

## **Ethnic Cleansings of Hungarians after the two World Wars**

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### **The Tragedy of Hungary's Dismemberment**

Although in the period after World War II the Germans were the primary victims of the officially sanctioned policy of "ethnic cleansing" (about 16 million Germans were expelled for their ancient homelands), the Hungarians were also subjected to this policy of mass expulsion by the various "successor states." The latter had been established or significantly enlarged mostly from territories that before World War I had been part of Historic Hungary. In point of fact, the "ethnic cleansing of the Hungarians" began immediately after World War I, following the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the simultaneous dismantlement of the old Kingdom of Hungary (1919-1920). The primary beneficiaries of this disintegration and dismantlement were the newly created states of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, and much enlarged Romania that did not even exist in that form and under that name until the middle of the 19th century.

The ethnic cleansing of Hungarians took place in two separate stages, after each of the two world wars. The first of these stages was less systematic and took the form of the expulsion or flight of 350,000-400,000 Hungarians from the detached territories. Most of these deportees or exiles were educated people who had been members of Greater Hungary's administrative and military apparatus, or perhaps of the landowning nobility and gentry, whose landed estates were coveted by the new rulers for the ethnic restructuring of their newly created states. These Hungarian officials and social elites were expelled or they simply fled because of fear of repercussions from the new ruling regimes.

These expulsions were done for several reasons, including the desire to decapitate the former ruling nationality and to lessen the presence of the Hungarians in the "successor states." The Hungarian elite's refusal to take the oath of allegiance to the new states also played a role.

Unless possessing property in much diminished Hungary -- which had been reduced from 325,000 to 93,000 square kilometers (from 125,500 to 35,900 miles)<sup>1</sup> -- these refugees or expellees faced unusual hardships. The defeated and mutilated country could offer them very little support by way of housing and jobs, and barely enough food to keep them alive. Many tens of thousands of them were forced to live for months in railroad cars or in other temporary shelters on the outskirts of towns and cities. Moreover, even if later they were able to secure jobs and housing, the quality of their lives was in no way

comparable to what they had left behind in the detached territories of Historic Hungary. Given their situation, they naturally came to constitute an important core of those irreconcilable elements, who were strong supporters of the policy of territorial revisionism. It was this policy -- however just or fair -- that subsequently drove Hungary into the arms of Mussolini and Hitler, and then in 1941 into the Second World War.

In the course of 1938 through 1941, Hungarian revisionism did triumph temporarily, for during those years Hungary had regained many Hungarian-inhabited territories. In consequence of these territorial revisions the country almost doubled in size from 93,000 to 172,000 square kilometers (from 35,900 to 66,400 square miles). The regained territories included Hungarian-inhabited Southern Slovakia (1938), Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia (1939), Northern Transylvania (1940), and much of Voivodina (1941).<sup>2</sup> But as these territorial changes took place with German and Italian mediation and support, they lacked the necessary international recognition to make them permanent. What was even worse, however, these "gifts" from the hands of Hitler and Mussolini bound Hungary to the Axis Powers, and made her -- however reluctantly -- a partner in Hitler's war against the Soviet Union. Moreover, when that war ended in defeat, so did Hungary's hope of retaining these territorial gains, notwithstanding the fact that these changes were basically in line with American-inspired policy of national self-determination.

Post-World War II ethnic cleansing in Hungary involved several groups of Hungarians and non-Hungarians. The most horrible aspect of this process was the deportation and extermination of a sizable segment of the Hungarian Jewry. While scholars argue over the number of the victims, we can probably accept Ignác Romsics's summary in which he asserts that "the total loss [of Jewish population] on the territory of Trianon-Hungary was over 300,000, while on the territories of Hungary of 1944 it was close to half a million."<sup>3</sup> There are, of course, those who are convinced of either much lower or much higher losses.<sup>4</sup> But in this study we will not even attempt to reach a consensus about these discrepancies.

Next to the Jewish Holocaust, ethnic cleansing of Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin involved the following events: 1) Hungarians expelled from Czechoslovakia to Hungary, and deported from Slovakia to Czechia; 2) Hungarians expelled from Romania to Hungary, and massacred in Northern Transylvania; 3) Hungarians expelled from Yugoslavia to Hungary, and massacred in Voivodina; 4) and Hungarians deported from Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia to Ukraine and Siberia.

### **Ethnic Cleansing of Hungarians in Czechoslovakia**

Before signing the Paris Peace Treaty on February 10, 1947, most Hungarian political leaders -- with the exception of the Communists and Social Democrats -- hoped that, by virtue of the principle of national self-determination, Hungary would be able to retain much of the previously regained Hungarian-inhabited territories. This dream, however, soon fizzled, primarily because reconstituted

Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were now counted among the victorious states; and Romania's timely withdrawal from the Axis (August 23, 1944) made her a belated ally of Soviet Russia, and thus placed her in a favorable situation vis-a-vis Hungary. As such, all three of these states received preferred treatment over Hungary, whose attempt to withdraw from the war on October 15, 1944, failed, and consequently she went down in history as "Hitler's last and most faithful vassal."

Taking advantage of this situation, President Benes of Czechoslovakia made known his views concerning the Hungarians in the so-called "Kosicky Program" of April 5, 1945, elaborated in Moscow a month earlier, wherein he proclaimed the "collective responsibility" of all Hungarians for Czechoslovakia's dismemberment, and consequently deprived all Hungarians -- with the exception of a few active anti-Fascists -- of their Czechoslovak citizenship. Moreover, his decree closed all Hungarian schools, and stated that no Hungarian can acquire landed property in reconstituted Czechoslovakia.<sup>5</sup>

It should be noted here, however, that no such punitive measures were taken against the Slovaks, notwithstanding the fact that independent Slovakia under the presidency of Msgr. Josef Tiso (1887-1947; r.1939-1945) was perhaps Hitler's most faithful vassal state. In contrast to Hungary, Tiso's Slovakia had initiated the "ethnic cleansing" of Slovakia's Jewish population on its own much before the deportation of the Hungarian Jews, following Hungary's German occupation on March 19, 1944.

The chauvinistic content of the Kosicky Program was later incorporated into the so-called Benes-decrees, one of the earliest of which was issued on August 2, 1945 (33:1945).<sup>6</sup> Moreover, they were also included in the May 14, 1946, resolution of the Slovak National Council (65:1946).<sup>7</sup> These decrees and resolutions had a major negative impact on the Hungarians of Slovakia, whose homeland had been incorporated into the Czechoslovak state. In addition to depriving them of their citizenship, their homes, and their agricultural properties, they also divested them of their jobs, their pensions, and their general livelihood. They likewise forbade the use of the Hungarian language in all public places and public functions, expelled Hungarian students from the universities, disbanded all Hungarian cultural associations and institutions, and froze all Hungarian bank assets.

This so-called "Kosicky Program" -- which became the Czechoslovak government's official policy vis-a-vis the Hungarians<sup>8</sup> -- was a lesser version of the "ethnic cleansing" that had been embodied in the Benes-decrees,<sup>9</sup> which had "cleansed" the artificially constructed Czechoslovak State of over three million of its German citizens. It is to the credit of Václav Havel, the President of post-Communist Czechoslovakia, and then of the Czech Republic, that in his capacity as the last President of Czechoslovakia he acknowledged the immorality of the policy embodied in the Benes-decrees. Sadly, however, this acknowledgement was not followed by any effort at compensation or restitution; let alone the revocation, invalidation, and nullification of these decrees.

The first manifestation of "Hungarian ethnic cleansing" in Czechoslovakia was the expelling of all Hungarians from capital city of Bratislava (in the 16th-19th century, the Hungarian Royal Capital of Pozsony) in May 1945. The expellees were put into temporary concentration camps near the village of Ligetfalu [Ptrzalka], where they were kept until August 1946. During these deportations many atrocities and mass murders were committed, most of which remained hidden and unspoken of until relatively recently.<sup>10</sup> Some of these anti-Hungarian atrocities are described in the documentary prepared by the editors of the Budapest periodical *Kapu* [Gate] entitled "Magukért nem felel senki" [No one is responsible for you]. These atrocities are also summarized in a report by the Hungarian World Federation (Budapest), dated April 22, 2002, in conjunction with the debate over the Benes-decrees which are still in effect today's Czechia and Slovakia. The first to question the legality of the Benes-decrees, and to speak openly about the moral and economic problems posed by the expulsion of Germans and Hungarians from post-World War Czechoslovakia, was Viktor Orbán, the Prime Minister of Hungary (1998-2002), during the final months of his incumbency.

After expelling of Hungarians from Bratislava, the new Czechoslovak Government began drafting all able bodied Hungarians for public works projects. These draftees were resettled in various diverse parts of the country, including the Sudetenland in Bohemia, where they were forced to assume the work that used to be done by the deported Sudeten Germans. Although this process of banishment began in the fall of 1945, when 9,000 Hungarians were pressed into forced labor battalions, mass deportations from Hungarian-inhabited territories did not really begin until November 1946. In the course of the next few months about 44,000 Hungarians were uprooted in Southern Slovakia and transported to Bohemia. Their deportation was carried out with the help of the armed forces. According to fairly reliable statistics the deportees came from about 220 Hungarian villages along the northern frontiers of Hungary, where they were forced to vacate 6,602 family homes, which then were given over to Slovak settlers from the country's northern hill districts.<sup>11</sup>

According to most sources, these deportations had the following goals: To uproot Hungarians from their southern homeland in the vicinity of the Hungarian border, to replace the expelled Sudeten German workers with a proven work force from the country's non-Slovak-inhabited regions, and to force the Hungarian Government to agree to a population exchange in return for stopping these domestic deportations of Hungarians.

On February 27, 1946, with the active support of Soviet authorities, the Czechoslovak Government was able to exact a population exchange agreement from the hapless Hungarian Government. Carrying out this population exchange, however, proved to be more difficult than expected. The most important problem was that there were eight times as many Hungarians in Slovakia as there were Slovaks in Hungary. Moreover, of the 75,877 Hungarian Slovaks no more than 14,000 volunteered to leave Hungary. Only after a powerful propaganda campaign by the Czechoslovak Government, and only after learning about the

economic advantages of this resettlement, were they able to persuade 60,257 Hungarian Slovaks to resettle in Slovakia. The expelled Hungarians left behind 15,700 family homes and 160,000 holds = 91,200 hectares of agricultural land in return for 4,400 family homes and 15,000 holds = 8,500 hectares of agricultural lands left behind by the Slovaks. The resettled Slovaks, therefore, received much better accommodations than the ones they had left behind in Hungary.

At the same time 76,616 Hungarians were forced to leave their native towns and villages in Slovakia. But to this number must be added nearly twice as many others, who have fled in the course of 1945-1947 to escape the ever growing harassment by the Slovak authorities, as well as those who have been expelled illegally before the official exchange agreement. In point of fact in the course of 1945-19467 over 200,000 thousand Hungarians were driven across the Danube, most of them in the middle of the winter and without proper clothing and provisions.

Simultaneously with these forced exchanges and illegal deportations there began the campaign of "Re-Slovakization." To escape persecutions and forced expulsions many Hungarians agreed to identify themselves as Slovaks. Of the 600,000 Hungarians in Slovakia in 1945, about 423,264 asked to be registered as Slovaks, of whom 326,679 were in fact registered as such. Of course, most of these national affiliations proved to be temporary reclassifications made under duress. Thus, as soon as conditions permitted, the great majority of these "Slovak Hungarians" reassumed their original Hungarian national identity. As a result, in spite of all the pressures and conscious misidentifications, by 1960 the number of persons who declared Hungarian as their mother tongue rose to 534,000, and then by 1970 to 600,249.<sup>12</sup>

### **Ethnic Cleansing of Hungarians in Transylvania (Romania)**

Following the dismemberment of Historical Hungary in 1919-1920, the largest lost Hungarian territory (103,000 sq. kilometers = 39,800 sq. miles) and the greatest number of Hungarians (1.6 million) were acquired by Romania. The lost territory consisted of historic Transylvania and the so-called Partium that connected Transylvania with Hungary proper. Because of its geographical size and the size of its Hungarian population, the majority of Hungarian refugees that inundated post-Trianon Hungary also came from Transylvania.

With the Second Vienna Award of August 30, 1940, Hungary had regained Northern Transylvania along with slightly over 1.1 million Hungarians. This was followed by the reestablishment of Hungarian political and cultural dominance over the region. Sadly, however, Hungary's unfortunate role in the Second World War made these gains very short-lived, and the more than two million Transylvanian Hungarians, who had enjoyed Hungarian rule only for four years, had to be left to their fate.

During the final months of the war, the Romanians, who in August 1944 left the Axis and switched over to the Soviet side, reoccupied the region and began a bloody process of ethnic cleansing campaign against the Hungarians. The worst perpetrators of this terror were members of the so-called Maniu-Guard, who

were not content with simply expelling Hungarians. They went ahead to engage in torturing and mutilating their civilian victims. Many of the victims were decapitated or otherwise maimed and killed.<sup>13</sup> For a while these atrocities became so widespread and so violent that even the Soviet military authorities were taken aback, and they ordered the Romanian administration out of Transylvania.<sup>14</sup> The latter were permitted to trickle back only after March 1945, although full Romanian administration did not return until after the Peace Treaty of Paris was signed in February, 1947.<sup>15</sup>

In contrast to the situation in Czechoslovakia, however, Romania did not engage in the mass expulsion of Hungarians. Nor did it sign a treaty for forced population exchange with Hungary. In point of fact -- as described by László Hámos of the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation -- "during the first years after the introduction of Communism, conditions were actually favorable for Rumania's minorities. In 1952, though largely symbolic, a Hungarian Autonomous Region was created at the center of the country to include the most densely Hungarian-populated counties."<sup>16</sup>

This relatively tolerable situation, however, did not last very long. Following the short-lived anti-Soviet Hungarian Revolution of 1956, Moscow gave free hand to the Romanian regime to deal with the Hungarian minorities in Transylvania. This immediately set off an anti-Hungarian campaign. In 1959 they force-merged the Hungarian Bolyai University with the Romanian Babes University in the city of Cluj (formerly Kolozsvár); in 1960 they dissolved the Hungarian Autonomous Region and through various boundary changes diluted its Hungarian character; then they began an onslaught against Hungarian schools and various cultural institutions; and finally the regime undertook a policy of resettlement, whereby they forced young Hungarians to find employment in the Regat (old kingdom), and at the same time settled hundreds of thousands of Regat Romanians in tightly packed Hungarian regions and purely Hungarian towns and cities of Transylvania.

The climax of this anti-Hungarian policy was reached under Nicolae Ceausescu's communist dictatorship (1964-1989), which for a while threatened the very existence of the Hungarian population of Transylvania. Only the very effective publicity campaigns of Hungarian organizations in the United States and Western Europe, and Romania's simultaneous effort to court the West, prevented the implementation of the planned forced assimilate all Hungarians in Romania.<sup>17</sup>

### **Ethnic Cleansing of Hungarians in Voivodina (Yugoslavia)**

Yugoslavia -- like Czechoslovakia -- was also an artificially created multinational state that came into existence after World War I on the ruins of the former Austro-Hungarian and the Ottoman Turkish Empires. In 1910, in what later became Voivodina, the Hungarian population was 424,000, which, within three years after the war (1921), had declined to 371,000. Although their numbers had increased slightly in the next ten years to 376,000, in relative terms the Hungarians have lost significant ground.<sup>18</sup> This rapid decline after World

War I was the result of a Serbian-induced forced emigration of Hungarians to Hungary and to various overseas territories. Thus, between 1918 and 1924, about 35,000 Hungarians have left their birthplaces in the provinces of Bácska [Bachka] and Bánát [Banat] to settle in Trianon Hungary; while during the two decades of the interwar period 60,000 Yugoslav subjects -- virtually all of them Hungarians and Germans -- have emigrated overseas.

The relative decline of the region's Hungarian population, however, was not only the product of state-induced emigration. It was also of the result of the implantation of tens of thousands of Serbian families to formerly purely Hungarian-inhabited territories in Northern Voivodina. In the early 1920s, for example, about 88,000 Serbian peasant families -- 20,000 of them newcomers from Southern Serbia -- were given lands in that region. At the same time, these lands were not made available to landless Hungarians.<sup>19</sup>

The situation changed drastically in 1941, when Hungary had regained the northwestern half of Voivodina, including Bácska and Baranya. During the three years of Hungarian rule (1941-1944) the province witnessed the radical rise of its Hungarian population by around 80,000 persons to 457,000. This rapid increase was due partially to the settling of 20,000 Hungarian civil and army personnel, as well as over 13,000 Hungarian-speaking Bukovina Csangós [Changos] to the regained territories. But it was also the result of the reclassification of the national identities of tens of thousands of others, who under Yugoslav rule saw it preferable to assume Serbian identities.<sup>20</sup>

Germans, known as the Danube Swabians. Moreover, as soon as the Yugoslav authorities returned to the province, they undertook a series of ethnic cleansings and ethnic exterminations. The result was the massacre of 25,000 to 40,000 Hungarians, and perhaps as many as 200,000 Germans.<sup>21</sup> In line with the Decree of October 17, 1944, issued by the guerrilla chief Josif Broz Tito, the invading partisan units "were given free rein over the entire region. This legalized the terror which was now inflicted on the minority population."<sup>22</sup> The prospective victims who were collected from various villages were forced to dig their own graves. Then they were machine-gunned into the ditches, and the next group of victims had to cover them up, before they too were forced to dig their own graves, and then machine-gunned.<sup>23</sup> This well-planned and systematic massacre "was followed by the expulsion of almost all of the remaining Germans and about 30,000 Hungarians. In their place, Serbs from Bosnia and the Krajina region were brought in to bolster the local Serb population."<sup>24</sup> In consequence of this policy of violent retributions, Voivodina -- and thereby Serbia -- was cleansed of all of its German and a significant segment of its Hungarian minorities.

It should be noted here that at least part of the anti-Hungarian massacre was the result of an earlier Hungarian-induced massacre that took place in January 1942 in and around the city of Újvidék [Novi Sad]. As described by Andrew Ludányi, this so-called "Novi Sad Massacre" was the result of "an overreaction by the Hungarian Military to subversive activity, including guerrilla activity targeting Hungarian occupying forces."<sup>25</sup> Two Hungarian military commanders -

- Major Gen. Ferenc Feketealmly-Czeydner and Brigadier Gen. József Grassy -- ordered the rounding up of all communists and guerrilla sympathizers, which roundup then lead to the summary conviction and execution of 3,309 persons -- among them 700 Hungarian Jews.<sup>26</sup> It must be added here, however, that as soon as this massacre came to the attention of the Hungarian Government, the responsible military commanders were relieved of their command and court-martialed. True, with the help of some sympathizers among the Hungarian officer corps they were able to escape to Germany. But following the war they were handed over to Yugoslav authorities, who had them executed at the scene of their crimes.

It is a sad fact that the perpetrators of this much larger counter-massacre of 1944, which killed at least ten times as many Hungarians as the number of Serbians who had fallen victim to the Novi Sad Massacre, were never brought to justice. In point of fact, Serbian historical scholarship simply denies the existence of the Serbian massacres of 1944. And what is even worse, this "denial syndrome" is also picked up unwittingly by a number of Western scholars who are unfamiliar with the history of the region and accept the Serbian view uncritically.<sup>27</sup>

### **Ethnic Cleansing of Hungarians and Hungarian Jews in Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia**

Carpatho-Ruthenia, inhabited mostly by Rusyns, Hungarians, and Yiddish-speaking Jews, the latter of whom were in the process of assuming Hungarian identity, was detached from the Kingdom of Hungary after the First World War. After a brief period of autonomous existence as Ruska-Krajna (December 21, 1918-March 21, 1919), it was attached to newly created Czechoslovakia, which position was legalized in the Peace Treaty of Saint-Germain on September 10, 1919. Of the province's 848,000 population 356,000 were Rusyns, 267,000 Hungarians, 94,000 Romanians, 93,000 Germans, and 38,000 Slovaks. These statistics, however, do not reflect the fact that of the province's Jewish population was categorized either as Hungarian or German.

The first Czechoslovak census of 1921 altered the ethnic picture significantly, in which transformation the Hungarians were the greatest losers. This was the result of a number of factors. These included the flight of many Hungarians, who did not wish to live under Czech rule; the reclassification of a huge number of Hungarians as Hungarian-speaking Jews and Gypsies; and finally the reclassification of all Greek/Byzantine Catholic Hungarians as Rusyns/Ruthenians.

Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia survived as a remote province of Czechoslovakia until November 1938, when its reintegration into Hungary began. The First Viennese Award of November 2, 1938, assigned its Hungarian-speaking southern fringes of the province to Hungary, while the total disintegration of Czechoslovakia, and the proclamation of independent Slovakia on March 14, 1939, was followed by Ruthenia's reincorporation into Hungary.

Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia remained part of Hungary for over five years until the fall of 1944, when its conquest by the Soviet Red Army altered the situation. Meanwhile, however, in 1941, largely on the orders of the Hungarian Ministry of Defense -- which was thoroughly under German influence -- Hungarian authorities began to collect refugee Soviet Jews, and later also some Hungarian Jews, for deportation to German-controlled Ukraine. In August of that year nearly 20,000 of these prisoners were taken across the Tatár Pass of the Carpathians, and beyond the Dniester River, to the region of Kamenets and Podolsk. Apparently the German SS forces in that region had no orders and did not know what to do with the accumulated mass of human beings. So, in the course of August 27-29, they machine-gunned all of these Jews into ditches. According to an official German military document dated September 11, 1941, during those three days, the German "Einsatzgruppe D" had executed 23,600 Jews. This means that in addition to the deported Hungarian and Polish Jews, many of the local Jews also met similar fate.<sup>28</sup> It should be noted here that this mass murder took place five months before the Wannsee Conference (January 20, 1942),<sup>29</sup> where the total liquidation of the European Jews was worked out.

Following its conquest by the Soviet Red Army, Sub-Carpathia remained in a limbo for about two months, before the reconstituted Czechoslovak Government agreed to transfer it to Soviet Ukraine. Although the relevant agreement was not signed until June 19, 1945, the actual transfer took place at the time of the Soviet conquest in January 1945. This move further endeared Benes and the Czechoslovaks to Stalin, who thereafter supported all their aspirations vis-a-vis Hungary. This meant even the detachment of three additional purely Hungarian villages from Hungary in the vicinity of Bratislava, on the other side of the Danube.

The incorporation of Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia into the Soviet Union -- which then was renamed the Trans-Carpathian Province of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic -- complicated further the position of the Hungarians and the pro-Hungarian Rusyns. The most visible sign of Soviet Communist anger and distrust was the collection and deportation of about 40,000 of Sub-Carpathian Hungarian men, along with tens of thousands of equally distrusted Rusyns. The latter included the majority of the working age men and many women, as well as the political, cultural, and religious leaders of the distrusted nationalities. Among the deportees were 129 Greek/Byzantine Catholic priest, 19 Roman Catholic priests, and 20 Reformed/Calvinist clergymen, along with all of the teachers, journalists, and other exponents of Hungarian and Rusyn culture.

With the collection and deportation of Sub-Carpathian intelligentsia, Sub-Carpathian society was basically decapitated. Moreover, by forcing the Greek/Byzantine Catholic Church to merge with the Russian Orthodox Church, they destroyed the only institution that could have stood up to defend the separate and distinct national identity of the Rusyns. Those Greek/Byzantine Catholic priests who refused to go along with this forced merger were arrested, tried, and convicted to 25 years of hard labor in Siberia.<sup>30</sup> Some of them died already in the "holding" or "distribution camps" of their own province, while

others perished in Siberian slave labor camps. Such notorious "holding" and "distribution camps" were located in the vicinity of Szolyva and Szanok in Sub-Carpathia, where as many as 120-150 people died every day. Some of the victims were Rusyns, Slovaks or Ukrainian, but the majority of them were Hungarians.<sup>31</sup>

The deportees who survived began to trickle back starting with the year 1946, but about 70% of them never returned. They died of hunger, privation, torture, and various kinds of diseases. As recalled by one of their chroniclers, "their bones lie in unmarked graves from Szolyva (in Sub-Carpathia) to far off Siberia."<sup>32</sup> Their miserable fate was also shared by a number of Germans, including young German girls and women. Those who managed to return were mistrusted for many years. Only after Stalin's death in 1953 did they begin to feel a change for the better.

Two clergymen who left written records of their trials and tribulations include the Reformed Bishop Pál Forgon,<sup>33</sup> and the Byzantine Catholic priest, Msgr. Gyula/Julius Marina.<sup>34</sup> The first of them suffered many years of Siberian exile, while the second was forced to stage his own death and funeral to escape conviction and perhaps execution. After many vicissitudes he ended up in the United States, where he was able to write his memoirs.

### **Some Conclusions**

Although the ethnic cleansing of Hungarians never reached the level experienced by the Germans, Armenians, and some smaller nationalities in Stalinist Russia, it has been a constant feature of 20th-century Hungarian life, both in Trianon Hungary and in the detached territories. The pain of Trianon was felt by all Hungarians irrespective of their ethnic background, religion, or political affiliation. The resulting "Trianon Syndrome" was the dominant feature of Hungarian life during the interwar years, and for the political emigration it continued to be so also during the half century of Soviet occupation of Hungary.<sup>35</sup> True, in the homeland all manifestations of nationalism were suppressed by the communist regime, but not even they were able to bury the pain felt by the Hungarian minorities in the neighboring states, who were compelled to survive in an atmosphere of national oppression throughout these decades. The alternative for them would have been to accept expulsion ("ethnic cleansing") from their homelands, which they and their ancestors have inhabited for ten or eleven centuries. But this option was neither appealing, nor really available to most of them.

Though conditions have changed since the collapse of communism, they did not necessarily change for the better. The collapse of international communism let loose the hitherto submerged feelings of national chauvinism, especially among the nations who have been the gainers at the expense of the Hungarians during much of the 20th century. And this upsurge of national chauvinism has made the position of the Hungarian minorities in their homelands ever more tenuous. As territorial revisions -- however fair and just -- are out of question in the early 21st century, their only hope is that the membership of their respective

countries in the European Union will mellow the chauvinism of the dominant nationalities, and thus make their lives increasingly tolerable. Although the kind of ethnic cleansing they have experienced after the two world wars appears to be unlikely, a kind of creeping and mostly invisible ethnic cleansing is still going on. It is still affecting their lives in all of the surrounding states that have benefited from the collapse of Hungarian rule in the Carpathian Basin.

#### NOTES:

1) On these territorial losses see: Ignác Romsics: *A trianoni békeszerződés* [The Peace Treaty of Trianon] (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2001), pp. 229-233.

2) Hungary's territorial gains in the course of these revisions were as follows: Southern Slovakia (12,000 sq. km. = 4,630 sq. miles), Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia (12,000 sq. km. = 4,630 sq. miles), Northern Transylvania (43,000 sq. km. = 16,600 sq. miles), and Northwestern Voivodina and the Mura Region, 11,500 sq. km. = 4,440 sq. miles), that is, a total territorial gain of 78,500 sq. km = 30,300 sq. miles. Cf. Ignác Romsics: *Magyarország története a XX. században* [Hungary's History in the 20th Century] (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 1999), pp. 244-250.

3) Romsics: *Magyarország története*, p. 263. For an excellent set of short essays on the Hungarian Holocaust, see the monthly *História*, vol. 26, nos. 2-3 (2004), pp. 2-67. The number of deportees given there, based on Randolph L. Braham calculations, is 445,000 to 450,000. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

4) The latter include Raphael Patai, who believes that the losses of Hungary's Jewish population for Trianon-Hungary was over half a million, while for the enlarged country it was 686,000. Cf. Raphael Patai: *The Jews of Hungary. History, Culture, Psychology* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996), p. 590.

5) *Magyarország történeti kronológiája* [Hungary's Historical Chronology], ed. Kálmán Benda, 4 vols. (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1982), vol. 4, p. 1018. See also the relevant article in the *Magyar Nagylexikon*, vol. 10 (2000), pp. 628-629.

6) A complete list of the Benes-decrees can be found in Steven Béla Várdy, H. Hunt Tooley, Agnes Huszár Várdy, eds.: *Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe*, foreword by Otto von Habsburg (New York: Social Science Monographs, Columbia University Press, 2003), pp. 823-828, hereafter cited as Várdy, *Ethnic Cleansing*; and in Miklós Patrubby, ed.: *Benes Decrees. Taking Victims in 2002* (Budapest: World Federation of Hungarians, 2002), pp. 55-60. See also Róbert Barta: "The Hungarian-Slovak Population Exchange and Forced Resettlement in 1947," in Várdy: *Ethnic Cleansing*, p. 566.

- 7) For a list of the decrees of the Slovak National Council, see Várdy: *Ethnic Cleansing*, pp. 828-834; and Patrúány: *Benes Decrees*, pp. 60-65.
- 8) Concerning Hungarian expulsions and the fate of Hungarian minorities in the surrounding Successor States, see Elemér Illyés: *National Minorities in Romania: Change in Transylvania* (New York: East European Monographs, Columbia University Press, 1982); John Cadzow, Andrew Ludányi, and Louis J. Éltetĉ, eds.: *Transylvania: The Roots of Ethnic Conflict* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1983); Stephen Borsody, ed.: *The Hungarians: A Divided Nation* (New Haven: Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1988); and Raphael Vágó: *The Grand Children of Trianon: Hungary and the Hungarian Minority in the Communist States* (New York: East European Monographs, Columbia University Press, 1989).
- 9) Cf. Patrúány: *Benes Decrees*. See also the collection of these "Benes Decrees" compiled by Professor Charles Udvardy [Wojatsek] of Bishop's University, Canada. Cf. Várdy: *Ethnic Cleansing*, pp. 823-834. The list is also available on the Internet, along with the article: "Ethnic Cleansing in post World War II Czechoslovakia: the presidential decrees of Edward Benes, 1945-1948." See: [www.hungarianhistory.com](http://www.hungarianhistory.com)
- 10) Some of these anti-Hungarian atrocities are described in the documentary prepared by the editors of the Budapest periodical *Kapu* [Gate] entitled "Magunkért nem felel senki" [No one is responsible for us]. These atrocities are also summarized in a report by the Hungarian World Federation (Budapest), dated April 22, 2002, in conjunction with the debate over the Benes-decrees, which are still in effect in today's Czechia and Slovakia. The first to question the legality of the Benes-decrees, and to speak openly about the moral and economic problems posed by the expulsion of millions of Germans and Hungarians from post-World War II Czechoslovakia was Viktor Orbán, the Prime Minister of Hungary (1998-2002) during the final months of his incumbency. Cf. *The Economist*, March 2, 2002, p. 52.
- 11) *Magyarok a világban — Kárpát-medence* [Hungarians in the World — The Carpathian Basin], ed. Sándor Kasza (Budapest: CEBA Kiadó, 2000), pp. 47-48.
- 12) Barta: "The Hungarian-Slovak Population Exchange," pp. 568-574; Edward Chászár: "Ethnic Cleansing in Slovakia: The Plight of the Hungarian Minority," in Várdy: *Ethnic Cleansing*, p. 562.
- 13) For some of the contemporary description of the activities of the Manu-guard and other Romanian freebooters, see *Magyar Holocaust. Dokumentumok a magyarok megsemmisítéséről, 1917-1967*, 4 vols. (Kaposvár: Magyar Nemzeti Történelmi Társaság Kiadványa, 1998-2004), II, pp. 83-88.

14) Magyarok a világban, p. 359.

15) *Ibid.*

16) László Hámos: "Systematic Policies of Forced Assimilation against Rumania's Hungarian Minority, 1965-1989," in Várdy: Ethnic Cleansing, pp. 669-670.

17) Romania's anti-Hungarian crusade under the Ceausescu-dictatorship is detailed by László Hámos: President of the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation of New York, in his above-mentioned study. Cf. Várdy: Ethnic Cleansing, pp. 665-692.

18) Magyarok a világban, pp. 597-598.

19) Andrew Ludányi: "The Fate of Hungarians in Yugoslavia: Genocide, Ethnocide, or Ethnic Cleansing?" in Várdy: Ethnic Cleansing, pp. 575-600, figures from p. 581.

20) *Ibid.*, p. 598.

21) *Ibid.*, p. 598.

22) Ludányi: "The Fate of the Hungarians in Yugoslavia," p. 586.

23) For the description of this Serbian massacre of Hungarians and Germans, see Tibor Cseres: Titoist Atrocities in Voivodina, 1944-1945 (Buffalo: Corvinus Publishers, 1993); and Márton Matuska: Megtorlás napjai [Days of Retributions] (Novi Sad, 1990). See also the collection of personal recollections by Julia Teleki: Visszatekintés a múltba [Looking Back Into the Past] (Privately printed in Voivodina, 1996). The expanded second edition of this work appeared under the title: Keresem az apám sírját [I Am Searching for My Father's Grave] (Privately printed in Voivodina, 1999), which contains the names of 865 victims from three small Hungarian villages. See also Julia Teleki's article "A csurgói magyarok meghurcolása" [The Sufferings of the Hungarians from Csurgó], in Amerikai Magyar Népszava-Szabadság [American Hungarian People's Voice - Liberty] (East Brunswick, New Jersey), vol. 114, no. 21 (May 21, 2004), pp. 14-15.

24) Ludányi: "The Fate of the Hungarians in Yugoslavia," p. 586.

25) *Ibid.*, p. 585. This Hungarian-induced massacre was described in detail by the Hungarian author Tibor Cseres in his historical novel, Hideg napok [Cold Days] (Budapest, 1964). Subsequently Cseres also described the Serb-induced

counter-massacre in his documentary essay, *Vérbosszú Bácskában* [Vendetta in Bachka] (Budapest, 1991).

26) Judit Molnár: "A 'legtudósabb rabbi' sorstalansága" [The "Most Scholarly Rabbi" without Destiny], in *História*, vol. 26, nos. 2-3 (2004), pp. 17-22, esp. p. 18.

27) See Ludányi: "The Fate of the Hungarians in Yugoslavia," p. 585, who cites Andrew Bell-Fialkoff: "A Brief History of Ethnic Cleansing," in *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72 (Summer 1993), as an example of a Western scholar accepting the Serbian claims at face value.

28) Cf. Tamás Majsai: "A Kamenec-Podolskij-i deportálás" [The Deportation of Kamenec-Podolsk], in *História*, vol. 16, no. 7 (1994), pp. 26-29; and György Haraszi: "Kárpáti rapszódia" [Carpathian Rhapsody], in *História*, vol. 26, no. 2-3 (2004), pp. 23-28, esp. 25.

29) For this fateful gathering see the film by Heinz Schirk: "The Wannsee Conference," co-produced by INFAFILMGmbH Munich, Manfred Korytowski and Austrian Television - ORF, and the Bavarian Broadcasting Corporation, 1987. In German with English subtitles.

30) Concerning these developments in Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia, see: *Magyarok a világban*, pp. 244-247; Paul Magocsi: *The Shaping of a National Identity. Subcarpathian Rus, 1848-1948* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 191-271; Walter C. Warzeski: *Byzantine Rite Rusins in Carpatho-Ruthenia and America* (Pittsburgh: Byzantine Seminary Press, 1971), pp. 172-192, 251-266; and *Encyclopedia of Rusyn History and Culture*, ed. Paul Robert Magocsi and Ivan Pop (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), pp. 58-60, 450-451.

31) See *Magyar Holocaust*, I, pp. 35-37; *Magyar Holocaust* II, pp.89-90.

32) György Dupka: *Kárpátalja magyarsága. Honismereti kézikönyv* [Hungarians of Sub-Carpathia. Handbook for Fatherland Studies] (Budapest: Magyar Nyelv és Kultúra Nemzetközi Társasága, 2000), p. 29.

33) Pál Forgón: *Ott voltam ahol legszebb virágok nyílnak* [I Was There, Where the Most Beautiful Flowers Bloom] (Budapest: Kálvin Kiadó, 1993).

34) Gyula Marina: *Ruténsors. Kárpátalja végzete* [Ruthenian Fate. Destiny of Sub-Carpathia] (Toronto: Patria Publishing, Ltd., 1977).

35) On the impact of the Treaty of Trianon upon the Hungarian mind, see Steven Béla Várdy's following studies: "Trianon in Interwar Hungarian

Historiography," in *War and Society in East Central Europe: Essays on World War I: A Case Study of Trianon*, eds. Béla K. Király, Peter Pastor, and Ivan Sanders (New York: Social Science Monographs, Columbia University Press, 1982), pp. 361-389; "The Impact of Trianon upon the Hungarian Mind: The Nature of Interwar Hungarian Irredentism," in *Hungarian Studies Review*, vol. 10, nos. 1-2 (1983), pp. 21-42; "The Trianon Syndrome in Today's Hungary," in *Hungarian Studies Review*, vol. 24, nos. 1-2 (1997), pp. 73-80; and "Treaty of Trianon and the Hungarian-Americans," in *Eurasian Studies Yearbook*, vol. 69 (1997), pp. 127-145, (the last study written jointly with Ágnes Huszár Várdy).