training.

of Huszt (Хуст). Point 5 admonished Major-General Fadyeyev that the NKVD squads controlled by him should exercise a more efficacious work in detecting and arresting the above mentioned individuals. Point 6 admonished Major-General Katznelson to permit the military commanders directing regionally the operation to use Willis motorcars parking at the recruiting places. Point 7 permitted to use the garrison of the settlement commanders for strengthening the escort of the arrested. Pont 8 told the chief of the logistic area to organize a sufficient number of dining stations from the 18th of November, 1944 on the path Ungvár (Ужгород [Uzshorod])-Sambor and Szolyva (Свалява [Szvaljava])-Sambor. Point 9 admonished Major-General Fadyeyev again that in order to execute the Decree he should summon the military commanders and their assistants for a conference to be held at three o'clock p.m. on the 12th of November, 1944. On this conference, Fadyeyev let the military commanders and their assistants know the essence of the forthcoming operation and the order of the military commander agreed with the Military Council of the Front. This order had to be announced in all the towns and villages of Transcarpathia on the 13th of November. 'Order 2 of the town's captaincy' was attached to Decree 0036 also with the date November 13.

As we can see, the operation was prepared quickly and circumspectly. The order had been translated into Hungarian, too, and was printed in several hundred copies in the Miravcsik printing house in Ungvár (Ужгород [Uzshorod]). The text of the Hungarian bill was the following:

1) From November the 14th of the present year, within three days all the soldiers and officers who belonged to the bounds of the Hungarian and German armies and remained on the soil of the liberated Transcarpathia are obliged to present themselves at the nearest town's captaincy.

German and Hungarian males of military age from 18 up to 50 are also obliged to present themselves.

2) All those who hired themselves out in the service of the police or gendarmerie during the Hungarian occupation in Transcarpathia are also to be registered within these days of appearance.

3) One can appear at the town's captaincy only from 9 a.m. till 7 p.m. The last day of appearance is the 16th of November, 1944.

4) They who do not meet this engagement will be arrested and sentenced by a court-martial. Town's major (Egyetlen bűnük… 1993a: 8).

After November 13, 1944, 'the 2nd order of the town's major' was hung out also in settlements inhabited by Hungarians and Germans. The leaders of the municipalities co-operating with the town's majors thought up this notorious 'three-day labour' or the tale mobilizing the population for bridge and road repairs. This was proclaimed from the house-top by the common criers with

the addendum that the concerned 'should take for themselves enough food for three days'.

In such a short time (in a day actually), it was difficult to execute all this. Most likely the plan of the operation was elaborated well in advance. However, it turned out later that it was organized with hurry-scurry, it was over-sized and fraudulent, and the consequences of bad provisioning turned out to be disastrous and fatal for many Transcarpathians in the very first days already. The overwhelming majority of the individuals 'to be arrested,' who presented their ID documents on the 16th of November already, on the 18th of November went to the place of appearance to take them back only. But they were not allowed to go home for their personal belongings and food and to take leave from their family members. After the data were checked, they could go out into the yard or to the street with armed escort only. As a matter of fact, they found themselves all of a sudden in camp circumstances. In the yard that became an enclosure and in the streets, the fraudulent misrepresentation, i.e. the fooling of the people collected this way, continued. Viz. the military authorities beguiled them with the promise that they would be sent for 'a little extemporaneous three-day labour' (malenykiy robot) and their provision would be organized on the way. A couple of Hungarian agitators weighing with the folks, among them the guerrilla (partisan) leader Gyula Uszta and Major Béla Illés (the writer), encouraged the people. In some of the settlements, the people going for this 'three-day labour' were sent off ceremonially, with drums and blessings of priests and authorities. It was really difficult to believe that all this was nothing else than a gorgeous farce which was a road to hell and death for the majority of the crowd.

3. Preparing the Units Taking Part in the Operation of Carrying out the Deportations

We managed to find evidence in form of detailed instructions concerning the collection of Hungarians and Germans (TSU 2007: 250. doc. 433–435). Major Portnyagin, the head of one of the departments of the NKVD squads belonging to the 4th Ukrainian Front issued 'a top secret' order (0047. 15. 11. 1944) for the NKVD units executing Decree 0036. This order gave the murderous genocidal machinery of the NKVD and the SMERSH a boost. It set the ball rolling and the seeding, isolating, collecting, arresting, internment, and deportation of the population were executed most rigorously.

Quite recently, more top secret NKVD reports connected with the execution of Decree 0036 turned up in the Russian State Military History Archives in Moscow. The operational tasks were directed personally by Colonel-General L. Mekhlis, who received detailed reports ever day from Major General Fadyeyev, who

was the commander-in-chief of the NKVD troops co-ordinating the execution and guarding the logistical areas. More NKVD reports inform the boss about the events and the emerged situation of the period between November 18 and December 17, 1944. Detailed numerical data show the results of the registrations scheduled by the Decree, the arrest of the target persons, and their division into groups according to their military ranks and nationality. Sixteen town captaincies participated in this operation. And namely that of Ungvár (Ужгород [Uzshorod]), Munkács (Мукачеве [Mukacseve]), Beregszász (Берегове [Berehove]), Nagybereg (Великі Береги [Veliki Berehi/Velyki Berehy], Huszt (Хуст), Tiszaújlak (Вилок [Vilok]), Nagyszőlős (Виноградів [Vinohragyiv]), Bátyú (Батьово [Batyovo]), Kövesliget (Драгово [Drahovo]), Perecseny (Перечин [Perecsin/Perechyn]), Poroskő (Порожкобо [Poroskovo]), Kaszómező (Косівська Поляна [Koszivszka Poljana]), Szolyva (Свалява/Szvaljava), Szerednye (Середнє [Szerednye]), Nagyberezna (Великий Березний [Velikij Bereznij]), and Kisberezna (Малий Березний [Málij Bereznij]). A list was prepared of the isolated Slav nationalities (Ukrainian, Roussin, Slovak, and Czech), while cumulative data were reported about the arrested who were directed with armed guidance to POW concentration camps. There was also a list of those individuals who did not appear for the second registration in the appointed time (on the 18th of November). Finally, it made a report about the persons who were in hiding but were arrested and escorted into a concentration camp. The numerical data of the tables that may be read in these reports are shocking proofs of how circumspectly and comprehensively was ethnic cleansing (purification) organized in settlements inhabited by Hungarians and Germans. The further reports also witness the blows of the speeding up and murderous machinery of the NKVD on the Hungarians, Germans, and Krauts.

More people in the columns directed from Szolyva (Свалява [Szvaljava]) into the concentration camp in Turka (Lemberg/Lvov/Lviv territory) fled. In this respect, a minute-book (TSU 2007: 262. doc., 447–448) was found signed by convoy commander Lieutenant Kulik, assistant commander Sub-Lieutenant Belitsky, Sergeant Bozin, Buck Sergeant Zub, and Red Army privates Pizhikov and Zhaludkov. The signers signalled towards their superior, the commander of Battalion 159 securing the convoy that at night on the road leading from Poljana to Verecke (Szerednyovereckij) 51 persons, most of them Jews, fled from the column consisting of 2,000 people escorted by 42 armed guards. A unit, with the co-operation of the command of a border warden squad located in the area of the Polish-Czech border, started the search of the disappeared, and on the 22nd of November they found sixty-five persons without any papers in the surrounding woods. All of them were sent to the concentration camp in Szolyva (Свалява [Szvaljava]). After the combing out of the Roussine villages, the discovered persons of German and Hungarian nationalities were also registered and sent to the nearest concentration camp.

The aggregate dispatch (TSU 2007: 262. doc. 447–448) of December 17, 1944 also contained surprisingly interesting data. Compared to the documents mentioned above, there are still more detailed accounts of the cleansing operations of the NKVD units on the loot in Transcarpathia. This report was sent by Major General Fadyeyev and Colonel Bosiy to Army General Petrov. The registry number of the three-page typed document is 5032P. Major General Fadyeyev wrote, inter alia, in his report the following: 'Executing Decree 0036 of the military Council of the Front accepted on the 13th of October, 1944, the NKVD squads screening the logistic area on the territory of Transcarpathian Ukraine isolated the officers and privates of the enemy, the German and Hungarian men of military age, the gendarmes of the Hungarian gendarmerie, and the officers of the Hungarian police, and directed them to POW concentration camps.'

Table 1. *A survey of people directed to POW camps according to their nationality: November 18 – December 16, 1944*

No.	Nationality	Officers	Men	Of military age	Policemen, Gendarmes	In the aggregate
1.	Hungarian	132	7 669	7 025	164	**14 990**
2.	Czech	3	-	-	-	**3**
3.	Roussine (Ruthene)	16	-	-	5	**21**
4.	Slovak	3	-	-	1	**4**
5.	German	-	60	68	1	**129**
6.	Ukrainian	-	-	-	4	**4**
7.	Romanian	-	-	-	1	**1**
In the aggregate:		**154**	**7 729**	**7 093**	**176**	**15 152**

The table shows that this time the officers, policemen, and gendarmes of Czech, Roussine, Slovak, Ukrainian, and Romanian nationalities were not acquitted either; as 'guilty elements,' they were also sent to transit camps together with the ones of Hungarian and German nationality. 'Encamping' was avoided by soldiers and men of military age confessing the Orthodox and Greek Catholic religion only. They were allowed to go home or could ask their conscription into the Red Army. Many of them did so.

Table 2. *An aggregate survey of people directed to transit POW camps: November 18 – December 16, 1944*

No.	Nationality	Officers and privates	Of military age	Policemen and gendarmes	In the aggregate
1.	Hungarian and German	14 202	8 564	185	**22 951**

This dispatch was closed with the report saying that 'from November 18 to December 16, 1944, 22 951 persons were arrested and sent to transit POW camps by the NKVD squads' on the territory of Transcarpathia. It was also noted that 'the operation for cleansing the logistical area continues'. This judicial document sheds light on the fact that the confiding Hungarian and German/Kraut male population was rived from their families with a disloyally thought-up tale mobilizing for 'a three-day labour.'

The above quoted NKVD reports left the number of deceased during the march unsaid, but we learnt from the survivors that prisoners who had dropped behind the columns and had fainted because of distress had been executed by the guards on the spot. Thousands of prisoners kept in GUPVI camps fell victims of starvation, cold, and contagious diseases. Headcount deficiency was refilled with Roussine, Ukrainian, and other nationalities from the settlements of call. It often happened that star-gazers were pushed into the lines of marchers. Due to such brutality, lots of Slovaks, Romanians, Ukrainians, Polish, Roussines, Jews, and other nationalities, but also priests and communists got into the transports and transit camps. The names of about seven thousand victims out of 130 settlements populated by Hungarians can be read on the Wailing Wall in the Memorial Park of Szolyva (Свалява [Szvaljava]). Thirty percent of the deported (out of forty thousand) never returned (Dupka 1913). The aggressive deportations, inhumane treatment killed thousands of people. We know it from notebooks, memories, noted down strips of recollections of the survivors that the sadism of the organizers and executors of the deportations and internment went one better than that of the fascists (Élő történelem / Living History, 1913).

Analysing the full report, it appears that the number of imprisoned policemen and gendarmes (so emphasized by the Decree) was only 185 and the confiscated firearms were less than 100. The great number of soldiers and officers needs some explanation. Viz. it turned out from the archival materials that in case of the arrested the military rank that was primarily taken into consideration was the one they had in the Czechoslovakian army. These soldiers and officers had not been lurking. Living with their families they thought their military service was over for good and so they were not afraid of presenting themselves voluntarily.

The Hungarians and Germans of military age were all civilians, i.e. they had nothing to do with the army, the police or the gendarmerie. It can be also known from archival documents and from the oral accounts of the participants of those events that later on, besides them, the authorities also arrested and sent to the Gulag people who could be persecuted criminally neither in war times nor after it, but in spite of this the state security guards deemed them suspicious. The NKVD organs watched them vigilantly even in the camps.

It is another shocker how self-confidently and 'openly' the operation was carried out under the false allegation of 'the three-day labour'. In those days,

the leadership of the People's Council of Transcarpathian Ukraine was doing preparations for a very significant political event of the country, and the situation that evolved was not immaterial for party leader Ivan Turyanitsa, who would later become Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Transcarpathian Ukraine. On the 19th of November, 1944 (it was the other day after the arrest of the most significant part of 'the crowd designed for isolation'), the first Congress of the Communist Party of Transcarpathian Ukraine was opened, where the long-range questions of the activity of the county's party organ and the reunion of Transcarpathian Ukraine with Soviet-Ukraine were discussed.

A week later, on the 26th of November, the first congress of the People's Council of Transcarpathian Ukraine was held, which had to accept the Manifesto declaring the reunion of Transcarpathian Ukraine with Soviet-Ukraine. Under these circumstances, the operation aimed at the arrest of 'the isolated elements of the population' was most likely deemed a necessary part of the plan designed for ensuring state security and public order.

Regarding the approach to the Hungarian population, it is worth quoting a practically obligate confession of Lieutenant-General Pronin, the head of the political group of the 4th Ukrainian Front: 'The political situation in these days (after the signing of the Manifesto declaring the reunion of Transcarpathia with Ukraine) has become much more complicated and worse. Until the Congress, local Hungarians received the entry of the Red Army into Transcarpathian Ukraine if not gladly but by no means with hostility. But now that the state security organs singled out nearly thirty thousand Hungarians of military age, the greater part of the Hungarian population and part of the pro-Hungarian Ukrainians express their discontent and starting maladjustment in a way. It is expressed primarily by agitating against the Manifesto' (TSU 2007: 390. doc. 619–665). As is known, all this had happened well before Transcarpathia became Soviet territory.

The eyewitness László Sándor in his memoirs recollects these days as follows: '… after the Congress, the following code-word appeared in Russian and Ukrainian in the daily papers and on different placards: Long live the reunion of Transcarpathian Ukraine with Soviet-Ukraine! The local Hungarian and Roussine population read the code-word with surprise because they did not ever know that Subcarpathia had once been part of Ukraine. Even the learned intelligentsia did not ever hear that this territory had once belonged to Ukraine. But certain Soviet historians picked up their pens quickly and started writing a series of articles proving that Subcarpathia was once part of Ukraine, but these articles could not resolve the local population's doubts either' (Sándor 2009: 87).

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National Traumas – Local Memories Villages Southeast and Southwest from Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca) during WW2 – General Research Overview

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Abstract. The presentation summarizes the results of two years of oral history research. The aim of the research was to record the recollections of the still living eyewitnesses of the events in the fall of 1944 in Cluj and its surroundings, in settlements that belonged to the southern part of Transylvania during World War II. Several hours of interviews were made in the villages of the regions of Ţara Călatei (Kalotaszeg) and the Transylvanian Plain (Mezőség), and the lecture presents a synthesis of these interviews. They address issues like deportation, atrocities, fleeing, arm usage, Soviet and Romanian detention camps, adventurous escapes, etc.

Keywords: Transylvania, Romanians, Hungarians, ethnicity, WW2, traumas, injuries, requisition, interning, forced-labour camps

In April 2012, I had the chance to meet 'Bapóka bácsi' (Uncle Bapóka), the 85-year-old János Bükkös from the village of Aiton, Romania. The main goal of our meeting was not remembering the events of WW2, but – as the old man was personally affected – he shortly started storytelling about that period, and I found out the he was one of those who had been taken away from their homes like war criminals into concentration camps only because of their nationality, and that he was released two months later and got home in an adventurous way. Our discussion gave me the idea to start a research (for almost two years) in the scope of which I would ask in their last moments all those who are still alive from the generation that had suffered all these traumas. The Domus Hungarica fellowship of the Hungarian Academy, which I was granted for three years consecutively, made this research possible.

General Historical Overview

In August 1940, the Romanian and Hungarian governments asked for the arbitration of the German and Italian governments in order to solve the territorial dispute between the two countries. The applicants obliged themselves to accept the terms of the decisions without reluctance. The arbitrary decision, which was made on the 30th of August, 1940 in the Gold Cabinet of the Belvedere Palace in Vienna based on ethnic, economic, and strategic premises divided the land of Transylvania, which constituted the topic of the territorial debate, in two parts. The Northern part was annexed to Hungary and its southern part remained in Romania.

The new border torn Transylvania in two parts in an unprecedented way. It divided historical regions, centuries-old economic, social and cultural relationships, villages, families, doing all this without any pragmatic regard. Cities lost their supplier villages, industrial facilities their raw material bases, producers their markets, important railway lines became standoffs, main roads became dead ends. The decision parted Transylvania and its inhabitants. Romanians in north and Hungarians in south watched the new border sadly, with joy and acclamation on one side and rising hatred and nationalist hysteria on the other. The already burdened relationship of the two nations has turned to open animosity. Hundreds of Romanians were killed by the revenge of Hungarian paramilitary units in north, and hundreds of thousands of Hungarians were expecting their darkest period of minority existence in the south.

The events of the following four years led to the war of nerves because of the different conceptions of the two countries regarding the situation of minorities, and the way they were dealing with them, and because of the revisionist hopes emerging on both sides of the border, which evolved at the beginning into a cold war, but later, after King Michael's coup in 1944, it led to a state of war. The problem of Transylvania and the dispute of the two countries were definitively closed by the Romanian occupation of Northern Transylvania in 1944, the restoration of the Romanian administration, and the Peace Treaty of Paris in 1947.

During the four years of separation, the Hungarians of Southern Transylvania had to face the minority policy of the Antonescu regime. As I referred to it in my book (Nagy 2012), the approach of the Romanian government and public opinion toward the Hungarians was characterized in the researched period by serious hatred and revengefulness and the determination for ethnical cleansing. In the background of this approach were the following: the desire to avenge the injuries that the Romanians had suffered in Northern Transylvania; the determination to create the ethnically uniform Romanian nation-state; the politics based on reciprocity, which have been concretized in mutual avenge from both sides; the primitive nationalism, and finally pragmatic and economic considerations. And this approach did not change after August 1944. Even though it seems that

Romania had come to an end with the fascist and nationalist ideology, which would implicitly mean that the xenophobia and ethnic cleansing should have become void in this period – at least officially. But it did not happen this way, and this is proved by a series of events that caused serious bitterness to the Hungarians of Romania.

The Hungarian–Romanian war, which broke out in September 1944, had several aspects. In Romanian circles, it was declared an antifascist war. The offensive started with the new ally, the Soviet Union, and it was officially against the alliance of the fascist Germany, Hungary and against fascism. But this war was considered also a national liberation war. Extremist Hungarian circles presented it as a means to punish the betrayal of Romanians and to liberate the Hungarian brethren from Southern Transylvania, while Romanians considered this war the liberation of Northern Transylvania invaded by the Hungarians. Hungarians in Transylvania became collectively guilty of fascism, and therefore they were the most feared enemy; so, they had to endure the retaliation for every injury suffered by the Romanians during WW2.

Therefore, the situation of the Hungarians became worse after 1944. They had to suffer because of discriminative laws; the trials of the court-martials started before 1944 did not cease, and new trials were to be expected. Hungarian people were forced into concentration camps, and these camps survived the war: half a year after the German capitulation, they were still inhabited by Hungarian prisoners. The injuries caused by the authorities were followed by injuries caused by the local Romanians. These were committed mostly in the villages near the border, especially in those which fell in the area of the offensive. There were such villages in which the authority was changed three times during a month. In these villages, the wealth of the Hungarian population and Hungarian churches were victims of the robbery of the soldiers and the revengeful civilians.

General Description of the Research

The border created by the Vienna Award was one lacking every strategic, economic, or ethnic consideration. It left in Romania those villages southeast and southwest from Cluj, inhabited mostly by Hungarians, which were connected with numerous economic and administrative links to the city like: Magyarfenes (in Romanian: Vlaha), Tordaszentlászló (Săvădisla), Magyarvalkó (Văleni), Györgyfalva (Gheorghieni), Ajton (Aiton), Kolozspata (Pata), Kiskályán (Căianu Mic), Mócs (Mociu), Magyarfráta (Frata), Mezőkeszü (Chesău), Magyarszovát (Suatu), Nagysármás (Sărmaşu), etc. A few of these villages were part of the legendary Goering-sack (the methane gas fields of the Transylvanian plain had to remain by Romania).

The goal of the research was to visit these villages and to record interviews with the living witnesses of this period about everything they could tell about the suffered or heard injuries.

Historical sources testify a lot of personal injuries: emigration in order to avoid military service, interning in concentration camps, forced labour, robbing, physical injuries, and atrocities. My goal was to analyse their personal imprints. The analysed villages were border villages, and therefore they were exposed significantly both during the four-year division and during the war.

In my interviews, I analysed the following topics: anti-Hungarian injuries starting from the autumn of 1940 and their effects on the local communities, demographic and economic changes due to the second Vienna Award, the requisition of grain from the winter of 1942, the consequences of the Romanian–Hungarian war (looting, atrocities), interning in concentration camps, interning in forced-labour camps, retaliation from the local authorities, interethnic tensions, occasional clashes between the two communities, atrocities against people, identification of those persons who died due to the atrocities, the aftermath of the events and their later effects on the relationship of the communities.

I looked for people who were old enough during the events to be able to testify about them and still in adequate mental condition to be able to remember. Due to the advanced age of the subjects, their number was quite low (2-3 persons in a village), but there were also villages where I found only one person or none at all. Therefore, I created 39 interviews (20 hours of recordings, 670 000 characters).

By a general overview of the interviews, I can definitely say that – as it was expected – from every experience those of personal humiliation were the ones that erupted the most significantly from the memories of my subjects. The interview with Mrs. Mária Császár is a good example. Even though she was only five and a half years old, she declared regarding the Soviet–Romanian offensive: 'I don't know what I ate yesterday, but I remember everything about how it was when the troops were retreating'. The stories told by Sándor Császár from Magyarfráta and by János Császár from Berkenyes (Berchieşu) are also very detailed: both of them told me about their internment to forced-labour camps in 1944. In the case of János Császár, it is very interesting that even though he considers himself Hungarian and he emphasized that he had been interned into forced-labour camp because he was a Hungarian, he still forgot his mother tongue and could speak only in Romanian. He cannot remember his mother tongue, yet he gave a detailed description of the events that happened to him in the labour camp of Buzău.

Traumas suffered by others or information gathered from third-hand sources were not recalled precisely, and the subjects often mixed events, places, or persons; so, these answers were often imprecise, short, vague, and reticent. It was frequent that events from the autumn of 1940 were confused with those from the autumn on 1944. For instance, Anna Szabó from the village of Novaj (Năoiu),

near Pusztakamarás (Cămăraşu), recalled that Romanians in her village dressed in black because of their grief for the Vienna Award, but it turned out that they were grieving the occupation of their village by the Hungarian army in 1944.

But later, when the recalled event was one the persons experienced themselves or they were the injured ones, the old people started to remember precisely whole dialogues, and the description of the events was detailed; they were often affected by their stories and told them with high emotional implication. Such implication was present in the narrative of Erzsébet Sinkó from Magyargyerőmonostor (Mănăstireni), who was a little girl when the Romanian army invaded her village, or in that of István Lőrincz from Magyarvalkó (Văleni), who was lured in Soviet imprisonment with a simple trick, but when he recalled it, he shouted: 'The bastards!'

It is natural that in the perspective of time a lot of information lost its preciseness; such was the case of Dani Horváth from Mezőkeszü (Chesău), who was convinced that the requisition of grains had also affected the Romanian population of his village, while János Császár from Berkenyes (Berchieşu) stated that only the grain of the rich people had been seized.

I remarked that the subjects were familiar with the terminology of the historical events, they used naturally expressions like requisition (of grains), refugees (Romanians from Northern Transylvania), concentration, robot (the expression Soviet soldiers used to lure people to concentration camps), 'barysna' (Soviet soldiers were looking for girls to rape with this expression). I also have to remark that people from different areas and villages used the same expression when they spoke about different attitudes. The best example was 'mocking,' which expressed the attitude of Romanian authorities and civilians against Hungarians characterized by humiliation, verbal or physical aggression. In every village, the subjects recalled requisition as an event when Romanians 'scraped out even the troughs for flour' or when they 'swept' every bit of grain.

I also have to mention that during the grain requisition there were situations in every village when local Romanians acted humanely. Many Hungarian families were helped by their Romanian neighbours to avoid starving, and it was frequent that the authorities avoided to seize grain from poor or orphaned Hungarian families such as in the case of Mihály Járai from Pusztakamarás (Cămăraşu).

The judgement of the attitude of the Hungarian and German soldiers was often positive, but regarding the Germans there exists the grievance that they took away Hungarian men for workforce. They are recalled as soldiers who did not seize anything, yet they asked for food or other goods, and often paid for them, they were benevolent towards civilians, and often helped them (according to János Császár, they helped a local widow with many children).

Though the analysed territory was quite small, and included neighbouring villages, and even though the recalling of the general conditions and war events

was similar, the narratives still contain a wide scale of personal injuries from humiliations to Soviet imprisonment, from interning to looting and from court-martial trials to the death of close relatives.

Results

The interviews are oral testimonies of events that can be described through the historical sources. During the four and a half years of war, the following happened on the analysed territory:

The new border tore inorganically in two the historically consistent regions of Kalotaszeg (Țara Călatei) and Mezőség (Câmpia Transilvaniei), taking away their natural relationship with the centre, Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca). This was most relevant for Kolozspata (Pata), Györgyfalva (Gheorghieni), Magyarfenes (Vlaha), and Tordaszentlászló (Săvădisla) because these villages were in an organic relationship with the city. According to the witnesses, this rupture also affected the Romanian population as their main occupation was marketing. Since the traditional trade-route was closed by the border, the locals had no other chance than smuggling. And their businesses had to be arranged in the faraway Torda (Turda), connected with inferior roads. Therefore, these villages became centres for smugglers. The main goods transported to Hungary were lumber, soap, and raw food, and they brought garments and shoes in Romania. The closeness of Hungary increased the number of immigrants; almost every young person from these villages moved to Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca).

In the first years, peasants with land remained in the villages, but as Romania entered in the anti-Soviet war in 1941 Hungarian men were massively recruited in the Romanian army, and they all chose to immigrate rather than to become soldiers. Therefore, in the region, there are only a few war dead from the Romanian army, but a lot more from the Hungarian army. The heads of the families went for work, leaving their wives and children behind. Those who fled from recruitment also left their families behind, but they were exposed to the harassment of the authorities.

Since most of the villages were ethnically heterogeneous, the relationship between Romanians and Hungarians was strongly ambivalent: next to the conflicts implying violence, we may see clear evidence of benevolence too.

The memory of the 1942 grain requisition is still alive in every community. The memories they recall are pure witnessing of those contemporary reports we may read in archives from pastors and local political leaders. We have to emphasize that in every village Romanian neighbours helped the local Hungarians and showed clear signs of benevolence.

Though during these four years the ethnic-based atrocities, house searches against Hungarians were quite frequent, the subjects did not recall such events.

This is probably because that type of official harassment involved mostly the intellectuals from the cities, while the peasants in villages were hit mostly by economic injuries. Still, the memory of ethnic harassment is living in the villages of Magyarszovát (Suatu) and Magyarfenes (Vlaha).

From the turn of 1944-45, subjects recalled three significant events: the entry of the Hungarian army for a short but memorable time, the later events of war regarding the looting of the Soviet–Romanian army and Romanian civilians, the atrocities against Hungarians, and finally the interning of the Hungarian men in concentration or forced-labour camps.

During the Romanian–Hungarian war, the Hungarian army occupied almost every village under analysis. Regarding these events, we have to remark a general sympathy towards the Hungarian 'honvéds' (soldiers). In several villages, the German troops took away civilians to help them carry their goods, and they followed the troops till the border of the Trianon Hungary.

The Soviet–Romanian offensive caused a lot of material damage and loss. We know that the soldiers looted the food reserves of the Hungarian population, they took away their livestock, their money, and small valuables. Soviet soldiers raped Hungarian girls, and in several cases escaping from the sexual harassment was a matter of coincidence. Many Hungarian soldiers were executed, and a lot of them died during the war events. The looting of the soldiers was followed by the looting of the civilians. Subjects recall that in the later times they found their furniture and valuables with Romanians from the neighbouring villages.

The retreat of the Hungarian–German troops caused a lot of damage in the infrastructure of the area. Roads, railroads, bridges, and tunnels became unusable, but to serve the logistics of the occupying Soviet–Romanian troops these had to be made usable. So, the Hungarian population of the nearby villages was taken to forced labour, and they were forced to work with their own tools and animals in the repairing operations.

But the greatest and most painful injury in every village was the interning of the Hungarian men in October 1944. There were three types of interned people: men who fled before the recruitment to the Romanian army and returned in their villages as retired Hungarian soldiers, families who went to work in Hungary and returned to their villages on the autumn of 1944, and those who remained permanently in their places but because of their ethnicity were taken to forced-labour camps. Regarding their destination, the prisoners had two categories: those taken to Romanian concentration camps and those taken to the Soviet Union. Personal narratives all relate inhumane circumstances, poor conditions, harassments, and even though most of the prisoners returned from the camps, a lot of them died during imprisonment. Subjects could not recall the names of those who died in the camps.

Interning was the consequence of the application of the elements of the armistice, which compelled Romania to intern every Hungarian and German

citizen from its territory. But the selection of the interned people was made solely on ethnic considerations and not on citizenship because, as it seems, local authorities had to meet a certain quota regarding the number of the interned people. This way, even minor boys were taken to imprisonment, only because of their nationality.

The memory of the events of WW2 still determines the Romanian–Hungarian relationship in the area. These memories still live in the communities, and the compensation and the satisfaction for the suffered injuries is yet to come, not to mention the responsibility of the criminals. The subjects of harassment are not eligible even today for any financial compensation for their injuries.

Conclusions

The interviews with the subjects are valuable sources of the events from every village. Since military archives regarding the events are still not available for research, regarding several types of atrocities, these testimonies are the only evidence. Therefore, making these interviews is an urgent and important task. Due to the advanced age of the subjects, this work must be continued because these narratives show us the imprints of the events in the souls of people. They show us how they traumatized their lives, how they affected their ethnical identity and their relationship towards the Romanian community.

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The Deportation of Germans from Romania to the Soviet Union in 1944–1945

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Abstract. The study outlines the capturing of prisoners by the Red Army taking control over Transylvania in the fall of 1944. It presents the second wave of capturing: the deportations in January-February 1945, pronouncedly oriented toward the German community (Transylvanian Saxons and Swabians) primarily living in the Banat. There are described the circumstances of capturing the prisoners, the number of those taken away, the routes of their deportation, the locations and lengths of their captivity, the number of the victims, and the return of the survivors. Finally, the remembrance of the 1945 Soviet deportations, their present social embeddedness is expounded. The source material of the study consists of specialist books, essays, published recollections, and interviews with survivors made by the author and other researchers.

Keywords: deportation, lager, captivity, prisoners, trauma, disease, hunger, homesickness, death, survivors

> *'A sacred hatred is burning in our hearts… We have got only one thought: kill the German! Thrust a bayonet into his hoggish belly! Make him shut his greedy eyes! Smash his stupid, angled head. Let the snake perish! A storm is rumbling over the steppes alongside the Don. An infuriated, enraged, unmerciful Russia is moving ahead. A dooming Russia. A vengeful Russia.'*
>
> Ilya Ehrenburg: *The German* (1943)

Seven decades ago, in the fall of 1944, World War II reached the land of Transylvania. The passage of the front lines brought about immeasurable suffering to local people, irrespective of their ethnic backgrounds. But the German population of the region divided between Romania and Hungary at that time was even more exposed to the mercy of the troops moving forward as compared with the other ethnic groups. The switching of Romania to the side of the Allies on the 23rd of August, 1944 made the country turn into a belligerent associate from an enemy. Thus, the Red Army, when liberating the country moving with its

troops towards the West, stepped for the first time on the territory of the enemy in Northern Transylvania. Therefore, it considered the large Saxon and Swabian population living here an enemy. The Red Army, intending to take revenge for the destructions in the Soviet Union, avenged upon the ethnic German civilian population, stigmatized as 'Nazis' and considered a scapegoat.

The most spectacular means of Soviet revenge was the large-scale capturing of civilian prisoners. This occurred in two larger waves in Transylvania: first in October 1944, right after the passage of the front line, when ethnic Hungarians and men thought to be German soldiers, German-looking boys and men, or people with German names were deported. The second wave came a few months later, in January 1945, after the occupation of Northern Transylvania and the eastern parts of Hungary, when the German-speaking civilian population of Banat, Partium and Transylvania was deported. The present study deals with the latter in detail.

The second wave of the Soviet deportations concretely decimated the German population living on the territory of present-day Romania. Decision number 7161 of the Soviet State Defence Committee (Государственный комитет обороны, ГКО, Gosudarstvennyj komitet oborony, GKO) released on the 16th of December, 1944 ordered the beginning of the deportation of Germans (Polian 2004: 250–252). This was supplemented a few days later by the strictly secretive Executive Order 0060 of the Military Council of the Ukrainian Front, released on the 22nd of December, 1944, which ordered the deportation of the population of German origin, capable of work from all over the territory of the Carpathian Basin by the special units of the army (Bognár 2012: 85–86). Order 031, dated on the 6th of January, 1944, addressed to the Romanian Council of Ministers by the Allied Control Commission, was based on these two Soviet directives, prescribing the compulsory mobilization for forced labour of all ethnic German people living in Romania, irrespective of their citizenship (Rusnac 3). According to Order A/192 on the 19th of February, 1945 of General Vinogradov, the deputy leader of the ACC, mixed committees were established in each county, with the task of taking the census of the population of German ethnicity. Besides Soviet officers, these committees included Romanian soldiers, gendarmes, and policemen (Aioanei–Troncotă 1995: 56).

According to the order, German men capable of work had to report compulsorily at the town halls of their places of residence between the 10-20th of January, 1945, and during this 10-day interval all men of German ethnicity between the ages of 17 and 45 capable of work as well as all women between the ages of 18 and 30 had to be mobilized (Polian 2004: 250). Theoretically, mothers of children under 1 year should have been an exception (Baier 1994: 40). But this rule was not respected.

Hearing about the abuses, and because of the general fear and uncertainty, a lot of people hid themselves at home or at relatives instead of voluntary reporting. Thus, the number of people was insufficient, which led to new abuses. The Soviets soon deported 16-17-year-old boys and girls, too, indiscriminately,

and even more, in addition to the previously determined age limit, 40-year old women and 50-year old men were also deported (Volume: Erzählungen von Rußlanddeportierten, 1995: 39). Those who did not present themselves were personally taken from their homes or workplaces by the units of the Romanian gendarmerie, on the basis of lists. This – to avoid sensation – mainly happened during the night (Zengea 2001).

The people deported because of their German ethnicity were in a more favourable situation as compared to the Hungarians captured three months earlier insofar as – in accordance with Decision 7161 and Order 0060 referring exclusively to them – they were allowed to take with them warm clothes, spare underwear, bedclothes, cutlery, and food enough for 15 days, a total weight of 200 kilograms per person (Polian 2004: 251, Bognár 2012: 85–86). Thus, their chances for survival were better. But because there were women with weaker physique among the Germans, the rate of their mortality was approximately the same as in the case of Hungarians.

The 10th of January, 1945 was designated as the date when the deportation of Germans was supposed to start (Stark 2006: 75). On that day, in accordance with the regulations, deportations began indeed in the Banat (Timişoara, Arad, Lugoj, Reşiţa), while in the Saxon Land (Braşov, Sibiu, Sighişoara, Mediaş, Rupea, Cisnădie, Agnita) and in the Partium (Satu Mare, Carei, Căpleni) deportations commenced a little bit later as compared to the original schedule, in some places only on the 11th of January (Baier 1994: 71–74). But the end of the deportation was everywhere the 16th of January, 1945 (Baier 1994: 69–70). In the frames of this short, well-organized action, lasting only a few days, the part of the German population from Romania that was capable of work was practically almost entirely gathered and deported to the Soviet Union.

But how many people were in fact captured and how big was the sacrifice paid by the German civilian population from Romania for the crimes and crazy abuses of Nazism? According to the 1941 census, 587,075 ethnic German people lived in Romania (Aioanei–Troncotă 1995: 56) in addition to the 44,000 in Northern Transylvania under Hungarian rule (Ablonczy 2011: 47). In comparison, the registry of the Romanian Statistical Office only included a total number of 469,967 ethnic Germans on 15th of August, 1945 (including Northern Transylvania) (Aioanei–Troncotă 1995: 60). The missing number of people is 162,108. Still, this number includes all the German people who joined the SS, and who died on the frontlines, and also those who had escaped to the West alongside the Wehrmacht in the fall of 1944. For these reasons, the exact number of those deported in January 1945 cannot be determined based on the data of censuses. Yet there are different estimations, according to which 70,000, 75,000, 81,000 (Rusnac 7) or for that matter 97,762 people (*Die Presse* 28.08.1954) were deported to the Soviet Union for forced labour. Among them, there were 35–50,000 Swabian people from

the Banat, 26–27,000 Saxon people from Transylvania, and 5–15,000 prisoners mainly from the Magyarized Swabian people in the region of Satu Mare (volume: Erzählungen von Rußlanddeportierten 1995: 9–10).

Many tried to intervene in order to ease the situation of the captured and deported German young people – firstly, the leaders of the German community themselves, Hans-Otto Roth, Rudolf Brandsch, and Victor Glondys, requesting an audience on the matter from Romanian Prime Minister Nicolae Rădescu. But their attempts were to no avail; the Romanian politician referred to the Soviet order, and said that his government was powerless under the given circumstances (Rusnac 3–4). The intervention of the Romanian organization of the International Red Cross at the Romanian government on the 22nd of January, 1945 was similarly unsuccessful (Baier 1994: 9).

Yet, there were some people who were exempted from deportation. The approximately 12,000 people who succeeded to avoid Soviet deportation were those needed in the country from an economic point of view (rich people, skilled industrial workers, etc.), as well as those incapable of work, or with close relatives of Romanian ethnicity (a Romanian spouse, or children from mixed marriages) (volume: Erzählungen von Rußlanddeportierten 1995: 8.).

This shows that while the Soviets were not dealing with smaller details, Romanian authorities did have their role in the deportation of the Germans! It is public knowledge that some Romanian politicians openly supported the deportation of German people, while others, like Iuliu Maniu, the leader of the Romanian National Peasant Party, tacitly accepted their deportation on a large scale or at least did not protest against it (Rusnac 5–6). The agitation of the Romanian communists in favour of the deportation of ethnic Germans was spectacular. The communists considered that the German civilian population was simply collectively 'Hitlerite,' and regarding them as a source of danger behind the front line urged the total elimination of this ethnic group (Baier 1994: 7–8).

The deportation of the German people was carried out quite rapidly. Groups of gathered people were taken to the closest railway stations in closed trucks in just one or two days, (volume: Erzählungen von Rußlanddeportierten 1995: 13), then made to start their journey squeezed into cattle-trucks in groups of 30-50 people (Baier 1994: 70, Brenner 2001). Most of them were switched on broad-gauge Soviet railways in Bacău, where approximately 80 people were placed into bigger, Russian cattle wagons (Brandstetter 2001). After that, they were transported across the Soviet border through the town of Iaşi.

Most of the Germans were taken to the camps of Ukraine by a journey lasting from approximately two weeks to a month: Dniprodzerzhynsk, Dnipropetrovsk, Odesa, Mykolaiv, Volodarka, Zaporizhia, Irmino, and Voroshilovgrad (today Luhansk in the Ukraine) (Rusnac 13). A lot of people were deported to the famous coal-mines of Donbass and to the lagers in Dokuchaievsk, Yenakiieve, Elenovka,

Horlivka, Petrovka, Krasnoarmeysk, or Makiivka (Zengea 2001, Brenner 2001). At the same time, part of the deported people ended up in the bigger camps of the Ural Mountains, being swallowed up by the lagers in Chelyabinsk, Ufaley, Kopeysk, and Berezovsk (Rusnac 13). Also, there were people taken to Lenino on the Crimean Peninsula, to the district of Stalingrad (Petrov Val), others to the district of Rostov (Rostov, Belaya Kalitva) or the area of Nizhny Novgorod (Dzerzhinsk), and some people were deported to the region of the Caucasus (Krasnodar) or to even more remote Asian camps (Frunze – today Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan) (Rusnac 13).

As long as the war evolved, the prisoners were not allowed to write and receive letters. Military post did not even start after the war ended; it began to function only from the beginning of 1946 (Zsigmond 2002: 89–90). Apart from the news brought by the sick detainees sent home, the prisoners could only send messages home officially after 1946. In the beginning, they were allowed to write longer texts on the postcards handed out, but later on, in order to ease the work of the censors, they could only write ten lines, or maximum 25 words. Inventive ones wrote the words together, so that their letters could be longer (Papp 2001: 56, 164). Encampment postcards were checked in the centre of censorship in Moscow, before sending them on to the addressees. Similarly, letters written to the prisoners were also checked in Moscow before delivery. The prisoners had to put the Moscow Red Cross as the addressee – this was the organization that oversaw detention camp correspondence. The word 'detention camp' was not permitted to appear on the postcards, 'post office box' was written on them instead, and the number in fact was the number of the prison camp.

Correspondence was random and extremely belated. It happened that prisoners got their first letters from home only in the January of 1948. It is worth quoting the memoirs of Helene Brandstetter from Rupea; she was a prisoner in Donbass and got her first few lines of letter from her family only after three years of imprisonment. 'I got the first letter on the 26th of January, exactly three years after my detention. They even thought I lost my senses… Because we were being given the advance, and the interpreter brought the letters, and he asked: Mrs. Göldner, you did not get a letter so far, did you? And I said: No, I did not. And as he took the letter, I immediately recognized my father's handwriting. Then I said: Oh, my God, that is mine! And he said: Mrs. Göldner, just be calm, everything is all right. Yes, but as I grasped the letter I began to shout till I got to the barrack… And as I was told later, I collapsed near my bed… They called the doctor, who told them to put me in bed, and... that a friend should read me the letter. And she was reading and reading, and I finally got well. Then I read it myself. My father had written about everything: that the children had been with him since the time I left, that they were all fine, and that Hansi had been baptized…' (Brandstetter 2001).

Many of the deported people died in the world of Soviet labour camps. The exact number of the victims still remains unknown today. Even the number

of prisoners remains unknown. Therefore, there are just estimations about the number of ethnic Germans who died in detention, namely 15-20% of those taken away for forced labour (Baier 1994: 13), but at least 10,000 and a maximum of 20,000 people have become the victims of the encampment conditions.

The prisoners considered as free workforce were exposed to excessive physical burden, they were constantly excessively pushed to work, pressed to accomplish impossible norms. But en masse death was also caused by the rough, extreme weather, the extremely cold Russian winters – during which the deported people were forced to carry on working. The most difficult winter was the first one, of the year 1945. The leaders of the camps were not aware yet of the working capacity of the prisoners, and the deported were not used to the conditions of the camps either, to the cold temperature that sometimes went under –40^{0}C. And if the accomplishment of the norm was not achieved severe punishments followed, and the lack of proper medical assistance became the reason of the death of the detained (Rieder 2001: 60). At the same time, irregular and permanently unsatisfactory nutrition resulted in feeble organism and the appearance of contagious diseases in every case. Deadly, often unstoppable epidemics sometimes caused the death of almost all members of the camps. Among the most frequent diseases, infectious diarrhoea, dysentery with chronic gastritis, exanthematic typhus, malaria, inflammation of heart valves, meningitis, effusive pleurisy, dystrophy, and marasmus can be mentioned (Szabó 1994: 68, 73; Papp 2001: 41). The latter had several stages; those in the fourth, fifth and sixth stage could not be saved (Papp 2001: 54). In addition to all these diseases, the prisoners suffered of parasites like lice and bedbugs, both in the summer and in the winter, and they frequently got scabies (Csetri 2004). No wonder that under these conditions many of them committed suicide (Brenner 2001).

The cruel world of detention camps mainly had intellectual victims. Because of the disappearance of the best part of middle-class intellectuals, the German society of Romania became more exposed to and more defenceless later on against primitive communist ideology.

The much awaited moment of release came in 1947-1948 for the majority of the prisoners (Szabó 1994: 125–127). German people born before 1916 could go home at this time (Zengea 2001.). The last larger transports of prisoners arrived home in October 1949 (Papp 2001: 148, 156, 161). The Germans born after 1916 came home with this transport. The prisoners still remaining there could only return home much later, between 1950 and 1953. The returning route was varying. The first station for some was the transit camp in Focşani, while for others the distribution camp in Râmnicu Sărat, where the Red Cross from Bacău and Buzău attended home-comers. In the distribution camps, prisoners were taken over by the Romanian Army. They remained in quarantine for two weeks, and then they were released home.

The sufferings left permanent marks in the hearts and the memories of survivors. Many of them became physically so weak that they died shortly after coming home. Others, who could somehow recover of the spiritual and physical torments, found a world around themselves that had changed totally. They could not fit easily into the peaceful, civilian life. In the difficult situation after the war and the political atmosphere loaded with prejudices concerning the past of the prisoners, many of the intellectuals could only live by teaching the Russian language they had learnt in the camps. The political leadership ordained the compulsory teaching of the Russian language from elementary school to university, and there was a huge shortage of Russian language teachers at that time.

The calvary of these innocent people that had been through hell was a taboo topic for a long time. During the four decades of communism, Soviet labour camps and deported people simply did not exist. The political leadership even ignored home-coming prisoners. It was not possible to speak, write about, or remember the unlawful deportation or the sufferings endured. Moreover, it was forbidden even to make mention of these events. Despite of this, the relationship between survivors lasted, and the common memories about the years spent in detention camps survived as an underground river. The former deported people kept count and continue to keep count of one another. Yet, their continually decreasing number urges the historian to track down still surviving eyewitnesses of the labour camps, even if in the twenty-fourth hour, and by recording their recollections to save a valuable resource material for a future comprehensive scientific exploration.

The survivors dared to write down their recollections only after 1989, and the first memoires could only appear after the change of the political system. A few but valuable creations appeared in the last two decades. In addition, a widening series of interview volumes (Betea et al. 2012) and scientific treatises (Weber 1995, Stark 2006) evoke the stories that had caused such collective traumas.

Reaching the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II in Transylvania, I feel that it is high time for a worthy commemoration of the ethnic German people deported to the Soviet Union for forced labour. That is also the reason why an international conference with this topic was organized in October 2014 in Cluj, in the new premises of the Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania.

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Calvary of the Germans in Hungary at the end of WWII

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Abstract. The German community in Hungary suffered many blows at the end of World War II and after it, on the basis of collective guilt. Immediately after the Red Army had marched in, gathering and deportation started into the camps of the Soviet Union, primarily into forced-labour camps in Donetsk, the Caucasus, and the Ural mountains. One third of them never returned. Those left behind had to face forced resettlement, the confiscation of their properties, and other ordeals. Their history was a taboo subject until the change of the political system in 1989. Not even until our days, by the 70th anniversary of the events, has their story reached a worthy place in national and international remembrance. International collaboration, the establishment of a research institute is needed to set to rights in history the story of the ordeal of the German community after World War II, for the present and future generations.

Keywords: Malenkey robot, Soviet lager, deportation, labour camp, prisoners of war, relocation, collective guilt, Swabian Holocaust, Germans from Hungary, forced migration

Mission of the Association Pécs-Baranya Ethnic Circle of Germans in Hungary

Our association was founded in 1991. Its main aim is the representation of interests and the research of the true history of the German national minorities. The Circle has been intensively involved in researching the Malenkij Robot since 2008. Thanks to EU applications, we have had the chance to travel to the Donets Basin and to the Ural mountains, where we got to visit such lagers where the civilian population was deported following WWII from the Carpathian Basin because of their German or Hungarian origin. We could not find the barracks, but we found many of the nearby graves. A DVD film was made on our travels. We have also published books on the topic; Malenkij Robot – 'Our only sin was our origin' and 'I was in captivity far in Russia'. We commemorate those transported to the Malenkij Robot every year in the framework of a conference, exhibition,

or presentations. We make interviews with those still alive by involving young people. Our first partner organization from outside of our borders was the Historical Memorial Park of Szolyva Committee represented by György Dupka writer, poet, and researcher. By now, we have partner organizations from Transylvania, Vojvodina, Upper Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Poland. Our aim is to have the tragic story of those civilians deported to the Soviet Union become part of international memory and be part of our history books in Europe.

Germans: 1,000 years in the Carpathian Basin

A quotation from the study of Ágoston Keisz about the history of Germans in Hungary: the history of Hungary and the Germans has been intertwined for about 1,000 years. In our common history, we characteristically used to live together in peace. Germans in the country have lived without any serious conflicts with all the other nations. The first Germans arrived to Hungary already in the Middle Ages. Saxons used to settle in Transylvania and in the northern parts of the area that is Slovakia today. They were mainly city dwellers; the birth of the Hungarian cities and trade is mainly attached to them. The second big wave of colonization took place in the second half of the 18th century. Following the decrease of population as the result of the Turkish wars, first it was the Hungarian lords and then the Viennese court that initiated colonization attempts. Those German groups who arrived in Hungary at those times mainly settled around Pest-Buda, in Fejér, Veszprém, Somogy, Baranya and Tolna counties, between the Danube and Tisza rivers, and some other places.

By the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the German population had an important role in the life of the country. Looking at their numbers, in the year 1910, about 10% of the population was made up of Saxon and German minorities. They had essential roles in the civilian transition and in the industrial and mining processes. They established a flourishing agricultural economy.

After the Treaty of Trianon had downsized the country, the circa half a million members of German minority mainly living off the land and working in agriculture became the greatest minority, giving about 6-7% of the full population.

Conflicts regarding the Germans in Hungary in the 1930s

Here are some of the reasons:

Hitler gaining power: the national socialist politics found some supporters among the Hungarian Germans too. Volksbund was founded in 1938, but it only got under Nazi rule by 1944.

Anti-German movements became stronger as their ideas were consciously spread in the country. Since the financial situation of the Germans was way better than that of the Hungarians, popular belief had it that if they were to be driven out of the country the lands they used would fulfil the poor Hungarian peasants' need for land, and later, in the framework of the population exchange programme, the empty houses would serve as home for the newcomers. And this idea was shared by leading politicians as well.

Their wealth that was to be confiscated would help to solve the catastrophic social situation following the war.

They became the culprit for the loss suffered during WWII.

By the end of WWII, the coming of the Red Army and the actual international atmosphere was a good ground for driving the Germans out of the country – just by the principle of collective guilt. This was primarily stressed by the Communist Party and the National Peasant Party.

Impacts on the German Minorities before and after WWII

The 13 most serious impacts:

1. Police abuse and harassment became frequent.

2. The internment camps established for the political criminals were mainly filled by Germans, and they were the majority to be obligated to do public labour or carry out forced labour.

3. During the forced enrolment processes of the German army (to the SS or the Wehrmacht), mainly German-born people were transported. 'Take the Germans' was a common viewpoint in Hungary.

4. Truculence from the incoming Red Army was an everyday issue in the occupied villages. Houses, cellars, and families were robbed, food reserves taken away, and women raped. Murder was also quite common.

5. 15 March 1945 marks the birth of the regulation of the Provisional Government Land Reform, the 2nd chapter of which states who can be deprived of their lands: the full land shall be taken away from traitors, far-right-wing leaders of the Nyilas or other national socialist and fascist groups, members of the Volksbund and war criminals. In reality, it was the Germans who were deprived of their full wealth if others needed it. In the villages, land claimant committees were formed.

6. The pressure for the Hungarianization of names got stronger by 26 May 1945.

7. July 1945 marks the loss of citizenship (by the decision of the Potsdam Conference).

8. During the 4 November 1945 elections, the Germans got no right to vote if they had been voluntary members of the SS, right-wingers, interned, sentenced by the people's court or if they considered themselves German in 1941. (According to the 1941 census, the number and rate of Germans was the highest in Baranya County. Around 30% of the population considered themselves German. Not considering the central city Pécs, this number was rather 40%.)

9. High number of war cripples; psychological and physical scars and injuries; prisoners of war and a high number of fallen or lost relatives.

10. Full deprivation of citizen rights for 5 years, relocations.

11. Political and cultural discrimination: prohibition of the use of mother tongue and education until the 1950s.

12. Relocation – driving people out of the country in the period of 1946–48.

The Potsdam Conference gave way to the relocation of the German population. The Temporary Hungarian Government was obliged to relocate 400-450 thousand Germans. Their lands and wealth were seized.

During the Potsdam Conference held in the second half of July in 1945, the representatives of the USA, GBR, and the former Soviet Union made the decision of relocating Germans from Hungary, the former Czechoslovakia, and Poland. This action affected those who served in the Hungarian army or were not even Volksbund members. (The majority of Germans in Baranya were mainly peasants living in the villages.) Only those people could get immunity who entered the communist party. But, as per the motto of the communist party, 'rich Swabians have no excuse' – even if they were innocent.

The first train left Budaőrs on 19 January 1946 and the last one in autumn 1948. A very large number of Germans were relocated from Baranya. There were such villages where two-thirds of the Germans were chased away, their houses, lands, and animals seized. Numerous villages were almost fully abandoned where Germans used to live in majority.

13. Malenkij Robot:

Transporting people to the Soviet lagers for a 'little work'. Kidnapping and abductions started by Order 0060 dated 22 December 1944, in Baranya County. The preceding central order, 7161, dated on 16 December 1944, was actually signed by none other than Stalin himself. This order dealt with the transportation of the Germans to the former Soviet Union for reparation works from the areas 'liberated' by the Red Army. The Order also stated that the internment processes should be carried out through the governmental organizations of the given country. (Order 0060 was dated on the same day when the Moscow-controlled Temporary Hungarian Government was established. It is possible that the intention was to

address this way the responsibility of the German relocations in part or fully to the Hungarian Government.)

Baranya County was occupied by the 3rd Ukrainian Front of the Red Army in November/December 1944. The order regarding the relocation of the Germans was signed by the regions around 22 December. The Hungarian authorities made a list of the people who were considered German by each village – whoever was on the list had to check in at the central office of their village. From there, they were sent to the Russian military headquarters set up in the district centres. This obligation concerned women between the ages of 18 and 30 and men between the ages of 17 and 45. They had to carry food and clothes for two weeks with themselves, allegedly to construct the Pécs Airport or to work on the Bácska corn fields. They learned about the fact that they were transported to Russia only at the train station – if they learned it at all. Other than the above mentioned people, that is children aged 14–15, elderly, senior citizens, and pregnant women, were deported too.

Around 5-6,000 thousand civilians were deported from around 200 villages from Baranya. The exact number remains unknown because in Baranya no single list was constructed like in Tolna County, for example. In many places, only such a list is available that includes the name of just those people in the cases of whom extraction was initiated. And this solely happened in the case of politically trustworthy persons. No people who considered themselves German during the census could get on the list. This is where the popular misbelief is rooted that from Baranya County only 700 persons from 69 villages were transported to the Malenkij Robot, because these people were those Hungarians who were earlier transported with the Germans by mistake.

Strangely enough, the full area of the county was affected by the Malenkij Robot even though there were hardly any Germans living in the southern and western parts. While from the German-populated regions mainly Germans were deported, from the other villages, people who had German-sounding names and German spouses were also taken. In some cases, they deported such demobilized soldiers who served after 1941, during the time when the former Soviet Union was attacked. From the villages, people were often driven on foot to the Pécs collection site, the Lakits army base in the middle of winter. From the village of Babarc, people were taken away on 22 December and, in some cases, on 23 and 24 December, the day of Christmas too. The collection date in many places was the second day of Christmas in 1944. The majority started their journey on 25 and 26 December. On the Hungarian side, the commands were usually executed by the Chief Constable of the county. The collection was carried out with military assistance.

The trains were assembled in the Pécs train station in the first half of January 1945, each car capable of carrying 40 people crowded together. They were transported along the route Baja – South Transylvania – Sibiu – Braşov – Ploieşti – Iaşi or Oltenia – Timişoara – Lugoj – Caransebeş – Bucharest – Ploieşti

to Jassy in utterly inhumane circumstances. Many had not made it alive to the destination. (Torda – Braşov and Focşani used to be the largest gathering lagers in Southeast Europe; about 50-60 thousand German and Hungarian prisoners of war languished here. Focşani also served as a transit station.) People changed to the broad-gauge Soviet trains in Iaşi. From here, the route went towards the Donets Basin or to the Caucasus, but the final destination could also be some different area of the former Soviet Union like parts of the Ural or Byelorussia.

Malenkij Robot by the Place of Capture

Most of the people, including Hungarians and Germans, were deported from Baranya, Tolna, Bács-Kiskun, Békés, Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun, Borsod, Szabolcs-Szatmár, and Zemplén counties.

Prisoners were decimated by the brutality of the prison guards, the given quotas, the terrible conditions, the daily 10–12 hours of hard and demanding work, hunger, sicknesses, and freezing temperatures.

The prisoners worked in mines, on the construction sites of roads, dams and railroads, laying crude oil pipelines, like that of the Druzhba pipeline (Bashkortostan), without appropriate tools, clothes or food, many times in as cold a weather as minus 30 degrees Celsius.

Prisoners also worked in the Donetsk Basin, the Ural or Caucasian industrial regions, or around greater cities at the construction sites or renovation works of water plants. There was not one international convention dealing with their cases, not even the Red Cross visited them. It was the sole decision of the former Soviet Union when they would let the prisoners go.

Returning Home

On 9 May 1945, when the war was already over, many people hoped they could return home. In fact, some civilians did return among the prisoners of war on special ambulance trains.

I.	1946. 38 trains	16,322 prisoners of war
II.	1947. 89 trains	101,623 prisoners of war
III.	1948. 68 trains	88,325 prisoners of war
IV.	1949.	5,055 prisoners of war (Germans in majority)

The POW – prisoner of war name includes the civilians too; they were not separated.

Debrecen: This city used to have a POW care camp where they received a certificate of their medical examinations, 20 Forints in cash, and a handkerchief.

Remembrance

'Our Russian supervisor accompanied us all the way to Debrecen, where he handed us over. We had a wash and they took us home. Here they already knew whose whole family was transported to Germany. They did not have to come home to Nádasd; they were transported straight to Germany.'

'By the time I got home, my parents had already been in Germany. I could not go back to our own house, we were thrown out. Everything was taken away from us, we had nothing left. I ended up in an empty house from where another family had been taken away and had left everything behind.' (89-year-old Aunt Marika; Ferencné Reisz from Mecseknádasd, from the interview conducted by Zsuzsanna Elblinger in February 2014.)

The exact number of people deported to the lagers in the former Soviet Union requires further investigation because there is too much controversial data available right now. According to some estimates, around 360 thousand civilian and 600 thousand prisoners of war were the victims.

Where can the numbers be found?

– the local Red Cross office might hold the list of deported civilians in the municipalities like in Pécsvárad;

– in parish churches if the documents have not been seized earlier from the parish priest

– the District National Committees also had a role in listing and classifying the names;

– in the material of the County National Committee in Pécs (They actually called the attention of the Soviets to the fact that 'the Germans are Hungarian citizens'. The Soviet answer was that 'we do not modify the order'.).

Deportation, internment, ethnicity-based collective punishment and genocide, labour camps, death camps – shall these words be used in connection to the crimes committed against Germans and Hungarians in the Carpathian basin? Yes, because in their case all of these were present.

International Background

The deportation of several thousand Germans to labour camps took place with the collective agreement of the allied forces following Stalin's order on 16 December 1944.

During the Tehran Conference between 28 November and 1 December 1943, Stalin already stated to the allies that he wished to use the work force of 4 million Germans in the reconstruction period for a few years.

The deportation of Germans to the former Soviet Union for reparation works regarding the damage they caused was part of the German compensation – as written in a telegram by President Roosevelt of the United States on 18 January 1945.

According to Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Great Britain, during the war, Russia suffered a lot of damage; so, they are not to be blamed if they requested 100 or 150 thousand people of any origin from, for example, Romania to work in their mines (note from 19 January 1945).

Stalin has made his final decision backed up by the cynical approach and ignorance of the allied forces. 'The gathering and internment of the Germans shall be realized between December 1944 and January 1945, and their transportation to the work locations shall be finished by 15 February 1945.'

The 70th anniversary gives a great occasion to call attention to the stories of those deported to Soviet lagers and the tragic happenings that are kept secret while teaching history. The guilty shall be named and those responsible brought to light during the Memorial Day. The English and American allies, as they did with many similar cases like the Katyn murder of 22 thousand Polish soldiers, overlooked the enslavement of several thousand East European (like Hungarian) prisoners of war and forced workers, considering it as the reward of the Soviet allies for their military victories.

Those deported, withstanding the physical and psychic sufferings, loss and ordeals, have always kept their human dignity. Their faith has kept them. Their deep religiousness gave them will and fortitude. German and Hungarian prayers and songs were born in the captivity, where victims told their misery to God and asked for redemption.

They are role models for their descendants. Their spiritual magnitude is proved by the fact that they have no lust for vengeance in their hearts. They also feel gratitude for those Russians who gave them food and helped them.

We, successors, have the obligation to keep the memory of the innocent victims and commemorate them in every possible way: by organizing conferences, international memorial years, through research institutions, by establishing a full database of the names with those who did not survive, through the old lager locations and burial sites. Documentaries, thematic radio programmes, scientific and literary volumes, memorial sites, memorial plaques, memorial journeys to the gathering, spreading lagers, and that of the former Soviet Union should be made, published, or organized.

14. Those returning from the labour camps were treated with discrimination. They did not get any, or did not get proper work. They had everyday existential problems. They were deprived of their rights. They did not get any certificate about the fact that they were imprisoned in lagers. No indemnity or military compensation was given to them.

The Obligations of the Descendants

The future generations shall inherit the knowledge not just through national school education but in the European education systems as well (for example, in the framework of an EU project, the common European history books could be expanded with a chapter about the stories of those transported to the lagers of the former Soviet Union).

The tragedy of the Malenkij Robot shall become part of international and national memories.

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TO THE MEMORY OF MY GRANDPARENTS

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The History of the Germans from Mérk and Vállaj, Deported to the Soviet Union for Forced Labour 1945–1949

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Abstract. The deportation – in German: Verschleppung – was a 'taboo' for a long time. However, the works born since the change of regime provide an excellent and overall picture about this painful historical act. At the same time, it is desirable to get a more precise picture by examining the detailed history of the deportation in the case of the individual settlements. Mérk and Vállaj, the Swabian settlements in the Szatmár region, in the eastern part of the country, lie on the periphery in several aspects. Still, considering the numerical proportion of their population, the most displaced persons were deported by the Soviets, as war criminals, from here in 1945 – a quarter of whom never saw their beloved ones and home country again. It is the particular tragedy of this fact that those deported were at least as much bound to their recipient country, the Hungarian nation, as to their German nationality. They are not criminals of war but victims of the war of racial discrimination. 'Who will be responsible for these people suffering innocently?' – puts the question Ferenc Juhász, parish priest in Mérk at that time. Giving an answer is the task of all of us. The paper seeks to explore a segment of the micro-texture of the country-wide, and even wider, regional trauma of this community, based on diary excerpts from the period as well as on individual, specialized literature research.

Keywords: 'Malenkey robot,' Mérk, Vállaj, Donyeck, Szatmár Swabians, forced labour, deportation, reparation, victims, forced-labour camp

'We are just spending time here, one day after another. Like animals, we are looking for every opportunity to skive off or to steal, so that we can get something to eat, in order to obtain some more and better food. It is the body, always just the body. The soul remains only with the small prayer that we say in the morning, at noon, or in the evening, if we say it at all. If yes, we say it lazily, most frequently absent-mindedly, sleepily, tiredly… We have become like the drunken people, dazed by alcohol. We are dazed by exasperation. This is how we try to forget.

And then, when we get "sober," when common sense returns, we realize that we are here, nowhere else but here, and everything is happening in vain, and there is nothing that could change our fate' (Irén Véber's diary). These are the lines of a young girl in her twenties in November 1945, who had been a happy, religious Roman Catholic young person not long before, brimming with life. How could she have changed so much? She drudged hard, her body and spirit being worn out in a forced-labour camp in the Soviet Union. She had been deported and condemned to spend years there, just because she was of German origin. She was declared guilty of the war, collectively with her brothers and sisters, parents and her co-villagers, and all those tens of thousands of people deported to Soviet camps between September 1944 and the spring of 1945.

Deportation had been a 'taboo topic' for a long time. However, the works published since the change of the political system provide an excellent and comprehensive idea about deportations. At the same, it is desirable to create a clearer description of the events on a country-wide scale by describing the detailed story of deportation in the case of various settlements.

The Soviet Union wanted to obtain compensation from the newly occupied countries for its economy destroyed by the war and its extensive labour shortage. The deportation of the civilian population, primarily of German origin, aiming at reparation by communal work, was carried out systematically, according to plans that had been conceived long before.

'Each person with German origin, capable of work has to be mobilized and is due to report for work!' (György Zielbauer: The Deportation of the German People from Hungary 1944/45). The gathering up of the people of German origin was called into action by General Order 0060 of the Soviet Army dated on the 22nd of December, 1944, on the organization and accomplishment of communal work in the rear areas.

The Hungarian authorities – primarily the administrative bodies of villages and districts – were also obliged to help with the deportation; they were ordained to compile the lists and to rank and classify the people. This was included in the order of Interior Minister Ferenc Erdei, given on the 5th of January, 1945 (Zielbauer 1990).

One of the main questions of the matter is related to the number of deported people. Researches so far determine the number of people deported to malenkaya rabota to approximately 60-65 thousand.

Their transportations – to the gathering camps and then on to the Soviet Union – were entirely accomplished by Soviet military authorities.

People carried off from Hungary ended up in the demolished factories and mines of the Soviet Union, e.g. in the Urals, the Donetsk Basin, the Sayan Mountains or the Caucasus.

The Soviets reported reassuring news about the deported people all along: '… the living conditions and the health provision of the people carried are fair given the circumstances' (Füzes 1990).

In spite of their 'fair' circumstances and health provision, almost one third of the prisoners died as a result of the inhumane conditions – starving, epidemics, accidents, and the weather!

This was the first stage of the collective calling to account and punishment of Germans from Hungary. This was followed by the agrarian reform, the confiscation of lands from the Germans, the abolishment of German-language education, the restriction of their political and civil rights, and finally – 'Get out of the country with the Swabian traitors!' – their banishment (Füzes 1990).

The History of the Deportations from Mérk and Vállaj

The Occupation

Mérk and Vállaj were occupied by the Soviet army a few days after the battle between Zalău and Tăşnad, on the 19th of October, 1944. The army took control over everything right as they marched in (História Domus, Mérk). For the interpretation of their orders – quartering, requisitions etc. –, they made use of a small group of local men who had been prisoners of war in World War I and had a basic knowledge of Russian – they became the so-called policemen.

Gathering and Vicissitudinous Journey to the Detention Camp

The commanding officer of the occupying forces – a Russian major – had the policemen compile the list of people to be deported to the Soviet Union at the very end of December. By New Year's Eve, the precise list was ready, and it affected each family – because every family had at least one member in the age limit.

'The 3rd of January, 1945 was the most painful day in the history of our township' – wrote the Historia Domus of the parish from Mérk. Early in the morning, the public criers and policemen knocked on the windows of almost every house, and read out aloud the names of those that had to show up in the Reformed school in Mérk and a smaller school in Vállaj. In Mérk, the motivation was that they would be given shoes and salt, whereas in Vállaj they were told that a meeting would be held about 'establishing new order in the village'. When they considered everyone was there, armed Russian soldiers surrounded the building of the school.

Around noon, they were driven over the gendarmerie barracks at the end of the village, under strong escort. They announced by beat of drum that warm clothes and food for 18 days should be brought for everyone.

On the morning of the 6th of January, an order was given that they should pack up because they would depart in two hours. 264 people (159 men and 109

women) were deported from Mérk (História Domus, Mérk) and 214 people from Vállaj (136 men, 78 women): a total number of 478 people. They departed on foot – surrounded by armed troopers – to the gathering camp of the county in Carei (Nagykároly), located at a distance of 12 kilometres.

Their relatives – almost the entire village – followed them from a distance. The church bells were tolled in the village. After leaving the confines of Vállaj, they turned on the stony road and continued their way through Urziceni (Csanálos, Schontal) to the county seat. The inhabitants of the Swabian settlements from the region were also gathered in the yard of the county hall those days.

During the day of the 9th of January, they departed to the railway station, where cattle wagons were waiting for them. Wooden bunks and utility stoves that could be heated up with tarred railway sleepers were set up in the wagons. The toilet was a small hole cut in the floor. Dawn came by the time the train left the railway station of Carei. The men loudly sang the song 'As so many times in the past, let's hurry and save our country once again!'

After this, came the bitter 18-day long journey by train. From Carei through Oradea and Cluj, they joined the South-Eastern railway. At the transferring station, they changed train – and continued their journey in Russian wagons because of the difference of track gauge. From here, even more people travelled in a wagon – 80 people –, and besides that these were coal wagons, so they became dirty and got infested with lice. It was even more uncomfortable to stay in these wagons – 'we could only crouch' – remembered Mrs. János Schlachter.

Arrival, Transfer, and Assignment to Work

They arrived to a picturesque station, but they were not taken to the same place – the men from Mérk and the women from Vállaj were taken to Nikitovka, while the men from Vállaj, together with the women from Mérk, to Kostiantynivka. These industrial settlements are located in present-day Ukraine, in the Donetsk Basin, in a region called Donbass. Those separated could not even say goodbye, husbands and wives did not know anything about each other for years or forever.

Camps were built near several huge factories and mines destroyed during the war in Donbass, and surrounded with barbed-wired fences, watch-towers, and sentry-boxes.

1,100-1,200 people lived in their camp in a huge, two-storeyed building complex. The hallmarks of the war could be seen on the building, which had to be renovated first. 30-40 people lived together in a room. They displayed a cross and the picture of Virgin Mary on the wall, but the soldiers laughed at them.

On the 28th of January, they were registered by names, and on the next day, on Monday, work began. The working sites – plastering ruins, building railways, rebuilding factories, working in factories of bricks, of iron, of mercury, on the

fields, in stone pits and other mines, kolkhozes – were often at a distance of 20-30 kilometres. The workers had to go on foot every day, obviously accompanied by armed attendants.

The most difficult work was in the mines and in the mercury factory. In the mercury factory, one could only resist for a few months at most because it was harmful to the lungs, and atrophied the workers gingivae, making them lose their teeth. Their lips got constantly wounded, their eyesight got weaker. Most of the people died here. Working in mines was dangerous as well because the mines were obsolete, old and they had no security at all. Work was extremely difficult as mainly the women had to work with pickaxes, shovel stones into mine cars and push them (!), also carry water with buckets when the water came into the mine. A lot of accidents happened deep down in the mines.

The factories destroyed during the war had to be rebuilt first. Once the ruins had been cleared away, people were organized into brigades of bricklayers, scaffolders, and painters. A lot of factories, industrial units were built, renovated and called into action by Hungarian forced labourers. They worked also in the restarted factories. They tried to include men in the brigades according to their professions. Those without a profession – agricultural labourers and housewives – were assigned to unskilled labour. Many of them loaded and unloaded wagons, while some of them worked on trucks as loaders.

Work at kolkhozes meant different types of agricultural work from early spring to late autumn. At the beginning, they were frequently assigned to build railways, mainly in the region of Artinovka.

Weaker people were assigned to work in the detention camp, in the kitchen, as cleaning personnel, to wash, repair clothes, as stokers etc. This kind of work was also given to those coming out of lager hospitals, too. Russian brigade leaders were assigned to the working brigades, who watched over performance.

Everyday Life in the Camp

They had to go out to work six days a week – in kolkhozes often on Sundays too – irrespective of the weather or even if they had no dry clothing. They were only allowed to stay inside when the temperature got below -35°C outside! From Mondays to Saturdays, they had to wake up at 4 o'clock in the morning because daily bread ration was given out at this hour in the 'shop'. After this, they got soup, then line-up, counting and roll-call followed. They had to start work at around 7 or 8 o'clock, depending on the distance between the lager and the workplace. They worked until 4 o'clock in the afternoon and then went back to the camp on foot. Then there was a roll-call and counting again in the centre of the camp. Then they were given some soup again for dinner and they went to bed tired after a full day's work. Stoves in the rooms had to be heated after coming

back from work. People were cold very often. Clothes becoming wet during the day were dried by the warmth of their bodies.

Getting clean officially meant that they went to the communal bath of the town once in two or three months, and they were disinfected in the lager. Disinfection was unpleasant because clothes were burned, became stinky, but body lice survived. They tried to wash themselves and their clothes on Sundays because during the week there was no time, energy and means for it.

Some people were assigned to work as interpreters from among those who spoke Russian. They did not do physical work, but they got a role in administration and management.

The camps were directed by military authorities and the guardians were soldiers. Besides the military leadership – from the 'nachalnik,' the captain to officers –, there was also an economic leader, a director, and there were political officers, too.

Several people were sent to jail, to the 'kalzer' (incarceration), which was an underground hole with a trap-door. It was extremely wet, with a lot of rats. Jail punishment also went together with the reduction of food ration.

The lager inhabitants who managed to learn some Russian were chosen to be commanders of rooms and barracks, and leaders of workers' brigades. They were the ones who distributed the bread rations for their roommates or the members of the brigade.

Rarely people ran away, but they did not get far; most of them only managed to get to a distance of tens of kilometres from the camp. Besides distance and bad weather, the civilian population also prevented people to escape.

Only a few and lucky people succeeded to get home. Vera Bauman and Anna Leser returned home. Vera Bauman learned Russian and this helped them, too. József Altfater succeeded to come home – his brother, János Altfater, had run away right from Carei. He sewed clothes for money for the Soviet officers. According to those remembering, the officers knew about his running away but did not do anything against it. After coming home, he even sent a letter back to the lager. Apart from these rare and lucky exceptions, most runaways were unsuccessful. Fugitives were generally caught after a few days. Those caught were very badly beaten and it even happened that people died because of the beating (János Ritli, for instance).

The wage system in the case of the people from Mérk and Vállaj meant that the price of dwelling and food was kept back from their so-called salaries. So, in the end, they even got into debt.

If someone worked well, they got food: a 'ticket' for which they could get two spoonfuls of rice.

A form of meeting the civilian population was begging: the deported felt very much ashamed because of this. During the Sunday permissions two-three

people went together and knocked in every house. In spite of the deep poverty, the civilian population was good-hearted and gave something to the starving Hungarians: a corn-cob, an onion, a jar of milk, a piece of bread, potatoes, etc.

Unfortunately, starving also forced them to steal. But they only stole food, or something that could be exchanged for food. They stole from the civilian population, from the workplace and from the camp.

Anything could be sold or changed in the market place. They mainly sold their clothes and objects brought from home, but the stuff stolen from the workplace or other places were changed here, too. The market was fairly expensive: the price of a litre of milk was 15-18 roubles, a glass of corn or beans cost 3-4 roubles, an egg 4-5 roubles (while they were paid 16 roubles for a cubic meter of cleaned bricks!). With the money obtained, they only bought food: anything they could afford from potato skin to pies.

The base of lager feeding was bread. Bread was made from barley husk, rye, and oat. It was very 'barbed,' difficult to eat. As soon as they got it – at 4 o'clock in the morning –, they immediately ate it because they were very hungry. There were three quantitative categories in the case of bread, in function of the difficulty of work. Workers in the mines got 100 decagrams per day, those working in the factories 75 decagrams and kolkhoz workers 50 decagrams. Besides bread, the main food item was soup. Most often it was cooked of cabbage stalk, a dark-coloured soup. Sometimes, they also got other soups: made of sour cucumber, bran, beet, beet leafs, soup made of husked wheat, of millet, sorrel and apples. Soup was made for 120 people at once and – as a prisoner working in the kitchen recalls – half a litre (!) of oil was used for this amount!

Lager inhabitants often suffered from thirst. There was only one well, which could hardly satisfy all the prisoners and civilians. Deported people were starving all the time; their weight was around 35-40 kilograms. 'We became very weak because of the monotonous food. Only bread gives us life, but it is not for the first time that we do not get bread' – wrote Irén Véber in her diary. 'We are dizzy as autumn flies because of hunger.'

The most miserable year was that of 1946, when they ate everything they got. They even gathered the rest from refuse dumps and rubbish.

Women were more resourceful, they could cook from anything. It happened that they ate rank grass with bread, raw or cooked.

Supply, besides feeding, was also very weak and driven by necessity. Once their own clothes deteriorated, they got 5 metres of canvas to sew clothes of it. They got shoes of canvas with wooden soles, so they could hardly walk and it was extremely cold. These were naturally deducted from their salaries.

Health care was similarly disastrous. Although officially there was a room for sick people in the camp and a hospital in the town, there were no professionals and medicines at all.

They had already got infected with lice during the journey in the Russian wagons. There were body and hair lice. Lice spread a lot of diseases and caused epidemics.

Disinfection was not useful, neither vaccinations. And weakened people easily became sick. A lot of people suffered from typhus, dysentery, flux, scurvy; there were many cases of ulcer and abscess, some people became scabious. Everybody complained about kidney troubles because of the salty brine. According to the recollections, the skin of the people staying in the sick-room was yellowish in colour. There had been cases of lung disease and of heart enlargement. Women had dysmenorrhoea – according to posterior medical opinions, this was due to endocrine disorder caused by stress (Miklós Füzes: Modern Slavery). It happened that during the night eyelashes froze and the eyes inflamed.

A medical commission controlled incapability for work in the camp. If the skin on someone's bottom could be pinched, then he or she was capable to work.

80 people from among the Mérk and Vállaj deportees died in the detention camps. This is 17% of the deported people. This number is increased by those dying en route or immediately after their return home. A quarter of the people deported from Mérk and Vállaj died because of deportation! The majority of the deceased died of weakness or because of curable diseases untreated in the lagers.

Another cause of death was accidents. Intentionally or unintentionally, but in each case the cause was life in the detention camp. For example, István Plánk was swept down by the coal-mine. A young man from Urziceni (Csanálos) was crushed to death by a drunk driver. Two girls got burnt. And the list could continue with many other cases.

Men led the death rate with a 20:1 ratio. A man from Vállaj died on the very first day of their arrival to the camp. By 23-29 June 1945, a number of 19 had already died in the lager of Nikitovka (Irén Véber's diary). The cause might have been that people were expected much more effort despite the same amount of food, but their addictions killed a lot of people as well. Some even gave their food for cigarettes (Miklós Füzes: Modern Slavery).

Funerals were organized very simply. Usually, all the people attended, but in the end only the family members were present. The priest deported together with them was also present at funerals in Nikitovka, but there was no ceremony – the Russians did not allow it. Bodies were buried anonymously, without a burial hill. A separate cemetery was opened for the deportees. In the beginning, men stole wood from the wood-mill and the carpenters made wooden coffins, but later on they did not do that anymore – because of the deaths in large numbers.

Those dying at home should also be added to this list. Many of the returned people died a few years after coming home because of the diseases they were carrying in their bodies or because of their weakened organism and immune system.

They got news from home only after one and a half year, and they could also write home only then. The first news was transmitted by the sick. Letters were

obviously censored. When writing letters, the deportees were almost dictated what to write. They could only write nice things about the Soviet Union and their lives in the camps.

The entire lives of the detainees, every second they spent in the camps was characterized by deep piety, by their trust in God. Christ was their only support in their years of torment. Besides daily prayers, they tried to keep the spirit of Sundays and Catholic holidays – albeit they were forced to work – by common prayer and common remembrance. They could only go to church – an Orthodox one – by the end of their detention, in smaller groups of 4-5 people. The priest from Aporliget, Károly Franzen, was also deported to Nikitovka. He was forced to work just as everyone else; moreover, he was imprisoned several times, being accused of organizing people. He performed a holy mass only once, right after their deportation, but it was forbidden.

Returning Home

The most precise determinations of the time when they would be allowed to return home were 'bistra domoy' and 'skora domoy,' i.e. the promise of a near return home.

The first group returning home – with schoolmaster Béla Galambos among them – returned home on the 28th of October 1945 with a sick transport. The old and the sick came home with other transports as well, like for instance the one on the 5th of January, 1947. Most of those deported from the two villages came home in the October of 1947. The last people from Mérk and Vállaj arrived on the 26th of December, 1949 (e.g. Margit Supler)!

It is a fact that they had to work right until the day of their return. The farewell from the other Swabians from the region of Szatmár was heart-rending. They could not yet come as they again belonged to another state. Friends, relatives said goodbye to each other for long decades, some even forever. They were carried by trucks from the lager to the gathering encampment in Stalinov, where they spent a few days undergoing a medical screening examination. From there, they were taken to Romania through Bessarabia, reaching Sighetul Marmației (Máramarossziget), where they were examined again, and those found to be sick or weak were sent to recovering camps for a few days or weeks. Many of them kissed the soil when they reached Sighetul Marmației.

From here, they travelled on by train to Debrecen. Here they were again thoroughly checked up, even X-rayed. They were given a certificate of prisoner, medical papers, a small, painted handkerchief and 5 forints (20 for those arriving later) for several years of forced labour. They also got travelling documents, valid until they reached their homes.

They were threatened here and also in the Soviet Union: only good things can be said about the Soviet Union. Anyone talking about detention camps will be taken back there.

Once they had returned home, the first thing after greeting their family members was to thank God in the church for their return. The relatives of those still remaining in the camps visited them to get some information about their loved ones.

They had to be very careful not to eat too much after their return. Unfortunately, not everybody could do this, and several people died after their first, copious meals (e.g. Ferenc Scheibli).

'Those that died on their way to and in the labour camps should be considered victims that were officially annihilated by blind tyranny.' (Miklós Füzes: Modern Slavery)

Nonetheless, the survivors are also victims. Those returning home had to bear the consequences of forced labour during their entire lives, physically and mentally. They were stigmatized in the eyes of the new power. They were not allowed to do the work they would have liked. Many of them died within a few years because of the diseases they had brought with them.

'Who can be held responsible for these innocent sufferers?' – asks Father Ferenc Juhász, the parish priest of Mérk at that time (História Domus, Mérk). The answer is left for us to give. The issue cannot be avoided, and this sad, tragic chapter of Hungarian history must be known for us.

The present paper – in its humble way – also attempts to help in remembering.

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A Repression of Czechoslovak Citizens in the USSR

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Abstract. Around 30,000 citizens of pre-war Czechoslovakia were persecuted in the Soviet Union, at least 5,000 originated from Czech lands. One of the groups consist of the people who in the period of 1939–1942 sought refuge in the USSR from German or Hungarian Nazism, or who wanted to actively fight against it. They ended up in the Gulag, from which they were freed during an amnesty linked to the creation of a Czechoslovak unit in the USSR. Many were Czechoslovak Jews, including those who escaped from the Nazi concentration camp in Poland, Nisko, while thousands were inhabitants of Carpathian Ruthenia.

Keywords: repression, persecutions, refugees, Czechoslovak citizens, Czechoslovak Jews, SMERSH, NKVD, forced labour, victims, witnesses

Introduction

The research in the Czech Republic concerning our citizens persecuted in the Gulag started only after the fall of communism in the 90s. The reason is obvious: it was a taboo, just as in other countries of the communistic bloc. Therefore, it is rather late to start such research, especially when you are trying to find living witnesses to map their stories.

Another obstacle is still a limited access to archives today, mainly in Russia, but we had some success in Ukraine in recent years. Because of this limitation, all the numbers about persecuted Czechoslovak citizens are only estimates, and probably will remain estimates for many years to come. However, our group of oral history in *The Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes of Prague* (www.ustrcr.cz) is trying to fill this gap in the Czech history. We are trying to find the last living witnesses and record their memories or their relatives, and we have collected about 40 interviews with survivors so far, more then 20 with their family members and thousands of documents and photographs from the NKVD files. In regard to the archives, we were successful especially in Lviv and Uzhorod in the recent years.

The Main Groups of Persecuted Czechoslovak Citizens

The main groups of persecuted people can be divided by the period of WWII. Before WWII, it was the legionnaires and captives of WWI, emigrants to USSR and members of Czech minorities. The most tragic periods included the start of the 1920s, when the Bolshevik regime was consolidating its power, followed by the turn of the 1920s and the 1930s, when farmers and intellectuals were persecuted, and in particular the Great Terror (end of 1936 – August 1938), when the number of Czechoslovak victims of persecution reached a peak. The number of Czechoslovaks persecuted in the inter-war period is put at around 1,000, of whom 700 died.

During the war, it was the group of people escaping from occupied territories, the Czech legion in Poland forming there in 1939, Jews from the transport to Nisko and victims of Katyn.

The third period of repression began almost immediately after the liberation in May 1945. From then until the start of the 1950s, hundreds of innocent people of interest to the Soviet regime were conveyed to Soviet territory by members of special units of the SMERSH military counter-intelligence and the NKVD. Alongside collaborators, they mainly comprised members of the pre-war Russian, Ukrainian, and Belarusian exile communities.

A number of Czechs, who had in the past 'allegedly' committed offences against the Soviet regime, were also subject to rendition. The majority were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment (10–25 years). Estimates put the number of persons subject to rendition from the territory of today's Czech Republic at around 500 (of which 300 met their deaths), while the figure for Slovakia was 6,000 with at least 2,000 dead.

The largest increase in the number of victims of the Soviet forces of repression occurred in the period of WWII, more precisely in the years between 1939 and 1941. Czechoslovak citizens threatened by Nazism, by the new Slovakian puppet regime, or by the result of Hungarian annexation opted to move to the Soviet Union, while some found themselves on its territory due to the Soviet occupation of Eastern Poland.

The majority were arrested and charged with illegally crossing the border, being in the Soviet Union illegally, or with espionage, either immediately after setting foot on Soviet territory or during NKVD raids on 'unreliable elements'. They subsequently faced being sentenced to – most frequently – three to five years of forced labour and being sent to Gulag labour camps (in the Pechora, Kolyma, Norilsk, Karaganda oblasts and elsewhere).

Czech researchers have also concentrated on the group of Czechoslovak Jews form Nisko transports. From the 5,000 deported Jews in autumn 1939, around 1,500 were Czechoslovak citizens and approximately 700 of them were sentenced

to the Gulag. We know that 300 appeared alive in Buzuluk to join the Svoboda army, which was forming there.

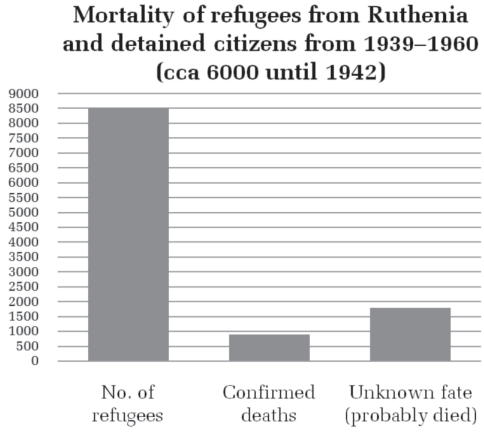
After the amnesty of 1942 declared by the Soviet leadership, thousands of Czechoslovaks were released from camps and prisons. The majority of the released signed up as volunteers to a Czechoslovak military unit in the city of Buzuluk. However, the amnesty did not concern 'persons suspected of espionage against the USSR'.

If it is possible to make a generalization at all from the stories we know from the war period, Czechoslovak citizens were escaping Nazism looking for refuge in the USSR, but they were arrested by communists and sent to the Gulag instead. If they survived, they tried to reach Buzuluk after the amnesty. They were free now, but they had to fight their way back home. They took part in various battles on the Eastern Front. Many perished on the battlefields, of course.

Ruthenia

After the occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1939, the biggest group which ended in the Gulag came from Ruthenia. The numbers from different sources are between few thousands to 15,000 thousand. We know that in years 1942-43 around 3,000 made it to Buzuluk after they had been released from the Gulag.

What we know from Ukrainian sources is that around 8,500 citizens from Ruthenia and people who were trying to escape through this territory ended up in the Gulag camps (this number does not include Hungarians and Germans detained after the war). Approximately 6,000 people from this group ended up in the hands of the NKVD before 1942.



Source: The Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes

Figure 1.

The Story of Václav Djačuk

Václav Djačuk was born on 10 September 1920 in Rachov, Ruthenia. With the aim of avoiding conscription to the Hungarian Army, he and one his friends entered the territory occupied by the USSR in July 1940. However, they were arrested shortly afterwards, having to spend several months behind bars in Nadvirne, Stanislavov, and Starobilsk. In their case, a sentence of three years' forced labour was handed down for illegally crossing the border. In July 1941, they were deported to the infamous camp of Kolyma in north-eastern Siberia, where prisoners worked in extremely difficult living conditions in gold- and coal-mines. In the spring of 1943, Djačuk was released on amnesty for Czechoslovak citizens. He set off on a difficult journey lasting many weeks to the Czechoslovak unit in Buzuluk, arriving there at the start of August 1943. After successfully undergoing training at an aviation school, he was transferred to the 1st Czechoslovak Fighter Air Regiment. As part of the regiment, he took part in the Ostrava Operation during the liberation of Czechoslovakia. Following WWII, he became an experienced pilot in the air force. However, in 1949, he was dismissed from the army without explanation and was allowed to take only labouring jobs. Following 1989, he was rehabilitated and his military rank reinstated. In October 2011, President Václav Klaus presented him with the Order of the White Lion. Today, Djačuk lives in Prague.

Summary

A rough estimate puts the total number of Czechoslovak citizens persecuted in the Soviet Union under 30,000. That is fewer than it was believed until quite recently. The reduced figure is the result of detailed research carried out in the Ukrainian archives of the NKVD, according to which the number of persecuted citizens of Ruthenia was significantly lower than originally estimated. The overwhelming majority of these persons passed through Gulag camps, though the overall estimate also includes those who were executed or displaced. The number of people persecuted with a direct connection to today's Czech Republic stands at 4,150, of whom around 2,150 died as a result of their persecution.

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Virtual Tour of the Gulag

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Abstract. The study presents a virtual tour of the Gulag camp (www.gulag.cz), which consists of the 3D visualization of the labour camp and the panoramic tours of all types of barracks. It is a unique opportunity to familiarize with the conditions, to see how Gulag camps really looked like, especially as there is no museum built from former Gulag camps in Russia today. The description of everyday life in the camp is illustrated by witnesses' testimonies. The tour is accompanied by a general overview of the Gulag system and the stories of Czechoslovak, Hungarian, and Polish citizens arrested in the Gulag. The virtual tour is the result of three Czech expeditions to the furthest flung parts of Siberia (in 2009, 2011, and 2013), aiming to map what has remained of the abandoned Gulag camps in those areas.

Keywords: Gulag, Stalin, Soviet labour camps, virtual tour, Dead Road, Transpolar mainline Salekhard – Igarka, barracks, prisoners, Soviet Union, 3D artefacts

The virtual tour of the Gulag is a unique way of learning about what **Soviet corrective labour camps** looked like. Though there were tens of thousands of Gulag camps in the USSR, none has been turned into a museum analogous to former Nazi camps (Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Theresienstadt). Given that it is not possible to visit a camp of this kind in Russia, we decided to at least capture the appearance of real, abandoned Gulag camps, transfer them from Russia to the Internet and create a virtual tour accessible to people all around the world.

The tour can be found at **www.gulag.cz** and is accessible in four languages: Czech, English, Polish, and Hungarian. It is a complete 3D visualization of a labour camp with a panoramic tour of all types of barracks and a 3D tour of found artefacts. The tour is supplemented by information about the fates of Czechoslovaks, Poles, and Hungarians in the Gulag.

How the Tour Came About

The virtual tour is the result of three expeditions (2009, 2011, 2013) that mapped in the most remote parts of Northern Siberia the remains of corrective labour camps along with what is known as the Dead Road – a freight railway built by Gulag prisoners in 1947–1953. Almost 1,500 km in length, it was intended to link the towns of Salekhard and Igarka. An estimated 100,000 prisoners in dozens of camps worked on it. Due to the fact that the Northern Siberia region is so distant and desolate, many of these camps have been preserved to this day – the entire construction project was abandoned soon after the death of Stalin in March 1953.

In all, we mapped 17 abandoned camps in various states of decay. In difficult climatic conditions, far from civilization, we carried out thorough geodetic measurements of camp buildings and took spherical panoramic photographs of them. In total, we took 18,000 pictures, which we have used to create the panoramic tour.

Everyday Life in the Gulag

Our aim is to introduce virtual Gulag tour visitors to everyday life in the camp. There, the constructed model of the camp corresponds in shape to the most common layout of the buildings (although every camp differed in number of barracks and other details) and it features all the types of barracks typical of the majority of camps: three types of prisoners, barracks, administration, kitchen with mess-hall, solitary cell, latrines, sick-bay, disinfection section, drying house, workshops and stores, first-aid station, guard house, guard tower, and dog kennels.

The tour also includes 3D visualization of items and written materials found in the camps that illustrate everyday life. We also documented prison clothing, mess-hall bowls, spoons, medicine bottles, tobacco products, work reports, and prisoners' personal letters.

Use of Memoirs and Witnesses

Alongside knowledge gleaned from our long-term field research, we have drawn on the study of specialist literature, archive materials and, above all, the memoirs of survivors in describing the purpose of individual buildings and camp life. Descriptions of each type of barrack are supplemented by collections of onetime prisoners. The authentic memoirs of prisoners are exceedingly important in creating a picture of everyday life and conditions in the camp, giving the tour a

necessary emotional aspect. In most cases, these are memoirs of camp life along the Dead Road. Alongside published memoirs, we recorded interviews with two actual survivors for the purposes of the tour.

The Gulag.cz Association

The Gulag.cz civic association is a voluntary independent group that explores the phenomenon of the Gulag prison system as well as the Soviet totalitarian regime in general from various perspectives and disciplines. We co-operate with Czech historians, researchers, literary scholars, filmmakers, and photographers.
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The Activities of the Committee for the Preservation of Military Traditions from Turda (THHB)

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Abstract. The Institute of Military History of the Hungarian Ministry of Defence decided in 2000 to try to find the marked or unmarked graves of Hungarian soldiers killed in World War II. Joining this initiative, József Pataky founded the Committee for the Preservation of Military Traditions from Turda (THHB). Among other things, the aim of establishing the Committee was to discover the identity of the Hungarian soldiers that died in action in the fall of 1944 in Torda (in Romanian: Turda; in the followings, we will use the traditionally Hungarian name of the town: Torda) and its surroundings, find the location where they were buried, and erect a worthy monument to their memory. A Hungarian Soldier Graveyard was created within the Central Hungarian Cemetery of Torda, which has since become a place of pilgrimage. In addition, more then fifty sites of Hungarian soldiers' graves were discovered and in most of the cases properly marked since that time. In 2012, József Pataky was awarded the Hungarian Gold Cross by the Ministry of Defence for his untiring work to discover the places of burial and identify Hungarian soldiers that died in WWII, and for worthily keeping their memories alive.

Keywords: Torda, Hungarian, THHB, József Pataky, Battle of Torda, World War II, heroes, soldier, graveyard, cemetery, monument, forced labour, malenkij robot, MoD

'Peace gives birth to abundance,
Abundance to arrogance,
Arrogance to contempt,
Contempt to war,
War to poverty,
Poverty to humility,
Humility to peace.'
(Inscription on the side of the Újtorda Reformed Church)

Respect and Remembrance

... is due to valiant József Pataky, the founding president of the Committee for the Preservation of Military Traditions from Torda (in Hungarian: **T**ordai **H**onvéd **H**agyományőrző **B**izottság, or THHB), who passed away on 5th January, 2014. Until his death, he tirelessly and successfully worked on organizing the Torda Hungarians, tracing the graves of soldiers killed in action during the Battle of Torda and immortalizing the names of abducted civilians from Torda.

Preliminaries

During the Ceauşescu Era, authorities made every effort to consign the recent happenings to oblivion. The compelling need to immortalize the names of the heroes killed in action and their place of burial had therefore preceded the formal establishment of the Committee for the Preservation of Military Traditions from Torda.

Several members of the Hungarian community in Torda have searched for the opportunity to present the real history of the Hungarian soldiers' heroic perseverance and the historical events pursuing the battles. Since around 1986, Hungarians in Torda have been searching for the opportunities to record, in a worthy manner, the historical facts. Firstly, they began to gather and organize the data. After the fall of Ceauşescu's regime, more prominent actions have taken place.

Foundation

The Committee for the Preservation of Military Traditions from Torda was founded in September of 2000. They undertook the task of establishing a graveyard at the burial grounds of the soldiers killed in battle and taking care of it. Around the sites surrounding the battle, they search for previously unknown graves, catalogue them and, depending on the financial possibilities, set up a

monument commemorating the fallen soldiers. On All Souls' Day and on Heroes' Day, they praise the Hungarians' memory and strengthen their national identity and historical knowledge by remembering the heroes of the Hungarian army and the civilian casualties.

The Battle of Torda

Why was the Battle of Torda important? After Romania joined the allies during the final stage of World War II, the Hungarian and German troops halted the advance of the outnumbered Soviet–Romanian troops for nearly one month (between 12th of September and 8th of October, 1944) as they broke through the passes of the Southern Carpathian Mountains towards Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca). They aimed at 'marching' through the valleys of the rivers Maros (Mureş) and Aranyos (Arieş) to Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca) and then proceed onto the Great Plain. In the region of Debrecen, they wanted to surround the Hungarian and German defences, and with that 'momentum' to occupy Budapest in the fall.

Despite the outnumbered enemy, exploiting the local terrain, the Hungarian military leadership successfully stopped their advance at Torda, leaving around 2,500 casualties. (The enemy's loss was much heavier.)

The Activities of the Committee for the Preservation of Military Traditions from Torda

Since the foundation of THHB, its members and helpers have been collecting historical data, clarifying the sites and resting places of the Hungarian army's victims. They place a plaque commemorating the heroes' names. The memorial tablets are usually placed in churchyards or on walls of temples visited by Hungarians, as the state allowed few public properties on which to commemorate them.

After the establishment of the Hungarian Soldier Graveyard within the Central Hungarian Cemetery of Torda, having newly acquired data and knowledge, THHB places one or more tombstones or memorials every year with the support of the local population. The institutions of the Hungarian Ministry of Defence dealing with war graves aid the Committee's work by clarifying and supplementing the data, adding suggestions as well as providing financial support in many cases.

Malenkij Robot Memorial in Torda

To remind people of the tragic consequences of the war, a wooden headboard was placed at the entrance of the central cemetery of Torda in 1995 in memory of the deported Hungarian civilians died at unknown places. The generalizing inscription on the pedestal of the headboard said: 'In memory of the victims of World War II'.

As a survivor, Professor Elek Csetri, who was invited to the inauguration, recounted the fate of civilians deported for forced labour to the Soviet Union, referred to as 'malenkij robot'. It was the first time that many people heard of the previously obscured and denied tragedies. The families of the deportees who remained at home also had a miserable fate. Many of them left or emigrated from their dear homeland.

József Pataky, the officially declared Head of the Committee, continued collecting the names and researching the fates of the deported civilians from Torda.

On 4th October 2014, THHB set up and unveiled two granite columns containing the names of 216 Hungarian victims who died away from home (see Table 2). At the inauguration, Assistant Professor János Kristóf Murádin presented his research, the real history of the deportations. Participants faced the inhumane circumstances of the tragic events as they read the names of children, women, and the elderly who died abroad, at unknown places, buried in unmarked graves.

Achievements

– Several commemorative plaques and memorials have been set up for the soldiers who died a heroic death defending our country (see Table 1).

– We have expressed our grief and solidarity. We have not allowed forgetting the sacrifices of our heroes.

– We have returned the exemplary historical resistance to the memory of the Hungarians.

– We have included the respectful remembrance in the Hungarian community's events at the anniversaries.

– We have strengthened the historical coherence of the Hungarian community and provided an example at our gatherings to the next generation.

Further Plans

– Transfer of newly acquired data to the Ministry of Defence's Military Heritage and War Grave Care Department. Refinement of data based on the Ministry of Defence's repositories.

– Apprise the Transylvanian Hungarian population's historical knowledge through articles in local newspapers.

– Exploration and public distribution of local memoirs.

– Organization of local people to initiate joint activities. Quality reunions following inaugurations.

– The financial support and participation of the motherland's Ministry of Defence strengthens the national consciousness.

– The population of Hungary can gain an example of acting in collaboration (through the effectiveness of individual, community donations, and the support of the Ministry of Defence).

Guidance

We wish that the following epitaph provides guidance for all of us:

"They were fathers and soldiers,
Wielding a pen or a hoe,
They were all heroes.
Those who glance at their memory,
Salute!"

Table 1. *Memorial sites established by THHB*

Site	Where to find	Dead	Remarks
Alsó-felsőszentmihály (Mihai Viteazu)	Unitarian churchyard	7	Local militiamen were killed.
Alsójára (Iara)	Hungarian Cemetery	19	Concrete frame, covered. Inauguration in 2003.
Aranyosegerbegy (Viişoara)	Reformed churchyard	–	Names on a commemorative plaque on the outer wall of the church. Inauguration in 2005.
Aranyosegerbegy (Viişoara)	Reformed Cemetery	60	Mass grave. Inauguration in 1994. Overbuilt by the Orthodox (?)

Site	Where to find	Dead	Remarks
Aranyosgerend (Luncani)	Reformed Cemetery	35	Concrete frame. Inauguration in 2005. Black marble commemorative plaque on the inner wall of the church. Inauguration in 2007.
Aranyosgyéres (Câmpia Turzii)	Reformed churchyard	17	Scattered graves. Inauguration in 2005. Marble plaque. Inauguration in 2011.
Aranyoslonka (Lunca)	Outskirts of the village	11	Needs explanation!?
Bágyon (Bădeni)	Unitarian churchyard	23	Mass grave.
Berkes (Borzeşti)	Orthodox churchyard	160	Mass grave. A Hungarian inscription was removed several times. Buried Soviet, Romanian, German, and Hungarian soldiers.
Bonchida (Bonțida)	Reformed Cemetery	109	Separate graves. Inauguration in 2008.
Dés (Dej)	Public Urban Cemetery	82	Sepulchral mound can be seen. Inauguration in 2011.
Detrehemtelep (Tritenii-Colonie)	Reformed Cemetery	60	Separate graves. Inauguration in 2011. Plaque on the outer wall of the church. Inauguration in 2005.
Gerendkeresztúr (Grindeni)	Cemetery of Virághegy	26	2013.
Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia)	Roman Catholic Cemetery	65	Graves of war prisoners, uncared
Hadrév (Hădăreni)		20	Inauguration in 2014.
Harasztos (Călăraşi)	Reformed Cemetery	23	Mass grave – cared. Inauguration in 2000.
Kolozs (Cojocna)		38	
Kolozsbos (Boju)	Garden of Unitarian rectory	17	Combined tombstones, cared. Inauguration in 2006.

Site	Where to find	Dead	Remarks
Kolozskara (Cara)		11	
Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca) I.	'Házsongárd' Military Cemetery	251	Separate graves, cared, all of the names are known
Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca) II.	New Jewish Cemetery	68	Two mass graves – the names are known
Komjátszeg (Comşeşti)	Unitarian churchyard	16	Not yet inaugurated
Középpeterd (Petreştii de Mijloc)	Orthodox Cemetery	11	Peeled mass grave
Kraszna (Crasna)	In the yard of the kindergarten	3	Black marble plaque. Inauguration in 2009.
Magyarfenes (Vlaha)	Reformed churchyard and cemetery	13	They are said to be more, we are researching
Magyarléta (Liteni)	Scattered graves	5	Research in progress
Magyarlóna (Luna de Sus)	Scattered graves	13	Research in progress
Magyarszovát (Suatu)	Unitarian churchyard	6	Cared. Inauguration in 2007.
Margitta (Marghita)	Reformed churchyard	81	Inauguration in 2009.
Mészkő (Cheia)	Outskirts of the village	27	Unitarian churchyard. Inauguration is delayed.
Mezőbő (Boian)	Orthodox Cemetery	37	Some punk headboards, uncared
Mezőőr (Iuriu de Câmpie)	Pasture land on the outskirts of the village	18	Planned a cross in a concrete pedestal
Miriszló (Mirăslău) I.	Reformed Cemetery	6	Cared
Miriszló (Mirăslău) II.	Mass grave along the main road	36	Numerical credibility must be clarified!
Miriszló (Mirăslău) III.	Forest	6	Forest between Miriszló and Őrménes
Nagyenyed (Aiud)	Reformed Cemetery	234	War prisoners, common grave. Inauguration in 2007.
Nagyszalonta (Salonta)	Urban Cemetery	219	Soldier graveyard, cared

Site	Where to find	Dead	Remarks
Nyírmező (Mermezeu-Văleni)	Roman Catholic Cemetery	19	Separate graves – wooden headboard at Torockószentgyörgy with an epitaph. Inauguration in 2006.
Paptamási (Tămăşeu)	Reformed Cemetery	6	Cared
Segesvár (Sighişoara)	Roman Catholic Cemetery	45	Hungarian soldiers returned from Soviet prison camp
Sinfalva (Corneşti)	Near the river Hesdát	3	Commemorative plaque on the wall of the Unitarian church. Inauguration is delayed!
Szamosfalva (Someşeni)	Reformed Cemetery	8	5 heroes in the Reformed Cemetery, 3 in the schoolyard
Szászfenes (Floreşti)	Hungarian Cemetery	20	Concrete frame, cared
Székelyhidas (Podeni)	Greek Catholic churchyard	12	The graves are cared. Inauguration in 2013.
Székelykocsárd (Lunca Mureşului)	–	7	–
Szind (Sănduleşti)	Unitarian churchyard	43	7 separate graves in the churchyard. Inauguration in 2011.
Torda (Turda) I.	Central Hungarian Cemetery	216	Malenkij Robot Memorial at a decorative place. Wooden headboard – inauguration in 1995. Two granite columns containing the names – inauguration in 2014.
Torda (Turda) II.	Central Hungarian Cemetery	224	Separate graves. Iron fence, 13 white marble plaques with names on them. Cared. Inauguration in 2004.
Torda (Turda) III.	Reformed churchyard in Újtorda	–	Wooden headboard. Remains of 49 exhumed soldiers were buried again in the Soldier Graveyard within the Central Hungarian Cemetery.

Site	Where to find	Dead	Remarks
Tordaszentlászló (Săvădisla)	Millennium small forest	19	Black marble. Inauguration in 2008.
Tordatúr (Tureni)	Roman Catholic and Orthodox Cemetery	–	Soviet, Hungarian, German. Uncared.
Tordatúr (Tureni)	Unitarian churchyard	52	White marble plaques with names on them. Inauguration in 2007.
Torockószentgyörgy (Colţeşti)	Roman Catholic Cemetery	9	Peeled graves. Inauguration in 2006.
Tövis (Teiuş)	Reformed Cemetery	11	War prisoners
Várfalva (Moldoveneşti)	Unitarian Cemetery	2	Peeled graves, cared. Inauguration in 2012.

Table 2. *The names of 216 Hungarian victims of 'malenkij robot' from Torda who died away from home*:

Name	Age	Name	Age
ÁBRAHÁM Géza	(46)	BERECKI Béla	(14)
ACHIM Árpád	(21)	BLÉNYESI Kálmán	(22)
ÁCS János	(43)	BODA Géza	(20)
ÁMIRÁS Márton Endre	(39)	BORBÉLY Géza	(21)
APÁCZAI Károly	(20)	BOTOS Ferenc	(24)
BABOS Viktor	(41)	BÖSZÖRMÉNYI Géza	(45)
BALÁZS János		BRANDEIS Olga	(21)
BALÁZS Mózes	(54)	BRANDOFFER Antal	(44)
BALOGH Béla	(40)	CSETRI Zoltán	(23)
BARÁTOSI Tibor	(17)	CSIPKÉS József	(46)
BARDOCZ Andor	(31)	CSUNDERLIK János	(49)
BARDOCZ Béla		DANKÓ János	(36)
BARÓTI Dezső	(42)	DÁVID József	(21)
BARTHA János	(17)	DEÁK István	(21)
BARTHA Károly	(42)	DEMETER Mihály	(34)
BARTHA Lajos		DÉNES Ferenc	(24)
BARTUS Károly	(42)	DONÁTH Ernő	(32)
BEDER Árpád	(17)	DURUGY József	(33)
BEDŐ András	(49)	ERDEI Sándor	(39)
BEDŐ Antal	(45)	FEDURÁGAI Károly	(18)
BEDŐ Ferenc	(50)	FEHÉR Gábor	(42)
BENKŐ József		FERENCZI József	(34)
BENKŐ Károly	(39)	FINTA Lajos	(49)

Name	Age
FINTA Miklós	(56)
FODOR Árpád	(27)
FODOR Egon	(17)
FODOR Ferenc (Frici)	(54)
FODOR István	(32)
FODOR István	(49)
FODOR Jancsi	
FODOR József	(17)
FODOR Márton	
FRICZ Ferenc	(41)
FÜSY Gyula	(44)
FÜZÉR Ferenc	(30)
GALAMBOSI János	(49)
GALAMBOSI József	(41)
GÁSPÁR András	(35)
GEGESI Árpád	(37)
GERGELY Róbert	(17)
GÖNCZI Árpád	(49)
GÖNCZI Béla	(46)
GÖNCZI Lajos	(50)
GRIM Lajos	
HALMÁGYI Pistika	(19)
HALMÁGYI Tamás	(47)
HARTL Lajos	(22)
HÁVRANEK Elemér	(45)
HOLLUNZER Lajos	(42)
HORVÁTH Gyula	(24)
IRSAI Ferenc	(35)
ISSZA Zoltán	(36)
JAKAB Samuné	(55)
KACSÓ György	(41)
KANYARÓ Sándor	(20)
KÁPTALAN N. József	(22)
KÉKEDI Árpád	(17)
KÉKEDI Árpád	(42)
KELEMEN Károly	
KEMÉNY Tibor	(42)
KERESZTES Endre	
KISS Ernő	(42)
KISS Ferenc	(34)
KISS Sándorné	(72)
KONCZ András	(48)
KONCZ László	(14)
KONCZ László	(17)
KORPÁDI Gyula	(42)
KÓSA Károly	(38)
KOSZTA Józsefné	(58)
KOSZTA Mihály	(15)
KOSZTA Miklós	(14)
KOVÁCS Albert	(33)
KOVÁCS Dénes	(38)
KOVÁCS József	(17)
KOVÁCS József	(42)
KOVÁCSICS Lajos	(51)
KŐMÍVES János	(46)
KÖNTÖS József	(52)
KRÓNER Béla	(49)
KUBIK Lajos	(41)
LÁSZLÓ Lajos	(16)
LÉHMAN Mátyás	(39)
LICKAI Lajos	(25)
LOSONCZI Dezső	(51)
LŐRINCZ Árpád	(25)
LŐRINCZ József	(21)
LŐRINCZY György	(38)
MAGYAROSI Sándor	(60)
MAGYAROSY Zoltán	(49)
MAJOR Sándor	(20)
MAKKAI Miklós	(61)
MÁTYÁS Albert	(41)
MEDGYESI Béla	(27)
MILOTAI Lajos	(62)
MILOTAI Sándor	(40)
MOLDOVÁN György	(10)
MONITORISZ Ferenc	(37)
MONOKI Béla (Adalbert)	(34)
MÓRICZ Miklós	(42)
MÓRICZ Miklós	(51)

Name	Age
NAGY Mátyás	(43)
NAGY Pál	(28)
NAGY Sándor	(23)
NEMES László	(29)
NÉMETI József	(22)
NÉMETI Sándor	
NÓTÁS Károly	(26)
ORBÁN József	(19)
PÁSKULY István	(29)
PÁSKULY Márton	(49)
PATAKI András	(18)
PÉNTEK Balázs	
PETHŐ Samu	(17)
PETŐ Lajos	(14)
PETRI Béla	
PETRI József	(23)
PIFFER Antal	(17)
PORZSOLT János	
PÖFER Antal (Dódi)	(17)
RÁCZ Béla	(17)
RAVAI Árpád	
RAVAI Elek	(45)
RAVAI Elemér	(18)
RAVAI Lajos	(58)
RAVAI Miklós	(54)
RÉZI Mihály	(39)
ROZENBERG János	(42)
ROZSOS János	(51)
SALAMON József	(18)
SÁNDOR Béla	(42)
SÁNDOR János	(47)
SÁNDOR János	(58)
SÁNDOR Miklós	(50)
SÁNTA József	(44)
SAS Árpi	(18)
SCRABÁK Attila	(19)
SCRABÁK János	(46)
SILÓ Károly	(28)
SIMON András	(52)
SIMONFY Zoltán	(17)
SIPOS Gábor	
SZABADOS József	
SZABÓ Ambrus	(49)
SZABÓ Árpád	(47)
SZABÓ Ferenc	(34)
SZABÓ Ferenc	(25-30)
SZABÓ István	(32)
SZABÓ József	(17)
SZABÓ Tamás	(17)
SZABÓ Tamás	(18)
SZAKA Béla	(33)
SZAKOLCZI Dezső	(14)
SZÁSZ Zsiga	(37)
SZÉKELY Béla	(40)
SZÉKELY Béla	(47)
SZÉKELY Bella	
SZÉKELY Gyula	(20)
SZÉKELY Gyula	(50)
ifj. SZÉKELY Gyula	(17)
SZÉKELY Lajos	(44)
SZÉLL Sándor	(19)
SZILÁGYI Dezső	(33)
SZILÁGYI Ferenc	
SZILÁGYI Gyula	(22)
SZILÁGYI István	
SZILÁGYI Sándor	(38)
SZŐCS Árpád	(31)
TASNÁDI Márton	(41)
TOMPA Lajos	(43)
TOMPA Sándor	(44)
TORDAI József	
TÓTH László	(41)
TÓTH Pál	(57)
TŐKÉS Béla	(44)
TÖRÖK Olga	(17)
TÖRÖK Róza	(4)
TURONY József	(35)
ÜVEGES János	(18)

Name	Age	Name	Age
VENCEL János	(35)	VESZPRÉMI Lajos	
VERESS Árpád	(18)	VINCZE Sándor	(20)
VERESS Zsigmond	(80)	WEKERLE Károly	(42)
VERESS Zsigmondné	(64)	WELMAN Károly	
VESZPRÉMI Árpád	(39)	ZALÁNYI Antal	(40)
VESZPRÉMI Ferenc	(42)	ZILAH Samu	(49)
VESZPRÉMI József	(36)	ZÜRICH László	

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2. *70th anniversary – Battle of Torda*

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Captives in a Frozen World

Book Review
Gyula Ercsey: Im Shatten der Wölfe. Klausenburger im GULAG[1]

The author, Gyula Ercsey, spent his childhood in the village of Tordatúr (today in Romanian: Tureni), where his father had a mill. He studied in the prestigious College of Nagyenyed (today in Romanian: Aiud). After his returning from the Soviet captivity, he finished his studies, and worked as a chemistry teacher at the same college. He started to work on his memoir in 1990, and he finished it in 2000.

In his memoir, Gyula Ercsey compiled the events happened with him between 1944 and 1948, during his captivity in the Soviet Union. The main story begins with his deportation from Kolozsvár (today in Romanian: Cluj-Napoca) in October 1944 within the *Malenkaya Rabota* campaign led by the Red Army. The term means 'little work' in Russian language, but in reality it refers to years of forced labour under very hard conditions.

With his memoir, the writer assumes the role of the main speaker of the events as an intellectual. His memoir relates very detailed facts about his captivity, revealing the truth about the Soviet camps. He spent, as mentioned before, four years in the Gulag. In this genuine memoir, the author reveals the way he was able to survive the captivity. He was asked by other war prisoners to write about the events in the Gulag should he survive the terror what ruined the lives of almost 5,000 Hungarians who had been deported from Kolozsvár in 1944.

The author, together with his father, was taken by the Russians on the 13th of October, 1944. After this, they were watched by the Russian and the Romanian guards. The 17-year-old boy helped his father to escape at Focşani. He managed to escape indeed, but his son did not. So, Gyula Ercsey was transported by train to the Soviet Union. On the way, many of the captives died because of the extremely bad conditions.

When they arrived in the area, the prisoners were directed to the first camp, Salasova. They were surprised by the immeasurable cold and the beauty of the landscape. The Russian officers told them that they had to buy their liberty with work because they were simple war criminals. The first winter was very tough,

1 Gyula, Ercsey: *Im Schatten der Wölfe. Klausenburger im Gulag* [In the shadow of the wolves. People from Cluj in the GULAG], Novum Pro Publishing Gmbh, Neckenmarkt, Österreich, 2012.

but Ercsey had luck and he spent all that rough time in the infirmary. In this way, he survived; meanwhile, many of his acquaintances starved to death or contracted some disease that would kill them.

The arrival of the spring brought the author good fortune as he got a place in a smithy, where things started to go better for him: he learned some of the profession, but he was not really good as a blacksmith, but in the camp this kind of inconvenience were not taken seriously. He thought the worst of the camp life is gone, but he was wrong. In October 1945, he had to go back to Salasova. But fortune was not with him this time as he ended up in the forest as a lumberjack. The life of the lumberjacks was not good in the camps; they were short of food, the beds were inconvenient, and in the sleeping area there was barely enough place for the prisoners. In winter time, the lumberjacks were in great danger. They had to face cold, (temperature drops to -40ºC) snowstorms, while the worst of this is the continuous starving. The 'adventures' continued and 'our hero' arrived in Beloreck, where he found love with a girl named Ruth. We can hardly call the feeling what they felt in the camp love, but it surely helped Ercsey to handle the sorrow. In this last camp, the author also worked as a plasterer, so this was not a bad place to work either. One day, the officer told that they could go home. It was in 1948, after four years of captivity.

The memoir guides the reader from the deportation through the captivity and the returning. It introduces the reader into the daily routine of the camps. The book describes the experiences of the prisoners. It is an introspection into a world where human life worth nothing. This totalitarian regime designed by Stalin was inconceivable for the prisoners at the beginning of the captivity. It made actions to destroy intellectual progression and tried to destroy all the visions which are different from the official communist one. The writers had to create in a communist spirit: if they did not do so, there was a straight way for them to the Gulag. The civilian life was destroyed by this horrible apprehension. It was idolatry for a system created by a maniac, which was shiftless for its members. The greatness of Tolstoy and Pushkin was suffocated by Stalin's madness and their spirits ended up in the Gulag, while the society remained with Stalin's compromised soul.

The unspeakable living conditions in the camps are presented in chronological order. The thread is sometimes interrupted by stories from the camp. This story tells about the author's friends, events, love, stealing, virtue, and others. The author's tenacity helped him to survive this horrible situation; his mental strength is incontestable. Strange as it is, morality did not disappear from his consciousness, but when it was necessary the survival instinct took its place. Ercsey relates how they have stolen a stove, food, and what was required for surviving in the wildness of the place and the inhumane living conditions.

Ercsey's language is very clear; he writes about this sadness with beautiful metaphors. His diction is clear. His metaphors let us experience how the prisoners

felt in certain situations like continuous starving, bone-freezing cold, or some mesmerizing landscapes. He describes their misery with an incredible attention to detail as they were prisoners of a system that was truly inexplicable for them, and he tried to take their lives with all of its means. In this system, we cannot find Confucius' principles at all.

In the memoir, he writes about how different illnesses took away his friends from him, or how they froze to death in the woods while they were lumberjacks. He recites what and how much they were eating, how they managed to fool the cooks to get more food; he told about the relations among camp members and how the guards behaved with the captives. He also describes how the camps were: the Salasova camp was surrounded by forest, which was dreadful and sublime at the same time. Asa has remained in his memory as the waste incinerator camp, Minyar is memorable because of the suspension bridge, and Beloreck is remindful because of the girls.

After he had escaped from the Gulag, his memoir gave us a perspective into an evil system built by a tyrant who did not care about human rights. When he arrived home, he had to realize that in his country a similar system had started to grow on the same ideological basis.

The chronological structure creates a good cohesion for the story and the short stories built in the text help the understanding. As a teacher, Gyula Ercsey manages to write a great and genuine memoir, with great descriptions and admirable diction. Because he was an intellectual, the memoir is more relevant and he can relate to a much ampler picture. The personal archive photos at the end of the book bring along a genuine feeling.

The memoir appeared first time in Hungarian language at the Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület (Transylvanian Museum Society) in Cluj-Napoca, after the death of the author, in 2006. The memoir was edited by János Kristóf Murádin, PhD, historian, Assistant Professor at the Department of Juridical Science and European Studies at the Faculty of Sciences and Arts of Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania. After that, it was translated into German language by Peter Gschwendtner, the son of a former prisoner, fellow sufferer of the writer. The German version of the memoir appeared in Austria in the year 2012, and it had a remarkable success. The book has lived up to its success because of its high-flown literary style and historical documentary value.

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University Events

International Scientific Conference on the Soviet Deportations of Hungarians in the Period of 1944–1945

2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. According to this issue, the Hungarian Government declared in its Decision No. 1009/2015 of 20 January that this year, 2015, is to be the memorial year of the deportation of political and war prisoners to forced labour in the Soviet Union. The first scientific event organized by the government was held in the Hungarian Parliament in Budapest on 25 February 2015. This was the most important conference in this matter with the participation of famous Hungarian researchers from the country and abroad. The lecturers came from three European countries (Hungary, Romania, and Ucraine). There were invited only seven lecturers in all: those who had published the most important books and articles on this topic. From Romania, János Kristóf Murádin, PhD, historian, Assistant Professor and Chancellor of the Faculty of Sciences and Arts at Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, presented his research work.

The conference entitled *Trauma és Tabu „Málenkij robot" – 1944/45–2014/15 Emlékkonferencia* (Trauma and Taboo 'Malenkaya Rabota' 1944/45–2014/15 – Conference of Remembrance) was organized under the high patronage of László Kövér, President of the Hungarian Parliament. The official language of the conference was Hungarian. The programme began with welcome speeches held by András Majorszki, President of the International Association of GULAG Researchers, Gergely Gulyás, Vice-President of the Hungarian Parliament, and Bence Rétvári, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Human Resources.

The plenary section of the conference incorporated three lectures under the chairmanship of Réka Földváryné Kiss PhD, President of the Committee of National Remembrance, a central forum created by the Hungarian Government. The section entitled *Forced Labour, Camps* was formed only by well-known researchers from Hungary. The first lecture entitled *Rabszolgasorsra kényszerítve* (Forced to Slavery) was held by Mária Schmidt, General Director of the famous House of Terror Museum in Budapest, who spoke about the general conditions of Soviet deportations in Hungary in 1944–1945, presenting the most important data

regarding the number of those taken to forced labour and of those who became victims of the regime.

The next lecture, held by Zalán Bognár, PhD, Associate Professor at Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary, Faculty of Humanities, Institute of History, had the title: *GULAG, GUPVI, málenkij robot. Magyar állampolgárok kényszermunkán a Szovjetunióban* (GULAG, GUPVI, Malenkaya Rabota. Hungarian Citizens on Forced Labour in the Soviet Union). It deals with the interpretation problems related to the notion of 'Malenkaya Rabota' (forced labour in Soviet Union) and focuses on the presentation of the different types of forced-labour camps, offering a short but very interesting introduction to its origins and stages of development. During his presentation, Mr. Bognár explained with some details the different ways of becoming prisoner in the Soviet Union: by judgement of the Soviet Court of Justice or simply taken to forced labour by the troops of the Red Army or the special NKVD-groups, immediately after the 'liberation'.

The last presentation in this section was made by Áron Máthé, PhD, historian–sociologist, member of the Committee of National Remembrance. The title of his lecture was *A „nulla év" emlékezete – megszállás, fogság* (The Remembrance of "Year Zero" – Occupation, Captivity). Áron Máthé deals with the issue of the social impact made by the Soviet invasion on Hungary in 1944–1945 and the different perceptions of a new beginning after the Second World War in Western and Eastern Europe.

The second section of the conference consisted of four lectures, under the chairmanship of József Ö. Kovács, Professor at Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. In this section, entitled *Málenkij robot a Kárpát-medence régióiban* (Malenkaya Rabota in the Regions of Carpathian Basin), there were presented the Soviet deportations of Hungarian and German civilians from Hungary, Transylvania, and Transcarpathia. The first lecture was held by Tamás Stark, senior research fellow at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of History. His presentation with the title *Hadifoglyok vagy kényszermunkások? Magyarok szovjet fogságban* (War Prisoners or Forced Labourers? Hungarians in Soviet Captivity) embraced the different ways of capturing the Hungarians, soldiers and civilians all over the territories of Hungary occupied by the Red Army in 1944–1945. Tamás Stark presented the results of his two-decade research work on the total number of those Hungarians who had became prisoners in the Soviet Union, the locations of their captivity, the time spent in lagers, the different works made by them, and the number of victims. The aim of his lectures was to present the real dimensions of Soviet captivity and its consequences on the Hungarian society.

In what followed, János Kristóf Murádin, PhD, historian, Assistant Professor and Chancellor of Faculty of Sciences and Arts of Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, held his lecture about the Soviet deportations in Transylvania.

Murádin in his presentation entitled *Málenkij robot Erdélyben. Kollektív trauma hét évtized távlatából* (Malenkaya Rabota in Transylvania. Collective Trauma in the Perspective of Seven Decades) spoke about the two waves of taking prisoners by the Soviets in Transylvania: the capturing of about 20,000 Hungarian men in September–October 1944 and the deportation of approximately 90,000 German young men and women in January 1945, all civilians. Murádin analysed the circumstances of the two deportations, presented their particularities, the way in which the people were taken into slavery, the location of the prisoner camps where they spent their captivity, and finally the main characteristics of individual and collective memories of the Malenkaya Rabota in Transylvania.

The last two lectures deal with the massive Soviet deportations in Transcarpathia, which decimated the Hungarian and German minority of the region. The general presentation of the ethnic cleansing focused on the non-Slavic population of Transcarpathia was made by György Dupka, PhD, Secretary General of Svalyava Memorial Park. In his lecture entitled *Halottaink 1944–1959, Szovjet népirtás Kárpátalján* (Our Dead 1944–1959. Soviet Genocide in Transcarpathia) Mr. Dupka offered a very interesting overview of the situation of Transcarpathia at the end of the Second World War and of the integration process of this region to the Soviet Union. In this perspective, there were analysed the deportations of Hungarian and German civilians and their effect on the transformation of ethnic composition in Transcarpathia's population. György Dupka presented his research work on the archives in this field and offered the possibility for an old survivor from Transcarpathia to narrate his captivity.

At the end of the conference, a young researcher, Erzsébet Molnár D., teacher at Ferenc Rákóczi II. Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute, in her lecture entitled *Kárpátaljai magyarok GUPVI és GULAG táborokba kerülésének körülményei* (The Circumstances of Taking Hungarians from Transcarpathia into GUPVI and GULAG Camps) focused on the characteristics of the deportation of approximately 40,000 Hungarian civilians from this region after the Soviet occupation. She spoke about the timeline of the Malenkaya Rabota in Transcarpathia, the number of those taken away, the victims of captivity and about the survivors' return.

The conference ended with a very successful memorial programme which incorporated a commemoration speech held by Erzsébet Menczer, President of the Organization of Hungarian Political Prisoners and Forced Labourers Taken to Soviet Union, and a very interesting remembrance programme offered by Schwarzwald Traditionalist Association from Rátka.

Finally, after the conference, the approximately 500 participants went to the nearby Honvéd Square to wreathe the central Malenkaya Rabota monument in Hungary. Here, after the celebration speech held by Mr. Antal Rogán, the parliamentary floor leader of FIDESZ, on behalf of the Hungarian Government, dozens of organizations placed their wreaths at the monument. On behalf of the

Faculty of Sciences and Arts of Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, János Kristóf Murádin along with Tibor-Csongor Teleki, student at the Department of Juridical Sciences and European Studies, placed a wreath at the monument.

The lectures presented during the conference will be published in form of a scientific book at the end of memorial year 2015.

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University Evenings

'University Evenings' Lecture Series

In the academic year 2014–15, similarly to the previous years, several academic lectures were organized, providing for the audience from Cluj-Napoca a good opportunity to meet invited experts from home and abroad.

In the second semester of this academic year, in the frame of the University Evenings, and at the invitation of the Department of International Relations and European Studies, well-known scientists, researchers, and experts held interesting lectures at our university. These events were open not only to the staff and the students of the university, but anyone interested in the topic of the lectures was welcome to attend the presentations.

The first lecture was held on 19 February 2015 by dr. Béla Makkai, Associate Professor, Head of the Department of Modern and Contemporary World History from the Faculty of Humanities of the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary. Topics covered by the lecture focused on the situation of Hungarians from the Romanian Kingdom and the national politics before the I. World War. The presentation gave an interesting historical insight in the special problems of the mentioned period.

On 5 March 2015, Petra Szávics technical expert (project manager) at the Department for Strategic Development of the North-West Regional Development Agency from Cluj-Napoca provided for the audience a comprehensive insight in the process of the EU financing in the 2014–2020 programming period, revealing details also on the Europe 2020 Strategy and the EU regional policy.

On 27 March 2015, the first introduction of the VERITAS Research Institute for History outside of Budapest took place at our university. The activity of the Institute's research groups was presented by Prof. Dr. Endre Marinovich, Deputy Director, Dr. Gábor Ujváry, Dr. Dávid Ádám Ligeti, Dr. Dávid Kiss, and Dr. János Sáringer, researchers of the Institute. After the presentation, Prof. Dr. Sándor Szakály, historian, Director of the Institute held a very comprehensive lecture entitled: *The Situation and Possibilities of Hungary between 1938 and 1941. The Territorial Re-Annexations and the International Background of Hungarian War Entering.*

On 16 April 2015, our guest lecturer was Dr. Zoltán Maruzsa, Assistant Professor at the Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Humanities, Deputy State Secretary for Higher Education at the Ministry of Human Capacities of Hungary. Even the title of the presentation raised the interest of the audience, as it was the following: *The Cold War as a Peace Process,* and it was a very interesting lecture indeed.

On 29 April 2015, a round-table discussion on Islamic State, Islam, and Eurabia took place at our university with four invited speakers: Prof. Dr. Miklós Maróth, academician, Prof. Dr. Zsolt Rostoványi, Rector of the Corvinus University, and Dr. Norbert Varga, Assistant Professor at the University of West Hungary in Sopron, political scientist. The moderator of the discussion was Prof. Dr. Márton Tonk, Dean of the Faculty of Sciences and Arts of the Sapientia University. The discussions covered a wide range of issues, as for example the characteristics of the Islamic State, the presence of the Islam in Europe, and so on.

The organizers of the Academic Conferences were the Faculty of Sciences and Arts of the Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, the Robert Schuman Association, and the Students' Organization of the faculty in Cluj-Napoca, and in the case of the event from 27 March, the VERITAS Research Institute for History, too.

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Students' Scientific Conferences

Students' Conferences in Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca, 2015

This year, the scientific students' conference of the Cluj/Kolozsvár Faculty of the Sapientia Hungarian University was organized on 24–25 March. This is a good opportunity for the students to participate because they receive a chance to present their topic in front of their colleagues. This year, 12 students participated in three sections: European studies and international relations, law, and environmental science. At the European studies and international relations section, there were 5 participants, Andrea Csilip, Zsolt Horváth, and Botond Keresztes third-year students as well as Tibor-Csongor Teleki, and Karola Tímea Veres second-year students. Tibor-Csongor Teleki won first place, Karola Tímea Veres was second, and Botond Keresztes came out third.

The winners received permission to participate at the ETDK. The prestigious scientific event was organized on 21–24 May. This year, 296 students presented their 274 scientific papers in 33 sections. In the sociology–political science section, three students of the International Relations and European Studies Department of the Sapientia Hungarian University participated: Botond Keresztes, Tibor-Csongor Teleki, and Karola Tímea Veres. Botond Keresztes with his paper entitled *The Motivations in Choice of University of the Hungarian Pupils from Sepsiszentgyörgy (Sfântu Gheorghe)* won third place.

Karola VERES
Student, II Year, International Relations and European Studies

National Scientific Students' Associations Conference (OTDK) in Budapest, 2015

The most prestigious scientific event for the students of Hungary is the so-called National Scientific Students' Associations Conference, which is organized every two years and gathers the best scientific works, researches, and innovations of students from Hungarian universities of Hungary and beyond.

This institutionalized talent promotion is one of Europe's best organized and oldest types of programmes in this area. This year, the XXXII. OTDK (Országos Tudományos Diákköri Konferencia) had 12 sections with more than 100 panels.

I had the opportunity and privilege to participate at the Social Science Section as a delegate of the Transylvanian Scientific Student Conference (Erdélyi Tudományos Diákköri Konferencia – ETDK), organized between March 30 and April 1, 2015 in Budapest, at the Károly Gáspár University. The Social Science Section had 13 panels. The 326 papers were organized in thematic sections (political science, international relations, aesthetics, etc.). The International Relations and European Studies Department of Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania was represented by two papers: Erika Gál's and Jenő Keszeg's case study on the Hungarian-language educational system in Romania (the paper won the special award of the l'Harmattan Publishing House) and Ferenc Török's research about euroscepticism in the EU. Besides the competitors, our department was represented by Márton Tonk, PhD, in the jury of the Social Science Section and by Barna Bodó, PhD, in the jury of the Humanities Studies Section. Also several observer professors and students were present.

Being part of the biggest scientific student conference of Hungary and possibly of Europe is a huge honour and great experience for everyone. The atmosphere of the competition, the great scientific works, and the friendships made there will remain special for every OTDK member.

Ferenc TÖRÖK
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