

ZSUZSA HANTÓ

Banished families



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Magyar Ház Könyvek

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Communist repression of “class enemies” in Hungary



Budapest, 2011

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION / 9

FOREWORD / 15

“STARTING FROM SCRATCH” / 23

The National Committees / 33

The People’s Courts / 37

The “Executioner’s Law”—Special Division of the People’s Courts / 46

Purging the Civil Servants. Screening Committees / 49

The B-Lists / 54

Ferenc Koszorús:

“A Hero of the Hungarian Holocaust” / 74

The Consequences of the B-List / 85

“Only what the Communist Party wants will happen here” / 87

THE PROCESS OF LIQUIDATING CIVIL SOCIETY / 90

The classification of violations of the law from 1945 to 1953 / 90

Collective Responsibility Laid to the Germans’ Account / 91

The Deportation of the Hungarians of Upper/Northern Hungary / 99

The Battle Against the “Enemy Within,” the Reactionaries,

Those Branded as Class Enemies / 106

Accumulated punishments / 123

After Release, The Work Camp / 132

THE LEGAL BACKGROUND OF THE EXPULSIONS / 138

Before 1945 forceful relocation was an exceptional measure / 138

The Legal Background of the Expulsion of Families

between 1945 and 1953 / 141

The masque of human rights / 145

Dual Value System / 150

“KULAK LIST”, “KULAK REVIEW” / 153

Precedents / 155

A Curious Form of Restricting the Kulaks: Giving Homes
to People Banished from Budapest / 162
The Technical-Organisational Background to the
“Liquidation” of the Kulaks: the “Kulak Lists” / 167
The Kulak List of Pécsvárad / 173
Writer at the Border / 179
“The Abolition” of the Kulak Lists / 186

BANISHED FAMILIES / 189

The Family Work Camps / 192
The Immediate Antecedents of the Deportations, The
Establishment of the Frontier Zones / 193
The Problems of the Use of Terminology
(Deported, Settlers, the Settled, Those Placed in
Closed Areas, Undesirable Elements) / 200
The Redoubling of the Measures / 204
The Activities of the “K” Corps / 205
The Rise of the Camp System / 205
The Reasons for the Expulsions / 210
“Peasant-Socialist Sectarianism” / 220
Relocations from Budapest / 222
The support and help given by the Chorin family / 234
Emőke Solymosi Tari:
László Lajtha, a composer in the time of dictatorship / 239

THE AMNESTY OF 1953 / 246

István Dér in Hortobágy / 249

BARBARA BANK—ISTVÁN BANDI:

DOMICILIU OBLIGATORIU (D.O), OR RELOCATIONS, MOVING TO COMPULSORY RESIDENCE IN ROMANIA 1949-1951 / 255

What is the D.O.? / 255
The beginning, when 3500 families were carried off
compulsory residence, at the same time / 256
Collectivisation, kulaks / 256
The Enemy Within / 257
The Border Zone / 259

Legal Framework	/ 260
Preparations	/ 262
The Resettlements	/ 270
The Camps	/ 278
“Liberation”	/ 286

THE ARISTOCRACY, TARGET OF THE GERMANS

AND THEN THE SOVIETS / 291

The NKVD's Activities	/ 302
The “Liberating” Soviet Army	/ 303
November 1944: the Muscovites Return Home at Stalin's Orders	/ 304
Declassification and Surveillance	/ 310
The persecution of the Zichy family	/ 325
Péter Zichy's Proceedings of Inquiry File	/ 336
Relocation from Budapest	/ 349
Mrs. István Csák, Mária Margit Zichy	
(Our relocation and a few antecedents)	/ 351
Count Ödön Zichy and his wife, Count Gabriella Bethlen's family	/ 353
The file of Aladár Zichy (Ödön Zichy's eldest son)	/ 354
Aladár Zichy, Jr.'s Reminiscences	/ 355
The expulsion of Count Mária Ludovika Zichy's family 1951-1953	/ 359
Mrs. Imre Kacsokovics Katalin Zichy's Reminiscences	/ 363
The Family's maternal branch: the Bolza family	/ 364
The treatment the Zichy castles received was hardly better than the treatment of their owners	/ 373

APPENDIX / 376

A Hungarian count, who found a patron in Comrade Khrushchev	/ 376
Record of the Data of Persons on the Kulak List of the Village of Pécsvárad	/ 377

REFERENCES / 383

INDEX / 398

To the memory of my father

INTRODUCTION

A nation's recent past is stored in the collective memories of the living, in thousands of family narratives and bits of stories, photographs, letters, newspaper clippings, and other receptacles of memory. These family narratives are imperfectly matched to the names of streets, squares, monuments and statues in public spaces and the accounts of events in the history texts of public schools pupils. Families have an imperfect, partial knowledge of other families' accounts. Victims don't want to share their stories with strangers, and strangers don't want to hear about the victims; everyone suffered during the hard times, and no one wants to open old and painful wounds. The authorities are against disclosing what is in the archives. They document the morally and legally suspect actions of hundreds of people who are still alive, and occupy positions of authority and responsibility.

There comes a time nevertheless when the children and grand children want to know more about what happened during troubled times, and the public shows interest. For some, it is a matter of accountability and vindication; for others, after decades of misinformation and deceit, human dignity demands that the truth be told. Authors write about the events, journalists and essayists dig up old newspaper files and probe the recollections of survivors, and historians immerse themselves in government archives and private papers. And thus it is in Hungary about the seizure and consolidation of power of the post World War II communist regime which is the subject of the present volume.

The seizure of power by the communists after the war was not like a military putsch when some army units occupy important government buildings, a few incumbent officials are arrested or sent home, and military officers take their seats. In Hungary, thousands of ordinary citizens whose only crime was that they were labeled class enemies, reactionaries, unreliable elements, enemies of the people, and the like were harassed by the authorities, fired from their work places, dispossessed of their pensions, prosecuted for crimes that did not figure in criminal statutes, were interned, deprived of their property, expelled from their homes and forcefully banished to villages and labor camps. Their guilt was collective: children and the elderly were included among the targets. The stripping of the citizen's civil rights and of their access to the normal channels of justice was done mostly by administrative decrees implementing

policies decided by the higher bodies of the communist party, which in turn was cloning in Hungary what the Soviet communist party had done or was doing in the Soviet Union. In Western Europe, after the war ended, life in peace-time institutions resumed. In Hungary and Eastern Europe, the military war was followed by a class war upon whose ruins the communist party-state was built.

How it happened, what actually happened, who were the perpetrators and who the victims, how after the death of Stalin the worst repression ended with the Imre Nagy government, is the topic of the book written by Dr. Zsuzsa Hanto. Throughout her professional and academic career, Dr. Hanto has researched and written about rural Hungary, its villages, its small towns, its collective farms, its families, its poverty, its adaptation at the end of socialism to the new system of individual farming. She has an intimate knowledge of rural districts where the banished families from Budapest were transported to, and of some of the farm families who were persecuted under the label “kulak.” The public should be grateful to her for analyzing and pulling historical information together from diverse sources with great skill. She breathes life into the repressions in the post war communist era that have been obscured in bureaucratic jargon.

Even before the war ended in Hungary, amid administrative collapse, grassroots national committees composed of coalitions of parties and of citizens took over governance in their districts under the umbrella of a provisional government formed in Debrecen in 1944. The committees created people’s courts for purging the police, Arrow Cross officials, war criminals and collaborators with the fascist regime of 1944-45. They were a vehicle for popular justice and retribution and punished offenses “against the people.” Penalties were prison, internment, forced labor, confiscation of property and fines, and in some cases death. In 1946, government administration and ministries were restored, the national committees were disbanded, but the people’s courts continued to operate, under the Ministry of the Interior (the police) and not the Ministry of Justice.

As the ministry of the Interior and the police came under communist authority, so did the people’s courts, which became instruments for the communists to settle accounts with their adversaries and to seize power. Opponents of the regime were charged and convicted for “crimes against the people” and other non-specific actions such as being a class enemy or enemy of the state which were not offenses under the law, except in time of war and

a state of emergency. In 24 functioning people's courts, from 1945 to 1949, sixty thousand cases were prosecuted, with 45% of those charged found guilty. These included 390 members of the last fascist (Arrow Cross) regime and other wartime officials and politicians. Of those 477 were sentenced to death, and 189 executed.

In addition to the people's courts, screening committees for public officials were created for purging the civil service of non-communists, shortly followed by screening committees in non-government organizations, in industry and business, professions, bank employees, and even the self-employed. The offenders were censured, transferred, demoted, blocked from promotion, deprived of pensions, and fired from their job. In Budapest, 37,000 persons were thus screened. The screening committees were terminated in 1948, but were followed by B lists that targeted broad sections of the bourgeoisie. The goal was purging supporters of the Small Holders' Party from government, reducing the size of the civil service, and colonizing the vacant positions with communists and reliable communist sympathizers. 86000 persons on the B lists were fired and only six thousand were rehired following lengthy appeals. At the same time, there were four political show trials against more than two hundred leaders and members of the Small Holders' Party who were charged with conspiracy against the Republic. All these measures were outside the normal bounds of legality. These persecutions accomplished their purpose, which was seizure and consolidation of power by the communists who had been unable to do so in free, democratic elections.

It is the nature of totalitarian regimes that when the apparatus and practices of repression become an integral part of its rule, new targets, enemies and victims keep being discovered and are persecuted. So it was in Hungary as well. There were two large classes of families targeted after the communists achieved power, the kulaks and the bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie, which comprises educated people in the professions and in business who own property, sometimes also labeled "capitalists," "enemies of the people" "class enemies" and other negative stereotypes, was defined by the party, the police and internal security agencies as dangerous to the security of the state and detrimental to society for economic reasons. Its members were suspected of anti-democratic, meaning anti-communist, agitation, but what sealed their fate is their property which could be seized and appropriated by the state and by communists for their own private use. By order of the Ministry of the Interior, without a legal hearing in a court of law,

forty thousand class enemies and reactionaries were interned in Budapest and its vicinity. In the West, it is called “preventive detention” and undertaken in emergency situations as when the British government in Northern Ireland was battling the Irish Republican Army. In Hungary, the internees were mostly intellectuals, teachers, scientists, technical staff, tradesmen, merchants, and propertied peasants.

In the summer of 1951, a further thirteen thousand members of the bourgeoisie, some five thousand families, were banished from Budapest to villages and small towns, by actions of the police and without legal appeal. On short notice, the police came around with trucks, evicted the residents from their homes, and permitted them to carry some personal belongings that could be fitted on the vehicles. Their homes were turned over to “deserving” people, i.e. communists. The properties of the banished ruling class ended up in possession of their persecutors.

Worse was the fate of the kulaks, who were peasant and farm families with some property such as land and farm animals that exceeded the standard of living of agricultural laborers and owners of small land plots. In official parlance they owned “excessive land and/or properties.” Their ranks included notaries, teachers and merchants. The estates of the Catholic Church and of the aristocracy had been confiscated under post-war land reform. Then it was the turn of the kulaks because they were an obstacle to the collectivization of agriculture production.

The Hungarian communists slavishly copied Soviets institutions. The Soviets had persecuted and expropriated the kulaks in the 1930’s drive to replace private peasant farming with huge collective and state farms, and the same thing had to happen in Hungary. Local councils hastily compiled kulak lists along ever changing arbitrary definitions and criteria. In 1952, forty thousand kulak farms had been listed. Another list of enemies of the state who blocked the socialist transformation of villages came up with seventy-one thousand kulaks. Many kulak families migrated to cities to escape persecution, leaving homes and properties behind. Others offered land to the state without compensation so that they wouldn’t be classified as kulak. Kulaks were excluded from farm associations and trade licenses, compelled to contribute excessively to local taxes and to fulfilling state agriculture delivery targets and heavily fined for failure. In 1952, twelve thousand kulaks were fined and over fifteen hundred had all their properties confiscated. Some

offenses like incorrectly loading transport wagons had no other purpose than to harass and impoverish the kulaks.

In the most extreme case of kulak repression, entire families were banished to twelve work camps in the Hortobagy plain where they performed twelve hours of forced labor each day under guard, lived in miserable adobe shacks that they themselves built, slept on straw or in bunk beds, and lived without heat and clean water. The measures against kulaks were made by executive decree. The banished family never found out why they were banished and there were no specific reasons for it: kulaks were collectively guilty of belonging to a group that the authorities punished “in the public interest” and for the “defense of the state.”

After Stalin died the Soviet leadership eased his repressive policies, and Hungarian communist party did like wise under the new premier Imre Nagy in 1953. Amnesties were instituted for the banished, deported and interned of the post-war years, but as Dr. Hanto makes clear, the persecuted in most cases did not get back their homes and properties, the stigma remained permanent, their children were barred from secondary and higher education, and the officials who orchestrated and implemented the repressions never acknowledged their responsibility. The communist party attitude was that even though what happened had been an unfortunate mistake, the victims better keep their mouths shut.

This, in a very brief sketch, is the history of the Communist seizure of power and the repressions that consolidated its rule. Dr. Hanto’s account describes it in rich detail at every turn, from letters and diaries and personal reminiscences to the decrees and official documents of the party and the government. Bits of the history had been kept in families and in records and documents that surfaced from time to time. Dr. Hanto sensed that the public was ready and eager for a full accounting. She has done it in a scholarly manner, and she has also done it as an engaged author whose readers will share with her the moral as well as the political dimensions of that history.

Anthony Oberschall

FOREWORD

The historical background of this book is well-known for most of the readers. The Treaty of Trianon was the peace agreement signed in 1920, at the end of World War I, between the Allies of World War I and Hungary (a successor state to Austria-Hungary). The treaty dramatically reduced the territory and population of Hungary. It lost 72% of its territory, which was reduced from 325,111 square kilometers (125,526 sq mi) to 93,073 square kilometers (35,936 sq mi). It also lost 64% of its total population, which was reduced from 20.9 million to 7.6 million, and 31% (3.3 out of 10.7 million) of its ethnic Hungarians, who suddenly found themselves living outside the newly defined borders of Hungary. Hungary lost half of its most populous cities and was deprived of direct access to the sea and of some of its most valuable natural resources. The military establishment of the country was reduced to an army of about 35,000, while its navy ceased to exist.

Furthermore, post-Trianon Hungary heavily lost its former economic and infrastructural potentials. While it still possessed 90% of the engineering and printing industry of the Kingdom, only 11% of timber and 16% iron was retained. In addition, it lost 61% of arable land, 74% of public road, 65% of canals, 62% of railroads, 64% of hard surface roads, 83% of pig iron output, 55% of industrial plants, 100% of gold, silver, copper, mercury and salt mines, and most of all, 67% of credit and banking institutions of the former Kingdom of Hungary. New borders also bisected transport links. Hence, much of the rail cargo traffic of the emergent states was virtually paralyzed. These factors all combined created staggering imbalances in the artificially separated, core economic regions of the formal Monarchy. (See the maps on CD)

Hungary, however, put a stop to the inflation and paid off all war-debts within one decade. On 1st of January of 1927 the Pengő was introduced as a part of the new stabilization program and remained as official currency till 31 of July, 1946. At this time one kilogram of gold was equivalent to 3800 Pengő. Since the natural resources could not be regained, education, science and culture became the prevalent strategic branches of national policy. The real strength of a nation lies in the number of educated persons—warned Kuno Klebelsberg, the Hungarian minister of culture from 1922 to 1933. The other strategic branch was social insurance with a new, more economical national

system of accident insurance, provision for pensions and health care, which was unique in Europe.

The Treaty of Trianon led to the participation of Hungary on the side of Germany in World War II. and the reannexation of formerly Hungarian territories as a consequence of the first and second Vienna-Awards. Later, as a consequence of the unsuccessful attempt at withdrawal of Hungary from the war, Germany occupied her on 19 March, 1944.

The German occupiers arrested the leaders of the country, even the regent as the Arrow Cross Party took control of the government. On October 15, 1944, the Gestapo arrested Lieutenant-General Szilárd Bakay, the commander of the Budapest army corps, and head of the group, that attempted to arrange for a separate peace treaty. Miklós Horthy's only living son was ambushed and captured by the Germans, and he was carried away on a truck, rolled up in a rug. The Germans also arrested Lieutenant-General Károly Lázár, the commander of the regent's guard detachment, András Kállay lieutenant of the guards, the son of Miklós Kállay, the Prime Minister, and on the morning of October 16, even Miklós Horthy, the regent himself. The prisoners, with the exception of the regent, were taken to Vienna, then to Mauthausen concentration camp. The reign of the Arrow Cross leader, Szálasi began, the moment the regent left the country as a prisoner of the Germans. Earlier, on the day following the occupation of the country by the Germans, March 20, 1944, the Prime Minister, Dr. Miklós Kállay of Nagykanizsa, took refuge in the Turkish embassy. In mid-November 1944, after the Arrow Cross coup d'état, he was forced to leave the embassy. He was arrested by the Gestapo and ended up first in Mauthausen, then in Dachau.

During the last months of 1944, as soon as the Soviet army set foot on Hungarian soil, the NKVD¹ (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs) arrested the members of the national resistance movement, except those who had been prisoners of the Gestapo or who had been sent to concentration camps and didn't return to Hungary after their release. The Soviets knew that those who fought for the country against the Germans, would do the same against the Soviets too. The wave of arrests that started in 1944, was intended to prevent this. That is how all those who actually or potentially defended their national identity ended up in internment or in labor camps.

¹ Narodnij Komisszariat Vnutrennyih Del

In November of 1944, the Soviet authorities ordered the prominent members of the Hungarian Communist emigration to return to Hungary. In the period before they were ordered home, they lived in fear and dread in a house in Moscow, 10 Gorky Street, on the sixth floor of the famous LUX Hotel, where one could enter only with a photo identity card. Generally, families had only one room. There was a common bathroom for taking baths and showers and the WC was also shared. Cooking took place in the communal kitchen on each floor. Not even family members dared speak to each other. The atmosphere in the hotel was extremely cold, and people lived in isolation from each other. The Stalin purges of 1936-37 decimated even the residents of the LUX Hotel, as well as the circle of friends of the arrested. The black cars, known as black crows, came regularly to carry away the residents of the hotel; not even the women and children were spared. They were nothing but little specks in a vast machinery who could be crushed at any time. They lived in hope that they would survive the next day without being arrested, that they would see their nearest and dearest again who had been taken to the GULAG.

After returning home (to Hungary), in November 1944, they could choose their own villas, together with furnishings and personnel. These apartments and villas were owned by the Communist Party, and the Party could revoke the right to their use at any time. This dependent, vulnerable relationship, determined their situation throughout, even when their living and material conditions changed. They continued to be specks of dust that could be blown away at any time by Moscow; nevertheless, they were given unlimited power in their own country, which they wished to hang on to. They learned how, in those years spent in the LUX Hotel.

The liquidation of the power structure of the Horthy regime commenced. Stalin's apparatus entrusted this to the local agents, the Muscovites, who spoke Hungarian and knew the field. The Muscovites had not lived in Hungary since 1919. They changed their Jewish religion to an internationalist faith. They were totally aware of the fact that they had to carry out every order without thinking, or they too would end up in a concentration camp in Hungary or in the Soviet Union. They methodically broke down the various sectors of society on instructions from Moscow.

With Soviet help, they raised the Communist program of action in 1945, to the level of a government program of the provisional National Assembly. The Smallholder's Party won the election of 1945, nevertheless, the Communists were granted local advantages, because the Soviets insisted on a coalition

government. One after the other they took over the police and administrations. As Hungary had waged an offensive war, Hungarian democracy was limited from the outset by the ceasefire agreement signed on January 20, 1945. The English and Americans entrusted the Allied Supervisory Committees to the Soviet commander; thus, already in the first six months the Communists managed to take over interior affairs, under the leadership of Ferenc Erdei. Ostensibly, Erdei was member of the Peasant Party; in truth, he was a secret Communist.

During the years following the Second World War II until 1947, during the period of the coalition government the Communists could not hope to take over power completely. As possessors of the Interior Ministry, they organized in the background a daily battle to take over national, county, and local positions. The weapons of the battle: the people's court trials, the screening procedures, and "B" lists (cleansing of state administration), which enabled them to dismiss tens of thousands of people from their jobs in the ministries and public administration. They hoped that until the signing of the peace treaty they could take power as a result of this undermining work and that they could keep it even after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops. This hope did not materialize; for this reason, the Communists launched their campaign against the Smallholder's Party in December of 1946. The actual objective of the campaign was to compromise the leaders of the Smallholders' Party and take power. Since Béla Kovács, the chief secretary of the Smallholders' Party, was protected by parliamentary immunity, and the National Assembly did not agree to handing him over, the Russians arrested him on February 24, 1947. Beginning with 1947, after the arrest of Béla Kovács, and the construction of totalitarian power, the social differences between individual citizens ceased. Those who did not unconditionally support the Communists—regardless of their previous past in the resistance or their professional skills—ended up included in the category of enemies to be defeated and liquidated.

At the end of World War II, the Paris Peace Treaty, known as the "second Trianon", not only reinforced, that the territory of Hungary was reduced to 93 thousand square kilometers, but also accepted a further reduction by 43 square kilometers with three villages in favor of Czechoslovakia. With the signing of the Peace Treaty on 10 of February, 1947, Hungary did not regain its sovereignty. Instead, it remained occupied by the Soviets, though by the 90th day following the enactment the troops of the Allied Control Commission should have been withdrawn from Hungary. By contract, the Soviet Union

had only the right to uphold as much troops as needed to maintain the transportation line to the Soviet Occupation Zone in Austria. Since Hungary, together with its neighbors remained under Soviet control, the Soviet troops could be stationed for further decades in the region, until they finally left in June of 1991.

As the great-grandfather of Péter Esterházy stated: *“There is no past, no history, no country, no tradition. The communists are the present, the brutal now.”*²

The first part of this book analyzes the attempt to deny history during the period between the end of World War II and 1953, by using archival sources. Until the signing of the peace-treaty in 1947, the division of influence between the Soviet Union and the Western powers to the extent of 75-25% ensured for the Soviet Union unrestricted intervention into Hungarian home affairs. “The People’s” jurisdiction became the means for legal punishment of war crimes. Contrary to Western European countries, where criminals liable for crimes against mankind were tried through civil and criminal legal actions, in competent professional courts, in our country individuals were made liable for “anti-people” acts, and civilian party-cadres were the judges. Certification committees and the “B”-list became the means of the cleansing actions among officials. The attempt to liquidate civil society included not only those made collectively liable because of their role in World War II, as in the case of ethnic Hungarians living in Felvidék (Northern Hungary) and ethnic Germans living in Hungary, but the communist leaders proclaimed certain middle and upper classes to be guilty during the war years. In the fight against the internal reactionaries, the purpose of which was to deny the past and reshape it to communist taste, the “enemies and class-aliens” became liable for the problems in internal politics. Internment, prison, condemnation by NKVD became the fate of even those, who participated in and supported the calling off of World War II. We illustrate the “prison world” on two maps, the collection and internment camps, as well as the workplaces managed by the Directorate of Public Utility Works, where prisoners and convicts labored. These maps do not contain the workplaces, where the “residents” of the 12 fenced-in family work-camps worked, since even today the archival documentation is insufficient.

² Péter Esterházy: *Harmonia Cealestis*, Magvető Kiadó, Budapest, 2000, p. 390

The intimidation of families and communities, the total control by the state over the words, even thoughts and needs was the practice of those years. The private sphere could be any time violated by the secret police. Not only certain social groups but also the members of the new establishment could be placed under surveillance, including neighborhood espionage, anywhere, any time.

As of 1949-1950 not only individuals but whole families—including babies—were considered liable for hindering the building of the “people’s democracy”. The cause for eviction from the dwelling-place became “being of class alien descent”; its consequence was the total confiscation of property and possessions without court order, by administrative decree. The four volumes of the series “*Kitaszítottak*” (Outcasts)³ explored the ill fates of the almost ten thousand people deported to the 12 fenced-in camps from June, 1950 to May, 1953. This book contains the short summary of these four volumes.

This volume deals with the database concerning the deportees from Budapest based on available archival sources.⁴ The database contains the name, occupation⁵, year of birth, original dwelling-place (district, street, number) of the head of the family and the place, county and township where the family was forcibly relocated. In the case of family members the degree of their relationship was indicated (e.g. grandchild of a minister). The family member’s name and year of birth was seldom indicated.

The study of Barbara Bank and István Bandi presents the forced relocations in Romania between 1949 and 1951. D.O. is the abbreviation of the forced dwelling-place (Domiciliu Obligatoriu) that affected more than 3500 families throughout the country, including Hungarian aristocracy and nobility. The map shows the forced dwelling-places (D. O.), the forced labor camps (“telepesfalvak”—“settler-villages”) and the prisons in Romania between 1951 and 1964, where also ethnic Hungarians were taken.

The last part of the book presents flashbacks to different episodes in the Zichy families’ lives. I shall illustrate the fate of the Hungarian aristocracy,

³ *Kitaszítottak* (Outcasts), Volume I „Magukkal fogjuk megzsírozni a földet” („We will fertilize the soil with you”), (**Zsuzsa Hantó**, 2002), Volume II „Dokumentumok a hortobágyi zárt táborokról” („Documents about the fenced-in camps in Hortobágy”), (**Miklós Füzes**, 2002), Volumes III/1-2 „Családok munkatáborokban 1, 2” (Families in labour camps 1, 2) (**Zsuzsa Hantó**, 2006, 2007)

⁴ In the Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security we found the database of the deportees from Budapest

⁵ This is a mixed and vague category, because it simply refers to the cause of the eviction (social position by profession—lawyer, landowner, degree of rank in the army or police etc.)

during the Second World War, and during the German and Russian occupation of Hungary up to 1991, using as example the renowned and perhaps largest Hungarian aristocratic family, the 'Count Zichy of Zics and Vásonykeő' family. Through the individual stories presented, we can sense not only the persecution of this family, but also the processes used against the aristocratic families at large, the nobility in general, and, in fact all the families who played an important role in the nation's life before the German and the subsequent, much longer, Russian occupation. The families' stories, recorded by the life-story method, were included by documents and letters. We show the "stations of the cross" of each family on maps, as well.

The CD supplement of the book supplies the military maps of the 12 camps in 1952, and in 1982, furthermore, the layouts of the camps. We also attached a map of Hungary to the book, showing the 515 settlements, from where the families were evicted to the 12 camps, and we marked also the frontier zones established in 1950. The CD contains the names of the Budapest-deportees, which we found in the archival database and which we enlarged while reconciling data with part of the families.⁶ The maps show the districts, indicating the streets and numbers, from where the families were taken away and also whereto, by indicating the county and the township. There are 22 sets of maps, each containing the original residence in Budapest by district and the destination of deportation by county, also a summarizing map, which shows, where the deportees were transported, indicating the counties and the settlements.

Besides the maps and the list of families, the supplement also presents relics, the photos of the inauguration of the only permanent exhibition established in commemorating the deportees in Ebes and a selection of the musical compositions of László Lajtha.

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In the preparation of this book, many thanks are due above all to Professor Antony Oberschall (Chapel Hill, USA) whose family was also among the

⁶ Data deviating from the source are indicated by *Italic letters*.

deportees and he has ever been a great colleague and supporter of my research. All these are well reflected in his introduction to this volume, and to Aladár and László Zichy, Frank Koszorus Jr. (Washington, USA), Solymosi-Tari Emőke, Daisy Chorin (Vienna, Austria) for their contribution to this book; to András Dabóczy, János Mátyásfalvi, Zsolt Okolicsány for the preparation of the list of the expelled families from Budapest.

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Budapest
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Zsuzsa Hantó

“STARTING FROM SCRATCH”

Until the peace agreement of Paris, Hungary was considered to be the defeated enemy of the Allies. External forces, the international situation even, determined the development framework.

As a consequence of the Second World War, Hungary was an occupied country in 1944-45, a state that had lost its sovereignty. Moreover, based on a pact concluded by the great powers, it had become part of the Soviet Union's interest sphere of interest. The Soviet army entered Hungary in August 1944. In November that year the Soviet authorities ordered the prominent members of the Soviet Communist emigration, Ernő Gerő⁷, Imre Nagy⁸, József Révai⁹, and Mihály Farkas¹⁰ to return to Hungary. At their initiative, the Hungarian National Independence Front (MNFF) [HNIF] came into being on 2 December, 1944 with the support of the Democratic Citizens' Party, the Independent Smallholders' Party, the Social Democratic Party, the Hungarian Communist Party, the National Peasant Party, and the independent trade unions. The HNIF (MNFF) accepted the Communists' programme, which had been adopted by the Provisional National Assembly, with minor changes, as its programme of government. Moscow made the decisions even in the establishment, composition, programme, and term of the Provisional National Assembly. Molotov was the Soviet partner in the negotiations. He tried to reconcile with the members of the armistice committee who had been sent to Moscow by the Horthy government, Géza Teleki, university professor and son of the Prime Minister, Pál Teleki; the envoy Domokos Szentiványi,

⁷ **Ernő Gerő** was commander of the international brigade in the Spanish Civil War and at the same time an agent of the NKVD (predecessor of the KGB). In November of 1944 he participated in the negotiations of the Hungarian armistice delegation. Later he established the new Central Leadership of the Hungarian Communist Party (HCP) in Szeged, together with Mihály Farkas, Imre Nagy, and József Révai.

⁸ **Imre Nagy** lived in the Soviet Union from 1930 to November 1944, where he worked at the International Agrarian Institute that functioned as the background institution of the Comintern. He took part in the negotiations of the Hungarian armistice delegation.

⁹ **József Révai** was one of the founding members of the Hungarian Communist Party. He lived in the Soviet Union from 1934 to 1944.

¹⁰ **Mihály Farkas** fought in the Spanish Civil War and later went to the Soviet Union.

who also headed the Bailout Office¹¹ and Major-General Gábor Faraghó, the former supervisor of the gendarmerie. Decades later Molotov remembered his role in forming the Provisional National Assembly, later the Provisional National Government, “I brought it into being rather quickly”



The members of Provisional National Government take an oath

Source: Gyula Juhász, 1988, p. 459

The 234 representatives of the HNIF (MNFF) (72 Communists, 57 Smallholders' Party, 35 Social Democrats, 16 Peasant Party, 19 trade union, and 35 with no party affiliation) were delegates of the Provisional National Assembly. A coalition government, the Provisional National Government was set up on 22 December, 1944 under the leadership of Béla Miklós Dálnoky who was not affiliated with any party. Its members were: Minister of Defence, Chief of General Staff János Vörös; Justice Minister, Ágoston Valentiny who was followed in office by István Ries on 21 July István Ries (both Social Democrats); Minister of Industry, Ferenc Takács (Social Democrat); Minister of Commerce József Gábor (Hungarian Communist Party); Minister of Public Supply, General Gábor Faraghó (no party affiliation); Minister of Religion and Education, Count Géza Teleki (no party affiliation, later Civic Democratic Party); Minister of Public Welfare, Erik Molnár (Communist); Minister of the Interior, Ferenc Erdei (National Peasant Party); Minister of Agriculture, Imre Nagy (Communist); Minister of Finance István Vásáry

¹¹ After the Germans occupied Hungary on March 19, 1944, the members of the Hungarian Independence Movement led by Domokos Szentiványi set up the Bailout Office. Beginning with September 11, 1944 Miklós Horthy, Jr. became head of this office, together with Domokos Szentiványi. Gyula Ambrózy on the civil side, and Antal Vattay on the military side, were responsible for preparations.

(Independent Smallholders' Party, later beginning with July 21 Imre Oltványi of the Smallholders' Party); Minister of Foreign Affairs, János Gyöngyösi (Independent Smallholders', Agrarian Workers', and Civic Party).

The development framework was provided by the ceasefire agreed on 20 January, 1945. Until the peace agreement of Paris, Hungary was considered to be the defeated enemy of the Allies. External forces, the international situation even, determined the composition of the Provisional National Assembly, which reflected neither the actual occupations nor the parties in the country. The 31% participation of the Smallholders and the Peasant Party representatives did not in any way reflect the 70% agrarian population, or the Communist Party, which according to its own calculations had only 3,000 members and did not even reach 0.1% of the population. They still obtained 30% of the representatives.

Nevertheless, the Provisional National Assembly, as István Bibó observed, became a textbook example of national solidarity, as its members included high-ranking officers of the Hungarian Army who had gone over to the Soviet Army, like General Miklós Béla Dálnoki, the former commander of the Hungarian Army, and Major General János Vörös, together with certain members of the armistice committee who had been sent to Moscow by Horthy, those who had come back home from Moscow, and representatives of the newly established domestic parties. External conditions permitted this broad national cohesion, but only for a brief period. The government's activities illustrated this at a superficial level. At the same time, in terms of power relations there were significant differences of position among the parties at the legislative and the local government levels, which subsequently influenced the government positions.

There came to light the memorandum of I.M. Majszkij—deputy commissar of the Soviet Foreign Office between 1943 and 1946—drafted in early 1944, concerning the role Hungary was expected to play after the war. According to this memo, the Soviet Union wanted the social organisation of former enemy countries to be based on broad democratic principles after the war, in the spirit of the ideals of the popular front. They were to refrain from meddling in the internal affairs of other countries, for the democratic organisation of the state was a precondition for a durable peace. On the other hand, the Soviet

Union was not interested in having a strong Hungary after the war. Hungary's territory had to be limited to the principle of ethnographic constituency. Territorial issues that arose in the neighbouring countries had to be decided against Hungary, because of her role in the war. Hungary had to be isolated internationally and forced to pay a significant amount of reparation. It is not known to what extent Majszkij's conception was an official position; however, the subsequent steps taken by Soviet foreign policy were in accordance with Mayski's memorandum.¹²

Until the signing of the peace-treaty in 1947 the division of influence between the Soviet Union and the Western powers to the extent of 75-25% ensured for the Soviet Union unrestricted intervention also into Hungarian home affairs.

Obviously the talks between Churchill and Stalin held in October 1944 played an important role. The influence of the Soviet Union and the Western Powers was divided on a 50-50% basis; this was later changed to 75-25% to the Soviet Union's advantage, up to the signing of the peace agreement. Churchill and Stalin had agreed on a formula of 50-50%, but two days later in his talks with Eden, Molotov forced a change to 75-25%, a massive Russian advantage. The failure of the Hungarian attempt at ceasefire on 15 October, 1944 also played a part. This decision was far more important than the Yalta Conference held in February 1945, which has been so much debated in Hungary, or the Potsdam Summit of July-August 1945. Molotov had already told his Yugoslav comrades in the summer of 1945 that they could only talk about the division of Europe, "What is theirs is theirs, what is ours, is ours." The decision was not yet final in Hungary's case. That is why permission was given not only to Austria, but also to Hungary to hold free elections. Between 1945 and 1947 an independent Hungarian foreign policy was hardly possible, but a decision had not yet been made on whether the Communists would become the sole power in Hungary. It was in 1947 that Soviet policy turned in this direction, when the so-called Cold War began, including the division of Europe.¹³

¹² **Mária Palasik**, 2000, pp. 26-27; **János M. Rainer**, 1998.

¹³ **John Lukács**, 1995, pp. 136-137.



Vyacheslav Molotov

Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov (9 March, 1890—8 November 1986) was a Soviet politician and diplomat, an Old Bolshevik and a leading figure in the Soviet government from the 1920s, when he rose to power as a protégé of Joseph Stalin, to 1957, when he was dismissed from the Presidium (Politburo) of the Central Committee by Nikita Khrushchev. He was the principal Soviet signatory of the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact of 1939 (also known as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact) as well as post-war negotiations, and a signatory of the Politburo resolution authorizing the Katyn Incident (mass execution of Polish officers by the NKVD in 1940).

The position of President of the Allied Control Commission (ACC) in Hungary, given the 75-25% proportion, was awarded to the Soviet Union. Marshall Vorosilov became president until the summer of 1946. The English and American representatives of the ACC could communicate with the Hungarian authorities only through the Soviet supreme command. The Red Army was given full powers from October 1944 until 15 September, 1947, when the peace treaty was ratified. In practice full powers meant that the government and local governments had to ask permission from Soviet ACC

high command before they could do anything. The latter even supervised the people's courts.

The ACC's supervisors had to respect the Yalta treaty, according to which:

"The Prime Minister of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, and the President of the United States of America conducted their talks in pursuit of the common interests of the peoples of their countries, as well of as the peoples of liberated Europe as a whole. They announced together their mutual agreement that in this transitional, uncertain period of liberated Europe, the three governments would help the peoples liberated from the domination of Nazi Germany by providing harmonised policies, and would help the peoples of the former Axis satellite states of Europe to solve their urgent political and economic problems through democratic means.

*Order must be restored in Europe and the economic life of the nation reorganised by making it possible for the liberated peoples to eliminate the last remnants of Nazism and Fascism and set up democratic institutions of their own choice, in accordance with the fundamental principles of the **Atlantic Charter**, in which every nation has the right to choose its own form of government. In addition, the sovereign rights and the right to self-government must be restored to those peoples, who had been violently deprived of these rights by aggressive nations.*

In the interests of improving these conditions within which the liberated peoples can make these rights prevail, the three governments whenever required by circumstances, will support the peoples of the former satellite countries of the Axis in the following:

- a. to create the conditions for domestic peace;*
- b. to implement emergency measures to help destitute people suffering from hunger;*
- c. to set up a provisional and broad-based government that will represent all the democratic elements of the population, required to form a government as soon as possible in accordance with the will of the people;*
- d. to promote the holding of such elections whenever necessary."¹⁴*

The Yalta Conference decided in February 1945 to bring all the war criminals to court. At the same time the Yalta Agreement prescribed that

¹⁴ **Declaration** of the Crimean conference of the leaders of the three Allies—the Soviet Union, the United States, and Great Britain., Winston Churchill, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Joseph Stalin on February 11, 1945.

every country that took part in the war had to solve political and economic issues by democratic means. In this new situation public security had to be restored and a government had to be elected freely.

That is why a provisional government was appointed, which was to remain in power until a new freely elected government could be set up.



W. Churchill, F.Roosevelt and J.V. Stalin at the Jalta Conference

Ferenc Erdei, Minister of the Interior, reported on the talks he had with the Soviets about restoring public order and security at the meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Provisional National Government held on December 28, 1944. Prime Minister Béla Miklós Dálnoki also thought it important to set up a police force, whose task would be to defend law and order in the democratic state. András Tömpe arrived in Pest on 26 January, 1945 with the Interior Minister's instructions to organise the Political Police Department of the Hungarian State Police.

The leadership of the Hungarian Communist Party (HCP) decided on 19 January, 1945 to set up this police force. László Sólyom became head of Budapest Police Headquarters; János Kádár became his deputy. They were appointed by the Budapest National Committee, while Gábor Péter was appointed head of the political police by the Political Committee of the HCP. In order to avoid a conflict between András Tömpe and Gábor Péter, the Interior

Minister established a Provincial Police Station, in addition to the Budapest Police Headquarters. András Tömpe became head of the political police department of the latter, while Gábor Péter continued to direct the Political Police Department of the Budapest Police Headquarters. The objective of this political police structure set up within the police was to find war criminals and those who had committed crimes against the people and uncover their crimes committed up to October of 1946.¹⁵

The liquidation of fascism was also a condition of the armistice agreement. When on 3 January, 1945, the Hungarian delegation joined the peace talks, Molotov demanded that the country be purged of “fascist elements”. He also demanded the reorganisation of the army and the implementation of land reform. The armistice agreement required that Hungarians cooperate in finding, arresting, and condemning “war criminals.” In addition, the Hungarian government was required to liquidate all political, military, and paramilitary organisations.

The question of the legal retribution for war crimes came up first in 1942 when President Roosevelt made it clear that those who were responsible for the organised murder of innocent people were to be punished with severe but just sentences. Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister, not only expressed his agreement with the American President, but also recommended that responsibility should be extended to entire nations, such as the Germans and Hungarians.¹⁶

¹⁵ This was when the State Security Department of the Hungarian State Police, headed by Gábor Péter, was set up. The Political Police Department of the Provincial Police Headquarters was incorporated in this. It was directly under the supervision of the Minister of the Interior, László Rajk. This organisational structure was maintained until September 1948, when a month after the new Minister of the Interior, János Kádár, took office, the State Security Authority of the Minister of the Interior [BM] took the place of the Hungarian State Police. The State Security Authority [AVH] was set up on 1 January, 1950 from the State Security Authority of the BM, and the Border Guards of the Army. “Based on the decree that founded it, the AVH’s job was to track down the enemies of the working people, and assure the state, economic and social order of the people’s democracy. Through its organisation, system of subordination, central and special units and network of secret agents, it strived to fulfill this task. Its units organised into a strict hierarchy, and its network of agents covered the entire country. The strands of this spider’s web—which even reached across the borders of the country in the interests of gathering data—converged into the hands of one man. Or more precisely in two men. Gábor Péter, who stood at the summit of the hierarchy, acknowledged only one leader to be above him. Mátyás Rákosi.” **Beatrix Boreczky**, 1999, p. 91.

¹⁶ **Géza Perjés**, 2000, pp. 821-822.

The primary goal of the HNIF programme announced on 3 December, 1944 in rebuilding democracy was to bring traitors and war criminals to the people's courts, disband pro-fascist organisations, purge public administration and justice, and repeal reactionary laws and decrees. According to this programme, the fascist, racist and anti-democratic elements were to be eradicated from the press, education, culture and public life. Through land reform, traitors and war criminals, the members of the Volksbund and Waffen SS, were to be deprived of their land without compensation. The programme, as I mentioned above, tallied almost word for word with that of the Communists, who had had a precise conception ever since September 1944. The emigrant heads of the illegal parties of Budapest and Moscow, independently of one another, outlined the basic shape of the People's Republic, based on the fundamental principles decided by the Seventh Comintern of 1935. The purges played an important part in both. The more detailed Moscow plan, in addition to a less radical wording, took into account the conservative elements, which had backed Horthy, had been ready to negotiate a ceasefire and could be drawn into an allied front.

Since the Budapest programme of action was not put into place, the Moscow programme prevailed. This programme was launched in late October 1945 by the emigrants who had returned home. It had been approved by Dimitrov, Stalin, and Molotov. This programme was made public on 30 November, entitled "the rebuilding of democracy and rise of Hungary, as the HCP's proposal." It first became the HNIF's programme and then the government's.

Owing to the lost war and foreign policy issues and military duties, the purges became one of the Interior Ministry's most important duties, even within the government programme. The programme stressed the fight against fascism, and consciously tried to include the conservative Horthy élite in the task of reconstructing democracy. The "complete liquidation of feudal structures" emphasised in the Budapest programme and the demand for concrete measures to be taken against the "reactionaries" of the state and society did not play a part here.

The Communist supervisors of the army set up the Military Political Unit whose task was to "purge" the army of "Horthyist elements". It was subsumed under the Ministry of National Defence. The Minister of Defence's decree of March 12, 1945 set up an organisation as legal successor to the

VKF/2. It investigated primarily the officers and deputy officers of the former gendarmerie, the leaders of VKF/2, employees, agents, and inmates of forced labour camps. After 13 November, 1945, the unit came under the aegis of the Minister of Defence, but it was the Party that gave orders to Pálffy. Pálffy personally selected the staff, but he needed the consent of the Soviet Colonel Géza Révész. After the suspects were identified, the hearings could begin.



Kálmán Kéri in the Parliament

For example, Major-General Kálmán Kéri was arrested on 4 March, 1945. During the Second World War, Kéri was the chief of the general staff of the Hungarian army. He had taken part in the ceasefire negotiations and was asked to reorganise the new Ministry of Defence, but he was soon discharged. Soon after his arrest on 4 March, he was released from prison, but on 8 August, he was rearrested by the Military Political Department and handed over to the Soviets, who kept him prisoner until 31 December, 1945. The next time he was arrested, since he had studied pharmaceutical chemistry, he was employed by the Swiss Ciba pharmaceutical company. On 2 February, 1949 he was arrested

again by the Military Political Department and charged with being the leader of an espionage organisation. András Berkesi and György Kardos were his interrogators. Upon his release from the Military Political Department's prison, he was sent to Kistárca and Recsk. He was not released in 1953 as the court had sentenced him to four years. On the other hand, they did take into account his time in prison up to then, so it was judged that he had served his time. After his release, he was hired by the National Translation Office, but soon he lost this job too. Finally, he worked at the Astoria hotel as a night guard until reaching the age of retirement.¹⁷

Pálffy was arrested in 1949 in the Rajk court case. On 1 January the Department he headed became the Military Defence Department, whose head was Károly Kutika. The AVH [State Defence Authority or Hungarian secret police] led by Gábor Péter, came under his department.¹⁸

The National Committees

The national committees were grass roots people's organisations, which had sprung up in 1944-45, and essentially functioned as the local organs of the HNIF. Consequently, they were supposed to represent the policies of the Popular Front that were approved by the victorious powers, and not the dictatorship of one party. This policy was also accepted by the Provisional National Government.

According to István Bibó, the national committee was a completely new type of public administration, which because it had come into being from nothing, was entitled "starting from scratch" In his treatise, "The Scales of Democracy," Bibó stressed that, in contrast with the other countries that had been allied with Germany, where a coalition or democratic government replaced the fascist or fascistic governments in such a way that there was a continuity, something essentially different and more substantial took place in Hungary. *Democracy began in Hungary when the government system in place collapsed one afternoon without leaving the slightest trace behind of what could be called a legitimate succession or continuation in the political sense; thus, from the*

¹⁷ Géza Böszörményi, 1990, pp. 182-186.

¹⁸ Gábor Péter was head of the Political Police Department [PRO], then the AVO, and later the AVH between 1945 and 1952.

constitutional or administrative standpoint the country was in a state of total tabula rasa.”

The national committee: *“In this situation Hungarian democracy became a textbook example of a political community that was freshly built up from basic community formations. In this state of starting from nothing, the Hungarian people had to show that if they didn’t have the strength or opportunity to shake off on their own the oppressive system that was on their backs, they did have reserves of strength that allowed them to seize the opportunities that had been opened up by the liberation and fill them with their own forces.”*¹⁹

The question was how the government programme could be put into effect at the local level. In the months following the war, this took on a special significance, while the provisional central administration emerged only later and was consolidated only slowly and gradually. Contemporaries recounted with shock that after the entry of the Red Army, “every day and every hour, every minute and second the historical moments repeated themselves: the state’s collapse and resurrection.” The Soviet military command tried in every city and every larger community—for different reasons—to restore the previous administration. They demanded that the provincial officials of the previous regime begin to work again, and at the same time that the local government administration, which had been liquidated at the communal level, be replaced by the “people’s” or similar committees to perform legislative and executive functions. At first the national committees acted as local government administrators, replacing the collapsing old apparatus. The initiative belonged in the first place to the working-class parties, but committee members who belonged to other parties also took part. Already in early November in Szeged, every decree that had been enacted since March 1944 was repealed.²⁰

It was the Communists who were first to recognise the central role that the local level filled in the play of political forces. In 1945, 3200-3400 committees were set up throughout the country on the basis of parity, from the representatives of the HNIF’s parties and trade union. In some places it was the workers’ parties which were in the majority, but this majority varied greatly, depending on the local situation. The national committees, however, were not the obedient tools of the Communists, who were in any case weaker in the countryside. Due to the influence of the Smallholders’ Party they

¹⁹ István Bibó, 1986, pp.132-140.

²⁰ Margit Szöllőssi—Janze, 1991, p. 322.

frequently turned to the centre and tried to reduce Communist influence on the local committees. There were a significant number of settlements in which the local community thought that the national committee was an organ of the local people's representative, and they refused to carry out the central will represented by the Communists.

The first signs of decline began in early January 1945, when Decree 14/1945 M.E. ordered the reform of public administration; that is, the national committees could not be integrated into the state and administrative apparatus. This decree removed public administration from its sphere of authority, replacing it with the cooperation of the various parties, the functions of social organisation and supervision. Already in early January, the decree eliminated these organisations from public administration in principle, although only gradually was this put into practice. After April 1946, the role of the local national committees was reduced to insignificance, democratic debate ceased, and there was no longer any possibility of having a say in public affairs. For a time their supervisory and screening functions continued, but ultimately they became a merely formal organ that was like the popular front. The official apparatus, however, did not disappear until 1949.

The power of the local grass roots communities, which had appeared out of nowhere, was slowly reduced; and the national committees that represented national interests were slowly strangled from above by the centralised state power. In this uncertain situation the agricultural committees, the local committees that demanded land, continued to function for a while. The Communists, however, who were becoming more and more aggressive, increasingly filled the administrative and political vacuum, and gradually made the reconstruction of Hungarian democracy impossible. *"This period in the life of Hungarian democracy of starting from scarch came to an end."*²¹

At first owing to the lack of a central authority, or rather the deficiencies in the provisional government, the local national committees played an important part in the liquidation in many communities. It is difficult to know how we might be able to obtain an exact picture of the decrees that ordered these acts of purging and reprisal that lacked any basis in law, or when we can know the number of victims of these "lawless" actions. Many of these were attributed to the violent taking of power, or to the soldiers who had taken part in the takeover. Hundreds of thousands of people were sent to the Soviet Union to

²¹ István Bibó, 1986, II, pp. 132-140.

forced labour or prisoner-of-war camps. Lynchings and executions took place every day. In some communities the committees themselves organised the political police, which were made up of workers and “agrarian-proletarians”. They brought “judgments by the people”, which sometimes degenerated into pogroms, but escaped punishment because of their “proletarian” character. In certain communities, some individuals were kept under surveillance and others isolated. Nevertheless, it is difficult to generalise, because of the great diversity of cases. There were cases in which even local Communists were condemned.

These excesses led to growing demands that the power of the committees be restricted and brought under the rule of law and the abuses ended. The central decrees were not realistic and often served legitimacy after the fact. Such an example was the liquidation of all the fascist organisations required by the 13 points of the armistice agreement. Decree no. 329/1945 M.E.²² enacted on 26 February, 1945 and proclaimed on 17 March disbanded the Fascist parties and organisations. This did not mean that these parties and organisations were functioning before that time, as they had been dissolved earlier. In any event, the decree more definitively ordered the liquidation, thereby attempting to channel these lawless actions. The 25 liquidated organisations included the Arrow Cross and other National Socialist parties. Other organisations included the Alliance of Eastern Front Warriors or the ideologically unambiguous societies such as the Jewish Research Institute or the racist Hungarian Scientific Race Protection Society. Also included were the governing parties, domestic organs ranging from conservative to right-wing radical, of the Horthy era, including the National Association of Hungarian Doctors and Judges.

²² Based on the mandate given it by the Provisional National Assembly in Debrecen on 22 December, 1944, the Provisional National Government dissolved fascist and military organisations in order to fulfill the 15 points of the armistice agreement concluded on 20 January, 1945 in Moscow: 1. Anti-Bolshevist Youth Camp. 2. Baross Alliance. 3. KMSZO. 4. The Alliance of Etelköz. 5. The Society of Awakening Hungarians. 6. Love of the Homeland. 7. Club of Blues. 8. Society of the Brothers-in-Arms of the Eastern Front. 9. Blood Alliance of the Double Cross. 10. Levente Society. 11. Society for Hungarian Future. 12. Hungarian National Defence Society (MOVE) 13. Hungarian Life Party. 14. Hungarian Renewal Party. 15. The National Society of Hungarian Doctors. 16. Hungarian National Socialist Party. 17. Hungarian Scientific Race Protection Society. 18. National Society of Hungarian Lawyers. 19. National Work Centre. 20. People’s Will Party. 21. Hungarist Movement of the Arrow Cross Party. 22. National Vitéz Chair 23. National Committee for the Defence of the Nation. 24. Turul Alliance. 25. Institute of Jewish Research (3. §).

Decree no. 530/1945 M.E. announced the “liquidation of fascist and anti-Soviet media products” in bookshops, libraries, public and private.

The People’s Courts

Contrary to Western European countries, where criminals responsible for crimes against mankind were tried through civil and criminal legal actions in competent professional courts, in our country individuals were made liable mostly for anti-people acts, and lay party soldiers were the judges



*Portrait of Béla Miklós Dálnoki
Source Árpád Rácz*

The Provisional National Government set up in Debrecen and headed by Béla Miklós Dálnoki had already announced on 22 December, 1944 that it would bring to justice war criminals and those who had committed crimes against the people, and that it would hand over those who had committed crimes in other countries. The 14th point of the armistice agreement dealt with this

commitment. On 25 and 26 January the government discussed the projected decree on this subject. Ákos Valentiny the Minister of Justice made sure that the investigation of war criminals was undertaken by the Justice Ministry and that a court of justice was set up to investigate. The goal was to take the cases out of the hands of the police, which was headed by the Communists. The government accepted the proposal, but the Interior Minister Ferenc Erdei voted against it. The Communists were in the minority. This was when the Soviet Union intervened. At the behest of Mátyás Rákosi and Árpád Szakasits, Political Commissar Pushkin, and ACC-president Vorosilov intervened for the first time in Hungarian domestic politics. In his report Pushkin warned the Prime Minister: *“that the Ministry of Justice was putting a brake on the battle against war criminals and fascist elements. The situation has not improved. We do not believe that it would be a good idea to take the cases of war criminals out of the hands of the Ministry of the Interior (the Police) and give them to the Ministry of Justice.”*²³ Thereafter, the Soviet troops of occupation meddled daily in the workings of the people’s committees.”²³

Decree no. 81/1945 M.E. announced on 4 February, the first day of the Yalta Conference, stated:

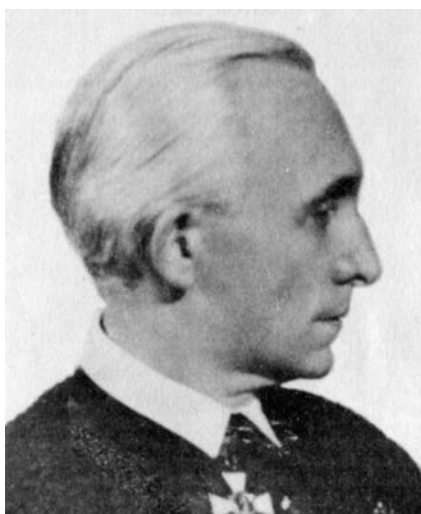
“Based on the authority granted by the Provisional National Assembly on 21 and 22 December, 1944, the Provisional National Government intends to bring to justice as soon as possible all those who caused the catastrophe that overtook the Hungarian people or who had taken part, and in the interests of restoring the jury through legislation and with respect to setting up the people’s courts, decrees the following:...”

By then the people’s courts were already functioning. The National Committee of Budapest had decided in late January to set up the Budapest People’s Court. Ákos Major was appointed president of the body called the People’s Court of Justice on 30 January, 1945. The following day Ferenc Szabó became prosecutor of the Peoples’ Court. On 3 February, before the announcement of the decree, the council headed by Ákos Major had already pronounced its verdict in the case of Péter Rotyis, reserve company sergeant-major, and Sándor Szívós reserve lance sergeant, who murdered 124 members of the special labour company no. 401.²⁴

²³ Károly Szerencsés, 2002, p. 33.

²⁴ Mihály Soós, 2004, pp. 83-84.

By means of such manoeuvring the Communists, working within the HNIF, brought into the Hungarian legal system the institution of the people's courts. This served the purpose of strictly executing the law with regard to individuals, as well as regulating the activities of the local people's courts, which lacked legality—generally condemning those who had commanded the Jewish forced labour units. The people's courts were given a legal foundation by Decree no. 81/1945 M.E. The administration of justice was taken out of the hands of the professional courts, which were responsible for civil lawsuits and criminal procedures. The members of Council no. 1 (Major) of the People's Court, who were involved in the László Bárdossy case, were the following: Antal Apró (HCP), Mihály Bíró (SZDP) [Socialist Workers' Party], József Mérő (Consultant), István Nagy (NNP), János Miskolczy (FKgP), and Dr. Sándor Révész, people's judge. Representing the prosecution were people's prosecutor Dr. Ferenc Fenesi and Dr. Sándor Szalai, political prosecutor. Dr. Zoltán Tóth took the minutes.



Portrait of László Bárdossy
Source: László Bárdossy, 1976

It became a matter of principle that every action which qualified as anti-popular could be punished, even if it did not violate any laws.. The international resolutions concerned crimes against humanity. The National Military Court of Justice distinguished between crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes

against humanity. The semantics of Hungarian law called attention to the fact that the calling to account for crimes against the people had taken on the character of “class conflict,” as in the rest of East-Central Europe.²⁵

Three amendments to the decree were made in a short time, as was required in practice. On 16 September, they were finally summarised by the Provisional National Assembly and drafted into law VII. of 1945, “raising government decrees on the question of the people’s courts to the level of laws”.²⁶

The people’s courts that were set up in the counties, the county towns, and Budapest were politically committed lay courts. Nationally there were 25 such courts (in addition to the one in Budapest) that were in operation for various lengths of time between January 1945 and April 1950. Based on the opinion of the chief judge appointed by the Minister of Justice, five delegates were chosen from the parties of the HNIF, who were commissioned by the lord-lieutenant. Beginning with 1 May, 1945, in accordance with paragraph 19 of Decree No. 1440/1945 M.E., the trade unions could also send a lay judge. Thus, the Communist Party and more rarely the Social Democratic Party were able to finagle an extra vote. This decision gave the Marxist parties veto power, and the Leftist Bloc, which soon came into being, an absolute majority.²⁷

The defendant or accused was represented by the “people’s lawyer”, the people’s prosecutor before the people’s court. The people’s prosecutors and their leaders were chosen by the Minister of Justice from among those who had passed the Legal Bar examination, or if need be, had a Doctor of Laws diploma, after being recommended and heard by the local national committee. The Minister of Justice could dismiss the people’s prosecutors at any time. According to Decree no. 5900/1945 2.§: *“The Minister of Justice can entrust the work of the public prosecutor to persons who are not members of the public prosecutors’ organisation. The public prosecutor, who has been charged with*

²⁵ Károly Szerencsés, 2002, pp. 30-35.

²⁶ The decrees were as follows: Decree no. **81/1945**. ME , enacted on 25 January, 1945, concerning the people’s courts, was issued in Debrecen on 25 January, 1945 and came into effect on 5 February, 1945; Decree no. **1440/1945**. ME on amending and complementing Decree no. 81/1945; issued in Budapest on 27 April, 1945, put into effect on May 1, 1945; Decree no. **5900/1945**. ME about the sphere of authority of the people’s courts, concerning the proceedings against an absent accused, also on the subject of rules concerning the representatives of public prosecution; issued in Budapest on 1 August, 1945; put into effect on 5 August, 1945; Decree no. **6750/ 1945** ME about ensuring the strengthening of the work discipline of public officials; issued in Budapest on 16 August, 1945, put into effect on 19 August, 1945.

²⁷ Károly Szerencsés, 2002, p. 46.

this duty has the same rights within the sphere of his commission, as the people's prosecutor."

The forum of appeal was the "National Council of People's Courts." It was made up of representatives who had knowledge of the law and were from the law chambers and members of the parties of the HNIF, at first five, then six, headed by a magistrate appointed by the Minister of Justice. They were mostly professionals and, unlike the lay people's judges, they had to have proper legal qualifications.

The sphere of authority of the people's courts covered civil society, the police and the gendarmerie, as well as foreign citizens. They determined not only the crime but also the punishment, which ranged from being forbidden the practice of one's profession or occupation, to the death penalty. Primary punishment included death, forced labour, and prison and internment, while the secondary penalties varied in that the fines and confiscation of property were adjudicated separately.

The people's courts determined politically the concepts of "war criminal", "crimes against the people," and "offences against the people". "The objective was to bring the former political elite before the courts as defendants."²⁸ These concepts—the definition of crime and punishment—changed in the above-mentioned government decrees. The "war crimes" defined in 12 points by Decree no. 81/1945 M.E. was complemented with two further points by Decree no. 1440/1945 M.E. The 13 points included all activities that promoted the interests of the Axis powers and that continued the war, beginning with Hungary's entry into the war in 1939. Everything was included here, from lawless violence and murder, to impeding the armistice. As a result, everyone, who contributed to the Arrow Cross take-over of power or helped maintain the Arrow Cross [Hungarian Fascist Party] by holding a position of leadership in the government, public administration, or army, or served in German military units or openly urged the continuation of the war, or who raised their voice against the aspirations of the Soviet empire was regarded a war criminal and could be taken to court. According to Decree no. 1440/1945 M.E.: "^{7th} anyone who carried out activities or continues to carry them out in any way, or promoted or promotes anything suitable to putting obstacles in the path of peace among nations or cooperation between them or violating such peace and cooperation, or evoking conflict between nations." This meant that the law went

²⁸ Károly Szerencsés, 2002, p. 334.

beyond the role of punishing the crimes of the past and was extended to cover current and future activities as well.

Death was the penalty for those who had held responsible positions (ministers, high-ranking officials and subordinate officials, etc.), but even those who weren't leaders could be sentenced to 10-15 years at a penal colony or 1-5 years prison. Decree no. 1440/1945 M.E. increased the severity of these penalties. It gave more space to verdicts of capital punishment, and the least penalty was 5-10 years of prison, convict prison or forced labour. A frequent penalty was a life sentence of penal servitude or labor camp, or not less than 10 years of forced labour.

Crimes against the people were broken down into less precise crimes or offences against the people and were defined in eight points, as "anti-people", "pro-fascist", and "anti-democratic" attitudes and behaviour. Considered to be against the people were those members of fascist or anti-democratic parties or officials who "pursued activities in office that were against the people and pro-fascist. But even those who prevented the expression of anti-fascist opinions or participated in bringing about anti-democratic laws, were condemned.

The punishments were less severe. In the case of crimes against the people the penalty was 3-5 years of prison or labour camp—which if made more severe could rise to 5-10 years. In the case of offences against the people the penalty was a year of internment or a year in prison, or in more serious cases, prison in 2-5 years.

Judgements of the people's courts could be appealed only in the case of certain penalties. According to Decree no. 81/1945 M.E.: "*The condemned could appeal against the death penalty, complete confiscation of property, loss of job, three years loss of freedom, or a fine exceeding 20,000 forints to the National Council of the People's Courts*". (53.§)

The counsel for the defence did not have an independent right of appeal. The people's prosecutor on the other hand could appeal, either to mitigate the sentence or to make it more severe. According to Decree no. 1440/1945 M.E. the above-mentioned 53 §-a. lost its validity. After 1 May, 1945, those who were held responsible for entering the war and spreading it, who helped the Arrow Cross, and who were instigators or actors in executing people or torturing them at home or abroad, no longer had the right to appeal. In other cases, one could appeal only in cases of a death sentence or prison term exceeding five years.

The law concerning the people's court also regulated even the question of the statute of limitations according to political expectations. Decree no. 81/1945 M.E. adjusted the statute of limitations to the day the armistice was signed. The Communists wanted to judge the crimes committed during the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919 within the framework of the people's courts. According to Decree no. 1440/1945 M.E.: "*Decree no. 81/1945 M.E. A 5.§ paragraph 2 of 9. § is no longer binding and is replaced by the decree below:*

The statute of limitations of those political crimes in 1919 and afterwards, which caused the deaths of people, as well as the crimes committed through the press, the factors defined by the current decree—and whose prosecution was blocked by the authorities in power, begins on 21 December, 1944."

According to this change every political crime committed between 1919 and 1944 would come before the people's courts. Not only was the well-known Pál Prónay condemned, but those judges and prosecutors of the Horthy era who had passed judgement against Communists, even those who were officials of justice during the time of the Communist trials were prosecuted.

The Provisional Government published the list of war criminals on 16 February, 1945, which was followed a few days later by another. The first to be brought before the people's courts were the commanders of the Jewish forced labour units, or the commanders of the Arrow Cross gangs and guards. The problem, however, was that many of the accused were young when they had met adults on the front during the months of the Szálasi government and carried out orders. According to Decree no. 81/1945 M.E. 22 §, only young people who were at least 15 years old could be sentenced to prison and convict prison. Decree no. 1440/1945. M.E. 15. §-a nullified the above-mentioned paragraph. Accordingly, the death sentence could be applied only if the young person was at least 16 years old when he committed the crime. The other punishments listed were used if the young person was at least 15 years old at the time the crime was committed.

The members of the Sztójay and Szálasi government and other leading extreme-right politicians, altogether 390 people who had fled to Germany to escape the Red Army, were handed over to the Hungarians by the Americans in October 1945. The government originally asked for the delivery of 438 Hungarian and 38 German war criminals. The Americans, however, refused to hand over the Germans, but they did deliver to the Hungarians three individuals as witnesses who were important from the Hungarian point of view (Becher, Weesenmayer, and Winkelmann). After brief hearings (ranging

from a few days to three weeks) the Budapest people's court sentenced five former Prime Ministers, ten Ministers, two under-secretaries of state, and two leading Arrow Cross officials to death, and one Minister to life imprisonment.²⁹

Based on archival sources, Mihály Soós classified the war crimes and crimes against the people and the people brought before the people's courts into eight groups:

1. The first group ranged from Prime Ministers, Ministers, under-secretaries, Parliamentary representatives and sheriffs to city or village officials who the most trivial proceedings brought against them, and anyone who was a politician, or an official at any level of public administration, who had executed the politicians' actions deemed to be war crimes or crimes against the people up to 15 October, 1944.
2. In the second group were listed those military personnel—chiefs of the general staff from the rank of general all the way down to the ordinary Hungarian soldier—who had committed a war crime or crime against the people up to 15 October, 1944.
3. The third group included those who were police and had committed war crimes or crimes against the people.
4. In the case of individuals who had served with the gendarmerie and who had committed war crimes or crimes against the people (similar to those who were police), there was no statute of limitations. The individuals who served with these bodies committed a significant number of crimes before October 15, 1944 and until the seizing of power by the Arrow Cross.
5. All those belonging to the group of political, administrative, and military leaders of the Arrow Cross who had assumed a leadership role when the Arrow Cross were in power, and as a consequence had committed war crimes or crimes against the people, namely, Ferenc Szálasi, as well as his ministers, under-secretaries, heads of ministries, sheriffs, and other heads of public administration, military commanders, and economic and cultural leaders.
6. The large number of Arrow Cross Party members and Party officials, as well as the armed Arrow Cross troops.

²⁹ Margit Szöllőssy—Janze, 1991, p. 329.

7. The seventh group comprised those Hungarian citizens of German descent, who joined the Volksbund, or those ethnic Germans who became members of the Waffen-SS.
8. The last group, had all the files that contained the affairs of mostly ordinary people, who did not fit into any of the other groups. I would like to mention Mihály Soós as an example of what is meant by an ordinary person. Mrs. A.M. was hauled into court, because, beginning from 15 December, 1943 she was an assistant concierge at Andrásy ut 60 for a year. In exchange for house cleaning she had a room in the “House of Loyalty.” On the strength of the evidence of the final decisions made on 13 June, 1945 and 3 July, 1945, although the state defence organs did not find this proved; they defended Mrs. A.M.’s membership in the Arrow Cross Party. She was sentenced to be interned. On 20 September, 1945, her internment ended and she was placed under police surveillance. The state defence agencies returned to Mrs. A.M.’s case in 1948-49. They inquired into what she knew about what had happened in the cellars of Andrásy ut 60 from 1944 to 1945. The files don’t inform us about Mrs. A.M.’s fate.”³⁰

Between 1945 and 1949, 59,429 people were brought before the people’s courts. Of these, the cases of 55,322 (93.08%) were closed, 3,307 (5.56%) were postponed; 26,997 (45.42%) were condemned, 14,727 (24.78%) were exonerated; the cases of 12,644 (21.27%) resulted in different sentences. The 24 functioning people’s courts between February 1945 and 1 April, 1950 sentenced 477 persons to death for war crimes and crimes against the people, of which 189 were executed.³¹

The governmental decrees were imprecise and their general conceptual references widened the sphere of the culpable, since the administration of justice was removed from judicial organisations. The people’s judges were delegated by the political parties; consequently, the judgements became the battleground of party conflicts. It was paradoxical that the people’s courts increased the number of violations of the law in the 20th century, while they wanted to punish flagrant injustices. Up to September 1945 the cases covered the previous period (war, the activities of the Horthy government, Szálasi’s take-over of power.) Decree no. 6750/1945 M.E. “concerning the intensification

³⁰ Mihály Soós, 2004, pp. 92-98.

³¹ Sándor Szakács—Tibor Zinner, 1997, p. 186.

of the work ethic of civil servants,” in contrast, crossed over from settling of accounts of the past to forming the criminal law of the political present. Accordingly, any official whose attitude endangered the implementation of the government’s decrees or seriously obstructed the reconstruction of the country was considered to be carrying out activities against the people. A crime against the people was perpetrated by “7) *a public official who seriously and purposefully violated his official responsibilities, especially if he did not execute the legal instructions of his superiors or in bad faith did not carry them out on time or in the prescribed way, if this threatened the orderly implementation of the democratic government’s decrees, or perceptibly obstructed the reorganisation of the country in the spirit of the people and democracy.*”

The conscious definition of “enemy of the people” was formulated clearly in the words of under-secretary Kálmán Kovács when he presented the Bill of Law VII/1945 People’s Court Law before the Provisional National Assembly. An act against the people speaks for itself; the representatives in the people’s courts had to know what was directed against the people. This law now went far beyond the officials of the Horthy and Szálasi regime, and was aimed expressly at the “reactionary enemies” of the people’s democracy.³²

The people’s courts punished public officials for acting in the spirit of the laws before and after the Second World War, which were qualified retroactively as anti-democratic. After 13 September, 1945 the law “which was self-explanatory as an act against the people” made it possible for anyone to be punished for anything.

The “Executioner’s Law”—Special Division of the People’s Courts

Providing a legal foundation for this was Law VII of 1946, which bore the title of “criminal law defending the democratic state order and republic.” It was enacted on 26 March, 1946 and transferred legal proceedings to the special division of the people’s court. This meant that political crimes independent of war crimes and crimes against the people were not given to the professional law courts, but to the special divisions of lay people’s courts. Dr. Dezső Sulyok called this law the executioner’s law. Experienced lawyers didn’t believe that

³² Margit Szöllőssy—Janze, 1991, pp. 327-328.

the defence of the republic and the state could be entrusted to party soldiers; that is why they rejected the bill. This was the reason Dezső Sulyok and his 20 colleagues were expelled from the Small-holders Party in March 1946.

“11. § (1) The judgment of the crimes defined in the current law in the people’s courts working in the headquarters of the Court of Appeals, according to paragraph (2) belongs to the sphere of authority of the five-member special division.

(2) The president of the special division (his deputy) is appointed by the Minister of Justice from the ranks of the trial judges; certain of its members (substitute members) are sent by the local organisations of the Independent Small-holders Party, The Hungarian Communist Party, the Social Democratic Party, and the National Peasant Party.”

The law determined both the crime (1-8.§) and its scale. The culpable were divided into two groups: those who had committed a crime and those who had committed an offence. Any act directed at overthrowing the democratic state or republic was a crime. Anyone who sought the life of the president of the republic, who assaulted him, or attempted to obstruct the president of the republic in the exercise of his functions, committed a crime. Included in this group were those who urged revolt or agitated against the democratic convictions of persons or groups. Anyone who made common cause with others in the commitment of any crime listed above was guilty of a crime. Anyone who endorsed a crime against the people, or who proclaimed falsehoods that were deleterious to the international reputation of the state, or who know about such acts, but didn’t report them was guilty of a crime.

Those culpable of crimes were punished with a minimum of five years’ forced labour, the maximum punishment was death or penal servitude for life. The minimum penalty for an offence was five years in prison, the maximum was a ten year sentence. In addition to the primary penalties, the secondary punishment was in every case the loss of position, and the suspension of political rights. An additional secondary penalty for persons convicted of crimes was expulsion from their place of residence,³³ If the person in question was a foreigner, he could be deported from the country and forbidden from returning for good. (10.§)

³³ “a Hungarian citizen could be expelled from the community where he presented a danger to the democratic state order, even if it was the condemned’s rightful domicile,” Law VII. of 1946 [10.§ (5)].

The real danger of the law was that it also regarded agitating as a criminal act. In Hungary we were forced to accept the social and political system of the occupying force, the Soviet Union, with the collaboration of the West, as the perfect manifestation of democracy, which was supported only by the Communist Party.³⁴

Based on Law VII of 1946, 12, 175 people were brought to the special divisions of the people's courts of Budapest, Debrecen, Győr, Pécs, and Szeged, of whom 5,861 people were sentenced,³⁵ Fifteen of the 25 people's courts had finished their work by January 1948. The People's Court of Budapest functioned until 31 October, 1949. The last people's court of Szeged finished its work on 1 April, 1950.

Those convicted of crimes and crimes against the people served their sentences, in vain because they were not allowed to start with a clean slate. Surveillance, arrests, and court trials continued well into the 1970s. In the 1960s, and even in the '70's, Mihály Soós could find examples of secret surveillance, both, in secret watching and open trials.³⁶

Not even those accused of war crimes and crimes against the people, and subsequently exonerated legally, could feel safe. They were subjected to daily harassment. On the secret instructions of the Minister of the Interior Ferenc Erdei, those legally exonerated by the people's courts could be interned for preventive purposes. In addition, according to Decree X of the people's court division of the Ministry of Justice, which was headed by István Ries, the exonerations had to be sent to the political police. The illegal practice emerged in which the verdicts of the people's courts could be countermanded by the police. Mária Palasik characterised this as a peculiar legal practice, since the ministerial decree provided the legal foundation. The National Division of the People's Courts of the second degree wished to end the immediate internment of those who had been legally exonerated. Their protests were unsuccessful, as were the protests in Parliament, that wished to annul the lawless political police actions and prevent new ones.³⁷ In addition to internment, the Law VII of 1946 provided a legal foundation that allowed them to be sentenced at any time.

³⁴ Károly Szerencsés, 2002, p. 43.

³⁵ Sándor Szakács—Tibor Zinner, 1997, p. 196.

³⁶ Mihály Soós, 2004, p. 85.

³⁷ Mária Palasik, 2000, p. 77; Ákos Major, 1988, p. 161.

The people's court trials made it possible for the Communists, who were in prominent posts at the most important ministries, to settle accounts with their political enemies by using the justice system. They destroyed the independence of the judiciary. They dismissed thousands of judges and replaced them with Party servants who had undertaken a "crash course". Equality before the law no longer existed, it was replaced by class judgement; that is, the family background of the accused was either a mitigating or an aggravating factor. "Class enemies" were given the heaviest punishments for the same acts. The defence of innocence ceased; an accusation without evidence or a "confession" forced out of the accused was enough.

Purging the Civil Servants. Screening Committees

Before the people's committees were officially established, the screening committees were set up, which functioned between 4 January, 1945 and 31 October, 1948. They were brought into being based on the mandate given them by the Provisional National Assembly, through Decree no. 15/1945 M.E. issued on January 4, 1945, entitled "Decree on screening public officials". Their function was to examine the political as opposed to the professional, that is, official, activities of public employees.³⁸

This decree was preceded by the local screening committees. These exceeded their sphere of authority and scrutinized even private employees, shop assistants, and soldiers, thereby foreshadowing the time when screening was required for virtually every employee.

It was the Communists who represented the highest proportion of representatives of the Provisional National Assembly. They considered the establishment of the "new democratic public administration" to be particularly significant; consequently, they made the demands of the Hungarian National Independent Front their own. They demanded that the administration, courts of law, and armed forces be purged of Arrow Cross, collaborators, and other "enemies of the people." The decree, which had been issued so quickly, ordered that anyone who had "offended against the interests of the Hungarian people" beginning with 1 September, 1939 could not be employed in public service.

³⁸ Public employees included employees of the state, the local authorities, local government, the administration of justice, public education or economic organisations.

This general wording, on the one hand, opened the way to innumerable abuses, and on the other, it deviated from the international resolutions in accordance with which individuals were made responsible for crimes against humanity.

Every official who had worked in the state, county, and local administration between 1939 and 1945, or had other public occupations had to put into writing the political activities they had engaged in during this time; in particular they had to include their behaviour in implementing the laws and decrees against the people. In the case of reporting false and missing data, they could be suspended from their job without compensation. The sheriff—as the representative of the county leadership—was responsible for implementing the procedures; he headed the seven-member screening committee in each district, which was composed of representatives of the five parties, a lawyer, and the representative of the responsible district office. At least eight days before the proceedings the president of the committee made public the list of names to be reviewed and informed the public that they had to report orally or in writing any activities they had engaged in that were against the people in the past or the present. In borderline cases, the witnesses that took the oath at closed hearings could be heard, could use written evidence, and set up hearings, since the committees functioned as courts of law. Officials against whom nothing could be brought up were “cleared”. In other cases, the penalties, depending on the seriousness of the crime included censure, transfer, failure to be promoted, demotion or deprivation of a position of leadership. Transfer or demotion could be appealed to the minister responsible.

In the course of the proceedings, it wasn’t the officials’ professional work, their personality, their actions or the measures they had brought that were investigated to see whether they were in accordance with the existing laws and/or requirements of humanity, but the reports or the information listed against them. Neither the veracity of the reports and data nor the credibility of the informer was investigated. The screening procedure was not public—whereas the actions of an official and their consequences could be evaluated only by those whom they affected. The legal foundation was ensured by the fact that it didn’t determine what kind of behavioural rules were transgressed when the individual violated the “interests of the people”; furthermore, the procedures for appeal were not regulated, nor was the time determined precisely when the screening committees should show up again. On the one hand, there wasn’t any legal security; on the other, the committees were often set up later, under pressure from above.

The organ of people's power, the Budapest National Committee, played a large part in the functioning of the screening committees, which for example, in spite of adhering to the decree literally, reviewed the powers invested in the sheriff. It arbitrarily extended the period of time to be examined to the official's entire political past. It tightened sanctions and recommended that the trade unions also be involved in the committees, as well as ensuring that the hearings be kept away from the public. Owing to the legal deficiencies, it was necessary to make innumerable changes in the decrees, complementing, appending, amending and correcting. Already in January 1945, Decree no. 77/1945 M.E. introduced the possibility of "temporary" identification in cases of missing documents and witnesses in which the data could not be reviewed.

The screening procedures coincided with preparations for the parliamentary elections of 1945. The parties would have liked to recruit as many members as possible, and the Communists, who had the fewest members, were at the head of the queue. They tried to obtain positions for their members in public administration at the expense of officials who had not been screened. A few political writers spoke up, saying that the parties should be careful, for the number of those, who had turned to the left in order to cover up past misdeeds was considerable.³⁹

The Communist press pressured the committees publicly to speed up the bureaucratic regulations and especially to increase the number of sanctions. They used the irregularities uncovered to extend the purging of Arrow Cross and collaborators from the state apparatus to the "reactionaries". The Communist Party launched a sharp attack on the "fascist reaction" at the national conference held on 20-21 May, 1945, while clinging to the screening committees. The powerful propaganda prevents us from getting a true picture of the proceedings and of those affected even to this day. One suspects that the political forces that were deemed awkward within and without the democratic camp were forced out of important positions. They had planned to finish the screening by 30 November, 1945, but if this was not possible, the committees were granted an extension until December 31. At the end of 1945 the work of the committees that had ceased to exist was taken over by the so-called permanent committees, which screened those who had returned from the West. Decree no. 10/1946 M.E. screened the civil servants who had been dismissed from their positions owing to the Soviet occupation,

³⁹ György Gyarmati, 2000.

the “westerners.” On 19 February, 1946, 33 “westerner” committees were in operation in Budapest. Forty-six thousand, four-hundred-fifty-one legally binding resolutions were issued up to 15 April, 1946; 41,060 (88.20%) persons were screened.

A summary of the work of the screening committees throughout the country has not yet been made public; we are aware only of the data involving Budapest. Until 10 January, 1946, 42,130 legally binding resolutions were issued, and close to 89% or 37,351 people were screened.

“As with the internments, and the screening, decisions concerning workers (that is in most of the cases, the “little Arrow Cross”) were favourable. From the outset only those were screened who had worked as managing directors, or held official positions; other working class persons were not to be screened.”⁴⁰

The National Committee of Budapest quarrelled for a long time over the screening of university professors. Their demands prepared a thoroughgoing modification of the decree on 2 May, 1945. Decree no. 1080/1945 M.E. set the standard for the concrete implementation of the screening procedure, since it determined the actions that “were injurious to the interests of the people”. Membership in a fascist party, supporting such a party or simply approving of its objectives, propaganda for entering the war, or agitating on the side of the Axis powers, incitement, as well as direct or indirect participation in preparing and implementing the anti-Semitic laws, were particularly egregious.

While the time-frame of review was limited, the number of institutions to be purged was increased, and included state-supported industrial and commercial enterprises and welfare institutions. At the same time, the trade unions kept their place and votes in the committees for which, in certain cases, the current national committee was also responsible.

The exact timing rendered the still public proceedings impossible. Contributing to this was a significant tightening of sanctions, which could include the withdrawal of pensions and dismissal without provision. In both cases, an appeal could be made to the people’s court of Budapest, but the appeal procedure, which two months later still wasn’t clear, had later required a supplementary decree to be issued. Decree no. 4080/1945 M.E. referred the judgement of appeals in cases to be screened to the people’s courts that were within the headquarters of the Courts of Appeal.

⁴⁰ Tibor Zinner, 2000.

Anyone who was dismissed was excluded from public service and could not assume important responsibilities even in the private sector. Even in well-founded cases, the screening committees could impose a sentence of internment. The May decree fundamentally regulated the purges in public administration, specified the facts of the case, and tightened the methods of procedure and sanctions based on the experience of the national committees and the Communist Party. Furthermore, it did not become clear what kind of penalty would follow what kind of activity against the people, so uncertainty continued to reign in legal practice.⁴¹

The significance of the Decree no. 1080/1945 of May was that it extended the pattern from public administration to other social areas. From May 1945 to January 1946, the screening requirement was expanded to include the liberal professions (doctors, veterinarians, pharmacists, engineers, journalists, actors)⁴² It was also required for lawyers, townclerks, merchants, and industrialists, the self-employed⁴³ and students; in addition, members and officials of sports associations and organisations.⁴⁴ In this the Budapest national committee, lead the way again; it hauled the employees of 25 banks and enterprises in April 1945 before the screening committees without any legal basis. In every case a partial or complete ban from profession or studies was expected, which also meant complete deprivation of every right and remuneration. In any event, the “anti-fascist principle” wasn’t damaged primarily in political practice but in the text of the decree, which defined certain occupations with respect to social requirements. Already in the case of censure, businessmen and industrialists lost their right to vote in their professional societies and organisations. Doctors, veterinarians, pharmacists, and engineers were banned from exercising their professions only in exceptional cases. They could be forced to take on menial and public service tasks for no remuneration.

⁴¹ **Margit Szöllősi—Janze**, 1991, pp. 336-337.

⁴² Decree no. 1146/1945 (and one complementing this 3140/1945) M.E. prescribed the screening of those intellectuals working in liberal professions (veterinarians, pharmacists, journalists, engineers, doctors, actors, etc.).

⁴³ Decree 6320/1945 extended the screening requirement to county, city and village employees, Decree no. 1410/1945 M.E. to lawyers, lawyer candidates, notaries public, (deputies), Decree no. 4100/1945 M.E. to managers of private enterprises.

⁴⁴ Decree no. 8500/1945 M.E. extended it to university and academy students, Decree no. 700/1945 to the members and officials of sport’s associations and leagues, Decree no. 3610/1946 M.E. and the right to use a pharmaceutical licence.

On the other hand, Decree no. 1048/1945 launched a new era in screening procedures. They accepted Rákosi's extremist, radical views and total lack of consideration for context. Those expectations first appeared through the decree, and they were later sanctioned by Law VII of 1946 that defended the Republic. The committees were forced to take assignments that diverged from their original objectives, and which they could not fulfill. This led to the idea of the B-list, the modified form of the screening.⁴⁵

In late October 1948 the screening committees were dissolved by decree. It is difficult to evaluate their activities as a whole. The ultimate goal of the procedures was undoubtedly to extend gradually "the screening to encompass the entire adult population." Beyond the power conflicts in the screening committees, the pressure behind the elections for National Assembly of 4 November, 1945 eased perceptibly, thereby losing their significance.

The material of the screening committees of Budapest is unprocessed. More than 131,000 resolutions were issued, but it is estimated that unprocessed documents could number several times this figure. We have processed data at our disposal about 52,116 (46,452 + 5.665) persons against whom proceedings were launched. Of these persons 88.5% were screened, of which 1,301 persons were dismissed from their jobs, 326 were pensioned off, 95 lost their licence. The case of 111 employees was transferred to the office of the Budapest People's Prosecutors. They ousted 1,833 people from their original occupation.⁴⁶

The B-Lists

The screening committees and The B-Lists became the means of the cleansing actions among officials.

The workers' parties were dissatisfied with the results of the screening procedures. This is why they implemented the so-called "B-lists" which reduced the number of civil servants, on the pretext that the procedures which attempted to liquidate the "remnants of fascism" were "futile". The national committees also took part in this activity at first, having been authorised to

⁴⁵ Tibor Zinner, 1985, p. 131.

⁴⁶ Tibor Zinner, 1983, p. 131.

render an opinion. The objective of workers' parties was not only to expel the members of the former regime from public life, who had taken the country into the war, but to dismiss from their jobs wide circle of those representing bourgeois views.

In the 1945 elections the Smallholders' Party won an absolute majority (57%), against the Communists (barely 17%), the Social Democrats (17.4%), and the Peasant Party (6.9%). After this, the purging of the public service sphere passed into another political dimension. The target groups, the methods and procedures changed, since in the view of the Communists, they hadn't achieved the desired result. After their electoral defeat, the Communists desired revenge, but at the same time they wanted power. Last but not least, they began to alter the political palette with the powerful assistance of Soviet advisors and began undermining the coalition.

On 1 March, 1946 Rákosi forwarded Gerő's letter to Ferenc Nagy, which fixed the reduction in staff in a particular way, so that the Communists could not give way. The letter ordered that a three-member committee be set up, in which, in addition to the Prime Minister and the competent ministers, the representatives of the Trade Union Council could take part, because only the "participation of the leaders of the organised working class could ensure a staff reduction that was democratic."⁴⁷ The democratic arrangement meant that the Communists could obtain for their increasing numbers of followers their longed-for steps. In addition to the already limited independence of judges, they asserted more intensely "class standpoints," with success.

The members of the B-list committees, who reduced the number of civil servants, didn't have to have political reasons: they could deprive any person whom they considered undesirable of their job and pension. The goal was to ensure jobs for those who were professionally mediocre, but politically reliable Communist cadres. In the course of the examination, they compiled three different kinds of lists: "A" = reliable, "B" = to be dismissed, but could be re-employed in a year, "C" = politically unreliable and not to be reinstated.

On 22 November, 1945 the Central Committee of the Communist Party already issued a "first plan" in which "right-wing" public officials and employees would have to be laid off based on the B-list. Even those who had been exonerated in the course of the screening and those who had only been censured, had to be dismissed. On the same day, Rákosi summed up the

⁴⁷ Tibor Zinner, 2005, pp. 274-275.

new strategy by saying that “the reactionaries had to be pensioned off first.” This political line was reinforced by the Political Committee on 31 January, 1946, claiming that the staff reduction was “urgently necessary” for financial reasons. At the same time, Rákosi ordered the new Communist Minister of the Interior, Imre Nagy, to increase the participation of the Party members in his Ministry and set up four so-called “mobile committees” to supervise the county governments. Vacancies in the lord-lieutenant offices had to be filled by Communists, Social Democrats, and members of the trade unions. The objective was obviously to launch a national campaign in which pressure could be exerted on the government, especially the small-holders. The slogan of the political police issued for 1946 meant that, after liquidating the Arrow Cross, they had to launch a pitiless battle against “reaction” too.⁴⁸

The Social Democrats and Small-Holders supported the idea of the B-list owing to the economic motive, although many of the officials were anxious about the measures to be introduced. Since the Small-holder Prime Minister approved the concept, the Small-holders, who at first rejected the idea, gave way, for they thought it a good idea to dismiss those professionally inexperienced officials who had obtained their jobs in public administration after 1945 through the pressure of the leftist parties.

This hope proved to be in vain, because at the Communists’ initiative the political alliance, the Leftist Bloc, was set up on 5 March, 1946, and it was operational until 1948. Its participants included the Hungarian Communist Party, the Hungarian Social Democratic Party, the National Peasant Party, and the Trade Union Council. According to the official reasons given, the Leftist Bloc’s goal was to harmonise the political struggles of the member organisations to preserve land reform, implement the nationalization programme, and to “purge” public administration.

The true goal of the Communists who were part of the government coalition was to destroy the largest government party with their “salami tactics”, as they had given the position of Prime Minister to the Independent Smallholders’ Party. The Leftist Bloc organised a mass demonstration in Budapest on 7 March, with the slogan, “Throw the enemies of the people out of the coalition!” At the same time as the demonstration, the Communists, who had infiltrated the Smallholders Party, made an unsuccessful attempt to organise the Party’s poor-peasant section at a meeting in Gyoma, in effect, trying to divide the

⁴⁸ Margit Szöllősi—Janze, 1991, p. 340.

party A week later under massive pressure, the Smallholders accepted the demands of the Leftist Bloc, and expelled 20 party members from the party.

The next important tactical step taken by the Communist Party was to replace Imre Nagy with László Rajk as Interior Minister on 8 March, 1946, which guaranteed their influence on the police, the press, the social organisations, and the local and regional governments.

After the reconciliation of the Smallholders with the Leftist Bloc on 12 March, 1946, the B-list draft bill was drawn up on the instructions of the Ministers of Justice and Finance. Nobody was happy with the bill. The parties of the Leftist Bloc were critical, because it removed the elected officials from the purges; the Smallholders because they considered it unprepared. In spite of this, the parties of the Leftist Bloc accepted Decree no. 5000/1946 M.E. on 19 May, 1946. The basic questions connected with the decree were asked by Imre Pálfi, B-list official, on August 5, 1945.

“Recommendation for the B-list.

I am convinced that the B-list will not be able to fulfill anybody’s expectations. The whole thing will turn into a political witch-hunt. It will cause individual and family tragedies, and most importantly, the country will see no real benefit from it. Partly because a series of serious mistakes will be made; furthermore, those who survive and stay on will think that they will be adequate in every respect. [...]”⁴⁹



*Portrait of Ferenc Nagy
Source Árpád Rácz*

⁴⁹ MOL XIX-A-1-b-1-d.

*The Budapest Body of District Leaders of the Independent Smallholders,
Agrarian Worker, and Bourgeois Party*

Budapest, 23 July, 1946

To Mr. Ferenc Nagy

Prime Minister of Hungary

National Party Leader

Budapest

"We have witnessed a great deal of abuse connected with the B-list; therefore, we ask that the B-list be suspended and ended as quickly as possible through decrees, and the dismissals be made null and void, that the abuses and irregularities perceived so far, and those that become public in the future be investigated, that [the perpetrators] be punished and finally that the basic decree too be amended in response to our petition.

We were shocked to see that in implementing the decree, instead of ensuring the proper political and economic standpoints specified in it, the objective of the executive organs was to annihilate the representatives of civic thought and to expel the members of our party from municipal and state administration."

Signed (by typewriter) District I, Gyula Dessewffy, II. Dr. Tamás Pásztor, III. Dr. Antal Zsóke, IV. Dr. János Bösze, András V. Balogh, VI. Dezső Németh, VII. Dr. Kálmán Saláta, VIII. Dr. József Senner, IX. Dr. Aladár Szellnár, X. András Denkő, XI. Dr. Ferenc Palimay, XII. Dr. Gyula Jármay, XIII. János Horváth, XIV. Mihály Babirák."⁵⁰

Several representatives objected that even 10% of the reduction prescribed would be detrimental to efficiency, as well as leading to individual and community tragedies. They also drew attention to the fact that the deficit couldn't be eliminated from one day to the next. In order to implement Decree no. 500/1946 and the amending decrees, the B-list department was set up by the Prime Minister to restore the equilibrium of the state budget.

A flood of petitions were submitted to Prime Minister Ferenc Nagy concerning the staff reductions ordered by the B-lists. Some of the petitions complained that only Smallholders' representatives and their sympathizers were listed or at least they formed the vast majority; the others described concrete violations of the law. I can cite a characteristic example. The

⁵⁰ MOL XIX-A-1-b- 1.d.

Smallholder Party's organisation in Sopron reported that only Smallholders Party members had lost their jobs.

On 17 August, 1946 the officials of the district of Zirc dealt in their petitions with the motives for the dismissals. According to Decree 2. §- point a) that an official with an anti-democratic attitude can be dismissed, according to point b) lack of aptitude and want of diligence is the reason for dismissal. Not in a single case did the criticised committee of Zirc justify its decision; it simply indicated Decree 2. §/points a) or b) as a reason. The Prime Minister was requested to make the members of the committee justify their claims with evidence, or to appoint a new impartial committee.

A memorandum dated 24 June, 1946 concerning the implementation of the decree that established the B-lists reached the Prime Minister. The last page of the memorandum is missing, so we don't know who the signatories were. The memorandum was entitled: "The workers' parties are preparing to take over public administration as a whole". They justified their allegations as follows: the Secretary-General of the Trade Union Council, István Kossa, explained the decree in a high-handed way; in his opinion the "workers' party had to achieve its goals" and the instrument for this was the B-list.

The situation that had emerged in the Ministry of the Interior was judged to be the most serious. It was their view that during the preparations the Minister of the Interior, László Rajk, had issued a decree unconstitutionally. Every county—with the exception of two—sent a Communist minister's commissar to prepare the B-list. The resolutions were forced through the National Committees. According to the reports of the provincial sheriffs, if they followed the Minister of the Interior's instructions, there would no longer be any bourgeois elements in public administration. All this related to the railroad, the post office, the OTI,⁵¹ MABI.⁵² The conclusion of the analysis was that a part of the bourgeois officials had left, another part had fallen by the wayside in the course of the screenings, the largest third part they intended to dismiss through the B-lists. The committee presidents were threatened by the political police to stop them from taking the commission. Attacks appeared in the press against the appointed presidents to provoke their dismissal.

⁵¹ OTI = Országos Társadalmbiztosítási Intézet [National Social Insurance Institute]

⁵² MABI = Magánalkalmazottak Biztosító Intézete [Private Employees' Insurance Institute]

FÜGGETLEN KISGAZDA-, FÖLDMUNKÁS- ÉS POLGÁRI PÁRT

SOPRON VÁROSI SZERVEZETE

SOPRON, DOMONKOS U. 13. — TEL.: 1253.

306/1946.

20.484/46

ME.

Miniszterelnök Ur!

A b-listázások során Sopron városában a városházi tisztviselők közül egyetlen egy tisztviselőt sem b-listáztak, aki a baloldali pártok tagja, hanem kizárólag kisgazdapárti tagjaink vesztették el állásukat.

Ezért tisztelettel arra kérjük Miniszterelnök Urat, mint pártunk vezérét, hogy a 10 % visszavételénél ne a megállapodás szerinti 60 %-os kwótát fogadjuk el, hanem a való helyzetnek megfelelően kizárólag kisgazdapárti tagok vétessenek vissza.

A megyei tisztviselői kar b-listázása során körülbelül 80 %-ban kisgazdapárti tagjaink kerültek b-listára és ezért kérjük, hogy ennek arányában történjék a 10 % visszavételénél az eljárás.

Amennyiben ~~ők~~ a fenti kéréseinket pártunk vezetősége keresztül tudná vinni, nagy megnyugvást váltana ki szervezeteinkben és fokozódna a párt iránti bizalom, amelynek emelése országunk jövője szempontjából felbecsülhetetlen értéket jelentene.

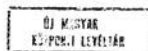
Hazafias tisztelettel:

Sopron, 1946. évi szeptember hó 17-én

Kunik
titkár. 27



Vas
elnök.



XIX-A-1-b-Vegyes-20484/1946.

(1.01)

Source: MOL XIX-A-1-b

The writers of the memorandum drew the Prime Minister's attention to the fact that there was a separate B-list. Some of the officials were interned or placed under police surveillance by the political police. The Communists immediately filled these positions with their own people. A few days later they retracted their decisions without giving a reason, but by then the representatives' positions were filled. Their restoration required long legal battles and by then the reviled official was without a job.⁵³

László Rajk sent the following instructions on 24 July, 1946 to all the lord-lieutenants, sub-prefects, and mayors of local governments. There could have been abuses committed in restoring those dismissed from their jobs or pensioned off, based on Decree no. 5000/1946 M.E. and the county, municipal and community employees restored to their positions by the Minister of the Interior.

"There were mistakes made through the above-mentioned procedures: even those employees against whom no criticism could be made, neither from the professional nor the political standpoint, were dismissed from their jobs as a result of the staff reduction."

*"In the course of staff reduction, I reserve for myself the right to restore to his position any official dismissed for whatever reason, or I delegate this right to my envoy, who is my proxy. Every measure, which has been brought or will be brought against my decree and Decree no. 8.100/1946 M.E., is at the outset null and void."*⁵⁴

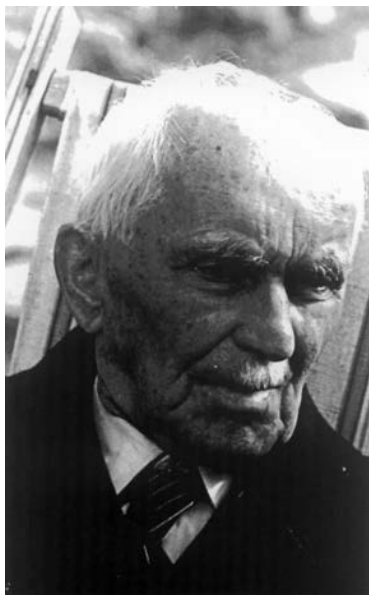
The B-listing of pensioners must definitely be mentioned. Decree no. 6800/1946 M.E. (14 June) extended the B-lists to pensioners in order to reduce the burden of the state. In connection to the decree, the national party director of the Small-holders Party asserted that "a pension was a right that cannot be withdrawn."⁵⁵ The decree is surprising because the ostensible objective was to "purge" public administration. The withdrawal of the pension of former officials meant that they were deprived of their livelihood, in fact, their right to life. This decree could not be appealed and a pension could be taken away without reason. This was justified by claiming that it "hurt the interests of the Hungarian people".

⁵³ MOL XIX-A-1-b-1.d.

⁵⁴ MOL XIX-B-1-c-3.d.

⁵⁵ MOL XIX-A-1-b-1.d.

The second volume of the book, *Families in Labour Camps* dealt with the withdrawal of district-notary of Zalabaksa János Kovács's pension after 38 working years.⁵⁶ It was enough for a worker from Csepel to inform on him for his pension to be withdrawn. He claimed that he had visited Kovács's home town Zalabaksa in 1943; he had said "we were weak and would lose the war." János Kovács was placed under police surveillance. After 1 July, 1942, the district-notary was not allowed to do his job.



János Kovács, district-notary of Zalabaksa
Source: Kliment family

When the residents of the district belonging to his sphere of authority learned about the withdrawal of his pension, the leaders and residents of the five districts signed a writ saying that all his life János Kovács had acted in accordance with the interests of the Hungarian people. They backed this by listing all that he had done as district-notary. The testimony of the Csepel worker nullified these facts. When the 74-year-old district-notary tried to appeal, they responded by saying that he should work ten more years and when he was 84-years-old he would get his old-age pension.

⁵⁶ **Zsuzsa Hantó**, 2007, pp. 107-114.

The Withdrawal of Ferenc Zsindely's Old-Age Pension

Ferenc Zsindely's old-age pension was also stopped. His fate was extraordinary because he and his wife Klára Tüdős had saved the lives of thousands of persecuted people at the end of the war, including László Rajk, László Piros, István Kovács, and Antal Apró. They received food, clothing, and a roof over their heads with the Zsindely family. Antal Apró's wife, two children, as well as Sándor Gáspár's wife were in the villa when the Soviet troops entered the country. Their past in the resistance saved the Zsindely family from expulsion, but they still got onto the list, in spite of the fact that they had given the villa where they had saved so many of the persecuted to the Protestant church. So they had neither property nor an anti-democratic past. Bishop László Ravasz could help the Zsindely couple, whose villa appeared in the landed property register as donated to the church, only by giving it back to their original owners, so that in exchange for giving it to the AVH they got permission to move away from the capital.



*The home of Zsindely family
Istenhegyi street 92-94
Source: Eszter Dizseri, 1994*

That was how they were able to go to Balatonlelle, as tenants in the summer home of a lawyer. They were able to pay rent only for a short time, for in January of 1952 Ferenc Zsindely's pension was stopped.

That was when Klára Zsindely turned to Klára Apró for help.

“Dear Klári,

I feel like a ghost who is knocking on the window of her nearest and dearest.

I will write in a telegraphic style about what has happened to us. The Ministry of the Interior mitigated our deportation to freedom to move, together with my brother-in-law László and his family. With his two sons (both schoolboys) there are four of them, and now that my mother has died recently, there are just the two of us, Feri and I. We obtained a post as house-porters in Lelle so that we could all come down together. László was a public administration judge; his pension was stopped on 1 November. Feri suffered a terrible heart attack on 1 February. The OTI sent him to the Hajnal Clinic. On examination, it was found to be a heart thrombosis. He was transferred to the Bajcsy-Zsilinszky hospital for a cure of digitalis. He is currently being treated there. The villa where we live now was nationalized the day before yesterday. I hope this will not make us homeless. The post brought a notice informing us that Feri would no longer be receiving his pension. I am enclosing a copy. He is past 60 and very frail. Until now he was a diligent gardener, but unfortunately, his heart problem has made this impossible. I am 56 years old, I am very tired

Balatonkúri 1952. II. 22.

Kedves Kéari.

Úgy érzem magam mint a kísértet aki éjjelkor az
őveinek ablakán kopog.

Amióta utójára találgasztunk sürgöny stílusban le-
írom ami belünk történt: Kitelepítésünkkel a Belső-
minioner szabad elköltözésre engedélyezte, László sógo-
komékkal együtt. Ők a két fiával /iskolások/ négyen
barnák s mi férivel ketten mert elválásunk után
eddigyám röviddel meghalt. Sellen egy villában
kapotunk hárfelügyelettel úgy, hogy mindnyájan
lejöhetünk együtt. László közgazdasági bíró volt,
nyugdíjjal nov. 1 - től bevonultunk. Féri bácsi febru-
ár elején egy sörmű rovrohamot kapott. Ötöd-
ikén az ősi beutalta a Haynal Klinikára. A mis-
gálal szívrombósisát állapított meg. Digitális
kurára álltak a Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Kórházba
ahol most kezelik. Tegnapelőtt átköltöztették a
villába ahol lakunk, ami reméljük, hogy nem
tesz bennünket újra kontalanokká. A mai pos-
tával megjön Féri bácsi nyugdíjának megörün-
tetéséről az értesítés, melynek másolatát ide
mellékelem. Ő csupán 60 éves és nagyon meg-
pohkiant. Eddig sorjalmatlan kerítéskedő,
de sajnos a szívével és mostmár nem meg-
én 56 éves vagyok, nagyon elfáradtam s a

XIX-A-2-98-XXIII-1952

Magyar Országos
Levélár

(31. d.)

and the day labour, which is the only work I could get, is too much for me. When we left our old home I gave penniless young couples everything I had. Thus, our economic situation is that of the proverbial church mouse.

I don't know, Klári, whether you are willing and able to help us.

I would not have knocked on your door for petty reasons, and even so I wouldn't have, except for Feri's illness. But I had to try and see if you still remember us.

I embrace you together with Tóni.

Klára"

naprános munkát amit talán kaphatnék, nek
katonáknak. Amikor régi otthonunkat elhagytuk
mindenemet fél ajándékosztam miniregen fiatal
pároknak. Nagyon helyesünk tehát a templom
egyerével azonos.

Nem tudom Kéari tudtok é és akarok é raj-
tunk segíteni?

Kissé elcsúszott nem kiegészítettem volna a k
kor sem, ha Kéari bácsi nem beteg, de így meg
kellott próbálnom, hogy hátha emlékeztek
még ráuk.

Szeretettel ölel. Lóival együtt

Kéara néni.

The background to the request, “if you are willing and able to help us”, lies in the stormy events of late 1945 about which Klára Tüdös and Klára Apró wrote the following:

“The cacophonous change of situation and atmosphere is not only impossible to describe, but cannot even be rendered perceptible, as we were tossed about by these stormy events, when Miklós Somogyi, Imre’s older brother, brought to our house two young women with two small children. Apparently, they had been bombed out. I had a feeling that this wasn’t true, but by that time I wasn’t about to ask anyone about anything. I sensed that they were illegal Communists. I had a funny feeling as if someone were watching me, waiting for my decision. A quiet voice somewhere inside me whispered that the two women and two small children should stay... One of the young women, a pale, sweet-faced young woman was called Klári, the other Lidi. An hour later Ilonka brought the regulation police form, which signified legality and perhaps even life for some. It was cheating, of course it was cheating, but not only did my conscience not trouble me, but something warm filled my heart when I looked into Klári’s shining tear-filled eyes. A few such underhanded things weighed on us, but Ferenc Zsindely’s⁵⁷ back and name shielded the residents of the house for the time being...Klári’s husband visited her often, he brought friends too, but I took no notice of them. He said he was a construction worker, which I believed seriously, and asked him to cut out a hole for the stove, for we wanted to turn the garage into a room. The hole for the stove turned out badly, which reinforced my suspicion that the man was hardly a construction worker... Only after the siege did I find out my peculiar guests’ name. The little woman with the sweet face said she was Mrs. Antal Apró, but that didn’t mean much to me, because at that time I didn’t know who Antal Apró⁵⁸ was. Perhaps he himself didn’t really know either. The other young woman was Lidi Gáspár.⁵⁹

“What on earth gave me the idea to turn to a Horthyist minister at the end of 1944 for refuge? There is a story behind this. Klára Tüdös greeted us. After the accession to power of the Szálasi government [Arrow Cross], although Klára

⁵⁷ **Ferenc Zsindely:** lawyer, writer, minister, He was Minister of Commerce for the Kállay government from March 29, 1943 to March 22, 1944.

⁵⁸ **Antal Apró:** Communist politician. In early 1952 he was Minister of Construction Materials.

⁵⁹ **Sándor Gáspár’s** wife. Sándor Gáspár, who had only six years of elementary school education, was deputy secretary general of SZOT between 1952 and 1957. Later he became its president.

Tűdős knew who we were, she said openly that they were anglophiles, they hated the Germans, and they weren't as hopeful about the Russian liberation as we were. I opened my heart to her forever for her honesty. But also for other characteristics. She cared about everyone; she created a friendly atmosphere, which I have never experienced since. She knew that my friends visited us illegally (László Rajk, Gábor Péter,⁶⁰ István Kovács)⁶¹ [stress Zs. H.]. They slept there often.⁶² She told me I could take them Zsindely underwear and she gave me the keys to the pantry so I could take them food.”⁶³

“National Pension Institute

Bp. Guszev u.10-12

81/1952. –E

I inform you that from the first of March I am stopping your pension in accordance with Decree no. 4.400/1974 M.E..

You can appeal against this within 30 days if you have an adequate reason.

The appeal must be sent in writing by mail.

Budapest, 20 February, 1952.

Gyula Fodor s.k.

President”⁶⁴

Antal Apró did not dare make a decision by himself and wrote a letter to István Kovács.

⁶⁰ **Gábor Péter**: Communist politician, head of the PRO, AVO, later AVH.

⁶¹ **István Kovács**: First secretary of the Budapest Party Committee up to 1956. Between 1 March, 1951, and 28 June, 1953, he was member of the PB [Party Committee].

⁶² It is an important historical fact that on October 3, 1956, the committee included **Antal Apró**, **Sándor Gáspár**, and **István Kovács**, set up to bury Rajk and his executed comrades.

⁶³ **Eszter Dizseri**, 1994, p. 168.

⁶⁴ MOL XIX-A-2-gg.—XXIII-1952. 31.d.

Kovács István Elvtársnak!
M.D.P. Központ.

Tudom sok dolgod van, de a mellékelt levelet olvasd át. Zsindelyné, akit Te is ismersz, azt kéri tőlünk, hogy férje kapja vissza a nyugdíjat, amit most vesznek el tőle. A szabadsághegyi villájából tavaly lett kitelepítve. Balatonlellén házmasterkedik. Mivel 44.-ben sokat segített bennünket, úgy gondolom folyósítani kellene számára a nyugdíjat. De szeretném véleményed megtudni mielőtt az ügyben intézkednénk.

Zsindelyné levelét mellékeljük.

Elvtársi üdvözzlettel:

Apró Antal
Építőanyagipari miniszter.

Magyar Országos
Levéltár

XIX-A-2-gg-XXIII-1952.

(31. d.)

"To Comrade István Kovács
M.D.P.[Hungarian Workers' Party] Headquarters

I know you are very busy, but please read the attached letter. Mrs. Zsindely, whom you too know, asks that her husband's pension, which they have just taken away, be restored. They were thrown out of their villa on Szabadsághegy last year. She is a house- porter in Balatonlelle. Since they helped us a great deal in 1944, I think that he should continue to receive his pension. I would like to know your opinion before I do anything about this case.

Please find attached Mrs. Zsindely's letter.

Comradely greetings

Antal Apró

Minister of Construction Material

[handwritten in red] I recommend that you do not do anything!!

11/26

Kovács⁶⁵

⁶⁵ MOL XIX-2-gg. - XXIII-1952.31.d.



Mrs. Zsindely, Klára Tüdős.
The pottery of Judith Józsa

Klára Tüdős wrote the following about the events following the stopping of the pension.

“For a time, by some miracle Ferenc continued to receive his pension, then it was as if someone remembered us and they took ours away too. The two elderly Zsindelys looked for work, but only Laci managed to get a job in a restaurant. They didn’t hire my husband even as a road sweeper, so we were deprived of any means of earning a living. I learned to ask for our daily bread. I asked and God gave more than I asked for. As the crows fed Elias, the yellow and pink money orders fed us.

And what moving messages were written on them. I used to earn a great deal of money and I gave to many people easily and generously. Then when it turned out that I had to accept the forints and packages of poor people, my heart sank, and it was very difficult for me. My wise husband said: It is written, it is better to give than to receive. But who are you to always have the better part? I understood. For the rest of my life.”⁶⁶

“When we were deported and our pension taken away, Kodály⁶⁷ and Palló⁶⁸ paid year’s rent for us.”⁶⁹


⁶⁶ Eszter Dizseri, 1994, p. 61.

⁶⁷ Zoltán Kodály: Composer, Musicologist, Music Teacher.

⁶⁸ Imre Palló: Kossuth-Prize winning opera singer. Kodály wrote his opera “Székely-fonó” [Székely Spinner] for him.

⁶⁹ Eszter Dizseri, 1994, p. 61.

Personal registry sheet of Ferenc Zsindely

Személyi törzslap				Állandó		Időleges	
				Férfi	Nő		
1. Családi és utónév: ZSINDELY FERENC EMIL							
2. Előző (leánykori) neve:				3. Családi állapota: házas			
4. Születés	helye: SZABOLCS		ország: Magyarország				
	idője: 1891. évi december		hónap: 22				
5. Állás, foglalkozása: nyugdíjas		6. Iskolai végzettsége: 8. osztály		7. Állampolgársága: magyar			
8. Anyja leánykori neve: WUNSCH MARIKA							
9. Anyja családi és utónéve, születési helye: Stimonyi János községe							
10. Munkahely	megnevezése:						
	címe:						
város		ker.		út		hsz.	
község		járás		település		szám	
11. Szakképzettség:				12. Munkakönyv száma: Nincs			
13. Családi és utónév: Tóth Klára Ernőné							
14. Foglalkozás: háztartás							
15. Születés	helye: Magyarország		ország: Magyarország		város: 1891. évi júli 20 nap		
	idője: 1891. évi júli 20 nap		hónap: 20				
16. Házasság		kötés helye: Budapest		város: 1938. évi júli 6 nap		hónap: 6	
17. Állandó lakás:		Jelenleg: Budapest		város: 1938. évi júli 6 nap		hónap: 6	
1938-ban: Budapest		város: 1938. évi júli 6 nap		hónap: 6		hónap: 6	
1948. 1. hó 1-én: Budapest		város: 1948. évi júli 6 nap		hónap: 6		hónap: 6	
18. Volt-e 1948. előtt külföldön: igen		19. Hol: Budapest		20. Milyen: hivatalos kiutazás			
21. Katonai szolgálatot teljesített-e: igen		22. Katonai igazolvány száma:		23. Rendfokozata: Poladusgy			
Kelet: Budapest 19. év nap.							
személyi törzslapot kiállító aláírása: K. Zsindely							
sajátkezű aláírás: K. Zsindely							

Source: ÁBTL 2.5.6. – 80/30



Ferenc Zsindely and Klára Tüdös

Of the Communists that the Zsindely couple helped and saved, László Rajk was no longer alive. He was executed on 15 October, 1949. László Piros lost his position. The others were gripped with fear with no illusions. They were afraid of each other and didn't even help each other. Why would they have done otherwise for the sake of a couple of "class enemies" expelled from Budapest? Let us remember the "comrades'" behaviour toward László Rajk and his accused comrades. For example, Pál Justus⁷⁰ who was condemned as defendant no. VIII. of the Rajk case. His best friend, Zoltán Horváth, was chief editor of *Népszava* [The People's Voice]. After Pál Justus became director of the Radio, Rákosi hinted that he would like him to be Minister of Education. Thereupon his best friend wished to publish Pál Justus's bad poems in the political column of *Népszava*, which had been rejected by György Faludy, the literary editor. Zoltán Horváth learned of Pál Justus's arrest when the poems had already been included in the political column. He removed them, destroyed every document, and even refused to see his friend's wife. When a collection was organised in *Népszava* for Mrs. Justus, he said:

⁷⁰ **Pál Justus** (Pécs, 7 April, 1905.—Temesvár, 28 Dec., 1965) sociological writer, poet, and literary translator. He was accused no. VIII of the Rajk case of 1949, whom the members of the special counsel of the People's Court, led by Counsel President, Dr. Péter Jankó, sentenced to a lifetime in prison. He was released in 1955.

*“There are some among us who are interpreting social humanism in the wrong way. These deluded comrades, driven by false sentimentality, organised a collection a few hours ago for the wife of a traitor. Let me state, clearly and unequivocally, comrades: a traitor has no wife, a traitor has no children, a traitor has no family”*⁷¹

*Mrs. Schiffer Klára Szakasits, behaved in a similar way: “After Rajk’s arrest, they took Edit’s husband away too. Mrs. Justus then called me on the phone, looking for her husband. I answered curtly, giving evasive answers.”*⁷² She showed no compassion; in fact, she was outraged that the traitor’s wife should call her on the phone. She reassessed her behaviour only when she too was deported, her husband and father were arrested and her former friends reacted to her phone call as she had done to Edit Justus’s call.⁷³

The Zsindely couple lived in Baltonlélle till the death of Ferenc Zsindely, 1963. During that time they were under police surveillance.

Ferenc Koszorús: “A Hero of the Hungarian Holocaust”

Hungary was the only country in Europe under German occupation that deployed regular armed forces to save Jewish

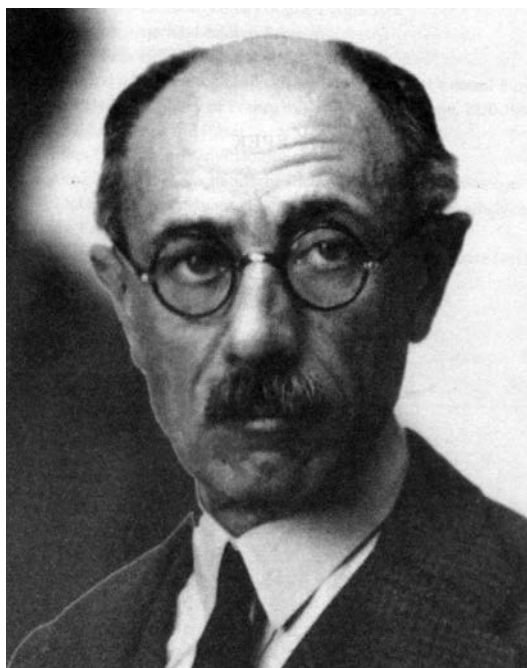
In addition to the examples mentioned above, I would like to show how the relationship between power and civil society basically determines the conduct of individuals and communities by reporting how masses of people were rescued during an earlier period. The Zsindely couple who rescued even Communists, saved the persecuted in the country that was occupied by foreign troops and the allied Germans. The government of the time and the Regent took part in the battle against the “allied occupiers,” showing an example

⁷¹ György Faludy, 1987, pp. 289-290.

⁷² Mrs. Schiffer, Klára Szakasits, 1987, p. 328.

⁷³ In the interests of the truth, however, it must be said that after the death of Ferenc Zsindely in April of 1963, Klára Apró arranged for Klára Tüdös to get an apartment in the XIth district of Budapest, and enabled her to visit her daughter in Australia.

for humane conduct and patriotism. Pál Teleki⁷⁴, during his second term as Prime Minister (1939—1941), initiated the illegal Hungarian Independence Movement (MFM [HIM]) whose leader was Domokos Szent-Iványi⁷⁵, to fight against the official foreign policy of his government and against the ruling ideology of a supposedly friendly country. He could do this only with the assistance of trustworthy colleagues.⁷⁶



Portrait of Pál Teleki
Source: Bálint Török, 2004

⁷⁴ Dr, széki **Count Pál Teleki** (Count of the Holy Roman Empire) (Budapest, 1879, November 1.—Budapest, 1941, April 3.) Prime Minister, geographer, university professor, landowner in Transylvania, politician, (honorary) head scout.

⁷⁵ **Domokos Szent-Iványi** (Budapest 1898, April 28—Heidelberg 1980, July 19) He obtained his doctorate from the faculty of law at Pázmány Péter University. He completed his studies in diplomacy at the Ecole des Sciences Politiques in Paris, then studied administrative law in the US. At the urging of Professor Pál Teleki he changed from a scientific career to a diplomatic one. He led the Orientation class of his Professor Pál Teleki, and headed the cultural department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1941 to 1942, he was deputy head from January 1 on of the Bailing-Out office, on 22 September, 1944 he became member of the armistice community. He was arrested in the communal case on 24 December, 1946.

⁷⁶ **Bálint Török**, 2004, p. 47, **István Csicsery-Rónay**, 1999



Portrait Domokos Szent-Iványi
Source: Bálint Török, 2004

“If we wish to characterise the programme of the Hungarian Independence Movement, we could summarise it as follows: its core was made up of socially progressive intellectuals who gathered around Pál Teleki, and were in total agreement with him, except with regard to the extent and rhythm of domestic social reforms. They saw Hungary’s future as lying not with the Germans but with the great democracies, and already considered the Yugoslav events, and even more the declaration of war against the Russians and the Anglo-Saxons, which was diametrically opposed to Teleki’s foreign policy (neutrality at all costs), as catastrophic.”⁷⁷

At the time 825,000 Jews lived in Hungary’s territory, 725,000 professing the Israelite faith, and 100,000 more, who, based on the race laws, were classified as Jews.⁷⁸ Before the German occupation of March 19, 1944, Hungary was an island of security in Europe for Jews. That was what Professor Namier, leader of the Jewish Agency said to Randall British Foreign Chancellor.

“Namier of the Jewish Agency told me yesterday that his people were most seriously concerned at the possible consequences to the 800,000 Jews, who now

⁷⁷ István Csicsery-Rónay, 2002, pp. 242-244.

⁷⁸ Gyula Juhász, 1988, p. 413, Szabolcs Szita, 2002

enjoy comparative security in Hungary, of any premature desertion of Germany by the Hungarian Government. The Jews here, he said, felt that Germany could not possibly tolerate Hungarian defection and as long as the German army was in position to react, would answer such a move by the Hungarian Government by German occupation of the country, the result of which would be extermination of the most important body of Jewry left in Europe. I said that this possibility was already being put forward in public (e.g. an article in the current "Tablet") as a reason for Hungary not making any premature move to the Allied side.

Professor Namier said that the only hope is for, as far as the Jews are concerned, was that the Hungarians would choose not to move until it was practically certain that the Germans would not be able to react.

*A.W.S. Randall*⁷⁹

The same danger threatened the cream of the positive part of Hungarian society, and as it turned out, it was justified.

The government led by Miklós Kállay and Regent Miklós Horthy successfully opposed the German's demand that Hungary hand over her Jewish population to Germany. The "shuttlecock policy" of the Kállay government and his attempts at approaching the western powers aroused the disapproval of the German leadership. Pogroms and atrocities against Jews did not take place in Hungary up to 1944, in contrast with Romania, Yugoslavia, Slovakia, where the deportations were already underway already in 1941 and 1942. As a result 70,000 Jews escaped into Hungary from the neighbouring countries. A minority of the refugees could move freely about the country, the majority were put into camps and institutions maintained by the Israelite Religious Community and the Office Protecting Hungarian Israelites.⁸⁰ After the German occupation, however, the atrocities began here too. Our compatriots of Jewish descent were forced into ghettos, and Jews in the countryside were deported beginning with the middle of May.

"After the occupation, other groups more radical than the Pál Teleki Work Group and the young populists known as the Student Resistance, joined the Hungarian Independence Movement. The latter joined with the former, and considered the

⁷⁹ Situation in Hungary: position of Jews. Notes of the British Foreign Office of October 14, 1943. Public Record Office 371, Hungary, 34498/C 12035.

⁸⁰ János Gyurgyák, 2001, pp. 168-169.

*Smallholders' Party as the vehicle of achieving a just Hungarian policy toward the peasants, rather than the National Peasant Party which represented a sort of peasant romanticism, or rather was chiefly headed by cryptoCommunists. Returning to the deportations: Géza Soós managed to obtain the so-called Auschwitz reports...he had them translated and distributed...However, it was only possible to act after June 6th, when, owing to the landing in Normandy, the German troops in Hungary had to be sent west...The deportations were stopped, based on the decision taken at the Crown Council. Eichmann did not accept this, and Baky and company planned to execute a coup d'état. Seven gendarme battalions surrounded Budapest. Szent-Iványi tried to solve this last issue. There was an armoured division around the region of Esztergom, whose existence they had managed to keep secret from the Germans. This division was supposed to stand at the disposal of the Regent at the moment of the defection. I was present when the decision was made whether to keep them hidden until they had to be deployed, or to block the planned mass deportation. Of course, we decided the latter.*⁸¹

In the interests of keeping the action objective and factually accurate for posterity, I cite the words of Ferenc Koszorús.



*Portrait of Ferenc Koszorús
Source: Jr. Ferenc Koszorús*

⁸¹ István Csicsery-Rónay, 2002, p. 242-244.

“In order to understand the events described here it must be known that Hitler asked the most important political (with the exception of Prime Minister Kállay) and military leaders (including the Hungarian Head of State) to come to the German general headquarters “in order to discuss the return home of Hungarian troops” and they went. On March 19, 1944, he occupied Hungary militarily when it was bereft of its supreme leaders. The reason for this occupation was that the Hungarian government had put out special feelers to make a separate peace, and the fact that, in defiance of Hitler’s demands, Hungary had not deported the Jews as all the neighbouring states without exception had done a long time ago.

The German Gestapo (Winkelmann) arrested and imprisoned the anti-Nazi and patriotic Hungarian politicians, representatives, generals, and installed agents to oversee Parliament, they reinforced the Hungarian Nazi Party, and did everything in their power to put them into power and began deporting the Jews, and expropriated the larger factories and plants.

It was under these circumstances that on the evening of July 2, 1944 I accidentally met Lieutenant-General Károly Lázár from Csáktapolcza, Commanding Officer of the Guards, along the banks of the Danube. Lázár told me that László Bakó, encouraged by Veessenmayer and Winkelmann, wanted to overthrow the current state system, and set up an Arrow-Cross regime, to which he was recruiting, organizing, and equipping troops with German help. Without pondering for long, I asked Lieutenant-General Lázár to report immediately to the Regent, as I would remove the “gendarmes” battalions by force if I were ordered to do so.

The next day, on July 3rd, I was ordered by the Regent via Lieutenant-General Lázár to prepare the operation within a few days. I informed only the head of the general staff of my cadre, István Belezna, Major of General Staff. Otherwise, I started the preparations...

On July 3 in the late afternoon hours I went to the troops of the first armoured division, first of all to Esztergom, where I spoke to the commissioned personnel of the tank regiment and reconnaissance battalion ordered there, especially to their outstanding commanding officers, Vitéz Colonel Zoltán Balló and Lieutenant-Colonel Imre Németh...

That very night I drafted and submitted a detailed report in writing of the steps I had taken to attack and close down Budapest.

At 22h30 on July 5 an officer of the Guard reported to me that the Regent had summoned me. I got into an automobile and within minutes appeared

at the Castle of Buda. The Regent received me in the presence of Lieutenant-General Lázár and informed me personally that Baky and company wished to carry out their coup d'état and take power by force on July 6. Then having listened to my report and recommendations, the Regent personally ordered me to drive Baky's "gendarmarie battalions" from Budapest within a short a time as possible with the parts of the first armoured division that I had made ready, and prevent them by force if necessary from carrying out their coup d'état. Upon receiving this order, I reported to the Regent the preliminary steps I had taken, then I informed him of my plan of execution. The Regent agreed and approved my plan.

On July 6, after inspecting my troops, and speaking with the commanding officers, I sent a patrol officer to László Baky at seven o'clock in the morning. Through this patrol officer, I made Baky understand that I was standing here with the first armoured division and had the highest orders to force him out. Through this delegated authority I again ordered Baky to evacuate within 24 hours his "gendarmarie battalions" from Budapest. I would see to it that this order was executed, and insofar as he was reluctant to carry it out, I would implement the evacuation by force...

The next day, on the morning of July 7, Baky began the evacuation of his battalion from Budapest. It seems that the occupying German leadership thought it better to comply. By noon of the 8th, Budapest was evacuated; when I was convinced that this was done, I withdrew the excellent troops to their garrison and reported to the Regent that his order had been executed."⁸²

Representative Tom Lantos⁸³ commemorated this heroic deed in 1994 at the 50th anniversary of the deportation of the Hungarian Jews in his speech to the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C.

"This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Hungarian Holocaust. I rise today to recognize one of the great heroes of the Hungarian Holocaust, Ferenc Koszorús, who at great personal sacrifice to his own life, saved thousands of Hungarian Jews from deportation to Nazi death camps.

⁸² **Ferenc Koszorús**, 1987, pp. 54-62.

⁸³ **Thomas Peter Lantos** (February 1, 1928—February 11, 2008) [1] was a Democratic member of the United States House of Representatives from 1981 until his death, representing the northern two-thirds of San Mateo County and a portion of southwest San Francisco. Lantos had announced in early January 2008 that he would not run for re-election because of cancer of the esophagus [2][3] but died before finishing his term. Lantos served as the chairman of the United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Lantos was the only Holocaust survivor to have served in the United States Congress.



Portrait of Tom Lantos

During the turbulent time in the summer of 1944, advancing Allied forces were closing in on Berlin while Hitler was racing to implement the final solution, the destruction of the Jewish race. There were many acts of heroic compassion and humanitarianism during this period. I would like to recount the story of Col. Ferenc Koszorús, one of the most remarkable examples of bravery and courage of the time. By June 1944, the Nazis had incarcerated and liquidated most of the Jewish population of Europe. In the capital of Hungary, Budapest, there remained approximately 250,000 Jews still alive. Budapest was still under the control of the Hungarian police force. The Nazis believed that this force was not ruthless and brutal enough to deal adequately with the complete destruction of the remaining large Jewish population of Budapest.

Ferenc Koszorús was a colonel in the Hungarian Army in charge of the First Magyar Armored Division stationed in and around Budapest. He learned that László Baky, Secretary of State and director of all security forces, with the exception of the army, had planned a coup d'état to install a police force completely subservient to the Nazis. They would see to it that Hungary was purged of all remaining Jews.

With the help of the Gestapo, Baky formed several battalions of "gendarmarie" forces loyal to him. Orders from the Regent to disband the gendarmerie went unheeded. Colonel Koszorús controlled the last remaining active army unit in

Hungary. At a time when few others would stand up to the Nazi occupation, Colonel Koszorús took the initiative to resist.

Realizing the severity of the situation, Colonel Koszorús consulted with the Regent and began preparations of his own to stop Baky and the gendarmerie battalions. On July 5, 1944 at 11:30 p.m. Colonel Koszorús ordered the units of the 1st Armored Division to take up positions at strategic points in Budapest, sealing off all roads leading into the city. By 7:00 a.m. on July 6, 1944 all the units were in place and Colonel Koszorús informed Baky that if his gendarmerie did not leave and disband they would be destroyed. On July 7, 1944 Baky capitulated and evacuated his forces. Colonel Koszorús's unparalleled action was the only case known in which an Axis power used military force for the purpose of preventing the deportation of the Jews. As a result of his extraordinarily brave efforts, taken at great risk in an extremely volatile situation, the eventual takeover of Budapest by the Nazis was delayed by 3 ½ months. This hiatus allowed thousands of Jews to seek safety in Budapest, thus sparing them from certain execution. It also permitted the famous Raoul Wallenberg, who arrived in Budapest on July 9, 1944, to coordinate his successful and effective rescue mission.

In October 1944, after the Germans had taken Budapest, Colonel Koszorús was forced into hiding to avoid certain execution by the Gestapo. While alive, colonel Koszorús never received recognition of his actions. In 1991, Ferenc Koszorús was posthumously promoted to the rank of general by the Hungarian Government. His memory is honored by a plaque placed in the famous Dohány Street Synagogue in Budapest.⁸⁴

Therefore, it is with great honor and pride that I rise today in recognition of the valiant, patriotic efforts of Ferenc Koszorús. Many thousands of families are alive today as a result of the heroic actions of one man who stood up for his beliefs in a very uncertain and dangerous time. His loyalty to his country and love of humanity are an inspiration to all who struggle against oppression and the vile bigotry of racism. Too often the efforts of those who struggled against the Nazi oppression go unrecognized. This year, the 50th anniversary of the Hungarian Holocaust, the world reflects on the lessons learned. I am proud to honor Colonel Koszorús, a patriot, a humanitarian, and a hero.”⁸⁵

⁸⁴ The commemorative plaque is on the wall of the house opposite the synagogue—H.Zs.

⁸⁵ **Ferenc Koszorús: A Hero of the Hungarian Holocaust.** In: Congressional Record, May 26, 1994.

This operation managed without bloodshed to save for a few months the largest surviving Jewish community in Europe. Represented in this operation were the Regent, a high-ranking military officer, the entire officer staff of a division, and the troops who carried out the orders in a disciplined fashion, that is the Hungarian people. The Koszorús operation⁸⁶ gave the Jews of Budapest hope and life until the Arrow Cross coup d'état. The operation proved that the occupiers could not manage to deport hundreds of thousands without the support of the Hungarian administration.

Adolf Eichmann,⁸⁷ the main organiser of the deportation of the Hungarian Jews, remembers the Koszorús operation at his 1961 trial in Jerusalem:

“The action of Horthy and the Hungarian Army was the single and only occasion in the Europe occupied by Hitler—when an ally of Germany supplied its army for the rescue of Jews. I held this unbelievable on hearing it. I thought I am dreaming or that it is false information. Alas, Géza Lakatos⁸⁸ forced me a few weeks later to leave Hungary.”

The success of the operation proved to have a good effect on the resistance movement too, for it demonstrated that it was possible to act in social dimensions. László Ocskay, captain in the Hungarian Army, as the leader of the “Clothes-Collecting Labour Company” offered protection to inmates of labour camps and their families in the Jewish Gymnazium of Abonyi Street (today the Miklós Radnóti ELTE Normal Grammar School (attached to a teacher-training college). He saved 2500 persecuted men, women, and children. Ocskay worked together with Raoul Wallenberg.

Rezső Kasztner, a journalist and lawyer, was one of the responsible leaders of the Budapest Aid and Rescue Committee. He took part in the negotiations,

⁸⁶ For weeks **Koszorús** was kept under tight military guard, as he was suspected of attacks on the SS. Later he was sent to the front, then to the military hospital in Buda with an inflammation of the gall-bladder. On November 2 an SS guard went looking for him. Fortunately for him, he was not in his hospital room at the time and the staff warned him of the danger. He went into hiding and later fled to the West. He died on March 8, 1974 in the United States. In 1991 he was made a Colonel-General posthumously. In 1992 a commemorative plaque in his honour was put up in Dohány Street at the initiative of the Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Society.

⁸⁷ **Karl Adolf Eichmann** SS-Obersturmbannführer (1906-1962) was head of the Department of Jewish Affairs in the Gestapo from 1941 to 1945 and was chief of operations in the deportation of three million Jews to extermination camps.

⁸⁸ **Géza Lakatos** de Csikszentsimon (Budapest, Paril 30, 1890—Adelaide, May 24, 1967) was a general in Hungary during World War II who served briefly as Prime Minister of Hungary, under Regent Miklós Horthy from August 29, 1944 until October 15, 1944.

which were carried out with Andreas Ernst Kurt Becher (Adolf Eichmann's personal "representative" concerned with Jewish affairs). As a result of this the Germans sent a train not to Auschwitz but to Switzerland for six and a half million pengő (one million six-hundred-thousand dollars) ransom. Later the operation that saved 1,680 Jewish-Hungarian citizens was called the Kasztner train.

Of course they needed the involvement of the man in the street, who collected certificates of baptism, obtained and produced papers, and furnished Jewish families with food, papers, or hid them in their homes. Of them the names of more than 700 true Hungarians are remembered, whose activities were recognized by the Yad Vaseem Institute as The Righteous of Nations. There is a lot of historical research yet to be done to uncover the activities of these Hungarians who rescued the persecuted.



Laying a Wreath on Ferenc Koszorús' Memorial Tablet in 2004
Jr. Ferenc Koszorus, János Almási Szabó, Jr. Ferenc Koszorus and János Almási Szabó
Source: Miklós Dobai

These rescue activities took on a particular significance after the coup d'état of October 15, 1944, when a Hungarian mob joined forces with the occupiers. Carrying off hundreds of thousands of people would not have been possible without the involvement of the locals. Nonetheless, the great majority of the population was not intimidated. The Zsindely couple continued to rescue

people even after the Arrow-Cross coup d'état. This was when they helped and hid the Communists and their families.

On February 12, 2006 Vilmos Hanti, president of the Hungarian Resisters and Anti-Fascists, accepted the invitation of Miklós Dobai, president of the Miklós Horthy Society, to lay a wreath together on the plaque commemorating Colonel Koszorús.

"I thank you for your gracious letter in which you propose that we commemorate together the plaque of Colonel Ferenc Koszorús whom we too hold in very high esteem. The rescue of the people in the ghetto in 1944, according to our sources, took place at the orders of the Regent Miklós Horthy, for that reason, the MEASZ [HRAF] regards this deed highly. I see the possibility for our two organizations to work together."⁸⁹

The Consequences of the B-List

Until the 15th of September, 1946, the government wanted to reduce the number of working staff in the 1937/38 state budget by 90%, at the state, county, and local level, and on the railways, in the post office, in the mines and factories—basically in the public sphere as a whole. Different regulations were issued for teachers, the army, and the police force. At first they wanted to get rid of anyone, whose continued employment "wouldn't serve the democratic reconstruction of the country in any significant way", that is those whose professional knowledge or energy wasn't sufficient to do their jobs. At least 10% of those who had become civil servants after the Provisional National Assembly was set up were dismissed. Three-member committees—the current Prime Minister, the designated minister, and the representatives of the trade union council—compiled the B-list, which listed those to be dismissed. The right to make recommendations and hold hearings belonged not only to the Ministers, but also to the sheriffs, trade unions, and the national committees. The strict deadlines guaranteed that they were carried out. Since legally it was a question of economy, the dismissals did not have to be justified, and appeals were not granted.

In the areas that were governed by the Ministries headed by the Leftist Bloc (Interior, Justice, Industry, Commerce, Transport, Welfare), the committees were always guaranteed to have a leftist majority. Naturally, there

⁸⁹ Excerpt from the letter **Vilmos Hanti** wrote on February 12, 2006 to Miklós Dobai.

were differences in practice depending on the political power forces at the professional and regional level. It sometimes turned out that the official based himself solely on professional criteria; furthermore, there were some who were reluctant to use these criteria when they recommended a colleague's dismissal. Egregious mistakes, and, even violence became an everyday occurrence. Both workers' parties became unbalanced; both tried to influence the committee meetings to save their own people, or to shelter them from political competition. In the intensifying power struggle, every party was aware of the significance of the B-list.

The Anti-Communist feeling within the Independent Front went so far in the summer of 1946 as to force the revision, at least partially, of the decrees that ordered the purges. Rákosi himself acknowledged at the KB [Communist Committee] meeting on 2 August, 1946 that sometimes the B-list committees "went a bit too far". Many amendments—in agreement with the non-Communist parties—were made to the decrees. The most important amendment was added to Decree No. 9050/1946 M.E., which ordered the review of 10% of the dismissals. The parties agreed that 40% of the decisions were correct, of which one half supported the Smallholder members, and the rest favoured the leftist parties.

László Rajk, Minister of the Interior, submitted a proposal to the Ministerial Council on 25 April, 1947. In the interests of balancing the budget, it was necessary to implement Decree No. 5000/1946 M.E. issued on the subject of certain decrees [...] a five-member committee was established.

Based on Decree 9.050/1946 M.E., 328 of 1,044 employees were reemployed, while the situation of 716 employees was not resolved.

Owing to Small-holder and Social Democratic pressure, the revision was extended once again (11 000/1946 M.E, 24 September); nevertheless, the Communists made the greatest political gains.⁹⁰

The B-lists had national consequences: 86,530 people were dismissed, based on Decree no. 5000/1946 M.E.. Decree No. 9050/1946 M.E. ordered 25, 909 people to be reinstated, but only 6,489 people were actually re-employed. This did not even reach the 10% allowed. More than 80,000 (8041)⁹¹ were dismissed on the basis of the B-list.

⁹⁰ Margit Szöllösi—Janze, 1991, p. 344.

⁹¹ Tibor Zinner, 2005, p. 329.

“Only what the Communist Party wants will happen here”

This quote by Mihály Farkas is taken from an article by György Gyarmati about the national assembly elections. He made it his title. Mihály Farkas was Deputy Secretary-General of the HCP in 1947, and he informed the county secretaries of the political situation after the national assembly elections: in Hungary only what the Communist Party wants will happen.

The Communist leaders followed the Soviet model in the countries that were part of the Soviet bloc. The black book of Communism calls this phenomenon the Sovietisation process.⁹² The essence of the process was that countries that had come under Soviet influence introduced the Bolshevik theory and practice that was being tried out in Russia in 1917. The Bolsheviks liquidated their allies of October 1917, the social revolutionaries, and others. Their pupils similarly liquidated their coalition partners in 1946. Following this model, the Communist parties in other countries tried to neutralise their actual or potential political and intellectual opponents or competitors. They used every means at their disposal, from imprisonment and execution, to forced emigration to leave the country. One of their chief weapons was the political trial, which was also known as the show trial.

*“These trials were held in countries that had been allied with Germany during the war (Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria) under the direct supervision of the Red Army. In the supervisory committees that were set up in 1944 and which functioned until 1947, Soviet soldiers played the principal role and imposed their will in every case. In Hungary, the Independent Smallholders’ Party—the big winner of the elections of 1945, having won 57% of the vote—became the target not only of intrigues, but also of massive police actions.”*⁹³

Despite of the Smallholders’ victory, they were forced by Soviet pressure to function as part of a coalition. In spite of the fact that the Minister of Defense became a Small-holders’ Party member, the Military Political Department within the Ministry received its instructions from the Communist Party. The Ministry of the Interior was taken over by the HCP and they organised violent mass movements, “mob law”. In September 1946 the Smallholders organised peasant days that mobilised the largest crowds since the war. They would have

⁹² **Stéphane Courtois** et al, 2000, p. 406

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 407

liked to establish a united peasant party under the leadership of Béla Kovács. The plan was foiled by Ferenc Erdei and Péter Veress. After the elections the Smallholders voted for parliamentary democracy, while the HCP in its Third Congress came out for “people’s democracy”.⁹⁴

Béla Kovács’s article, “Without us there can be no democracy” appeared in the 28 September, 1946 issue of the *Kis Újság* [Small Newspaper]. The General Secretary of the Smallholders’ Party asserted that without them they could only have the dictatorship of a minority, since the Hungarian people had given the Small-holders the mandate to govern.

The HCP Congress that began the following day declared war against the Small-holders and demanded that the reactionary right-wing of the party, the “filth,” must be swept out of the coalition. Changing the relations of force within the right-wing and left-wing coalition was only a temporary goal; the long-term objective was to make the country over in the Communists’ image. The declaration of war was in fact aimed at the leaders of the Independent Smallholders’ Party. On 5 January, 1947 the *Szabad Nép* [Free People] wrote that the AVO had uncovered a dangerous anti-republican conspiracy.⁹⁵

More than 250 people were arrested during the trials, of whom 229 defendants were taken to court. The series of trials that comprised the so-called “conspiracy against the republic” was composed of six trials; the best known were the show trials of Dr. György Donáth and 12 colleagues, as well as those of Endre Mistéth and 43 others.

They tried brutally to force the prisoners to sign the reports. The bills of indictment were written up from facts that were given arbitrary and false interpretations. The principal evidence was the confessions extorted from the accused after months of torture. Generally the accused were beaten and tortured until semi-conscious, they signed the “record” that was placed before them.

After 25 February, 1947, when the Soviets kidnapped Béla Kovács—they had to resort to this, as Parliament had not revoked Béla Kovács’s immunity—the democratic forces could only wage a rear-guard battle. After carrying out their coup on 25 February, the Soviet Union decided to intervene openly

⁹⁴ István Csicsery-Rónay—Géza Cserenyey, 1998, M. Kiss Sándor, 1999, Kálmán Saláta, 1989, István Vida, 1986.

⁹⁵ István Csicsery-Rónay—Géza Cserenyey, 1998, pp. 18-23.

and violently; this paved the way for Mihály Farkas's arrogant statement to become a reality.



György Donáth before execution
Source: Árpád Rác

The Communists reached their goal: they succeeded in destroying the Small-holders' Party. It was not the show trials, however, that achieved this objective, but the intervention of the Soviet Union. Had the Hungarian justice system been allowed to function, the show trials would have collapsed.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ Bálint Török, 1999.

THE PROCESS OF LIQUIDATING CIVIL SOCIETY

The classification of violations of the law from 1945 to 1953

At the end of World War II, millions of people were forced to leave their homeland. Germans and Hungarians who lived as ethnic minorities in East-Central Europe were blamed for starting the war. The argument in principle for the deportation or “population exchange” was the notion of collective responsibility. Anyone who thought of himself as German or Hungarian was pronounced responsible collectively for the outbreak of the war and thus judged an undesirable person. After the population exchange between countries, population exchange within Hungary began in Central Eastern Europe, as certain groups were branded collectively responsible for social and religious reasons.⁹⁷

Several groups of people were identified as bearing this responsibility in Hungary.

The populations that bore collective responsibility for the world war were the Germans living in Hungary, the Hungarians of Upper-Northern Hungary (Felvidék), and the prisoners of war who had returned from the Soviet Union.

Other ethnic groups (Croats, Serbs, and Bosnians of Hungary) were also blamed because Tito's Yugoslavia did not surrender to the Soviets.

In the fight against the domestic reaction, these groups of people were branded as “reactionaries” and “class enemies”.

The motive for deporting people from one country to another was to spread collective responsibility from the nations who had lost World War II to nationalities living in other countries, Germans and Hungarians residing in Czechoslovakia, ethnic Germans living in Hungary. German-speaking people or ethnic Germans in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, as well as ethnic Hungarians living in Czechoslovakia, had to bear “collective responsibility” for World War II, which meant that they had to pay compensation to the victims and for material damage. The penal proceedings against the Germans

⁹⁷ Ferenc Glatz, 2002.

and Hungarians were essentially decided at the Potsdam Conference. The agreement made by Churchill and Stalin in October 1944 gave the Soviet Union a decisive role in dealing with Hungarians as well.

The Communists spread the concept of collective guilt to the former Hungarian ruling and middle classes.

The property of those who bore the “stigma of guilt”, or collective responsibility, was partially or completely confiscated.

The attempt to liquidate the civil society included not only those made collectively liable because of their role in World War II, as in the case of Hungarians living in Felvidék (Upper Hungary) and Germans living in Hungary, but the communist leaders proclaimed whole groups of people to be guilty during the war among one another.

Collective Responsibility Laid to the Germans' Account

Germans living in Hungary had to suffer collective responsibility for the fact that the German occupiers were given a free hand after March of 1944 to enlist ethnic Germans into the SS.⁹⁸ Those who refused to “join voluntarily” were taken to concentration camps.

Based on the Soviet Army's Military Order no. 0060 of December 22, 1944, the Provisional Hungarian Government of Debrecen agreed that anyone who had even a drop of German blood could be taken to the Soviet Union for rehabilitation work.⁹⁹ This was the second ordeal that Germans in Hungary had to endure during the war. The Soviet state security corps arrived with precise target figures at a settlement, and where they couldn't reach their target with Hungarian citizens of German descent, they collected other able-bodied people.¹⁰⁰ And yet nothing whatsoever was written about this in the armistice agreement that had been signed on 20 January, 1945. The county

⁹⁸ Loránt Tilovszky, 1974, Miklós Füzes-András Újvári, 1996

⁹⁹ Barbara Bank-Sándor Óze, 2005, Gyula Erdmann, 1990, István Fehér, 1988, Miklós Füzes, 1992, Vendel Hambuch, 1988.

¹⁰⁰ The deportation of mainly Germans must be distinguished from the collection of “prisoners of war” that took place throughout the country.

notaries of counties in which people were being taken away turned to Ferenc Erdei, the Interior Minister of the Provisional Government for help, but to no avail.

"On 5 January, the county recorder of Gyula, Dr. Gyula Hráskó, turned to Ferenc Erdei in the name of the Communist Party organisation of Gyula. He informed him that the Soviet command had taken no notice of the local leadership and dealt with the Germans on their own...

He repeated the well-known fact that the Germans of Gyula identified themselves as Hungarians."¹⁰¹

Ferenc Erdei did not even inform the county leaders how it was possible that the short-term work, the *malenkij robot*, had to be done in the Soviet Union.¹⁰²

MAGYAR NÉPJÓLETI MINISZTERIUM HADIFOGOLYGONDOZÓ KIRENDELTSÉGE
DEBRECEN

Sorszám: 1264

Név és rendfokozat: Mesterházy Jánosné sz. Frank Irén

Születési helye és éve: Lászlófalú 1918. szept. 2

Anyja neve: Stelzer Elza

Foglalkozása: háztartásbeli Csal. áll.: férjhez

Állampolgársága: magyar

Mikor érkezett: 1949. okt. 17. Mikor távozott: 1949. okt. 17.

Hová távozott: Cihéskötös Baranya vm. Okt. 17.

„Szabadság”. Debrecen

The certificate of arrival of Mesterházy Irén Frank

¹⁰¹ Gyula Erdmann, 1990, p. 12.

¹⁰² Neither the Soviet Union nor its successor states has ever paid compensation to those who were taken away without any legal foundation to do this forced work that was in violation of international law. International law should respond to this question or those who were kidnapped should demand an answer.

Sixty to sixty-five thousand persons of German descent were taken from Hungary for forced labour service, men between the ages of 17 and 48, and women aged between 18 and 30 years of age. The first group, who were taken to forced labour camps returned home on 17 October, 1949. They were received in Debrecen. The first group of citizens brought home from the Soviet Union numbered 1,126 (725 men, 392 women, and 9 babies).

*“Of those who returned home there were 316 persons whose next of kin had been deported to Germany. Out of the 316, 254 found relatives with whom they could find refuge. Sixty-two people (23 men and 39 women) had no relatives in Hungary, and therefore had to find a temporary home in Debrecen.”*¹⁰³



¹⁰³ MOL XIX—C-2-y-021/1950.



People from Mezőberény on Soviet “malenkij robot”
Source: István Csávás- Julianna Köhler: Album II. pp. 287-291

The Budapest national committee discussed the German question at its meeting on 11 April, 1945, at which the Hungarian Communist Party recommended that every German be punished. At the request of the SZEB [ACC], Prime Minister Béla Miklós Dálnoki wrote to Marshall Vorosilov a letter dated 16 April, 1945 about the Germans in Hungary, with itemised statements in Hungarian and Russian.¹⁰⁴

The confidential, private decree¹⁰⁵ of Interior Minister Ferenc Erdei issued on June 21, 1945 made internment possible without recourse to a court verdict. In the third station involving the collective punishment of the Germans, they were interned temporarily until their ultimate fate could be decided, that is, their deportation to Germany or their holding to account in Hungary.

The fourth stage of the collective punishment of Hungary's Germans was carried out in connection with land reform. The law¹⁰⁶ stipulated the expropriation of land in two ways: confiscation (chapter II) and compensation (chapter III). "*The land of traitors, Arrow Cross, National Socialist and Fascist leaders, members of the Volksbund, war criminals, and other enemies of the people was*" confiscated "*completely and without regard to size.*" The state expropriated the land of those listed above, as well as the livestock and equipment for cultivating the land, and operate the buildings on it.

The law qualified as traitors, war criminals, and enemies of the people those Hungarian citizens who "*had supported the political, economic, and military interests of German Fascism to the detriment of the Hungarian people, who had voluntarily joined German Fascist military or police corps, forces of order, who had given out information that was inimical to the interests of the Hungarian people, or who had worked as informers or who had gone back to their German-sounding family name*". (5. β)

According to the law, anyone who had taken part in the war as a Waffen SS soldier, or a Hunyadi or Szent László soldier was a traitor, even though after 1944 their enlistment was no longer voluntary. The question of recruitment into the German army of Germans who lived outside Germany had already come up in 1940.¹⁰⁷ The German and Hungarian government made an agreement on 14 April, 1944 to set up a mixed recruitment committee. After Szálasi took

¹⁰⁴ MOL XIX—A 1 d.

¹⁰⁵ MOL XIX-A-e 4.d, cited by **Mária Palasik**, 2000, pp. 76-77.

¹⁰⁶ **Statute VI of 1945** concerned the ending of the system of large land holdings and the enacting into law of the governmental decree that distributed land to the agrarian people.

¹⁰⁷ **George H. Stein**, 1978.

power, they planned to reorganise the Hungarian armed forces, and set up four “Hungarist” and four SS divisions. Of the eight divisions planned they managed to set up two, the Hungarian “Hunyadi” SS and Hungarian “Szent László” divisions.¹⁰⁸

During the German occupation, they forgot about the principle of voluntarism, and Germans were forced to do military service in the SS. Those who refused or participated in the “Loyalty to the Homeland” movement¹⁰⁹ ended up in the cellars of the Gestapo and concentration camps.

A significant number of the members of the Volksbund were ignorant of the obligations incumbent on members. Once they realised what was required, many tried to leave the organisation. Only a few managed to do so.

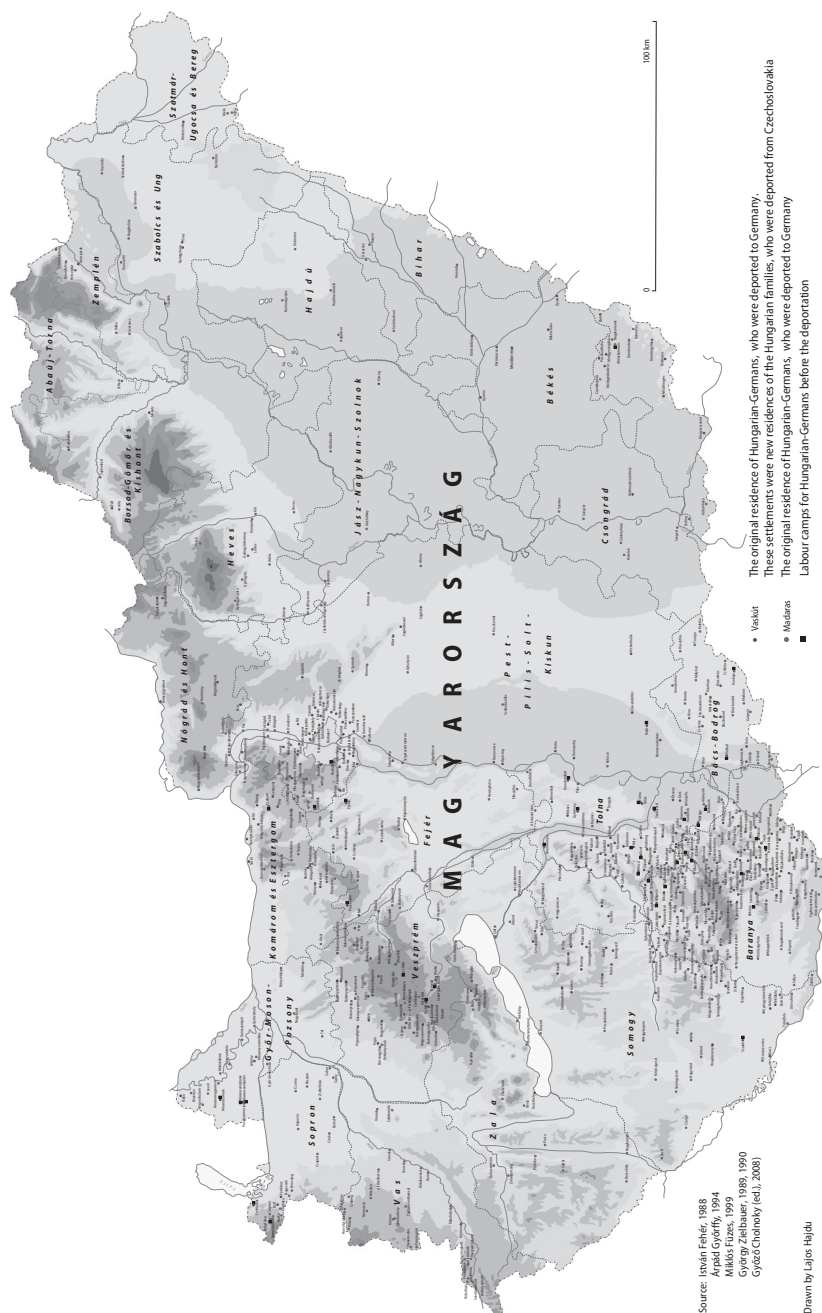
I have not found information about what defined a person as an informant, and the number of people whose property was confiscated as a result of this accusation. I don’t have any information either about the number of German families whose property was expropriated, because they had again adopted their German-sounding name. Statistics indicate only the complete number of traitors, war criminals, and enemies of the people, whose property was confiscated on this pretext.



Deportation of Germans from Hungary
Source: Rubicon 2007/1–2.

¹⁰⁸ Hans Werner Neulen, 1985.

¹⁰⁹ The „Loyalty to the Homeland” movement launched in Bonyhád, accepted the political and economic situation in the country and, braving the Volksbund, tried to arrange that the descendants of Germans who had arrived here in the 18th century could remain loyal to their recipient country even in the middle of the cataclysm.



German-hungarians living in Hungary deportation to Germany 1945-1950



German-Hungarians living in Hungary in deportation to Germany 1945-1950

The fifth stage was the deportation to Germany of 200,000 Hungarian citizens of German descent in 1946-47.¹¹⁰ According to the People's Welfare Office data, 133,655 Germans were deported to Germany's American zone between January and December of 1946. Beginning in the spring of 1947 more than 50,000 Germans were deported to the Soviet sector of Germany.¹¹¹

The criteria of deportation were more or less identical with those that led to the confiscation of the property of some Germans during the land reform. These included membership in the Volksbund, voluntary joining of the SS, as well as repeated adoption of German-sounding names. A single new criterion was added, in that anyone who confessed to being German during the 1941 census had to leave their host country. There was no means of proving this based on existing laws. According to the law on statistics the personal data of the census was secret, and could be given only to the data-supplier. Thus, the staff of the Statistics Office clashed with the political police, who appropriated the list of names. Proceedings were brought against employees of the Statistics Office who refused to collaborate. Lajos Thirring the director of the census was fired. This was the first violation of the law in the history of the Statistics Office.

The real or movable property of the deportees was locked up and inventories taken. Special Interior Ministry decrees specified what movables the deportees could take with them.

The sixth collective punishment meted out to Germans was internment in the camps of Tiszalök and Kazincbarcika of those former German prisoners of war, who had returned after 1949.

The Deportation of the Hungarians of Upper/Northern Hungary

The motive for deporting the Hungarians of Upper/Northern Hungary was the "charge" that Hungarian-speaking people were "collectively responsible" for the consequences of the war, owing to "Hungary's alliance with Fascist Germany". "Fascist Hungarians" belonged in "Fascist Hungary". After the

¹¹⁰ **Government Decree no. 12.200/1947** concerned the amendment, codicils or summaries of Decree no. 12.330/1945 M.E., as well as other decrees connected with this, concerning the deportation to Germany of Germans living in Hungary.

¹¹¹ **Barbara Bank—Sándor Óze**, 2005, page 24.



Sources: László Szarka, 2003
Katalin Vadkerti, 2001
Péter László, 2003

Czechoslovakia

• Nagymegyer- The orig
• Nagymegyer- The new



*Hungarian—
Czechoslovak population-
exchange 1945-1948)*

Hungary:

original residence of the families, who were deported to Hungary
by settlements of the families, who were deported to Czechoslovakia

- Békéscsaba - The selected premissis for the deported families (Péter László)
- Piliszenté - The Hungarian destinations for transports started from Czechoslovakia between 10. December, 1947 and 6 January, 1948 (Katalin Vadkerti)
- Solyvár - Settlements devoted on both lists

government programme of Kassa [Kosice] was announced, up to late 1945 the people's courts found 75,000 Hungarians—primarily intellectuals—living in Slovakia guilty of war crimes and deported them from Czechoslovakia. One after the other, proceedings were instituted against the outstanding individuals of pre-war Hungarian public life, who were accused of trying to destroy the republic. The lawsuit in Kassa against Hungarians was the largest; almost 600 Hungarians were condemned as war criminals. A series of lawsuits was launched against the members of groups, who assumed the defence of the Hungarians and organised the resistance.



Count János Esterházy
Source Lujza Esterházy, 1991

Count János Esterházy was a leading figure in Hungarian politics in Czechoslovakia between the wars; as a Member of Parliament he did not vote for the anti-Semitic laws and saved Jews and other persecuted people during the war, and resisted the Nazis throughout. He was handed over to the Soviet Union in 1945 where he slaved in a forced labour camp until 1949. When he returned to Pozsony [Bratislava], his death sentence was commuted to life in prison. He died in 1957 in a prison in Moravia.¹¹²

¹¹² Lujza Esterházy, 1991



Mihály Vértési with his tractor in Zengővárkony after deportation
Source: Vértés family

After the total deportation of the Sudeten Germans, the mass deportation of ethnic Hungarians began from the Hungarian areas of Slovakia in the spring of 1946. Forty-four thousand people (men, women, children and the elderly) were transported in unheated cattle cars to Czechy. The train stations were turned into veritable human markets where Czech farmers could choose workers. The property of the deported was allocated to so-called confidential party stewards—former partisans mostly—who at first managed the property and over time acquired ownership.

In the terms of the exchange agreement¹¹³ 89,660 ethnic Hungarians were deported. The agreement allowed those forced to leave their homes to take their movable property with them. Transportation had to be provided by the Czechoslovak or Hungarian governments.¹¹⁴

The final consequence of the population exchange agreement was that Slovakia got rid of almost 90,000 Hungarians whose land and other property

¹¹³ Representatives of the Hungarian and Czechoslovak government signed the Hungarian—Czechoslovak population-exchange agreement in Budapest on 27 February, 1946. The signing of the agreement was a compromise for both sides. Originally the Hungarian government opposed the population exchange, but it signed the agreement so as to ease the difficult situation of Hungarians in Slovakia.

¹¹⁴ **Kálmán Janics**, 1989, **Katalin Vadkerty**, 1999.

were several times that of the Slovaks who had returned to their country from Hungary. The new owners who were poor and were used to being agricultural labourers had to fulfill the conditions of fitting in and becoming prosperous so that they could later play the role of re-Slovakisation of the southern border region. Deported Slovaks numbered 73,273.

The Hungarian government tried to solve the deportation of the Hungarians of Upper/Northern Hungary/Slovakia to our country as cheaply as possible. The Hungarian-Czechoslovak population- exchange agreement was carried out by appropriating the real estate of the German population. Thus, farms were identified whose dimensions coincided with the size of the property of farmers to be deported. Most of the farm land was in Baranya County. In late 1948, the sub-prefect of Baranya compiled a summary report at the local level, in which he ascertained that there were 34,413 Germans living in the villages.¹¹⁵ The owners of large tracts of lands were deported from the county, since houses and farm buildings were needed for Hungarians, who had been deported from Upper/Northern “Hungary”.

Erzsébet Tóth (Mrs. Jenő Schmidt) was deported at the age of 18 to the village of Mágocs in Baranya County. Many of her relatives lived in the community of Upper/Northern Hungary where her father was a judge. The whole family worked on the farm where they cultivated 22-23 hectares of land. She herself worked at the co-operative centre of Hanza as a bookkeeper.

“The large farmers regarded themselves as Hungarian; we were of the nobility. Our name was Noble Tóth. We were allowed to take everything with us; we crossed the border with 19 wagons. We took everything we could move from the house, even from the farmyard. We could take animals, cows, young animals, horses. We left with a heavy heart and had no idea where we were going. We stopped at Dombóvár for two or three days while they decided where to send us. At first we were directed to Mohács; then we arrived in Mágocs in May of 1947. We were given Antal Inhóff’s house. The house and farm were fine and in good condition. We were compensated materially, but it was very difficult to fit in. Our land was on a plain; its soil was very rich. Our village Nemeskajal was a pure Hungarian community. We felt very sorry for those who had been evicted from their homes. They were standing in front of the gate, but we had to take their place. When they moved us into the house that was allocated for us, the family was standing at the gate crying. This was very difficult to bear. We

¹¹⁵ BML XXI. 3. Sub-prefect’s documents 1948/2.

had to leave our homes and move into someone else's home. They had to leave everything behind. They could take only their clothes. Even the furniture was left behind in the house, while we had left an empty house in Upper Northern "Hungary." We were able to bring all the belongings we could carry with us in 19 wagonloads, and we were given a suitable house and farm in exchange for the one we had left behind. They were forced to leave everything here. Later the furniture was taken away, but we don't know who got it. It wasn't the family that lived here. It was terrible for the family, but for us too, for it wasn't ours. There were many of the old Germans, and it was very sad to meet them, sad for all of us."¹¹⁶

Count Aladár Zichy and his family, together with his maternal grandparents, had to leave Walkó castle in the village of Für in Slovakia at the end of 1944, for they said they didn't want to become Slovaks. The family was driven across the pontoon bridge of Esztergom carrying 25-kilos of baggage. Aladár Zichy was five years old at the time, and his little sister was three.

Ethnic Germans in Hungary and the Hungarians of Upper Northern "Hungary" suffered atrocities other than being deported over the border.

These deportations from one country to the other carried out between 1945 and 1949 were based on the "the principle of collective guilt", whereas international law did not accept "the principle of collective guilt" and does not accept it to this day.

The violations of law suffered by the ethnic **Croatians, Serbs, and Bosnians**, who lived in Hungary, were connected to the Cold War period. In 1949 the Information Bureau's¹¹⁷ resolution declared the main ally of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, to be the principal enemy. They predicted that the scene of the conflict would be the southern frontier zone of Hungary; this became the foreign policy precedent for establishing this borderland. Lists were drawn up of ethnic groups who lived in the territory defined as borderland, their fate was prison, and forced labour for their families.

¹¹⁶ Detail from an interview with **Mrs. Jenő Schmidt** made in 2001.

¹¹⁷ The Communist Information Bureau, Cominform, for short (complete title was Communist and Worker's Parties' Information Bureau) was the international Communist organisation directed by Moscow between 1947 and 1956.

The Battle Against the “Enemy Within,” the Reactionaries, Those Branded as Class Enemies

In the fight against the internal reactionaries, the purpose of which was to deny the past and reshape it to communist taste, the “enemies and class-alien” became liable for the problems in internal politics.

András Hegedüs, who, from 1949 was a member of the Hungarian Workers Party’s leading organs and from 1952 the Minister of State Farms and Forests, Minister of Agriculture, then Deputy Prime Minister. He was president of the Ministerial Council from April 1955 to October 1956 and distinguished three basic levels of violations of the law committed since 1945 against the so-called “internal opposition”.¹¹⁸

- banishment from the cities, relocation, and placement under police surveillance,
- relocation from the edge of the Yugoslav border and internment families in the forced labour camps in the Hortobágy,
- internment, placement under police surveillance and labour camps, of which Recsk was a typical example.
- violations of the sentence,
- forced labour
- slave labour was not mentioned by the former president of the Ministerial Council as a violation of the law.

Police Surveillance and Relocation

“Police surveillance was supervision of the people by the police of those, who had served their time or had not committed a crime, but were politically unreliable from the standpoint of the state.”¹¹⁹

Interior Minister Ferenc Erdei’s decree¹²⁰ issued on 21 June, 1945, but which hasn’t been made public to this day, prescribed the procedure to be

¹¹⁸ Gyula Gulyás and János Gulyás, 1989, pp. 72-74.

¹¹⁹ Új Magyar Lexikon [New Hungarian Lexicon], Vol. 5, p. 551.

¹²⁰ Decree no. 138.000/1945. B.M. [Ministry of the Interior], Mária Palasik informs us, 1997.

followed in the case of people who were placed under police surveillance and police custody. Ferenc Erdei reasoned that extraordinary times required extraordinary measures with respect to bourgeois individuals “*who presented a danger to the security of the state, who were dangerous to public safety, and who were suspect, as well as detrimental to society for economic reasons*”. The calling to account of such individuals took place within the framework of procedures in the course of which the individual who was kept under police surveillance did not even have a chance to have a hearing before the verdict was made. These serious procedures were motivated by higher state interests, and they were not punitive but preventive measures, the Interior Minister claimed.

The decree placed individuals under police surveillance for six cases:

1. Members of the Arrow Cross Party who had paid party dues for at least two months, but who had not taken part in any activities other than membership in the party, people whose membership dated before 19 March, 1944 and those who had left the party before 19 March, 1944.
2. Those who had publicly endorsed the imperialist war and demonstrated an anti-democratic attitude, but who could not be handed over to the office of the people’s prosecutor.
3. Those who had to be by-passed for their previous fascist conduct; that is, they were refused permission to sell articles of daily use, they were refused the right to appear in public as well.
4. Those who had to be by-passed for their previous fascist attitude; that is, they were refused the right to perform in public. This included journalists, actors, lawyers, teachers, doctors, engineers, heads of economic institutions, etc.
5. Individuals who were known to have had Fascist attitudes and who had joined the democratic parties.
6. Those who had been members of Arrow Cross parties before 23 June, 1941, Imrédy, Pálffy, Festetics, etc. and who had resigned from the party before 23 June, 1941.

According to the decree, “*industrial workers, small peasant and agrarian worker elements*” who merely had to appear once a week and had other obligations to appear—depending on the seriousness of their case—could be obliged to do community work for one or two days a week. Placement under police surveillance, the obligation to report to the police could be implemented without banishment or eviction from one’s place of residence.

From the 1950's relocation entailed placement under police surveillance. In 1951 13,670 people were removed from Budapest. Those taken from provincial cities and communities numbered 1194 according to a datum of 1953.¹²¹

Deportations

Deportation originates from the Latin word to carry away (*deportare*), “to remove individuals or groups to foreign countries, to forced residence or a closed camp (and settlement) as punishment or after serving their time.”¹²²

We can call deportation the removal by force to the 12 closed family-forced-labour camps set up in the Hortobágy, Nagyunság, and the Hajdúság. This system of camps was the only one in Hungary where families were carried off and isolated. These even included helpless old men and women and infants. Even children above the age of 12 were forced to work for 12 hours a day under the watchful eyes of police with dogs.

Internment

The Latin word internment means “the taking of individuals into custody or keeping them isolated in a designated place, who presented a danger to the prevailing social order from the standpoint of politics or public safety and security but who had not committed a concrete crime...The Geneva conventions of 1949 prescribed that a state implementing internment was obligated to provide proper care and humane treatment of the interned.”¹²³

István Bibó penned a serious critique of the practice of internment:

“Those members of the Arrow Cross and their like who have not committed a crime that would warrant their being brought before the people’s tribunals, but who had in some way contributed to the catastrophe befalling the Hungarian people, could be brought to make amends in some way by working it off under numerous direct, strict but specific conditions. In contrast to this, the internment mechanism, as it exists today, has completely parted company from

¹²¹ ÁBTL. 4.1. A-505.

¹²² Új Magyar Lexikon [New Hungarian Lexicon/Encyclopedia], Vol. 2, 1962, p.48.

¹²³ Új Magyar Lexikon [New Hungarian Encyclopedia], Vol. 3, 1962, p. 616.

*the brutal, but direct administration of justice of the people, which can soon blow over. To punish in public a despotic chief constable before whom the entire district used to stand at attention, or visibly humiliate him is a revolutionary act, for it demonstrates how crowned heads can fall. But to imprison this same chief constable behind barbed wire so that he can't bury his mother, suffers a recurrence of his liver complaint and can't even see his child who has scarlet fever, displays nothing of revolutionary value whatsoever.*¹²⁴

The internment system was based on the decrees that had been issued between the two world wars and exploited in an expanded sphere of authority.¹²⁵ Decree no. 81/1945 M.E. ordered internment, among others, as punishment for at least six months to a maximum of 24 months. After this time had elapsed the individual sent to an internment camp could be freed only if he showed exemplary conduct. In the opposite case, the supervisory authority of the internment camp could extend the internee's time to another six months. Péter Zichy's file provides an example for this. He displayed an anti-democratic attitude at the reception camp with his ironic smile, which necessitated an extension of his stay in police custody. The implementation of internment was the province of the political police. According to Gábor Péter's summary, 1,869 people were interned in the capital between 1 February and 12 April, 1945, and between 12 April to 30 another 2,683 people were sent to the internment camps set up in the seven districts of Budapest and in seven settlements outside the city.¹²⁶ A significant increase in the number of internments in the second half of April prevented alteration of the decree. Namely, the amendment to Decree no. 1.400/1945 M.E. 1.β that took effect on 1 May, 1945 about the people's jurisdiction highlighted internment among the punishments prescribed.

Internment was a preferred tool for the Communist Party. After the screening committees were set up¹²⁷ Ernő Gerő announced, during a debate about the public administration purges, that a fascist or a member of the Arrow Cross, whose case wasn't bad enough to concern the people's tribunals, should be sent to a work camp. In interpreting Gerő's words, the press amplified his statement with two words; obviously it was not the editor's idea. In addition to

¹²⁴ István Bibó, 1986, vol. II, p. 40.

¹²⁵ Decrees no. 4352/1920, 3035/1920, 3000/1922 B.M. [Ministry of the Interior], Decree no. II tc.[article], 8130/1939 and Decree no. 760/1945 B.M.

¹²⁶ Mária Palasik, 1997

¹²⁷ Decree no. 15/1945 M.E. promulgated on 4 January, 1945.

fascist and Arrow Cross, the word “reactionary” appeared, which could send an individual not only to a work camp but also to internment, together with the fascists and the Arrow Cross members.

On 21 June, 1945 Ferenc Erdei’s above-mentioned confidential decree¹²⁸ regulated police custody, in addition to police surveillance, and internment. In regulating internment, in addition to banishment for political reasons, a new element was added to the internment of those who had violated economic laws. It specified in 11 points the kind of behaviour manifested by leaders, officials, and members of parties and organisations judged to be Arrow Cross or fascist that would lead to internment. In a further 10 points economic transgressions were added that were punishable by internment.

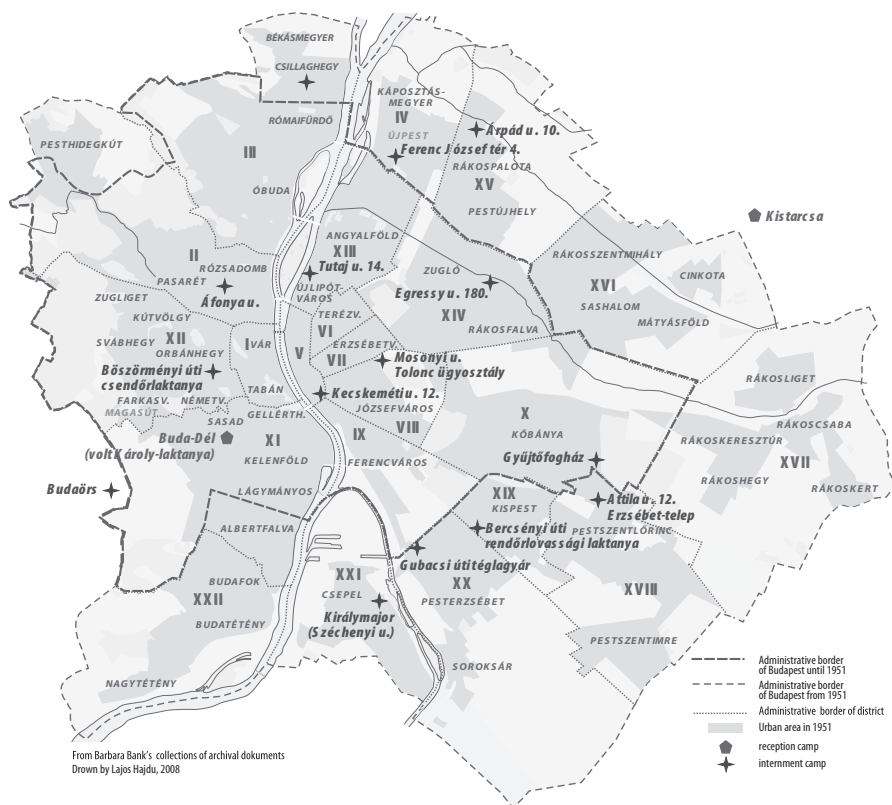
1. Those who had joined the Arrow Cross Party after 22 June, 1941.
2. Those who were leaders of the Arrow Cross Party before 19 March, 1944.
3. Those who were members of the Hungarian Renewal Party, the Festetics, and Pálffy groups.
4. Organising and leading members of the National Work Headquarters.
5. Those who had participated in the activities of the Hungary Life Party.
6. Members of organisations, associations, and institutions between the two world wars who had taken part in their work.
7. Those members of the Hungarian Women’s National Alliance who had turned the alliance’s activities in a fascist direction.
8. Those who did not belong to any party, but who encouraged a reactionary direction.
9. Those who had committed any act that conflicted with any decree issued by the people’s tribunals, but for which the evidence was not yet available, were to be interned until evidence was gathered.
10. Denouncers and informants
11. Publicans, tobacconists, barbers who spread fascist propaganda

This decree greatly expanded the authority of the political police. The author of the decree argued that internment was a preventive measure. Ferenc Erdei’s similarly secret instructions in 1945 reinforced prevention by permitting even those who had been legally acquitted by the people’s tribunals to be interned. Moreover, the political police could review the verdicts of the people’s

¹²⁸ Decree no. 138.000/1945 B.M., **Mária Palasik** informs us, 1997.

tribunals, as the Minister of Justice decreed that acquittals by the people's tribunals should be sent to the political police.

In September 1945 during negotiations about the bill concerning the right to vote, the question of the internments was also discussed. The bill deprived of the right to vote those “*who had been sentenced by the people's tribunals or against whom proceedings had been initiated, who had been interned because of Fascist conduct, who had been qualified by the land reform decree as traitors, war criminals, and enemies of the people, who were leaders of fascist organisations that had been disbanded, who were members or supporters of German Hitlerist organisations, who were given a heavy sentence by a screening committee.*”



*Reception and Internment Camps in Budapest and its Environs
1945—(1947)—1949*

The representatives thought that because internment deprived an individual of exercising the right to vote, the political police might take advantage of this to influence elections. Interior Minister Ferenc Erdei promised that internments carried out before the electoral law had been put into practice were exempted from the bill. This, however, did not reassure the representatives, since even though it couldn't influence the elections of 1945, it could do so later, which together with other procedures, could cause significant distortions. More than 10,000 people were interned in Budapest up to November 1945. Nevertheless, the votes of all the internees could not have added up to a single parliamentary mandate, even in 1945.¹²⁹

Between 1945 and 1949 more than 40,000 people were interned in the capital and its vicinity, and this affected more people than the people's jurisdiction. It was a method of distinction in the hands of the Communist Party to attain their ends. It enabled the criminal courts to overstep the bounds of the legal framework.¹³⁰

According to the record made on 16 July, 1953, 5,005 people were interned, of whom 2,318 were former war criminals. The other 2,687 were interned on the following pretexts: The largest group were those who were accused of anti-democratic agitation (385), 366 served their prison sentence, but because of the alleged danger they presented to society they weren't allowed to return to their previous place of residence. Three-hundred and fifty-eight people tried but failed to cross the Hungarian border. Two-hundred and ninety-four were right-wing socdems (social democrats). A hundred and eighty-nine were citizens of foreign countries (Yugoslav, American, English, and French) and suspected of being spies. Two hundred and seven had committed other crimes, 206 organised, 153 were interned for other unnamed causes, 137 for economic crimes, and 131 for other war crimes. Seventy-one AVH agents, who had turned traitor were interned. Sixty-three were informants and 46 were priests. The motives for the internment of the others was sabotage (30), Trotskyites (27), harbouring concealed weapons (24).

Intellectuals formed the largest group of the interned: Seven hundred and fourteen people (technical intelligentsia, teachers, scientists and scholars). Four hundred and ninety-nine were workers, 373 Horthyites (officers, field officers, police detectives, policemen, gendarme). Of the propertied peasants

¹²⁹ **Mária Palasik**, 2000, pp. 77-78.

¹³⁰ **Tibor Zinner**, 1997, p. 218.

399 (134 small- and middle peasants, 205 kulaks), 183 were tradesmen and small shopkeepers, 201 were citizens of foreign countries, 156 were employees (MAV railway, firemen), 81 were AVH, 76 were capitalists, landowners, aristocrats, 65 were priests and others clergymen.¹³¹

Forced Labour

The forced-labour corps, which the official military jargon called “military supply services”, were entrusted with building military establishments and infrastructure investments.”¹³² The Council of the Ministry of Defence held talks on 27 June, 1950 about the role of kulaks and hostile elements in the Hungarian people’s army. Major-General Károly Janza recommended that kulaks and other unreliable elements and their sons be enlisted, but that they not be given weapons, but put to hard construction work. During recruitment the Committee Determining Class Situation decided who was unreliable and had to be sent to forced labour camps. Based on the resolution of the Hungarian Workers Party, the labour corps was established by Decree no. 05360/HVK. Hadkieg. 1951 of the General Staff of the Ministry of Defence.¹³³



*Undesirable citizens in forced labour in 1952
Peter Nikolits (first from the right) and his friends
Source: Peter Nikolits*

¹³¹ ÁBTL. 4.1.A-508.

¹³² Tibor Dessewffy—András Szántó, 1989, p.15.

¹³³ Károly Csonkaréti, 1994, pp. 171-241

I cite Gábor Görgey's words about his experiences in labour "service":

"The vague rumours about Mátyás Rákosi et al's labour "service" were fairly alarming. They probably used the instructions concerning the wartime Jewish labour camps, since the aim then as now was to force unwanted and superfluous citizens into the most unbearable situations so as to get rid of as many individuals as possible within the state, which had been reduced to proletarian rule. These wartime modi operandi were inherited by the Communist state not only with respect to methods used but also to the Arrow Cross members and the sadistic fascist henchmen, and the seasoned guards who accompanied the former human freight shipments. Insofar as they accepted the terror service in the new system, their terrorist past was overlooked. These individuals of course happily continued where they left off, sadism, after all, is not limited to a single system.

They were entrained at the railway station at Gyöngyös where seven months ago a similar scene had taken place in the freight yard of Józsefváros, only here Papa and Mama weren't with him. There they collected on the platform, all class-enemy youths, pariahs of the system. They picked out the children of the persecuted class, the families deported from Budapest, from the tangle of people who had huddled together like frightened animals, children who had been deprived of their last refuge, deprived of the feeling that, although everything was lost, almost nothing was left to them other than mere existence, the animal warmth of the family could help them to survive. And the children of peasants who had been branded as kulaks by the state, which was waging class warfare. They were strapping, muscular boys, who had been put to work ever since they were small children, following the ancient law of the village, which did not allow anything to go to waste, nor a single grain or left-over seed to be lost in the brilliantly functioning cycle, every crumb of which finds its place and most useful function from harvest to manure-pile. [...] Their physical strength readied them for anything, but psychologically they were completely unprepared for the primitive inventiveness of sadism. They could not digest the murderous experiments of forced labour, which made the cruelest military service seem like child's play. The guards' attempts to fill every moment humiliating their victims and ruining them physically, hounded them into a depression in which they gave up. The city boys were generally weaker physically, but they were tougher intellectually and their wilier, more resilient inner life helped them to weather this hell.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ Gábor Görgey, 1999, pp. 26-28.

Prison Labour

A system of convict labour emerged in Hungary between 1949 and 1953 in which it was not only the condemned who had to do forced labour but even individuals and families who had been expelled from their homes without legal procedures, and who were placed under police surveillance or sent to closed camps guarded by police. The authorities had a double goal with the forced labour. On the one hand, they tried to integrate prison labour into the system of the socialist planned economy; on the other, they wished to humiliate the so-called “enemy elements”.¹³⁵

The MDP [Hungarian Workers’ Party] dealt with the problem of convict labour beginning with 1949. In her report to the Ministry of Public Welfare, Anna Ratkó raised the question on 7 March, 1950 of getting the prisoners of war, who had returned from the Soviet Union, to do agricultural work. Providing for those who returned was four and a half forints a day, which was a considerable sum for the Ministry.¹³⁶

Convict labour was basically built upon the forced labour of those who had been arrested and deprived of their freedom, a large number of citizens who had been interned and condemned in military courts, together with citizens whose liberty had been limited, and those condemned to reforming and educative labour. The apparatus was not prepared for the mass employment of “prisoners.” Ferenc Keleti drafted a memorandum on 10 November, 1951 concerning the guarding of prison labourers, and warned that the guards could not watch over almost 15,000 people who worked in 42 external work places. He recommended that the correctional enforcement system be changed and that “*they should not transport any more prisoners to external work until the conditions of guarding can be established.*”¹³⁷

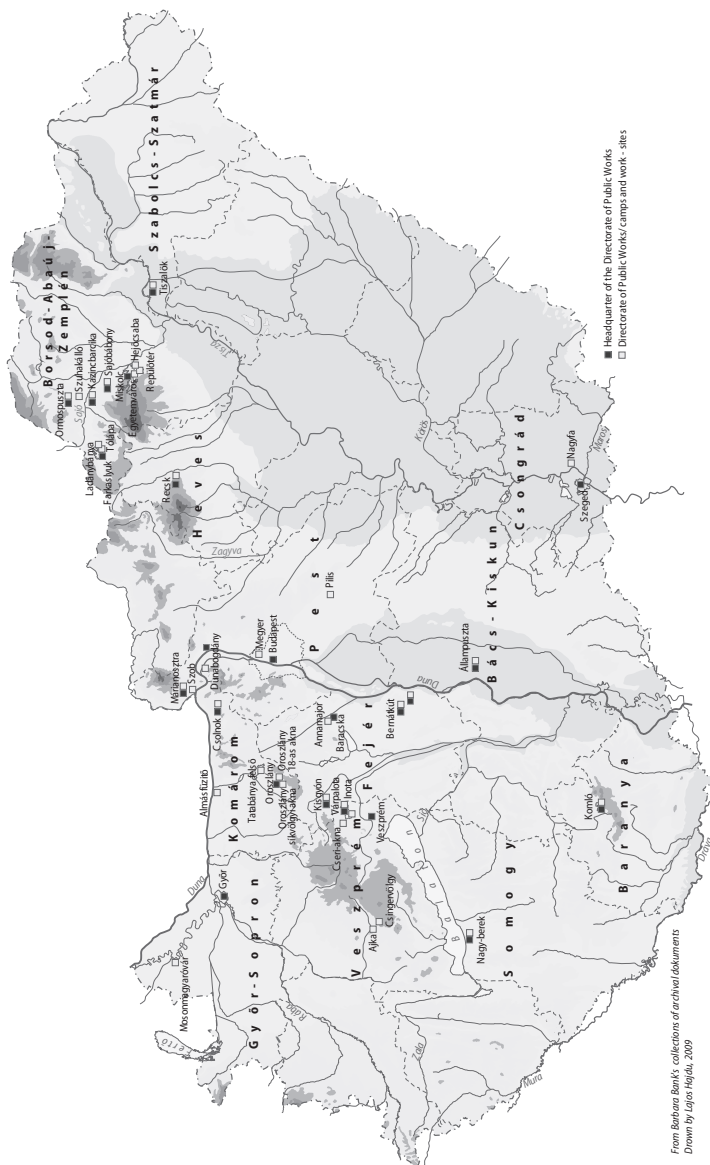
The People’s Supreme Economic Council in its Resolution no. 407/21/1951 set up the Directorate of Public Works (KÖMI) with effect from 1 December, 1951, since it was in the people’s economic interest that the prisoners should do productive work. At first the KÖMI worked under the aegis of the Ministry of Justice. Later in accordance with Decree no. 2033/10/1952 M.T. issued on

¹³⁵ György T. Varga, 2002.

¹³⁶ MOL M-KS 276. f. 65 cs. 184 ő.e.

¹³⁷ Expert from Ferenc Keleti’s memorandum prepared for the administrative department on 10 November, 1951. MOL M-KS 276, F.65 cs. 184 ő.e.

29 March, 1952 the KÖMI was placed under the Ministry of Interior, together with the guards of the arresting institutions.¹³⁸



From Barbara Bank's collections of archival documents.
Drawn by Lajos Hegedűs, 2009

The KÖMI-Camps and Prisons

¹³⁸ Barbara Bank, 2003, p. 122.

Petty Offences

The social-political practice of the '50's had another special procedure for isolating unreliable individuals and other enemy categories and keeping them in constant fear: the category of the so-called "petty offence". The extraordinarily large number of petty offences was shown by the fact that Imre Nagy granted amnesty in 1953 to more than 600,000 people who had been condemned for "petty offences". At that time the petty-offence courts declared null and void the imprisonment of 4,697 persons and the fines of 188,790 people and cancelled procedures against 229,263.¹³⁹

Based on the resolution brought by the secretariat of the Central Leadership of the Hungarian Workers Party, the Interior Ministry regulated the activities of the petty offence judges. The goal of the regulations was to draw the attention of these judges to the importance of the fight against the enemy, the kulaks, and other "class enemies". Two departments of the Interior Ministry dealt with petty offences. The main police department dealt with the petty offences committed in Budapest and the countryside, while the main department of the local councils focused on offences committed by kulaks.

The petty offences differed as to 'their social danger'; for this reason punishment could be meted out by the administrative departments of the councils, as well as the police. It was the police, who carried out the punishment of the most dangerous perpetrators of petty offences, and it was the police who brought the most severe judgements.

The Main Police Department of the Interior Ministry prepared a monthly report composed of statistics and analyses on the "police verdicts on infringements." The reports gave details of the infringement verdicts in Budapest and in the countryside, by breaking down the occupations of the perpetrators and the type of offence. They were classified according to occupation: industrial worker, agricultural worker, poor peasant, middle peasant, kulak, intelligentsia, employee, merchant or restaurateur, former Horthyist: this included policeman, gendarme, officer in the Hungarian army, factory owner, and other class enemies, industrialist, priest, as well as any other occupations. The offence could involve transportation, vice, registration, public order, fire police, forest, radio, press, public hygiene, animal hygiene or other. I did not find any definition of what the individual offences covered.

¹³⁹ ÁBTL 4.1.A 505.

Some light is cast on the content of some of the offences in the interviews made with the former condemned. If someone failed report his neighbour for having a radio, or for some other reason of which he was ignorant; in other words, he did not become a voluntary informant, if he failed to do his duty as a citizen he committed a reporting infringement. If somebody consumed wild fruit in the forest, or collected such fruit to share with his family, he committed a petty offence against the forest. Those who did not keep their path or the road clean, or those in the countryside who did not keep a sufficient distance between the dung heap and the well, committed an offence against public hygiene.

The condemned did not include those who worked on the cooperative farms or agricultural workers. These categories appeared for the first time in October 1953. Barely three months after the amnesty decree was issued, Tibor Pőcze, the head of the National Police Headquarters, sent under strict secrecy *“a regulation on the statistics concerning money and local fines levied by the police.”* In filling out occupations there was a special appendix, which defined working peasants, agricultural workers, tsz or tszcs [cooperative] members, etc. In the case of kulaks and other class enemies they drew attention to the uniqueness of these two occupations, especially underlining, *“Generally, the listing of kulaks and other class enemy elements under occupations must always be judged according to their former occupation, without considering that currently they may be manual workers or intellectual workers.”*¹⁴⁰

In July 1952, 15,790 people were condemned for petty offences in Budapest and 22,029 in the countryside: *“Small numbers of class-enemy elements were reported for petty offences. This proves that our police aren’t paying particular attention to class enemies in terms of petty offences; they are not consistently waging class warfare,”* they wrote in evaluating the petty offences in Budapest. The evaluators of the countryside acknowledged happily that *“the condemnation of class-enemy elements is on the rise here, although the number of condemned kulaks was reduced in June from 3,235 to 2,219.”*¹⁴¹ According to a May 1953 report, people sentenced for petty offences in Budapest numbered 9,799 and in the countryside 10,512, so the numbers were decreasing. The writer of the report thinks the cause of the reduction was that *“the comrades*

¹⁴⁰ BM KI) Main Police Department I. 67. 227/1953

¹⁴¹ BM KI Main Police Department I. 76.00255/4-1952 Aug. 1. Report evaluating the Main Police Department of the Interior Ministry and the work of the county police station in the month of July, 1952.

*understood the instructions of Comrade Interior Minister and they stepped up the task of educating the workers.*¹⁴²

Between 10,000 and 40,000 people were condemned every month.

The Main Department of the Local Councils of the Interior Ministry paid special attention to the petty offences committed by kulaks. The councils investigated them independently of the police. Their reports had to be sent to the Main Department of the Local Councils. In 1951 the police punished 41,234 kulaks and in 1952, it was 25,237. The majority of kulaks were fined. In 1951, 194 people were sent to prison, in 1952 the figure was 343. The kulaks punished by the councils in 1951 numbered 45,855, and in 1952, 57,606. These included 365 imprisoned in 1951 and 1,967 in 1952. It must be noted that from 15 July, 1952, a significant number of petty-offence cases were taken from the police and handed over to the councils.¹⁴³ That was why the number of kulaks punished by the police decreased and the kulaks condemned by the councils increased.¹⁴⁴

In 1951-52, 61,219 small peasants and 50,298 middle peasants were fined considerable amounts by the police. In comparison the number of kulaks punished was extremely high, because, according to the writers of the report, *“compared with the number of working peasants, the number of kulaks was negligible. Consequently, the police judges stepped up their use of petty offences as a tool in the battle against the kulaks...During this time, 77,460 small peasants and 80,080 middle peasants were punished. These numbers also demonstrate that the council petty-offence judges also tried, by keeping an eye on our Party’s peasant policies to use their judgments as a tool in the class war, and concentrated on restricting the kulaks economically.*¹⁴⁵

In order to interpret these numbers one must know the number of farms and the size of the arable land.

¹⁴² BM KI Main Police Department I.92. Report evaluating the Main Police Department of the Interior Ministry and county police station work during May 1953.

¹⁴³ In 1951 decree no. 59/1952 M.T. executive tvr. (?)

¹⁴⁴ MOL XIX-B-1-q 25.d 52-0046.

¹⁴⁵ MOL XIX-B-1-q 25 d. 52-0046.

*The number of farms and the area of arable land
In 1949, 1951, and 1952*

Farm size cad. hold	The number of farms and the area of arable land					
	1000 farms			1000 cadastral hold		
	1949	1951	1952	1949	1951	1952
0-1	185.2	165.6	148.5	61.8	66.2	59.1
1-3	326.9	308.3	290.7	572.1	436.9	393.5
3-5	300.2	263.1	255.8	997.3	787.8	742.9
1,411 mm	303.4	286.1	288.4	1,557.2	1,390.2	1,375.2
8-10	113.3	137.5	128.8	780.9	926.8	891.8
10-15	234.3	192.5	165.6	2,048.8	1,681.6	1,521.1
15-20	93.0	76.9	60.6	1,097.8	893.7	724.4
20-25	40.4	31.0	21.6	595.3	436.9	311.6
Peasants total	1,596.7	1,461.0	1,360.0	7,731.2	6,620.1	6,019.6
Kulaks under 25 cad.hold	16.1	29.1	24.9	228.0	328.9	215.7
Kulaks above 25 cad.hold	47.2	27.4	15.4	1,442.0	613.6	314.2
Kulaks total	63.3	56.5	40.3	1,650.0	942.5	529.9
Private farms total	1,660.0	1,517.5	1,400.3	9,381.2	7,562.6	6,549.5

(hold = 0.57 hectares or 1.42 English acres)

Source: MOL 276 f. 67cs. 185 ř.e.

In 1951, although the number of kulaks punished was 87,089, there were 56,000 farms; that is, many farms were fined more than once. This number does not include the 537 people sent to prison. In 1952 82,843 kulaks were punished, there were 40,300 farms and this number did not include the 2,332 sent to prison.

Petty offences were classified in an amateurish manner. The economic and political points of view were mixed up, and the definitions were far from clear. But the objective was not to allow the condemned to know what their "offence" was, but to keep them in a constant state of fear and dread. The acts considered to be offences were varied and vague so that they could be interpreted in several ways. The party apparatus was considered to be doing

good work when it could count on its superiors' appreciation, if it could prove that class warfare was intensifying in every community. Although the judges who dealt with petty offences had to provide proof; this did not mean that the condemned had actually committed what they were being accused of. The important thing was that they be punished.

In other words, petty offences were committed by those whom they wanted to condemn.

In 1951 the police petty offence judges punished mainly (64%) "petty offences against the fire regulations", which included a messy attic, the lack of lids, and sand, as well as other deficiencies in the storage of water. Transport offences (23%) included the "incorrect packing" of wagons, the lack of lamps, or anything at all, since there was nothing in the court documents specifying how one must load a wagon "correctly." In the case of report infringements (2.5%), the number of reports were considered inadequate, as shown by the fact that, while 48,909 reports were made in 1951 against 56,500 kulak farms, in 1952 there were 30,699 against 40,300 farms. It must be noted that reporting petty offences was not included among the offences dealt with by the councils. In 1951, 52,803, and in 1952, 64,536 reports against the kulaks were made to the councils.

There were several offences against hygiene. The path to the house not paved with stone or gravel, for example, so that the supervisory comrades sank up to their ankles in the mud, or the distance between the well and the cesspool was deemed inadequate, etc.

Offences against the press meant not ordering Szabad Nép [The Free People], even though it was the Party's official newspaper. Offences against the forest meant that brushwood was gathered and used for heating; wild fruit was picked in the forest, and honey was used without complying with delivery obligations. The distance between the well and the cesspool, as well as the attic and other storage of produce not meeting building regulations were offences against order.

In both years the largest number punished by the council petty-offence judges were "offences against the economic plans." These offences were connected to agricultural work. The sowing and harvest were not carried out in the time prescribed by the councils, they didn't keep to the right number of centimeters prescribed in deep ploughing, fewer fruit grew on the trees than prescribed by the planned economy, etc. The petty offence involving the

adulteration of food was committed by those who mixed corncockles with the grain and watered down the milk, etc.

These petty offences kept everyone in fear. They served to make life impossible for class enemies, including the “kulaks, the Horthyists, and the Horthyist factory owners.”

The punishments for petty offences mainly affected the kulaks; nevertheless, there was a significant difference of opinion between the two departments of the Interior Ministry. I cite from two reports, which were written at about the same time. The report of the Main Department of the Local Councils of the Interior Ministry written in April 1953 reported that the petty-offence judges had understood their job: *“The number of kulaks punished is higher relative to the working peasants, even though there are an insignificant number of kulaks compared to the working peasants. We can construe from this that police judges tried to use the petty-offence courts as a tool in the battle against the kulaks...The council petty-offence judges also tried, by focusing on our Party’s peasant policies and by using their authority as a tool in the class war, to put the economic restriction of the kulaks front and center.”*¹⁴⁶

Similarly, the report of the Petty Offence Department of the Interior Ministry written on 15 April, 1953, and signed by the head of department, Gedeon Füstös, was not happy with the activities of the petty offence judges because they showed a liberal attitude toward the kulaks, therefore *“the petty offence judges were not fulfilling the duties incumbent on them in the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the fight against the enemy, and in their mission to educate the workers. The leaders are not using the petty offence judicature as a tool in the class war.”*¹⁴⁷

A few months later a report, which considered that the number of punishments was intolerably high and, even though in compliance with the laws in force, was illegal and unjust, was written in June 1953. The resolution of the Central Leadership of the Hungarian Workers’ Party bore the brunt of mistakes committed in the Party’s political line and execution and dealt with what was needed to be done to correct these mistakes:

“Between 1951-53 V.I., that is, within two years and four months the police, as well as the petty-offence judges, meted out punishment in 850,000 cases. And out of 850,000 of these cases, 831,000 involved fines, and 760,000 amounted

¹⁴⁶ MOL XIX-A-2-Y-Z 0046/2991953.

¹⁴⁷ MOL XIX-B-1-q 25 d. 52-0046.

to less than 100 forints per person, and only 19,000 entailed imprisonment, a significant number were given suspended sentences, even so the number of people punished for petty offences is intolerably high. This amount means that administrative methods were used against the Hungarian population to an inadmissible extent.

The courts point to the same thing. Between 1950-53 they dealt with the cases of 650,000 persons, and convictions were brought against 387,000.

Similarly, the system and practice of issuing mass fines for not meeting delivery obligations is an inadmissible mistake. Fines levied on working peasants, on cooperative farms, and kulaks for not meeting delivery obligations amounts to 400 million forints, of which, according to the laws in force, a significant part is illegal and unjust.”¹⁴⁸

Accumulated punishments

A family could be subjected to several violations of the law: resettlement, internment, forced labour, deportation to one of the closed forced labour camps for families in Hortobágy, forced labour in a foreign country—malenkij robot (toll)—prison, and prison labour.

The wife of **László Farkas**, who died a hero's death in the Second World War, Margit Hazslinszky, his only son László Farkas, and his mother-in-law Karola Hazslinszky, the brothers and sisters of his wife, Tibor Hazslinszky, Géza Hazslinszky, Karla Hazslinszky and her husband Pál Morvay and their two children were moved in with a kulak family in Kisköre. Later in the summer of 1952, they were deported to a farm in Borsos. The adult men worked in forced labour.¹⁴⁹

After suffering imprisonment and multiple internments, the doctor **Miklós Dadányi** and his wife and daughter, were taken, after a house search, from their home in Budapest to Miskolc. Their son was allowed to stay in Pest, but had to leave their apartment. The three family members who had been relocated in Miskolc were not allowed to stay together for long, as Miklós Dadányi had been accused of concealing food and condemned to three years in prison. After Miklós Dadányi's release, the whole family—since their son

¹⁴⁸ MOL M-KS 276 f. 52 cs.24 öe.

¹⁴⁹ Excerpt from an interview with **László Farkas**.

spent the summer holidays at home—were taken to the closed-forced labour camps for families in Borsós in Hortobágy.¹⁵⁰

“In July 1950 when I was relocated with my father and mother, they were taken from their villa on Talizmán Street. At first they were moved to the Bobák farm, then after six months they managed with great difficulty to move into an abandoned house in the village, so they didn’t have to spend that bitterly cold winter on the puszta in Jászság. This was a great improvement in civilisation, after the farmhouse with the earthen floor, to the ramshackle house in the village with a well in the courtyard. This was when Adam learned to truly appreciate the luxury of a bathroom. Still, this relative calm was full of anxiety and punctuated by police harassment. So as to further enhance the idyllic deportation, Adam, who had been designated a class enemy, was called in to the army in February 1952 and forced into labour service, which was designed to curb the class enemies and decimate their numbers. This was in spite of the fact that a military doctor diagnosed Adam’s asthma in January and said he would give him an exemption. After this humanitarian encouragement the order to join up arrived a few months later! It hadn’t been a year since we had to leave house and furniture and everything on Talizmán Street on Rózsadomb [Rose Hill]. The train that carried us away with its whitewashed windows, jolted us along a distance of barely 100 kilometres. We went to the farm by wagon, then six months later we went from the farm to the village. Now for the umpteenth time, we had to go to some new or, most probably, even worse unknown destination.”¹⁵¹

J. Gyula was heir to a landholding family of Abaúj County. In 1945 the family distributed the family land, except for 100 cadastral acres, among the peasants of the village. In 1949 they gave 110 cadastral acres to the state farm, and in 1950 the remainder of their land was taken from them. Similarly, in late 1950 they were taken from their country house and placed with a kulak family in the village. In January 1952 they were resettled at the Borsós farm in the Hortobágy.¹⁵²

After the war my widowed mother (my father died at home in 1943, he was a retired army officer), my younger sister, Judit M. and I went from prosperity to poverty. We finished our secondary school studies with difficulty, and we got

¹⁵⁰ Mrs. Miklós Dadányi, Mária Semsey, 1974.

¹⁵¹ Gábor Görgey, 1999, pp. 25–26.

¹⁵² J. Gyula’s memoirs: farm, Hortobágy (published by Bálint Magyar) 1983.

jobs. My mother was given a schoolteacher's pension. She didn't get a widow's pension after my father on the pretext that they couldn't find his files, neither at the Pension Institute nor the H.M. archives. During the night of 3 January, 1952, the AVH took me and my younger sister, (she was 17, I was 18) from our homes. They forced my mother soon afterwards to leave her home too and, after interrogating her, the AVH took her to the Tiszaszentimre camp in the Hortobágy forced labour camp complex. After interrogations that lasted five months in Fő St. we were sentenced, my sister and I, for "plotting to overthrow the people's democracy". My sister was taken to a state prison farm and I ended up in a coal mine where I worked for four years."¹⁵³

"After coming out of the communal hall (on 23 June, 1950 when Dr. István Vörös, a lawyer from Siklós, was deported to Borzas—Zs. H.), I caught a glimpse of my friend István Budimacz, who had lost his wife to the gas chamber, under the Arrow Cross regime; he had been in Mauthausen. Two of his acquaintances managed to rescue his two children from his wife's fate. Now they treated him as they had when he lived with his second wife. These Arrow Cross henchmen proved to be no different as Communists than when they had been operational under the Arrow Cross reign..."¹⁵⁴

Even though **Pallavicini, Borbála Andrásy's** husband, was ill in 1943, he had himself taken to the Upper House to protest against the anti-Jewish laws. Between 1945 and 1946, his eldest son György was in German captivity in Pest, later he was sent to Dachau concentration camp. After his release on 6 May, 1945, he was thrown into a Russian car at three in the afternoon and he was taken to the jail at Vilma Királynő utca [Queen Wilhelmina St.] 33. From there taken to the transit prison on Conti Street whence they took him a few weeks later to Lemberg on a bigger transport. In the spring of 1947, he was taken through Sverdlovsk to Tejsed in Northern Siberia. He died there on 21 July, 1949 at the age of 37. His son Antal changed his name to Pálinkás and became an officer in the People's Army. In 1956, he and his mates serving in Rétság freed Prince-Primate Mindszenty. He was executed on 10 December, 1957 for counter-revolutionary activities. Borbála Andrásy was relocated to Besenyszög between 1951 and 1953. Her mother was **Eleonóra Zichy**.

Éva Széchenyi's father, Bálint, "was allowed home from a Russian camp in exchange for Rákosi". Her mother was heir to the Romanovs; that was why she

¹⁵³ Excerpt from **Rezső Mertz's** memoirs.

¹⁵⁴ Excerpt from **Dr. István Vörös's** memoirs, "Everyone steals something."

stayed in Hungary to look after of her husband's grave. They were deprived of everything after 1945. They lived in Buda in a sub-let where they couldn't even take any furniture. Even so they were resettled. Éva Széchenyi was taken to a forced labour camp. **Mrs. Bálint Széchenyi** lived alone on a distant farm under dreadful conditions; helpless, she could thank her kind hosts and her fellow deportees that she survived.

“For a long time I thought that the evil paper had arrived on 16 June, 1951 that ordered us to please take ourselves off within 24 hours to the compulsory residence designated for us. This had the moral function of teaching the enemy of the people manners, that was me basically (the paper was filled out in my name, but my father pretended not to notice). It had the effect also of freeing up a pleasant apartment, specifically making it available for the people, or to be more specific Comrade G.I., the devil take him! Everybody did well; we were in moral balance, the people and etc. 16 June was a good date, but 16 July was too, for it was the last day we had to move out. The very last. So the carrot was dangled in front of my parents, who fell into the worst trap that could befall anyone in a dictatorship, they began to hope. But this did not ever happen again.

You mustn't worry, Lilike. You mustn't worry; you have to wait. You must wait, not because it helps, but because you must. If somebody goes away or is taken away, then you must wait, he or she will come back or they will be brought back.¹⁵⁵

Andrea Nikolits Nádasdy's father Mihály Nikolits was a high level official of Baranya County.

(Overseer of public affairs, for which he was appointed by Regent Miklós Horthy before the German occupation and the new Nazi rule.) Since he didn't enforce the anti-Semitic laws which were imposed on the country, he was arrested in 1944 and taken to a German concentration camp, somewhere in the Mecsek [mountains]. When the Russian troops were approaching, the camp was moved toward the west, thus at one point it ended up at Nagykanizsa. Mihály Nikolits decided that he would have to escape, for his family were left behind and he knew nothing about their fate. He managed to escape and arrived home in Pécs. Soon after, he was arrested on the charge of being an escaped Nazi. Fortunately, Jews who dared to come out of their hiding places vindicated her father, and the charges against him were dropped.

¹⁵⁵ Péter Esterházy, 2000, p.573, p. 675.



Mihály Nikolits and Aladár Konkoly They are out Hunting
Source: Andrea Nikolits Nádasdy



A view of mansion of széchenyi Baghy Gyula



A view of chapell and the family crypt
Source: Andrea Nikolits Nádasdy

Andrea's grandfather Gyula Baghy de Széchény owned five thousand acres of farmland. They rode out the siege in Budapest, then returned to the Baghy farm where they found both houses emptied; even the bricks had been carried off. The maternal grandparents went to Pécs to the house where the county had rented a house for the overseer at 4, Inczédy Dénes Street. Charles Batthyány and his family stayed with them for a while, but they soon left the country and ended up in South America. The maternal grandparents eventually also left Pécs, and since nothing was left of their two manor houses, they moved into three rooms of their home in Szolnok. The house was occupied by an AVO officer and his family. He protected it from vandals and allowed the former owners to use three rooms of the house. Mrs. Nikolits's younger sister, Zsófia, moved into one of the rooms with her family of five, since they had been forced to move out of her husband's manor in Upper Northern Hungary (now Slovakia) and every movable and immovable property was expropriated. The grandparents moved into the room next to them and the third room was occupied by the maternal great-grandmother, for she too had been thrown out of her home.



Gyula Széchenyi Baghy and his wife in exile in Cibakháza

Source: Andrea Nikolits Nádasdy

Andrea's parents, Andrea and Péter Nikolits, moved to a smaller house in Pécs and, then to Budapest, where the family was not so well known. The family rented the top floor of a three-story villa; the owner lived on the ground floor and the second level floor was occupied by the Austrian embassy.



The temporary asylum for the Nikolits family II.nd.district of Budapest Árvácska street 11.

Source: Andrea Nikolits Nádasdy

Her older brother Péter registered for law school. Andrea completed her fourth year in secondary school with the Ursulinesisters. Her father found work with the company AGRIMPEX, but not for long because of the “B-list”. In 1950 Péter, who was an excellent student, was at university for a year, before he left. It was better to leave than wait to be thrown out. Moreover, he had to work for his living. Fortunately, through the fencing club, (he was a junior fencing champion) he got a job with the MÁV [Hungarian State Railway], pushing files, but later he was taken to a forced labor camp. In the summer of 1951 the AVO came looking for the Nikolits family, with the order of deportation in hand, but on the floor below where the Austrian ambassador lived. Andrea Nikolits Nádasdy writes the following about their resettlement.



Andrea Nikolits Nádasdy
Source: Andrea Nikolits Nádasdy

“A sleepy, bad-tempered official opened the door. When he heard who they were looking for, he snapped at them, ‘There is no such person here. This is the Austrian Embassy. It is not even Hungarian territory’. So, to put it mildly, he told them where to get off. They left grumbling. Then he rushed up to us and warned us of the danger. We didn’t think for a moment that they wouldn’t return once they discovered their mistake.

We had to act fast. It was far better to disappear on our own initiative than wait to be sent off to some God-forsaken place to work in the rice fields. We held a quick consultation. Our parents thought it wise to hide out in Szolnok for the time being. There really was no other possibility. They didn’t wish to take us with them, especially as it meant going with them to an already crowded house in a highly uncertain situation. If we stayed in Pest, the problem of where to live had to be solved, at least until the danger was past and something turned up. Péter and I didn’t hesitate. Szolnok didn’t really attract us. It occurred to me that my girlfriend Mari Szőke’s sister had just got married. I thought that a bed had been freed up there. I phoned Mari and asked if could stay with her for a short time, otherwise, I would have to sleep on a park bench. She replied, come, but not to say why I was there, for her father was also afraid of being taken away. Her father was the proprietor of the Szőke restaurant on Veres Pálné Street. Péter asked his old fencing mate Dodó Szendey if he could stay with him. [...] We had to have papers even in Budapest to get around. We had to have a form that included a fixed abode and a place of work which the porter had to countersign, and it had to be sealed by the police.

Through a lucky accident a week after our separation I found a servant’s room where they took me in. Irma Széchenyi, the wife of a former army officer, was expecting a baby. She said I could stay with her until she had the baby. She was keeping the little room, understandably, for her baby. Considering Irma’s husband’s family background, she was not obviously a “class enemy,” which was why the authorities didn’t notice that Irma was born a countess. [...] After a few months my parents left the house in Szolnok, as Grandfather Gyula and Grandmother Mici were also relocated. No matter that our home was taken from us; they begrudged us even those three rooms. The dreaded night visit took place. There were three names on the list, the two old people and their granddaughter Kati. She stayed with them after the two other girls were relocated. They didn’t think my parents were there, so they escaped notice. My grandparents packed their belongings and left for Cibakháza, which was not too onerous, as it was nearby. My grandfather would not have survived a longer trip. As it was, the

poor man lasted only a few months, but it wasn't clear whether he was aware of what was going on.

My parents found a little summer cottage in Alsógöd along the Danube, which they could rent temporarily. [...] Meanwhile, my job as silk painter ended and I had to look for another. At that time a job interview with a party secretary of any company took place as follows: they asked me my grandfather's occupation, did my father have property and how much, what religion was he, etc.? They weren't overly interested in whether I was able to read and write, or whether I had a diploma rather they were interested in our origin and family background.

I don't know how, but I heard that the Capital City Fine Mechanical Firm was looking for a trainee. I didn't think they would employ me, but I decided to try anyway. If I was accepted onto their training programme, I could learn a skill, which would qualify me as working class. I was hired.”¹⁵⁶

After Release, The Work Camp

Prisoners who had been branded “class aliens”¹⁵⁷ could not return to their homes or their families. They were deported to one of the closed family forced labour camps in Hortobágy or they went to internment camps. In 1953 about 14% of those who had done their prison time were sent to camps. “Class alien” was a stigma that could never be wiped away; that is why throughout their whole lives they were followed, their movements, whereabouts and their acquaintances supervised. They were hired only for heavy physical jobs if they were released.

“László N. was 55 years old; he had been a ministerial counsellor and resident of Budapest. He came from a middle class family, his father was a lawyer. After completing his studies on 15 October, 1915 he joined the army with the Hussars, where he was gradually promoted to second-lieutenant. He was discharged in November 1918, whereupon he emigrated to South America, whence he returned to Hungary in 1943. He found employment at the Foreign Office as counselor, where he remained until 18 March, 1944 when he was dismissed because he refused to take the oath to Szálasi. Then he was unemployed. On 30 January,

¹⁵⁶ **Andrea N. Nádasdy**, 2006, pp. 44-51.

¹⁵⁷ Class alien was somebody who didn't belong to any class. According to Stalin's theory of two classes, one stratum: in Socialism one class consisted of the workers, the other was the working peasants, the intelligentsia was a stratum.

1945 he joined the Ministry of Defence as a military warden. He was dismissed in September of that year, and was resettled in Czechoslovakia, whence he returned in June 1947. In June 12, 1947 he was arrested by the AVH, for he was suspected of having committed crimes against the people when he had been ministerial counsellor. In August 1947 the Budapest People's Court condemned him to five years in prison. He served his sentence in various places. "At the moment he is in Márianosztra and is working as a scribe. He will complete his sentence on 17 August, 1952. I recommend that he be sent to Hortobágy."¹⁵⁸

János Ispánovics was sentenced by the people's court to two years' prison for war crimes; he was released in the summer of 1952. On the AVH's instructions they did not let him return to his home in Katymár. On the AVH's recommendation, the chief of police headquarters of Fejér County banished him with a resolution on 21 July, 1952 to the closed area of Kónya farm.¹⁵⁹

After serving his prison sentence, Gyula Szabó was also sent to the closed camp of Kónya by the police chief of Fejér County with their resolution of 29 July, 1952.

*"Subject **Gyula Szabó's** (1919. Vilma Pintér) banishment from his residence in Siófok and placement in a forced place of residence*

PRISONER IN DETENTION

To the Head of the Interior Ministry's Administrative Police Department IV/9, Budapest

The person designated as the subject had been sentenced to one year in prison by the court of Kaposvár for agitation, and he was released upon serving his sentence on 26 July, 1952. The Fejér County department of the AVH (State Defence Authority) has ordered the designated person to be taken to the county police station and recommended that he be banished from his place of residence in Siófok and be placed in forced residence in a closed area in Hortobágy.

I propose that the subject be banished and placed in forced residence.

I placed Gyula Szabó, resident of Siófok, under custody at 13 hours on 26 July, 1952. Székesfehérvár, July 28, 1952.

In place of the chief of the county police station:

Miksa Klár

Police Major"¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ **Zsuzsa Hantó**, 2002, pp. 27-30.

¹⁵⁹ ÁBTL 2.51.30.d.

¹⁶⁰ ÁBTL 2.51.30.d.

It served to strike fear into the “residents” of the closed-family forced-labour camps that a few heads of families, who protested about making children work and about the beatings and abuse, were taken to internment camps. The motive for the internment—according to the police report written in the camp—was a threatening letter which the officer in command attributed to a deported inmate, as well as the beating of the head of the farm by another deportee.

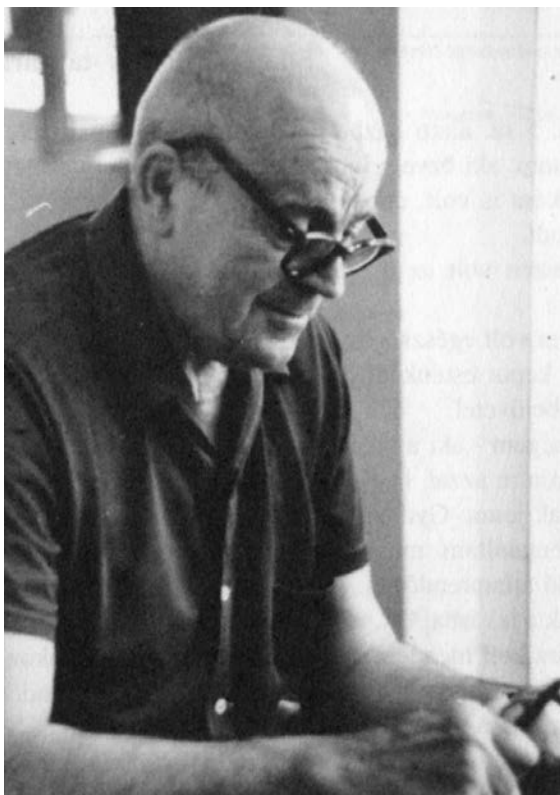
“On the morning of this day, when the officer in command woke up, he found a note in his window in which the following was written: “Be careful, work in a different way, your fate is sealed! The hour strikes! If you do not change your behaviour, you will hang!” It is the officer in command’s opinion that this note was placed on his window by Colonel of the Gendarmerie Ödön Fazekas Bede, for he went out on the 19th at around 23 hours in the evening to make his rounds. That was when he saw him come out of the building. He immediately reported the above to the State Defence Authority of Debrecen. He also reported that four days previously the deportee Dr. István Vörös had attacked the head of the farm István Csiszár in his office and beat him with his bare hands.”¹⁶¹

For these crimes, Ödön Fazekas Bede and Dr. István Vörös were taken to Debrecen, then to the State Defence Jail on Mosonyi Street. Dr. István Vörös wrote the following in his memoirs:

“The summer passed with difficulty in the camp, but it did pass and we were well into the autumn when an armed policeman appeared in the barracks and ordered me to get dressed and go with him. He waited for me to get dressed and I put on my only winter coat, as the nights were already cool. I said goodbye to my wife and we headed straight to the “house”. He opened the door facing the barracks and ushered me in. He closed the door and left, or perhaps he stayed outside, I have no way of knowing. I wasn’t there for long. I looked around the room, or rather fumbled around. There was an iron stove without stove-pipes, there was a tray on the top of it. Shortly the door opened, and in the darkness I could make out three men entering, István Csiszár, Sándor Szatmári, and Sándor Fekete. After they came in, Sándor Szatmári shone his electric torch into my eyes and ordered me to empty my pockets and even to take off my wedding ring. Since I had nothing in my pockets except for a handkerchief, and I didn’t let them pull off my ring, they kept shining the light in my eyes. It was clear to me that I would get a beating then and there. Having grasped the situation,

¹⁶¹ MOL XIX-B-1-j 40.d.106.00369.

and before they could beat me, I hit István Csiszár on the temple. He collapsed from the blow and broke the window and its frame behind him. The other two began hitting me. While defending myself, I thought that if my attackers were wounded in a way that was visible it would affect not only my situation here but also that of my wife. So I began hitting them so that at least the blows would not be visible on their faces. The brawl stopped when a policeman, alerted by the noise and the breaking of the window stepped in. After the struggle I heard that others would be interrogated as well as me. They were interrogated by the police. I suspected that the police wanted to engender fear.



*Portrait of István Vörös
Source: Vörös family*

In the morning the door opened again and a short man stepped in whom I had never seen before. He carried a rubber truncheon and behind his back stood a policeman with a machine-gun. He must have seen bruises on me for

he pointed to them and said that was what happened to those who didn't do as they were asked. Then he began beating me with the truncheon. I gave thanks to God that I didn't lose my temper and didn't lose my head, for it could have ended with my strangling the little man.

After a few days of rest to let the bruises fade a bit, they took me to the station house in Debrecen and put me in an isolation cell. Then they gave me the special treatment at the police station of Debrecen. They took me to the jail and locked me in one of the isolation cells. About my treatment and the sanitation it is better to say nothing. All I can say is that it was scandalous. Even pigs would have turned down the food. Yet in this jail I met a kind-hearted policeman, rare among his breed, who came to my cell and shared his own bread and bacon with me. As he said, this was what he ate too. He had brought it from home. He expressed his sympathy. It was days before my physical state and situation were examined. The doctor was a captain and didn't show himself to be the kind of doctor who cared about one's health. He did not give the impression of being a cultivated man. He declared that they should have done a better job of hitting me. I found out his name and I haven't forgotten it to this day; he was Comrade Captain Dr. Szentandrás. As I sat in the jail in Debrecen, it was difficult to imagine what would come next.

One night they opened the door of my cell and ordered me to come out. As I came up from the cellar I caught sight of several people, including a classmate of mine from high school, who served as general staff captain in the Hungarian Army, Tibor Szentirmai. As I came closer I recognised Sándor Varga and Lajos Kutor, acquaintances from Gordisa. The fourth was Lajos Badi, a resident of Piskó¹⁶² near Vajszlo, the fifth was György Fekete, who told me his name on the train. We were all heading for the train station at Debrecen. Two policemen began to handcuff us together, and I got the same handcuffs as my classmate. That was how we met for the first time since our graduation. We arrived in Budapest some time in November. They put us in a Black Maria and took us to the detention barracks. We didn't spend much time there, a few days at most, when we were informed that those interned here would go to the deaf-mute institute, which was on the same street. Those in the deaf-mute institute were all interned; the deaf-mutes were taken elsewhere. The prisoners there were an

¹⁶² Lajos Badi, Third-rate citizen. In: Zsuzsa Hantó, 2002, pp. 54-59.

*interesting variety of characters and occupations in the two-story building. We of the Borzas Lenin farm got work together, spinning yarn (fonalmentés).”*¹⁶³

*After the end of the Second World War when the people’s court cases were going on and when deportations, removals by force, relocations based on descent were proclaimed to be **crimes against humanity**, people were removed by force in Hungary and the Soviet bloc countries because of their origin and birth, and because they were classified as “class aliens.” They could do this, for Stalin had learned from history that genocide caused by cold, hunger, and the exhaustion brought on by a work schedule of 14-16 hours a day, was not a crime against humanity, but an **accident in the re-education camp**.*

The “blood-sucking parasites who exploited the people” had to be taught to work, by which they meant primarily physical work.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Excerpt from **Dr. István Vörös’s** memoirs entitled “Everyone steals something.”

¹⁶⁴ “My parents quickly got used to physical work. They were willing and able to do it. Most of the ones from Budapest didn’t share this attitude. They were offended, for they still looked down on physical work. As I say, my father didn’t look down on anything.” **Péter Esterházy**, 2000, p. 598.

THE LEGAL BACKGROUND OF THE EXPULSIONS

Before 1945 forceful relocation was an exceptional measure

The above-mentioned law prescribed banishment and police surveillance or custody only in the case of war or threat of war. Moreover, the banishment affected persons and not families. And banishment did not involve the confiscation of property. Once the war ended, legal conditions were restored.

In the Hungarian legal system police surveillance and custody are exceptional measures. Article of LXIII 1912, deals with the extraordinary measures that can be taken in time of war. This extraordinary power is granted so that *“in case of necessity, public security and order can be safeguarded and those administrative measures carried out that are necessary to bring the war to a successful conclusion. (4§), as well as “those members of the population, whose presence is deleterious to the war effort can be removed from fortified places that have been placed on war alert (6.§).* This exceptional power was meant to be used only during wartime and ceased when the war came to an end and “normal lawful conditions” were restored.

Article L. of 1914 complemented article LXIII of 1912 and article LXVIII of 1912.¹⁶⁵ According to §10. of L. of 1914:

“The Interior Ministry has authorised the Minister of the Interior to decree that individuals whose presence in certain areas of the country present a problem from the standpoint of the interests of the state or public order and safety from the point of view of waging war, be banished from the area—without consideration of residence—and removed to other areas and placed under police surveillance or even into custody if need be.”

“Based on the Ministry’s authorisation, the Minister of the Interior can also decree that a part of the population be removed from certain villages (cities)—

¹⁶⁵ Article LXVIII of 1912 concerned war service.

even in the case mentioned in the penultimate paragraph of 1912:LXIII.tc. 6.§— if their presence is disadvantageous from a military standpoint.”

Any loss to property suffered as a result of the measures mentioned in the above paragraph is not liable to compensation.

Those individuals banished or removed based on article §6. of LXIII of 1912 who cannot support themselves must be supported by the state. In exchange for this support they can be required to work in accordance with their capabilities.”

The People’s Law XX of 1919, concerned individuals who presented a threat to the achievements of the revolution, and prescribed their placement under police surveillance and custody.¹⁶⁶

“§1. Those individuals whose actions and attitude endanger the achievements of the revolution, as well as individuals whose actions or attitude present a danger to the interests of the people’s republic or disturb law and order from the standpoint of safeguarding the achievements of the revolution, depending on the circumstances, can be placed under police surveillance or if necessary taken into custody

Placement under police surveillance or into custody can be ordered and ended by the Council of Ministers.

Any loss of property suffered owing to being placed under police surveillance or taken into custody is not liable to compensation.

Those placed under police surveillance and taken into custody are to be supported by the state if they cannot support themselves.

The rules of placement under police surveillance and into custody must be determined by decree of the Minister of the Interior in agreement with the Minister of Justice.”

The revolutionary governing council’s Decree no. XCVIII of 1919 was the first to order that movable and immovable property could be confiscated for political reasons. Such a political reason, for example, could be actions aimed at overthrowing the Soviet Republic.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ People’s Law XX of 1919.

¹⁶⁷ The Revolutionary Governing Council Decree no. XCVIII concerning the confiscation of the property of counter-revolutionaries: §1. The movable and immovable property of all those Hungarian citizens, who are trying to overthrow the order of the Soviet Republic or restore the former order even from abroad or under occupied territories, can be confiscated without consideration to their immunity from being taken, under public property. The revolutionary court of law of Budapest decrees confiscation.”

The Minister of the Interior's Decree no. 4352 of 1920 called for *"the placement under police surveillance, into custody, and internment of those individuals who are dangerous to law and order, or to the social order and peace and suspect or who have a detrimental effect on economic life."* The decree distinguished between foreign (1.§) and non-foreign (2.§) citizens. Those foreigners who endangered law and order and public security, who were suspect or were detrimental to our economic life, had to be deported from the country and interned until they could be deported. Those who were not foreigners could be placed under police surveillance or taken into custody.

The decree §1. defined the concept of actions that endangered law and order and public security, that were risky and suspicious or detrimental to our economic life. *"Those individuals can be considered dangerous, who under the so-called Soviet Republic have committed actions that conflict with the criminal law book, as members of its organs, agents, commissaries or as part of its armed forces."*

"Considered to be risky are those individuals who have carried out activities that are aimed at overthrowing or disturbing the so-called Soviet Republic as it was founded, or endangered law and order and disturbed the public peace, from which it can be reasonably supposed that their continued presence endanger the security of the state or society or threaten law and order and public security."

"Considered suspect are those individuals, who since the collapse of the so-called Soviet Republic have agitated, or with other actions or words have displayed an attitude or behaviour from which it can be reasonably supposed that their objective was to restore this so-called Soviet Republic, or that they intended to overthrow violently the state or disturb the lawful order and peace of society."

"Those individuals can be considered detrimental to our economic life who endanger the public supply by accumulating goods, by acting as middlemen, overpricing, or engaging in forbidden traffic in foreign currency, or who evade or try to evade the decrees and measures established by the authorities concerning public supply and legal commerce."

Those individuals, who belong to the categories listed above and their relations and dependents, who live with them, can be taken into police custody. Placement under police surveillance was decreed by the police of the second degree at the recommendation of the police of the first degree. This decree could be appealed by the Minister of the Interior.

Being taken into custody or internment could be waived legally if it was prevented by some unavoidable reason (for example, a grave illness, advanced pregnancy in the case of women, the vital interest of infants.) (§2.)

Decree no. 4352 of 1920 of the Ministry of the Interior was complemented by Decree no. 30035 B.M. of 1920 which prescribed that *“every alien who is living in the country must appear in person with a passport so that he can be registered within 15 days of the promulgation of this decree.”* (§1.) In Budapest it was police headquarters, in the country it was the local police station or the village notary public, depending on one’s place of residence.

The Interior Ministry’s Decree no. 3000 of 1921 amended or complemented the Interior Ministry’s Decree no. 4352 of 1920, determined that, with a few exceptions, only the Minister of the Interior could order placement into custody.

The Legal Background of the Expulsion of Families between 1945 and 1953

The banishments were carried out in violation of the prevailing laws mentioned above.

They didn’t take individuals, they took whole families. The movable and immovable property of every member of a listed family was confiscated.

In his Decree no. 138.000/1945 B.M. [Interior Ministry] Ferenc Erdei already set out the rules for placement under police surveillance and in police custody in June of 1945.

Law VII of 1946 which bore the title “defence of the democratic order and criminal law of the republic” and which was called by some the executioner’s law, made possible the expulsion and partial or complete confiscation of property. The secondary punishment for persons convicted of a “crime” could be banishment from their homes: *“Natives could be banished from the community where they presented a danger to the democratic order, even if this was their legal domicile.”* (§10.)

While the decree and law promulgated in the period following the Second World War made possible police surveillance or custody and confiscation of property; nevertheless, the resolutions prescribing expulsion didn’t refer to

these. In the 1950s regarding the reasons for the final decisions sent out to the heads of families, who had been placed under police surveillance or taken into custody, it was the laws and decrees analysed in the following that turned up as references.

The law II. §150.¹⁶⁸ of 1939 dealt with the following:

§150 (1) *The Ministry can order that **persons** whose presence in certain communities or areas of the country presented a danger to law and order and security or some other important state interest or was detrimental to economic life, could be banished from the community or from that part of the country, without considering that this was their lawful domicile. Such persons could be placed under police surveillance or if necessary taken into police custody where they lived or in another area of the country.*

*(2) Based on the present § persons placed or taken into police custody **could be compelled to work** in accordance with their capabilities.*

*(3) Based on the present § a person who was banished or placed under police surveillance and taken into custody must be **supported** if he cannot support himself from the revenue of his property or earnings, and, in addition, if he has no relations who are required to support him and are able to do so, the **state must support him**. If this be the case, **persons who are not in custody** can be compelled to do suitable work in accordance with their capabilities. [emphasis—Zs. H.]*

(4) The detailed rules covering police surveillance and custody are determined in the framework of the present § with the concurrence of the Minister of the Interior and Minister of Justice.

The above-mentioned law prescribed banishment and police surveillance or custody only in the case of war or threat of war. Moreover, the banishment affected persons and not families. And banishment did not involve the confiscation of property. Once the war ended, legal conditions were restored. The law prescribed four possibilities for supporting a person who was taken into police custody. If he had income or earnings, he had to support himself. If he could not support himself from his income or earnings, he could be compelled to do suitable work in accordance with his capabilities. Insofar as he had next of kin who could support him, that person could be compelled to do work in accordance with his capabilities. Insofar as he was not able to

¹⁶⁸ Law II of 1939 about homeland defence—*Banishment and police surveillance or placement under custody*.

support himself and he had no next of kin who could support him, the state had to support him.

Decree no. 8130 M.E. of 1939 based on law II §150. of 1939 dealt with banishment, police surveillance, or custody. The decree concerned those individuals whose presence in certain parts of the country presented a danger to law and order and security or to some other state interest or who were economically detrimental. The police could restrict persons who presented a risk to public order and security in two ways.

- They could be placed under police surveillance in their place of residence.
- These dangerous individuals could be banished. Their banishment to other cities or communities also involved placement under police surveillance, but only in certain exceptional cases did this involve police custody.

The Minister of the Interior Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer with his Decree no. 760/1939 put into force the detailed rules to the Prime Minister's Decree no. 8130 of 1939. Taking into police custody (internment) was implemented by the police of the first degree. It could be carried out only in the communities designated by the Minister of the Interior, where groups of the interned were taken by the police or perhaps by the military. Only in exceptional cases were individuals taken alone. Care had to be taken that members of a family who lived in the same household be placed near the head of the family. A record had to be taken of the most necessary things that were left with the interned. The building where they were taken had to be locked from the outside at night. The internment had to be carried out humanely, and persons had to be placed with consideration for their level of education and social standing. The restrictive measures could be taken only with consideration for the order of the place of custody, and to prevent any connivance that endangered the objective of internment. The individual could at his own expense provide for his comfort commensurate with his social standing or wealth. Correspondence was monitored. The interned could not use telegraph or telephone. The Minister of the Interior himself could order someone to be interned directly.

Department IV of the Ministry of the Interior put into effect this law, which was supposed to be used in case of war or a situation similar to war, with its Decree no. 228.010/1948.IV./I.B.M., which has not been made public to this day.

The resolution of banishment passed between 1945 and 1953 referred to §56. of law XXX of 1929,¹⁶⁹ based on which the final decision must be carried out without consideration of appeal”.

§56. of the law referred to.

§56. (1) *That administrative resolution, which can be appealed or about which complaint can be made to the public administration court, cannot be put into effect before it becomes law, except:*

- a. if its implementation is expressly allowed by a provision of law;*
- b. if its immediate implementation is necessary owing to an important public interest, or in the case of public danger or to avert irreparable damage. If this is the case, its implementation must be declared in a clause of the resolution, or if the necessity of implementation emerges later, it must be declared expressly and based on good grounds.*
- c. Neither the petition for review, nor the procedure launched as a consequence of this will prevent the implementation of the legally binding resolution enacted in the course of the main procedure.”*

There was no possibility of appeal in two cases: if the provision of law allowed the implementation, or if immediate implementation was necessary to avert public danger or irreparable harm. In such a case the possibility of its implementation must be definitely pronounced based on good grounds in a clause of the resolution or in a separate resolution. The final resolution must allow for appeal and the appeal *could not have the effect of postponement from the standpoint of implementation.*

*“In the course of implementation it was greatly significant—wrote the author of the final report on July 23, 1951—that a complaint could be lodged against the final resolution and we investigated and pronounced judgment on these complaints that very day—before transport. Consequently, we could take into consideration those circumstances that escaped our notice while collecting information, and we could correct any inaccuracies that have crept up.”*¹⁷⁰

Was a single day enough to submit an appeal and pass a verdict? The recollections prove that it wasn't. Appeals weren't accepted even if the person to be banished was merely a sub-tenant and even if the porter attested to him. Allowing a class alien to sublet a room was enough justification for banishment.

¹⁶⁹ tv. Law XXX of 1929 about the organisation of administration.

¹⁷⁰ The strictly confidential final resolution of July 23, 1951 “concerning the banishment of undesirable elements from Budapest”. /1951 V.21—1951.VIII.18/ÁBTL 4.1. A-287 p. 39.

Banishment took a form, which was unknown before the 1950's. **Taking whole families to work camps was a peculiar manifestation of socialist humanism.** Regulations concerning persons sent to work in the 12 closed camps in Hortobágy, Nagykunság, and Hajdúság and the state farms in Hortobágy were instructions in Ücs IV 00384/1950 B.M. IV. I will write more about this in the next chapter.

Between 1950 and 1953, in contrast to the reference to the law, the banishment—police surveillance, taking into police custody (internment)—took place peacefully, in the period that followed the peace treaty that ended World War II. They didn't take individuals, they took whole families. The movable and immovable property of every member of a listed family was confiscated. Every form of banishment took place without resorting to court procedures; bailiffs became agents of state defence, and the police used the only specific sociological tool of the state, "physical force." The banishments were carried out in violation of the prevailing laws mentioned above.

The masque of human rights

"War was peace, freedom was slavery, and ignorance was strength."

(George Orwell)

Laws safeguarded the rights of citizens, but guarantees relating to their enforcement were missing. According to the introduction of Law I of 1946 concerning Hungary's form of government:

"The National Assembly elected on the basis of general, equal, direct, and secret suffrage sets up the form of state in the name of the Hungarian people and on their behalf. The form of state, most suited to the will and interests of the nation, is the Hungarian republic.

It ensures the natural and inalienable human rights of the citizens of the republic, and for the Hungarian people well-ordered coexistence, and a peaceful cooperation with other peoples.

The natural and inalienable rights of citizens are personal freedoms, the right not to be oppressed, the assurance of a human life free of fear and want, the free expression of thought and speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, rights of private property and personal security, the right to work

and make a living worthy of human life, the right to education, and the right to participate in directing the life of the state and the right of self-government.

No citizen can be deprived of these rights without due process, and, within the framework of a democratic system, the Hungarian state uniformly and equally safeguards these rights for its citizens.”

Affected parties could not turn to the courts to defend their rights as citizens. The monolithic power structure, which ended the division of branches of government (legislative, executive, and judicial), solved the problem “*by distorting on the one hand the criminal law codices by techniques of interpretation, and on the other hand, created, in addition to the publicly announced legal provisions—substituting their content—another system of norms (a pseudo-legality if you will).*”¹⁷¹

Anyone could legally be judged guilty in criminal law, whose activities were not illegal but only “reactionary”. József Révai argued in the *Szabad Nép* [Free People] on June 22, 1946 that “reactionary = anti-Communist.” But even a Communist could be deemed an enemy if he was a rival.¹⁷² The following words were synonyms of “reactionary”: “class alien,” “class enemy”, “kulak”, “arousing hatred”, “organising illegally,” “infringing regulations.” Of the anti-Communist lists, the kulak list was the one that was familiar to the public, even though there were others. The social list took into consideration not the individual’s economic situation, but mainly his or her imagined or actual political attitudes. The new administrative apparatus had to take into consideration that it wasn’t the value of his land or other property that determined the kulak or class enemy, but his occupation or social status before the liberation and after. The question was whether he had committed acts of an anti-Communist character, in which case he was a class enemy. The line wasn’t drawn according to whether the individual was a Southern Slav or German or Hungarian, but whether he was part of the working class or the “exploiting class.” It wasn’t an objective standard that determined who was a worker and who an “exploiter”.¹⁷³

According to Frigyes Kahler the entire system of criminal law was undermined by this separation of guilt from legality. The content of this pseudo-legality was determined by the demands of the current resolutions

¹⁷¹ Frigyes Kahler, 2002, p. 68.

¹⁷² Sándor Szakács—Tibor Zinner, 1997, p. 51.

¹⁷³ BML. MSZMP ir. 36 f. 2 cs. 44 ő.e.

of the Party. In the situation created by Stalin's letter written in the summer of 1948, Rákosi analysed the tasks facing the MDP [Hungarian Workers' Party] at the meeting of the central leadership held on November 27, 1948. *"Every nation can contribute something new and specific of its own in building socialism, but basically and essentially and in the decisive questions there is no such thing as a specific national path...So long as the peasant can see that the kulak is getting on quite well, he will not be motivated to cooperate. This was the case in the Soviet Union, but the only way we can accomplish this radically is to take away his land, his house, his machines. What we will do with these, we don't know. Perhaps we will set up special kulak villages, as in the Soviet Union, but we have to understand that this sow's ear will not become a silk purse."*¹⁷⁴

*"This chapter of pseudo-law reminds one of the Byzantine courts that examined heretics or the Spanish Inquisition of the late Middle Ages. These recent descendants of the "thought courts" did the same thing when they wanted to know whether the person undergoing the procedure confessed heretical views."*¹⁷⁵

"The FBI and the CIA covered half the earth with their agents; they even went undercover among Americans who professed different views, but—except for the McCarthy era—they were not looking for opinions."

*In contrast, the Hungarian Állambiztonsági Szolgálat [State Defence Security Service] (and its legal predecessor) formed its agents and used them for thought crimes. They followed the current party instructions as the thought police of the MKP [Hungarian Communist Party], MDP [Hungarian Workers' Party], later the MSZMP [Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party]."*¹⁷⁶

If there is no objective standard of culpability, then anyone, anywhere can commit any kind of crime whatsoever and be punished for it. György Faludy describes this situation in the following way. The *kocsma* [pub] of Dunapentel, which we know from Gyula Krúdy's novels, was a legendary inn, even in Faludy's eyes. He liked their wine and their food from the late Árpád era—wheat soup with pork, veal in rush-tuber sauce—which you couldn't get anywhere else, neither in a restaurant nor in anyone's house. The *kocsma* was handed down from father to son through eleven generations. *"Oil lamps, wreaths of onions hung up to dry, the aroma of food and pipe smoke, each of*

¹⁷⁴ MOL—M-KS-276f 52 cs.4.ő.e.

¹⁷⁵ Frigyes Kahler, 2002, p. 71.

¹⁷⁶ János Kenedi, 2000, pp. 36-37.

which is not particularly pleasant separately, but in this kocsmá it blended in such a marvellous way—or perhaps the innkeeper blended them consciously as he had learned it from his father—that my nostrils quivered with rapture, whenever I thought of the kocsmá of Dunapentele.”

The innkeeper looked up Faludy in 1949 and asked for his help: “He told me that the Party wanted to take away his kocsmá. He’d known for a long time that you couldn’t spit against the wind and he didn’t wish to. Months ago he had offered his kocsmá to the state: gratis, with the wine cellar, the pigs, the poultry, and the plot of land, on one condition: that they keep him on as waiter and his wife as cook. He didn’t even mind if they landed him with a manager, cashier, supervisor, head-cook, the whole works, it didn’t matter, he would serve them like an idiot, just to stay on. But the local party secretary wanted their fine house. He told him flat that they would take his kocsmá. So that they could do this more easily they declared him a kulak and chief exploiter. Why don’t they write in the textbooks that Sándor Petőfi’s father, the good old Petrovics, an innkeeper, was a kulak too? So now they could do anything with a person? And could I help him? Unfortunately, I couldn’t. I didn’t even try. They could do whatever they wanted with someone who was a kulak, who had been declared a kulak, for that was exactly why he’d been declared a kulak. Besides, I wasn’t acquainted with any of the ministers, and even if I had known them it would have done no good to turn to them. These people—out of principle or fear—never did any good for anyone. So I didn’t promise the innkeeper anything; he left wiping his brow. That evening he killed with an axe his diminutive wife, who panted when she spoke, and also his quiet, tubercular daughter. He butchered his pigs, shot his horse with a single bullet, then slaughtered his cows and poultry. He cut the latter into pieces and doused them with petroleum so they couldn’t be taken to market the following day. Finally he went down into the cellar, pulled the plugs from the kegs, and when he’d finished, hanged himself on that finely arched wooden gate through which so many mail coaches, dispatch riders, carriages, travellers, bicyclists, and automobiles had passed through into the courtyard since 1688.”¹⁷⁷

But why did they use laws during peace times that had been intended for time of war. There were two reasons for this; on the one hand, they put on a show of human rights; on the other, Stalin did not believe that the military

¹⁷⁷ György Faludy, 1987, pp. 295-296.

victory in the Second World War had ended the war. He believed that the war was going on; its “changed character” merely justified different means.¹⁷⁸

In George Orwell’s words, “*war was peace, freedom was slavery, and ignorance was strength*”. In Orwell’s novel the essence of war was destruction—not necessarily of lives, but of the results of human endeavour. The destruction of the results of human work in daily life meant that the needs of the population were constantly underestimated. Consequently, half of the things needed for life were lacking; the bosses considered this to be a good thing. Their policy was to keep even privileged groups on the edge of want, for the state of constant scarcity increased the importance of tiny privileges, thus accentuating differences among groups. At the same time their attitude of being in a state of war and thus in danger, meant that they thought that they could survive only if power was in the hands of a tightly limited caste. The Party’s two objectives were to conquer the entire world and to destroy once and for all the possibility of independent thought. A peace which was truly perpetual would be like perpetual war. This was the hidden meaning—although the great majority of the party members grasped it only superficially—of the Party’s motto—war was peace.

Freedom meant slavery, complete subordination, emptiness meant total self-surrender. If the hero, Winston, could have died hating Big Brother, this would have meant freedom, but Winston was emptied and filled with the love of Big Brother. This meant complete servitude and freedom in the world of Oceania. Party loyalty meant ignorance and unconsciousness at the same time. The transformation of thought, then the ending of thought and gaps in memory. The Party’s power lay in its total obliteration of the past. When the television bellowed that there was more food, clothing, housing, furniture, heating, etc. than there had been the previous year, everyone believed it. Winston was thrown into the Party’s prison because he remembered, for example, that there wasn’t ever enough to eat, never any underwear without holes, the furniture was dilapidated and broken and there was never enough heat. Nothing was cheap, except for synthetic gin. Victory gin.

¹⁷⁸ Sándor Szakács—Tibor Zinner, 1997.

Dual Value System

In addition to the openly publicized laws, the political police formed the “dual value system,” based on the resolutions passed by the leading organs and leaders of the MDP [Hungarian Workers’ Party]. The way they were carried out is illustrated by the confessions of the survivors and literary excerpts. On examining the brutality of the political police and other power-enforcement organisations in this interconnected system, one finds that it wasn’t the excesses of sadists, but the official manifestation of state reason.¹⁷⁹



Peter Esterházy the writer

Miklós Esterházy was the great- grandfather of writer Péter Esterházy. Therein lay the infinite danger, the destructive force of Communism, of Socialism, as Péter Esterházy’s great-grandfather put it.

Count Miklós Esterházy (1855-1925), Imperial and Royal Chamberlain, 1887-1918- was a member of the House of Lords, President of the Hungarian Catholic Circle.

On 24 March, 1919 at 4:30 p.m. Gyula Halnek, the dictator, the former stonemason foreman, broke into the Esterházy castle in Csákvár. His entire family had grown up on the Esterházy estate and died in their service.

¹⁷⁹ Frigyes Kahler, 2002.



Esterházy-castle in Csákvár

“Halnek, at the head of armed gendarmes and people’s guards, forced his way into the castle and demanded that he be brought to me. They demand...the last time it was the emperor and king who had demanded something from me, although formally that too was a request...And the children in those days for the donkey cart. [...] The gendarmes with mannlichers and revolvers surrounded me with a challenging and arrogant attitude. Halnek fished a telegramme from his pocket, which he read to me in a stentorian voice, according to which people’s commissar Lukács [György Lukács—Zs. H.] directed Velinczki county commissar to seize the art treasures of Csákvár Manor House under threat of death, and that the directorate of Csákvár immediately take the necessary steps. [...] They took stock of my books, for example, in the following way: 129 Italian books (a large encyclopedia of art and history) so many centimeters high. Instead of Voltaire, they wrote Moltke. I didn’t say a word. If the teachers did it so, it was all right with me.

The chapel was next, where these thugs entered without taking off their hats. Halnek and the corn-cutter, whereupon I was late in going down to my knees, for I pretended to kneel before them, shamefully I did it, knowing full well whom I was kneeling to Vanity is difficult to overcome, even for old people.

Beside the altar in a glass cabinet were the shirt, sword, and medals of my son Alajos who was slain in action. One or two of the gunmen who had been at the

front looked at this with reverence. Halnek did not like this mood. Comrade, we do not inventory that. It is worthless and of no interest to anyone.

This little episode woke me up to the infinitely dangerous nature of Communism, its destructive force and disposition (if it wished, it couldn't do otherwise), because they were sprawled out in my armchair, unpleasant. They'll eventually go away. Horribile dictu, they can shoot me in the head, also unpleasant. But the secret of eternal life is not here, not in my castle. With their infantile ideas they bamboozle people and wreck the country? Unpleasant, true, but the country would survive; it was strong—even if it was weak, it was strong—it would survive even this. But that wave of the hand over the devotional objects of Alajos, that seemed particularly terrifying. Let the Almighty forgive me, but that wave of the hand was just like it had been his, the wave of the Lord's hand, the Creator's, who had just put an end to something.

"Hero's death? None. Enshrining? None. My son? Non existent. We don't take an inventory of them, so they don't exist. There is no past, no history, no country, no tradition. The Communists are the present, the brutal now."¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ Péter Esterházy, 2000, pp. 386-390.

“KULAK LIST”, “KULAK REVIEW”

Kulak is a little known concept in the English speaking world. For this publication, our operational definition in accordance with the government regulations of the early 1950's in Hungary - kulak is an individual landowner with “excessive” land and/or properties. One who is perceived as “class alien” who is an exploiting, self-serving individual, therefore an enemy of the state who fails to live up to socialist/communist ideals.

Kulaks (Russian: кулак, kulak, “fist”, by extension “tight-fisted”; kurkuls in Ukraine, also used in Russian texts in Ukrainian contexts) were a category of relatively affluent peasants in the later Russian Empire, Soviet Russia, and early Soviet Union.

According to the political theory of Marxism-Leninism developed in the early 1900s, the kulaks were class enemies of the poorer peasants and were described by Vladimir Lenin as “bloodsuckers, vampires, plunderers of the people and profiteers, who batten on famine.”

“The events with which we deal may be summed up as follows: In 1929-1932 the Soviet Communist Party under Stalin’s leadership, for reasons that will emerge in the course of our narrative, struck a double blow at the peasantry of the USSR as a whole: dekulakization and collectivization. Dekulakization meant the killing, or deportation to the Arctic with their families, of millions of peasants, in principle the better-off, in practice the most influential and the most recalcitrant to the Party’s plans. Collectivization meant the effective abolition of private property in land, and the concentration of the remaining peasantry in ‘collective’ farms under Party control. The two measures resulted in millions of deaths among the deportees in particular, but also among the undeported in certain areas such as Kazakhstan.”¹⁸¹

¹⁸¹ Robert Conquest, 1986, pp 3-4.



Starvation of peasant

Source: Robert Conquest, 1986, p. 197

“It is impossible to quantify the vast amount of human suffering, the blood, sweat, and tears, of those who survived collectivization. But the number of lives lost during the collectivization period has been estimated by competent statistician at the staggering figure of five million. The famine accounted for most of these deaths. Thus the collectivization of Russian peasant agriculture began with the horrors of mass deportation and ended with the ordeal of mass famine.”¹⁸²

This model of the determination of “enemies” was adopted almost in its entirety by the ruling communists in Hungary. The kulak list, like the social list, or the list of class aliens was the “list of those who were outside history”. The “placement outside history” was for the long-term. According to instructions issued in 1951, those who “appeared on the kulak list would always be “kulaks”.¹⁸³

¹⁸² Lazar Volin, 1970, pp 233-234.

¹⁸³ MOL—XIX-K-7-c79-16/31952.

Precedents

After the land reform of 1945, a basic change took place in the operative structure of agriculture. In 1946 the proportion of farms that were 0-5 kh [cadastral acre] in area was 68.8%, the proportion of farms of 5-20 kh was 26.7%, 20-50 kh was 3.5%. The number of medium-sized and large farms that were in private hands had shrunk, and the property groups that formed the farms up to 20 kh were 95.5%, 53.6% of arable land. The changed operative structure also changed the structure of agrarian society, and the smallholders, the farmers who produced mainly for their own consumption became typical. Of the 642,342 of those who had got access to land, 394,291 (farmhands, agricultural workers, tradesmen who worked on the farm, and forest workers) became independent as a result of the land distribution. These new farms were significant from the standpoint of production. The size of the land that was distributed among families was between 5 to 6 kh on average, and this could not provide a living for those who were given the land, the farmers who were called new landowners.

Thus, agrarian reform that conformed to the new structure did not follow from the land reform and distribution of land. The so-called new landowners were not supported by capital or equipment, and they didn't receive any assistance in acquiring the skills needed for managing an independent farm. The smallholdings were not allowed to become bigger by leasing and becoming economically viable. For want of measures to support the launching of farms, the small farms, which were in the majority, were barely able to provide a subsistence living. The much longed-for peasant life, the "ethics of sacrifice and acquisition" proved to be a source of accumulation, but spirit and confidence in the future could not make up for the lack of professional knowledge and skills, small agricultural machinery, and credit. Only the medium-sized peasant farms (of 20 kh or more or 83,604 or 4.2%) could yield enough produce for the market.

Ernő Gerő interpreted the problems that cropped up in agriculture—which originated from the structure and lack of real agrarian reform—as though those who had the 4.2% of farms were responsible. Consequently, he interpreted the agrarian policy as a kulak issue. Mátyás Rákosi in his speech in Kecskemét held on 20 August, 1948, the festival of new bread, said "*that the Hungarian peasantry had reached a fork in the road*". They could choose between private farms or collectives. That is, "*the people's democracies, which*

*were building socialism in the cities so successfully, had to begin this work in the villages, too, and to strengthen the working peasants and make them prosperous.”*¹⁸⁴

The building of socialism in the villages involved setting up the collectives. Rákosi answered the question of “how” at the 27 November, 1948 meeting of the Central Directorate. On the one hand, he asserted that there was no separate national road to building socialism; the only way was the path of Soviet Collectivisation. On the other hand, the collectivisation, the joining of a collective can happen only if the land and equipment were taken away from the kulaks and, since “you can’t make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear,” kulak villages would be set up as in the Soviet Union. The middling and poor peasants would be given the land in the collective. Expropriating the kulaks’ land would give a huge impetus to the collective farms.¹⁸⁵

János Kádár held a briefing on the “methods of squandering the new agrarian policy for small policy change” at the meeting of the Ministry of the Interior’s Political Steering Committee held on 13 December, 1948. The affairs of the community should be managed in such a way that the entire community feels the effects, but the rich elements of the village feel the effects a hundredfold. According to János Kádár the definition of kulak was easy; it was based on Lenin’s definition: Kulak = exploiter. The interpretation that anyone who had a farm that was larger than 25 cadastral acres was not precise, for a kulak who regularly used farm labour was an exploiter.¹⁸⁶

Political conditions in 1948 did not make the establishment of a kulak village possible; this took place from 23 June, 1950. On that was when the closed camps for relocated families were set up in the Hortobágy, Nagykunság, and Hajdúság. Not only propertied peasants, but also those who were thought to be unwilling to live in a Communist way, that is, the “enemy elements” of the village, were sent to so-called “kulak villages.” Between June 1950 and October 1953 twelve forced labour camps were set up for banished families.¹⁸⁷

Beginning with 1949 the policies of collectivisation and the restrictions of kulaks were integrally intertwined. Economic and political restrictions were instituted in order to make the kulaks feel the effects a hundredfold.

¹⁸⁴ Mátyás Rákosi, 1955, p. 242.

¹⁸⁵ MOL 276 f. 52 cs.4 o.e.

¹⁸⁶ Erzsébet Kajári, 1999, pp. 209-210.

¹⁸⁷ Zsuzsa Hantó, 2006, 2007.

Economic and Political Restrictions on the Kulaks in 1948-49



Economic Restrictions
Source: Rubicon, 2010/9, p. 48.

- Kulaks were excluded from economic associations (grazing associations, agricultural associations, credit associations).
- Kulaks were deprived of their trade licences (brandy distilling, retailing of wine and spirits, soda-water plants, greengrocer's, milk collection, butcher's trade, fire-wood trade, etc.)
- Forced production was introduced. Kulaks were forced to raise crops that required the most work and were the most risky in terms of production. They broke down in terms of individuals what they had to produce and how much, regardless of the quality of the land and the farming traditions of the community.
- The crop system was distributed by the sub-prefect (of the county) to districts, villages, and county production committees and set in writing.
- The precise time to sow, harvest, thresh etc. was set.¹⁸⁸ Each part of the work was supervised and farmers were reported and forced to pay fines for being late. In 1949 2,192 people were punished for "not doing their work satisfactorily"; one was executed, 20 were sentenced to prison, 34 were interned, as they were accused of stopping the machinery without a good reason and sabotaging democracy. Although all they had done is what the peasantry had done for hundreds of years, they worked the land as the land required.¹⁸⁹
- Kulaks were forced to lend their yokes to poor peasants after their work was done.
- Taxes and produce-delivery requirements were fixed progressively, not in proportion to the arable land, but to the entire land.
- If villages did not fulfill their quota of produce delivery, the kulaks had to supply what was missing.
- Kulaks could not dismiss employees, who were made redundant because of the requirement to offer land to the State; they had to continue to pay their wages.
- The number and breed of animals that could be kept on the farm were fixed.

¹⁸⁸ As is well known, agricultural work cannot be bound to precise dates, as this can differ widely depending on the weather, the quality of the soil, the lay of the land, and the wind. It is senseless to set times for the entire country and for every area.

¹⁸⁹ MOL XIX-A-2-z 00120.

- Kulaks were also compelled to fatten pigs and deliver them to make up for the short-fall in fat and meat in Budapest, in addition to the produce deliveries required of them.
- Kulaks could not participate in agricultural fairs.
- Kulaks were excluded from any agricultural sales, for example, of sowing seeds or chemical fertilizers.
- If kulaks were unable to fulfill their produce-delivery quotas, fines rose progressively. Their upper limit was the value of the kulak's property.
- A detailed government decree was issued in the summer of 1949 concerning contributions imposed for agricultural development.¹⁹⁰ It was based on this that contributions had to be paid depending on the size determined of the real estate (25 ha) and the clear profit of cadaster (350 gold crowns). The decree regulated in detail the variations based on which the farmer would have to pay contributions.

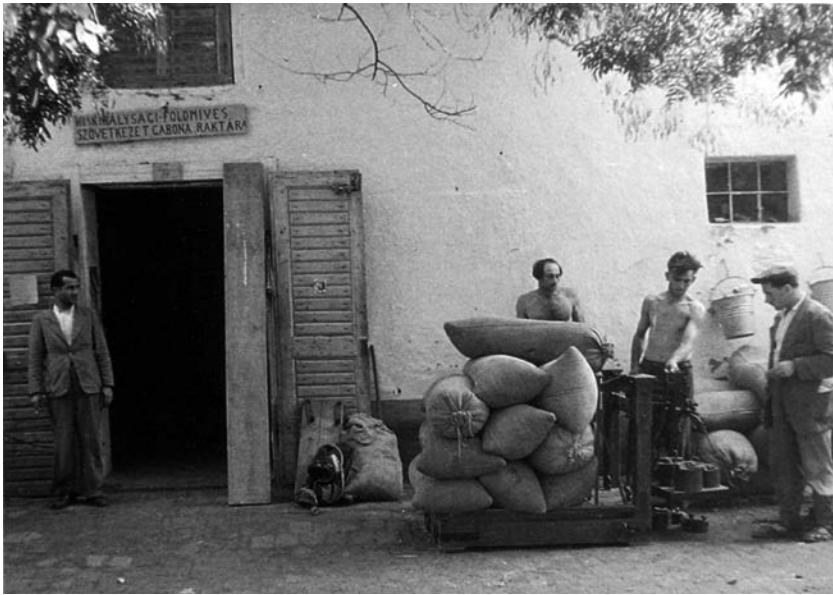
Political restrictions in 1949

In the first months of the year the leadership of the village prefecture, the people's committees, and the collectives was changed. They ordered that the officers of the grazing associations should also be changed. With the elections and the election of officials every kulak and anyone under kulak influence could be deprived of his position of leadership and other functions.

The Consequences of the Measures Restricting the Kulaks in 1949

Persons who owned more than 5 acres of land, and who weren't engaged primarily in agricultural work, offered their land to the State en masse, without asking for compensation. They did this because, of the increasing burden—produce-delivery quotas—and also the fear of being put on the kulak list, in which case they would not only lose their land, but also their jobs as they would be classified as class aliens.

¹⁹⁰ Government Decree no. 4112/1949/1949. (VI.26).



Source: Rubicon, 2010/9, p. 47.

The offers of land were successful only in part; the state accepted the land and equipment without compensation, so the objective of restricting the

kulaks was achieved. Even so such individuals did not escape being put on the kulak list in 1952, even though they had been made indigent.

At first the rich peasants offered only a part of their land, leaving enough land to be considered medium-sized farms.

This rapid reaction to the law surprised the leadership. It was decided that they would accept the mass surrender of land, but they ordered that all the equipment and livestock also be rented out. By the spring of 1949 the official standpoint was that farms should be taken not as property but as a lease.

Nevertheless, this stance changed quickly. According to Government Decree no. 4091/1949 and Decree no. 15003/1949 FM, the owner or tenant of agricultural property could offer it and his livestock with farm equipment and buildings to the state for sale or lease in writing or orally. The introduction to the decree explained it as follows:



Source: Rubicon, 2010/9, p. 48.

“Numerous land owners have recently voluntarily offered their real estate and equipment to the State as property or lease. Due to the lack of regulation concerning the evaluation of these offers, it was a cumbersome process, and the person making the offer was kept in suspense for an inequitably long time. It is to end this inequity and in the interests of the quick implementation of these

legal transactions that the government of the Hungarian Republic issues this decree.

Afterwards the government also asserts that the State will make a legal transaction only in the case of a decision made with free will and devoid of any compulsion.”

All this conjured up a spirit of complete legality. According to the provision of law of §11., property could be offered for sale or lease in writing or orally. In the case of offers of real estate in exchange for amortization, the sale price was determined freely, but it could not be more than 45 times the clear profit of cadaster; in the case of equipment, at its average market price. (§3. (1) a) and b)). According to the law, the sale price of the real estate would be paid by the state within five years, so it paid 35% the first year, then the rest within four years. The recompense for equipment would be paid within five years in equal installments (§3. (2)).

But when this law was issued they forgot that those making the offers were not in a position in the 1950's to take advantage of the law. The ruin of the rich farmers had begun in 1949 with administrative methods, and these were “refined” in the course of months.

Progressive taxation was introduced, of which almost 40% of the agricultural tax burden was laid on the kulaks. The progressive collection system was extended to almost every kind of produce. The new credits were ended, and from one day to the next the counter-value was collected, of which the maximum was the total value of the farm.

A Curious Form of Restricting the Kulaks: Giving Homes to People Banished from Budapest

Beginning in May 1951 “undesirable elements in Budapest,” who had been made homeless, were placed in kulak homes.

According to official documents, Borbála Andrásy Pallavicini was placed with the Szurma family in the village of Besenyszög in Szolnok County. *“I repeatedly give them my address written on the order in vain; I’m told that it has changed and I am to be taken to the other end of the village, to a little house next to an empty plot of land. The farmer, Ignác Cseh, is in prison, his wife tells me. She slept in her clothes for she has been waiting up for us all night. There is no room in the house, for the men who worked at the agricultural machine*

station were living in one room, and she and her son lived in the other one. And a family was living in the room by the courtyard. A child was just about to be born. She could put me in the so-called summer kitchen. This was a free-standing small building; it had stairs descending to the cellar and it was also a smoke-house. There was a small fireplace with two small windows. There was barely enough room for the bed and suitcases.”¹⁹¹



The family Poich in exile in Ókány
Source: Poich family

¹⁹¹ Borbála Andrásy Pallavicini, 1990, p. 20.



Source: Poich family

Péter Esterházy's family was taken to Hort.

"134.

István Simon was waiting for us at the gate.

"The Simon family?" the chauffeur asked.

"Yes." He answered, not taking his eyes from my father.

"ISTVÁN SIMON kulak" Asked the policeman, for the first time like a policeman.

"That's what they say," the old peasant shrugged and continued staring at my father imperturbably.

He stepped down from the high compartment and before he could do anything or ask to be helped down István leaped up to him...

“Welcome, Count, sir,” he roared and grabbed my father by the hand and smacked a kiss on it. This surprised my father so much, that he allowed it. The old man cried how glad he was and what an honour it was for him (as he haughtily boasted in the village: the finest man of Pest to the finest farmer), and he didn’t know how he had deserved this boon. He had never even met or shaken hands with such a high lord. Finally my father was nonplussed.

“All right, all right my dear Mr. Simon,” and he took him by the shoulders as if he were trying to hold a drunkard up. “We’re not alone,” he added softly.

The woman stood in the kitchen in front of the stove. Rozi was busy baking, so she did not turn around when we entered.

“Did you kiss his hand?” She growled softly but audibly. Our procession stopped short.

“Did you kiss his hand?”

“I did,” said István quietly, to himself, to the air, angrily. “As one should.”

“What an idiot you are!” and she turned her back again. She was cooking dinner for us, eggs with onions, green peppers, and sausage; the eggs had yolks that were truly yellow.

The two old women immediately put me to bed. My great-grandmother, who was in bed, ordered my father to come to her.

“You managed that well, my grandson. Hort, das ist wirklich schön, einen richtigen Hort zu besitzen. (Hort means treasure, refuge, asylum in German) Refuge. Well done, son.”

“No, nothing’s good, Grandma,” my father muttered. He was tired again. “This whole thing, Grandma, this whole thing, this is entirely Hungarian.”

*“They took us to the village, to the designated houses, which had been requisitioned from the kulaks. They deposited us in János Fekete’s courtyard. After the officials left, the master of the house went up to my father. My father introduced himself: **Vilmos Cseh and family**. I was brought here with my family, because I was a colonel. Thereupon, the master of the house replied, “I am Vitéz János Fekete, welcome, Colonel, sir. We are having difficult times, try to bear with us.”¹⁹²*

¹⁹² Excerpt from **Dr. Vilmos Cseh’s** reminiscences “They banished me 50 years ago” (manuscript)



Source: Poich family

“My father informed me by telegramme to come home immediately, for that very night we were going to be removed forcibly. By the time I arrived in Kispest, I found our apartment in a fearful mess. The lorry came for us at 11 o’clock that night. They loaded us on it. We couldn’t even go to the WC without being accompanied by the AVO, then they closed the freight cars and we headed off. It was noon by the time we arrived at the place by the name of Kenyár to which we had been moved. Our lodgings were designated. We were placed with a kulak family, named Szabó, who lived near the train station in one corner of an empty space. The family lived in the first building; we lived in the main house, which had two sides. There was a small porch in front which opened a hallway, and

*a room each on either side. A Jewish couple was placed in the room with the floor. The poor things had already been to hell and back in Germany. They had owned a fairly large cobbler's workshop in Kispest with several assistants. That was their current crime.*¹⁹³

The Technical-Organisational Background to the “Liquidation” of the Kulaks: the “Kulak Lists”

In a strictly confidential report written to András Hegedűs on 10 July, 1952, Ernő Gerő severely criticised the policy of the intensifying suppression of the agricultural class. They wouldn't be able to keep to the timetable of collectivisation, which was drafted in November 1949, if they didn't turn away from the policy of restricting kulaks to the policy of “liquidating” them. The change-over could not be gradual but had to be a great leap, a qualitative change.¹⁹⁴

The court procedures, which grew in number to an unprecedented degree in 1952, helped to destroy the kulaks economically and politically. In that year 12,533 kulaks were fined 11,900, 904 forints.¹⁹⁵ The courts in 1952 condemned 1,555 kulaks to complete confiscation of property, altogether 10,422 cadastral acres¹⁹⁶

On Gerő's instructions the agricultural the Department of Agriculture rewrote the report dated 4 August, 1952. Based on these guidelines, the planned transformation to the liquidation policy was broken down into concrete steps.¹⁹⁷ The first step was to deprive them of their technical production foundation. The second was to take away their land, the third was to remove them from the agricultural sector. The means of achieving this was the kulak list.

¹⁹³ Excerpt from **Ibolya Korényi's** manuscript, “The Story of Our Banishment”.

¹⁹⁴ MOL MK-S 276 f.74 cs.5 ő.e.

¹⁹⁵ The price of the most important articles were as follows: 1 kg half-white bread 2.80 ft., 1 kg fine flour 4.60ft, 1 kg sugar 11.20 ft, 1 kg pork fat 35.0 ft., 1 litre cooking oil 24.0 ft, 1 kg beef (uniform weighing) 20.50 ft, 1 kg pork (uniform weighing) 26.40 ft, 10 dkg cold cuts 3.0 ft, 10 dkg butter (78% fat) 6.60 ft, 10 dkg butter (82% fat) 7.20 ft, 1 litre raw milk 3.0 ft, 1 litre pasteurised milk 3.60 ft, Source: *Szabad Nép* [Free People] Dec. 2, 1951 issue, p. 5. The average monthly wage was 1000 ft.

¹⁹⁶ MOL XIX-B-1-q-52.d. 0046-1952.

¹⁹⁷ **András Hegedűs**, 1988, **Klára Kávási**, 1991, **Pál Závada**, 1991, **Kata Jávör et al**, 2000, **Melinda Irba**, 2002, **Ö. József Kovács**, 2007, **Dániel Bolgár**, 2008.



Source Rubicon, 2010/9, p. 46., 48.

The motive for compiling the lists: *“In the current phase of building socialism, the former capitalist class, as well as the kulaks, are trying to find their place in various areas of our economic life. This is facilitated for them by the fact*

that cadres in leading roles haven't been chosen with suitable discretion; their connections in certain areas can also help find them a job...I feel it is necessary to locate these individuals, and remove them from their residence."¹⁹⁸

Minister of the Interior Árpád Házy¹⁹⁹ in his strictly confidential report of 11 October, 1952—to “the headquarters of the president of every county council and Budapest council”²⁰⁰—ordered a review of the kulak list, so that there should be a final register of exploiters and enemies that are blocking the social transformation of the villages, “so that the most numerous representatives of the kulaks, the village capitalists should be on the new list and the restricting regulations can be used against them in every case.”²⁰¹

The legally binding Decree no. 2, tvr ²⁰² of 1952, issued the guidelines for review. A kulak was someone who owned (in lease or usufructuary lease) an area of land—a garden or orchard counted four-fold, a vineyard counted five-fold—25 cadastral acres, whose pure profit reached or exceeded 350 gold crowns. Anyone who had a threshing machine or an industrial plant which was powered by machines, or who carried on a trade or a catering trade [in 1952—Zs. H.], if the clear profit generated by these activities carried out in the farm reached or exceeded 100 gold crowns. It also included anyone who had paid agricultural development contributions in 1949.

The questionnaire contained the following data: name, address, area of land owned before 1948, together with lease, how many employees before 1948, current land owned together with lease [1952—Zs. H.], how many employees in 1952, was there a plant, or trade or plant powered by a machine, in addition to the land, before 1 June, 1948 and in 1952, and payment agricultural contributions before 1949.

The basic principle of the review was that the existing kulak list should form the basis for the review. Most communities did not have such a list. Kulaks were indicated by a “K” on the cadastre property, and on the farmers’ list. There was no separate list, and previously neither the Party nor the council agencies determined who would be included the list. Then a precise definition

¹⁹⁸ MOL XIX-B-1-j 41.d.124. 0528

¹⁹⁹ Árpád Házy—was a tailor who had had five years of elementary school, politician. He was Minister of the Interior from 20 April, 1951 to 14 November, 1952.

²⁰⁰ MOL. XIX-B-1-q 52. d. 0046/2/1952.

²⁰¹ MOL XIX-B-1-q 35.d.0046/2/1952—In the report of the Ministry of the Interior’s Local Councils Department dated April 15, 1953 István Pozsonyi deputy head of department informed the Ministry of the Interior about the measures taken to restrict the kulaks.

²⁰² Tvr = törvényerejű rendelet [Decree of legal force]

was made for the tax authorities, which accorded with the concept of the “kulak category” of the 1949 census. “Kulaks” were those who had farms larger than about 25 acres, or their income exceeded 350 gold crowns. Those owning less than 25 acres of land, but a part of which was used as vineyard, garden, or orchard, for these were counted five-fold. Also, those who had more than 25 acres, even if they did not work the land themselves but leased it in whole or in part.

From 1949 the “kulak” concept went through a qualitative change without ever having been defined unequivocally and precisely. It was only when the contributions imposed on the villages were distributed was this qualification of kulak impressed on those affected. According to the official statistics in 1952, there were 40,300 kulak farms. Of these there were 24,900 who owned land of less than 24 acres in area; the average had 14 acres. There were 15,400 kulaks, who owned more than 25 acres, and the average area per farm was 20 acres.

The compilation of these lists gave the councils a new job to do from October 1952. The existing list of farms and financial documents provided the database for the review. The presidents of the local councils were handed the results gathered during the review on 25 October. There wasn’t even a month left to gather the documents that attested to the pre-1 January, 1948 economic situation of those who figured on the lists and who had been deported from Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. There was no time to receive written documents, so their decision was based only on oral information.

One could deviate “downwards” or “upwards” from the three guidelines. The main point of view was that there was “exploitation” or that there was not. One could deviate “downwards” when the area of land was less or the value of the gold crown was less, but the farmer had employees before 1 June, 1948 or during the period of review. In any event, those who were exploiters, or who made a living from the work of others, regardless of the size of the property, had to be listed. One could deviate “upwards” if the land area was larger than 25 acres or the value of the gold crowns was greater than 350, but the land was worked by the farmer and his family, without employing anyone else.

Also listed were those who fitted any of the above-mentioned criteria, but had gone abroad or been interned, condemned, or deported. The authorities kept a record of those who had been sent to the family work camps as “relocations”; their residence was designated as the “Hortobágy”.

The deadline²⁰³ was very tight—the national statistics summarising the situation and the preparation of the report was due on December 31th. Consequently, circumspect and thorough work was impossible. The results of the review had to be reported every day and the councils and heads of districts and county committees sent inane evaluations: “the meetings ordered were held”, “the work of the review has begun”, “the work connected with the review was in process”, “no hostile manifestations have taken place.”²⁰⁴

The review was directed by the Interior Ministry’s Local Council Department and the supervision was carried out by the agricultural group of the coordinating department headed by János Rapp, who was associated with this Department. On 29 and 31 October two conflicting reports were issued evaluating their experience in carrying out the review nationally. János Rapp’s group drew the reviewers’ attention to the fact that it was not a list of class aliens that was ordered, but “*a review of the list of exploiters who had land or used land, and kulaks.*”²⁰⁵ István Pozsonyi asserted that they had succeeded in compiling a list of “enemies,” who blocked the socialist transformation of the villages, and he continued thus: “*There is no doubt that by using the newly compiled kulak list our councils and the peasant policies of our Party could be more effective and could carry out the agricultural produce collection and the measures restricting the kulaks.*”²⁰⁶

According to the lists there were 71,603 kulaks in the country. In the “statement” a distinction was made between those qualified as kulaks in the law no. 2 of 1952 and those who were not qualified as kulaks according to this law, but who had been listed anyway. These two main groups appeared in the Interior Ministry’s kulak report. According to the legally binding law no. 2 of 1952 there were four categories of kulaks:

- a. the number of those having more than 25 acres of land at their disposal was 13,447
- b. the number of those having less than 25 acres of land at their disposal was 28,752.
- c. the number of the landless, who had offered their land to the state, was 14,884

²⁰³ MOL XIX-A-2-z 0046/2/1952

²⁰⁴ MOL. XIX-K-7-c 4. d.

²⁰⁵ MOL XIX-A-2 0046/99/1952 BM [Ministry of the Interior]. ü.cs.

²⁰⁶ MOL XIX-B-1-q 25.d. 0046/2/1952.

- d. the number of the landless, whose land had been confiscated, was 2,126, totaling 59,229.

According to Law No. 2 of 1952, those, who were not qualified as kulaks but who were listed nonetheless, were classified in the following categories:

- a. the number of working peasants according to area of land was 4,733.
- b. the number of lawyers, notaries, priests or ministers, teachers and other intellectuals who currently had land at their disposal was 391
- c. the number of lawyers, notaries, priests and ministers, teachers and other intellectuals who did not have land at their disposal currently was 1,020.
- d. the number of merchants and tradesmen, etc. who currently had land at their disposal was 1,857.
- e. the number of merchants, tradesmen, etc. who did not have land at their disposal currently, was 1,379
- f. the number of those listed in other categories who currently had land at their disposal was 516
- g. the number of those figuring in other categories who did not have land at their disposal currently was 2,478.

There were altogether 12,374 people who according to the law did not qualify as kulaks.²⁰⁷

The statement asserts that the 1953 list of farmers contained 38,090 farmers qualifying as kulaks. The difference between the two statements was 33,513 people, in favour of the Interior Ministry's report. The more detailed report shows that an increase of 43% in the number of kulaks was made possible by the fact that even pre-1948 property was taken into consideration. Thus, individuals who might have been listed were left out due to the carelessness of the local council; consequently, they were propertiless class aliens. A significant migration had begun among those who had been propertied. Compared with the farm list of 1951, 17% of kulaks throughout the country moved away from their homes, leaving their property behind, and became industrial workers. The arable land of the kulaks shrank by 71% compared to the 1951 list.

The kulak list of Pécsvárad served as the model for compiling the lists. The reports made during the compilations and exemptions and the final kulak list is on the CD.

²⁰⁷ MOL XIX-B-1-q 41.d. 0090/19/1953

The Kulak List of Pécsvárad

The short history of Pécsvárad



It was founded in 998 by Hungary's first monarch, King St. Stephen. In medieval times the abbey of the Benedictine monks of Pécsvárad was one of Hungary's spiritual centers. After the Turkish Occupation, the old coat of arms of the Abbey and then landowners were exchanged on seals, crests and even altars by that of St. George the Dragon-Slayer. This remains the official crest of the town. During the time Germans, Jews and Slovaks have been invited and settled down. In the First and Second World Wars Pécsvárad lost many soldiers from the different ethnic minorities.



Jews and Gypsies were in great number deported from the town from Mai of 1944 to German concentration camps. From December 1944, the young Germans over the age of 17 were taken for forced labor “málenkij robot” to the Soviet Union. Not too many returned from these camps alive. From 1945, Germans from this area were resettled to those parts of Germany which were occupied by British, American and Soviet troops. From 1947, Hungarians of Northern Hungary were settled in Pécsvárad inhabit the vacant houses left behind the deported Germans. The liquidation of civil society, including the kulak-list, ruined the life of countless members of the community.

In the last decades the town has rapidly developed as a regional center. The good name of Pécsvárad as a center of cultural and artistic activities is maintained by numerous amateur creative and performing art and music groups at the regional festivals.

In Pécsvárad we encounter all the possible descriptions of kulaks: there were “Swabian kulaks”, “Hungarian kulaks”, “Upper Northern Hungarian kulaks”, “Southern Slav banned- list kulaks”, “settlers who became kulaks”. In addition to being listed according to origin, they were listed by occupation. There were “agriculturalist and leaser kulaks”, “merchant and horse-dealer kulaks”, the “miller,” the “innkeeper”, the “kulak who owned a small machine plant”, but

there were also the “priest or minister, gendarme, intellectual kulaks”. In addition to farmers, independent artisans and tradesmen, merchants, as well as private and state officials played a role in the society of Pécsvárad.

On 18 November, 1952 the executive committee of the community council of Pécsvárad reviewed the kulak list at an extraordinary meeting. Thirty people were kept on the list and nine asked to be taken off the list for the following reasons. The executive committee recommended that **István Gémes** be exempted, because it was his father who had leased a pub, and he died in 1936. Since then the family had never done anything other than cultivate the land. István Gémes had never kept a hired hand; only members of his family worked the land. He had not paid contributions for agricultural development in 1949. Further, **Sándor Fuller** worked on his leased land himself. His land was only 1 acre, and he made his living in a haulage service. He didn't have an industrial plant, he wasn't an exploiter. The committee also recommended the exemption of **Dr. László Grósz**, a lawyer who didn't do any kind of agricultural work. Since he had inherited 1900 square-fathoms²⁰⁸ of vineyard from his Jewish brother who had died, and he had a house, so now he had two houses. He could be qualified as a class alien but not kulak. Then there was the widow **Mrs. Elek Bánusz** who had been a household employee before she married. Her husband had leased a pub. He died in 1947 and left her indebted and with five children. She claimed that her coachman was a partner in the haulage business, as she shared half the profits with him. There was **Mária Benedek** who came from the village of Szellő at the request of her half-brother István Marx, who had been called up in 1942, to manage the estate of 16 acres which belonged to her two siblings, István Marx who had disappeared, and widowed Mrs. Gyula Külgusz, a resident of Vasas. She worked the land as a single elderly woman. **János Gombos**, a farmer whose land, together with the real estate of his son-in-law, who had disappeared, exceeded 25 acres but he had never exploited anyone. He was a war invalid and he and his family worked the land themselves and he employed a hired hand only when he became disabled and unable to work. The executive committee also dealt with the case of **János Nagy**, who hitherto had not appeared on the list. They determined that he retailed wine of his own production; he had nothing other than his 2000 square-fathoms of vineyard. He didn't have a permanent employee, and he himself took care of his honey-bees, and so could not be called a kulak.

²⁰⁸ One square-fathom = 3,57 m² = 38,32 squarefeet.

There was also **Antal Tichi**, water-miller, who never had any employees, and the clear profit of his land came to 87 gold crowns. **Vilmos Merk**, former water-miller, had two acres of land and, also never hired anyone, so could not be qualified as a kulak. Antal Kovács was a landowner of Szilágypusztá and the council of Szilágypusztá put him on the list, for that was his last place of residence. Imre Benedek was listed by the executive committee, because he was the son of a well-known kulak of Erzsébet.

The Executive Committee of Baranya County Council issued a resolution on 30 March, 1953 that of the nine people recommended for exemption in Pécsvárad, six had to be reinstated on the kulak list: István Gémes, Erzsébet Benedek (*“she was the daughter of Benedek, kulak of Kékesd who took the land of her relative, an SS officer, to work it as kulak. The entire Benedek family has been qualified as kulak. They kept a permanent employee, for they couldn’t work the land by themselves.”*). Sándor Fuller, János Gombos, widow Mrs. Elek Bánusz, and Dr. László Grósz. On the report of 6 May, 1953 Mária Benedek appeared as the 37th. (*“18 acres 593 fathoms 216 gold crowns. She did not pay agricultural development contributions. She came here from the village of Szellő in 1942 at the request of her half-brother István Marx to cultivate his land, but she is an elderly woman.”*) She was taken off the following list dated 12 May, 1953.

They also instructed the chairman of the community council that those on the list had to be judged as kulaks in terms of taxation and compulsory produce delivery; thus, a plan had to be prepared for each individual, and the kulak list had to be made public. Then they warned the chairman that to put someone on a kulak list or to remove him or her could be done only with the written permission of the Minister of the Interior. Those on the list had to make compulsory produce deliveries, regardless of whether or not the objective criteria were there for their fulfilment. In 1948/49 progressive deliveries were the same for the medium peasants and large farmers. Beginning with 1949/50 the kulaks had to fulfill larger compulsory produce deliveries than the medium peasants. From 1950/51 this grew sevenfold.

There were 36 names on the list of 12 May, 1953.

In his report of 18, June 1953 to the chairman of the community council of Pécsvárad, the chairman of the district council of Pécsvárad recommended, after reviewing the definition of kulak, the exemption of 11 individuals: János Bibecz, Károly Liszál, Antal Koch, László Anschau, Sándor Molnár, Károly Mihály, Sándor Fuller, Dr. László Grósz, Imre Benedek, János Inhoff,

and Márton Puch. The recommendation asserted that they didn't have any employees, they weren't exploiters, and the clear profit from the land in addition to the former industrial plant didn't exceed 100 gold crowns and also that two had died. In his petition to the directory department of the district council, Ferenc Harmat asked to be exempted. He was successful. He justified this by asserting that he had never had land, nor a delivery book, and he had been employed in industrial work. As a result of the exemptions, 12 people were taken off the list, which originally contained the 36 individuals.

The final kulak list of Pécsvárad was submitted on 19 June, 1953 where 24 people appeared on the list. The farmers of Pécsvárad appeared as numbers 349 to 372 on the national kulak list. (CD) Of the 24 who appeared on the list before 1948, there were 5 agriculturalists, 1 cartwright, 7 innkeepers, 1 farm overseer, 1 animal dealer, 2 butchers, 2 mill owners, 1 owner of a threshing-machine, 1 horse-dealer, 1 tenant of land, 2 individuals of unknown occupation. In 1949 six individuals had paid agricultural development contributions: the two butchers, the tenant, and three agriculturalists. Twelve individuals had a plant in addition to the land, shops, or plant powered by machines.

In 1952-53 at the time the list was compiled, nine individuals did agricultural work, the others were workers or had unknown occupations (one worked in a household, two were unskilled workers, one was a day laborer, two were workers, one was an entrepreneur, one did casual work, one was a quarryman, six had unknown occupations.)

Two farmers had land that exceeded the value of 350 gold crowns or 25 cadastre acres, but only before 1948. By the time the list was prepared, the largest land area was 17 cadastre acres, and only three farmers owned property larger than 10 acres. (17,13,11 cadastre acres) Seven owned no land at all, nor any other kind of agricultural property.

In Baranya County the number of kulaks were as follows: in 1952 there were 2,873 kulaks. Their number rose by 45% to 4,180 in January 1953. 23% had left their place of residence and their arable land had shrunk by 75%.²⁰⁹

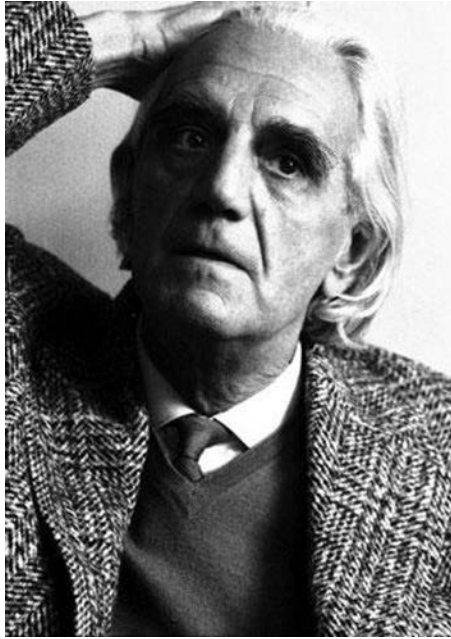
The villages, including Pécsvárad, completed their review in November 1952; the district review committees closed their work in December 1952, then because of the growing requests for review the lists were completed by May 1953. The process thus consisted of three stages. The executive committees of the local councils, together with the local party operatives, who were familiar

²⁰⁹ PII. 276. f. 67 cs. 185. ő.e

with local conditions, tried to exempt as many individuals as they could and recommended that they be taken off the kulak lists. In contrast the district review committees instructed that those designated to be taken off the list to remain on the list. Indeed, they further recommended that additional ones be added to the list. The chairmen of the district committees made the final decision at the third stage, although in several controversial cases they took into consideration the Ministry for Collecting Surplus Produce and Livestock, as well as the opinion of those competent in county organs. It transpired out of the review of the Pécsvárad District of Baranya County that the president of the district council played the role of balancer, and he significantly shortened the lists, which had been modified by the review committees.

Writer at the Border ²¹⁰

The Case of Géza Ottlik



Géza Ottlik

Source: Ottlik Circle of Gödöllő

Géza Ottlik (May 9, 1912 in Budapest—October 9, 1990 in Budapest) was a Hungarian writer, translator, mathematician, and bridge theorist. He attended the military schools at Kőszeg and Budapest, and studied mathematics and physics at Budapest University 1931-1935. After a brief career on Hungarian Radio, he was a secretary of the Hungarian PEN Club from 1945 to 1957. As he was unable to publish his works for political reasons from 1950-1957 he earned his living by translations. He translated mainly from English (Charles Dickens, George Bernard Shaw, John Osborne, Evelyn Waugh); and German (Thomas Mann, G. Keller, Stefan Zweig).

²¹⁰ Zsuzsa Hantó, 2006/b

In 1946-47 in Gödöllő I began writing a radio play entitled the Riddle of Valencia, which was supposed to be a scientific mystery, writes Géza Ottlik in the forward to his three short novels published in 1989. "The Radio, that is Miklós Cseres, asked to read my very rough draft. To my utmost alarm he accepted it as is. He had it typed out, with copies for the actors and for the prompter and everything. I had to go on a trip in early 1947. All right, I thought, I'll correct it on my return. By the time I got back from Rome the "fifties" had already begun in October 1947. My scientific mystery was swallowed up (together with me) by the mystery of history."

Ottlik confessed that his writing career was "as full of holes as Swiss cheese", since it was full of long pauses. At the same time he distinguished between silence and falling silent. Silence entailed the concentration of energies, a new novel could be maturing in every particle of silence—he said in his interview with Pál Réz. There were historic reasons for falling silent.

"I became silent, for instance, and so did my friends and Hungarian literature in general, in March 1944, when the Nazis occupied the country. Then again when I took back the first manuscript of my novel, Iskola a határon [School at the Border], from the publisher in 1948. That isn't what I mean by the writer's silence, not this kind of silence."

The mystery of history that swallowed the writer, which he calls falling silent, was the consequence in both cases of a world order that had collapsed. He went silent in 1944, but he could and did act. In addition to carrying out his civil defence service, he rescued, among others, the persecuted poet István Vas. From 1947, Géza Ottlik was a victim of history. He made a living by translating. We know very little about this period of his life. We encounter references in some of his writings. For example, in the *Riddle of Valencia*, one of the main characters, an elderly theoretical physicist's grandson, says the following about the relationship between his grandfather and grandmother... "how much he admired your courage...*the neglect and humiliation that lasted for decades, the spirit in which you endured it all.*"

The Ottlik family of Felsőözora and Kohanócz was one of the highly respected Hungarian noble families of ancient lineage. They produced high-ranking state officials, generals, and army officers. Owing merely to his origin, Ottlik merited the post-war stigmas of "class alien", "class enemy", "reactionary", "exploiter".



Spouse of Géza Ottlik



The father of Géza Ottlik

BELÜGYMINISZTERIUM		
szám. Ér.: 1953.		
A beadvány száma: 23.)		
kelte:		
Előírat:		
Utóírat:		
Iktatókönyvből kivette:		
Letisztázta:		
Egyeztettek:		
Elküldés napja: 1953. 11. 3. Elküldte: K. E.		
Irattárba érkezett:		
A kiadmányozó tisztviselő		
neve:		
állása:		
Tárgy:		
Ottlik Géza gödöllői lakos kulák ügye.		
Utasítás a kiadónak:		
Utasítás az irattárnak:		
194.		
Külfő:	Tétel:	Alapszám:
Együttel elintéztett szám:		
Kapcsolatos szám:		
Határidő:		
Lassa:		
Kiadmányozás (jóváhagyás) előtt:		
Kiadmányozás (jóváhagyás) után:		
Elküldés után (irattárba helyezés előtt):		
SZIGORUAN TITKOS		
Belügyminisztérium II. Közf. Járások Főoszt. - Titkos Ügykezelőség		
Érkezett: 1953. 11. 3.		Melléklet: 3 db 1/2 lap
00391953		
Magyar Országos Levéltár		XIX-B-1-q-23-0039/1953

Source: MOL XIX-B-1-q-23-0039/1953

MINISZTERTANÁCS HIVATALA

0039/1953. T. T. T.

37/1953. P. T. T.

Szigorúan titkos!
Készült két példányban.

Budapest, 1953. február 6.

Szám: D-327

Pozsonyi István főosztályvezető elvtárs,
Belügyminisztérium

8/2

B u d a p e s t ,

Tárgy: Ottlik Géza gödöllői lakos kulák ügye.

Ottlik Géza, Gödöllő Köztársaság ut 45.sz. alatti lakos, a Magyar Írók Szövetségének tagja, aki jelenleg is írásából él, 1948-ban 67 kh. földet örökölt Kecskeméten. Az örökölt földet felajánlotta az államnak térítés nélkül, ebből 53 kh. el is fogadtak. A kezelésében maradt 14 kh. földet 1952-ben újra felajánlotta az államnak, melyet a Dózsa tisz. Kecskeméten el is fogadott. A föld telekkönyvi átírása folyamatban van. Mivel 1948-tól a 14 kh. ingatlana után mezőgazdasági fejlesztési járulékot fizetett, a gödöllői községi Tanács kuláknak minősítette. Ezt a gödöllői járási és a pestmegyei Tanács jóváhagyta emellett, hogy tulajdonában csak 14 kh. ingatlan volt.

Kérem az Elvtársat, utasítsa a pestmegyei Tanács elnökét, hogy Ottlik Gézát a kulák-jegyzékből töröljék, mivel megállapítható, hogy földműveléssel sem felszabadulás előtt, sem utána nem foglalkozott, írásából élt és jelenleg is mint író dolgozik.

Megített intézkedéséről és annak végrehajtásáról kérem, hogy hozzam, február 15-ig küldjön jelentést.



Pozsonyi István
/dr. Pozsonyi István György

Magyar Országos
Levéltár

XIX-B-1-q-23-0039/1953

(35. d.)

Enl II 12-jm
RegB

Rejtőc!

Vitézkedéséi apmural megtemmii
est előőtag velem megbeszél.

7/11. Miro

gpi II 14

Miro elot!

Pozsonyi elot. keni nyakelt
Kulakhistonál való vitélti.

Reg. 1953. jún. 23.

21

Rejtőc!

Megyeri Páncsának kül
deudó utastást elrezi-
teni, amit Pozsonyi elot.
it alá.

7/24. Miro

8/3

Magyar Országos
Levéltár

XIX-B-1-q-23-0039/1953

(35.d.)

Regardless of the fact that he didn't cultivate his inherited estates and earned his living as a writer and literary translator, and that at the first opportunity he offered his lands to the state without asking for compensation. In 1948 the state accepted 53 cadastre acres of the 67 cadastral acres offered. In 1952 in Kecskemét, where the family estates were located, when the Dózsa farmers' cooperative was set up Géza Ottlik offered the 4 cadastral acres, which earlier he could only lease out, to the cooperative without compensation. The offer was accepted.

When the kulak list was compiled, a part of Ottlik's inherited land became the property of the state; another part was cultivated by the cooperative. In spite of this, he was labelled a kulak, because according to Law no. 2 issued in 1952 a kulak was defined as "someone who had paid an agricultural-development contribution in 1949."

In his memorandum written on 6 February, 1953, to the comrade head of department István Pozsonyi, Dr. György Pogácsás asked that Géza Ottlik be taken off the kulak list. József Mikó didn't take him off the list on 16 February, referring to the confidential decree of the Interior Ministry 0046/1952 BM [Interior Ministry].

"Ministry of the Interior

Local Councils Department

III/3. Coordinating Department

Report

Re: The case of Géza Ottlik, resident of Gödöllő, Köztársaság u. 45 [Republic St. 45].

I, together with the executive board of the community council of Gödöllő, examined the case of Géza Ottlik, and I ascertained that the community council's executive board classified the above-mentioned as a kulak, because he had been compelled to pay agricultural development contributions in 1949.

The executive board of the community council classifies the above-mentioned as kulak based on the social list compiled, based on the decree of the executive board of the Pest County Council and also the "Confidential" Decree no. 0046/1952/BM of the Interior Ministry. According to the legally binding decrees of 1951 and 1952 all those who were compelled to pay agricultural development contributions in 1949 had to be treated as kulaks.

He was not registered on the file of harvest or compulsory delivery, since the report of the executive board of the Kecskemét city council concerning his land had reached the executive board of the community council of Gödöllő.

According to the executive board of the community council, the above-mentioned did not cultivate his land himself, but leased it.

Considering all this, I did not have the above-mentioned taken off the kulak list.

Budapest, 1953, 16 February

József Mikó

Head of Department”²¹¹

On 23 February, 1953 Comrade Pozsonyi asked Comrade Mikó in writing to take Géza Ottlik's name off the kulak list. In the instructions sent to the council of Pest County—which did take Ottlik's name off the kulak list—Comrade Mikó then asked Comrade Rejtő on 24 February, 1953. This is how the descent into hell of the writer who was designated a kulak came to an end in February 1953.

“The Abolition” of the Kulak Lists

After the lists were made public, many people asked to be taken off them in 1953. The complaints were examined by the Office of Notifications in the Public Interest that operated within the framework of State Control Center. The kulaks' petitions went to the Interior Ministry's Local Council Department whence they were sent on to the proper county councils. Based on information sent by the president of the county council, the Interior Ministry's Department of Local Councils brought a resolution, which was sent to the proper county councils, who passed their judgment on to the competent district, village or city councils. The proceedings dragged out until autumn, but in the meantime the decree of amnesty issued in June ordered the abolition of the kulak lists. The resolution regarding the kulaks called the violations of law committed against the kulaks merely “mistakes”.

²¹¹ MOL XIX-B-q 35.d. 039.23

MAGYAR NEMKÖZTARSASAG BELOGYMINISZTERIUMA

1982 III 30
Koltai

SZIGORUAN TITKOS!

SZERV:

OSZTALY:

OBJEKTUM DOSSZIÉ

SZAM:

AZ OBJEKTUM MEGNEVEZÉSE:
FÖLDBIRTOKOSOK

AZ ÜGY KÖTETBEN

KÖTET SORSZAMA:

MEGNYITVA: 19.....

LEZÁRVA: 19.....

ARCHIV SZAM:

Source: ÁBTL, O-12-752

*“Serious mistakes were made also regarding the restriction of kulaks. Increasingly the policy of restriction was replaced in practice with policies of liquidation. This can be seen in the fact that the entire area of land owned by kulaks has shrunk in the past five years to 30% of what it had been before...The restriction and isolation of kulaks must stop, the harassment of kulaks must end. The kulak lists must be abolished too. In the new delivery system the compulsory delivery required of the kulaks must be reduced, as well as their tax burden. On the other hand, the fulfillment of obligations that are determined in accordance with real load-bearing capacity must be carried out definitely and fully.”*²¹²

After the decree of amnesty, the Imre Nagy government ordered that kulak cases be handed over to the Council of Ministers and instructed the Interior Ministry to collect the kulak lists. András Varga prepared a report for their guidance. *“Based on the government’s program, the following steps must be taken to abolish the kulak lists:*

All the kulak lists in the possession of the village or the city Councils must be collected and sent to the President of the executive board district Council at the latest at 8 o’clock in the morning on 28 September. The comrade president can use a courier if necessary to meet the deadline

Every package containing the kulak lists must have a table of contents in two copies, of which the sender will keep one copy and the other will be kept by the recipient executive board president with the signatures of both. The material containing the kulak lists must be handled and sent on in keeping with the rules of strict confidentiality.”²¹³

The kulak lists were collected, but not abolished. From 1958 we can see the lists in Archives (ÁBTL) under the title “Landowners”

²¹² MOL M-KS 276 f, 52 cs. 24 ő.e.

²¹³ MOL XIX-B-1-q-subject: the collection and forwarding of the kulak lists

BANISHED FAMILIES

As of 1950 not only individuals but whole families—including babies—were considered as liable for hindering the building of the people's democracy. The cause of eviction from their homes was the "class enemy" designation for the family. The outcome was the confiscation of all property and possessions by administrative decree, i.e. without a legal process and court order.

These families relocated forcefully by decree were placed into one of two categories:

1. deported families were expelled from their homes and imprisoned in forced labor camps
2. expelled families from Budapest were relocated in the homes of well-to-do merchants and farm families in rural districts.

This chapter will demonstrate the fate suffered by the banished families, shedding light on the similarities and differences between the families who were deported and expelled from Budapest. Even the public was aware that the members of families who had been expelled from their homes to several counties that lay east of the Danube were forced to do physical work. The difference was not obvious, and is not so to this day. At first, from June 1950 onward, it was the families from the southern and western frontier zone,²¹⁴ then those, who lived in closed camps in the Hortobágy, Nagykunság, and Hajdúság, who were relocated from almost every part of the country. Families living in Budapest were expelled in May-July 1951. Ignác Romsics wrote in his comprehensive work that among the inmates of the "Hungarian Gulag" there were separate categories of the 14,000 people who had been expelled from the capital and the larger country towns without any charges being brought or legal procedures followed. These relocations were based solely on police decisions and actions. Those expelled from Budapest were taken mainly to the Hortobágy where they were forced to do agricultural work. The large and impressive homes of most of the banished were distributed among "those who deserved them" because of their work or contacts.²¹⁵

²¹⁴ Expulsions took place from the borderlands before 1950 but not to the Hortobágy

²¹⁵ Ignác Romsich, 1999, p. 343.

Those banished from Budapest were not taken to the Hortobágy, for there were no villages there at that time, but to designated communities in Szolnok, Pest, Békés, Szabolcs-Szatmár, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Heves and Hajdú-Bihar counties. Romsich did not mention the 10,000 who were deported to the Hortobágy, Nagykunság, and Hajdúság.

The main reason for this ignorance was the clever conspiracy of the political elite, the suppression of the present and subsequently the past, and the fact that documents were made secret. The year 1988 was a turning-point; several books were published about the deported, including the four volumes of the Outcasts series. A book about the expulsions from Budapest, a comprehensive work by Kinga Széchenyi based on archival documents, entitled *Stigmatized*,²¹⁶ appeared in the summer of 2008.

The identical features of the banished families:

- The movable and immovable property of every family was confiscated. The majority of immovable property became the property of the State, but there was real estate that was kept in the name of the banished families. In spite of the fact that public institutions and private individuals used the immovable property, and the former owner was not allowed to return to his property even after the amnesty, they were forced to pay real-estate taxes and the renovation costs. János Kovács, district notary of Zalaabaksa and his wife, for example, were taken to a closed camp on 23 June, 1950, whence they were released on 4 August, 1953. His house wasn't nationalised after his expulsion. But the movables were immediately carried off. According to his daughters most of the movables were taken to Zalaegerszeg. After the expulsions were quashed, the former camp inmates were warned that they had better not try to demand that their movable and immovable property be returned, for they would not be returned. Even though he got back neither movable nor immovable property, János Kovács was required to pay the real-estate tax on the house used by the council and the council president. The former district notary was even deprived of his

²¹⁶ Tibor Dessewffy—András Szántó, 1988, Gyula Gulyás—János Gulyás, 1989, Miklós Füzes, 1992, Iván Jeszenszky, 2000, József Debreceni, 2001, Csaba Szalai, 2001, Miklós Füzes, 2002, Mrs. Ferenc Beke, 2002, Zsuzsa Hantó, 2002, 2006, 2007, Péter Holopcey—Melinda Irha, 2003, Zsuzsa Kövesdy—László Kozma, 2005, József Saád, 2005, Albert Varga, 2005, Dániel Kovács, 2006, Sándor Csőke, 2006, József Lukács, 2007, Kinga Széchenyi, 2008.

pension. As he could not pay and they didn't respond to his petitions, the furniture of his elder daughter was confiscated for unpaid taxes.²¹⁷

- Pensioners whose pensions weren't stopped before they were banished, because they had been in prison, B-listed, had undergone People's Court hearings, etc., did not receive their pensions afterward either.
- Those of working age were not employed according to their educational level, but were assigned for hard physical labor, which was considered part of their "re-education".
- The children were not allowed to go to state schools. The parents of the deported paid the teachers of the local ("settlers") schools to educate their children. The children of families expelled from Budapest could only attend the farm or village schools with the permission of the supervising police. Even after the amnesty only children, who had been accepted by those church schools that were still functioning could pursue their studies in secondary schools. Because of their origin as class aliens, only an extremely limited number of children could be accepted in institutions of higher learning.
- After the amnesty they couldn't return to their former place of residence if it was near the border or in a city. Even if they were allowed back to their former homes they had no right of usufruct, except in very extraordinary cases. They could rent a room or two, or take up residence in a shop that wasn't meant for living in, or in a church-charity home.
- Families broke up because parents tried to provide for their children's future. Fortunate children found accommodation with relatives, acquaintances, or in student hostels. The majority had to continue their studies in a roundabout way or attend evening classes if they could.
- Parents of an active age could only get heavy physical work, and they were often dismissed because of their status as class aliens, so they were forced to travel throughout the country to find work. The majority of family members therefore could see each other only once a week, once a month or even more infrequently.
- Even after the amnesty, pensioners couldn't get their pensions back. They were told to work for ten more years and then they would have a right to a minimal pension.

²¹⁷ The story of **János Kovács's** house in Zalabaksa. In **Zsuzsa Hantó**, 2007, pp. 114-121.

- Harassment continued even after the amnesty. Surveillance was kept up until the end of their lives. During the days before state holidays they could take advantage the prison fare of the people's republic.
- Some were less fortunate, like those who had been condemned in the later court trials, such as Marietta Bolza. In her case aggravating reasons played a role in her earlier deportation or expulsion.

Now I will discuss the individual features of the deportations and expulsions.

We would like the reader to know under what circumstances the families had to live for months or years in the labour camps established in peacetime and how the deportees were even deprived of their official documents, which were the only evidence of their existence. They were only left with the "promise": "their bones will fertilize the desert-like soil" of Hortobágy. It shows our twofold shame: first that all this could have happened and secondly that ever since that time we have not been able to confront the facts.

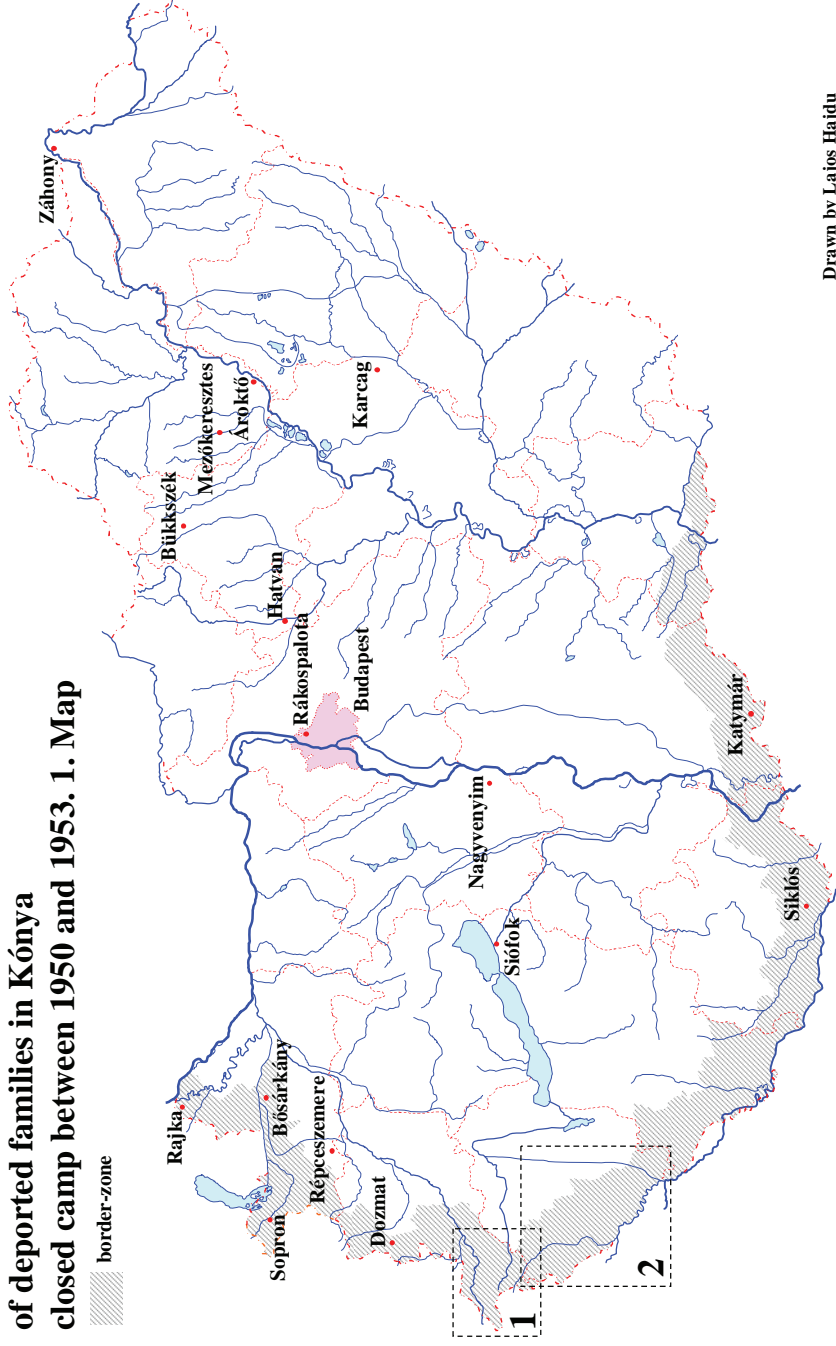
The Family Work Camps

After the peace-treaty ending World War II., between June 1950 and October 1953, about 2500 families, or almost ten thousand people, were forced to leave their homes and deported, without being tried and sentenced, only receiving deportation orders from the authorities, all of them with the same text. After being deprived of their property and possessions, these families were deported into fenced-in, internment camps.

On 25 July, 1990, the 40th anniversary of the expulsions to the Hortobágy, Dezső Varga Nagy, the FKPG Member of Parliament spoke up on the third day of the extraordinary meeting of the National Assembly and asked his fellow representatives and Hungarian society as a whole to remember.

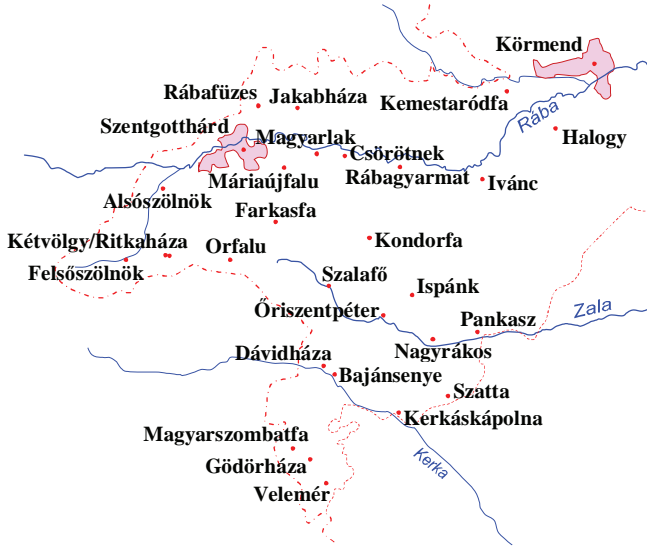
"I asked to speak so we should remember that on 23 June, 1950 the AVH took several thousand people and families away at the same time, at 2 o'clock in the morning, from Sopron and transported them to Szeged under the instructions

The original residence of deported families in Kónya closed camp between 1950 and 1953. 1. Map

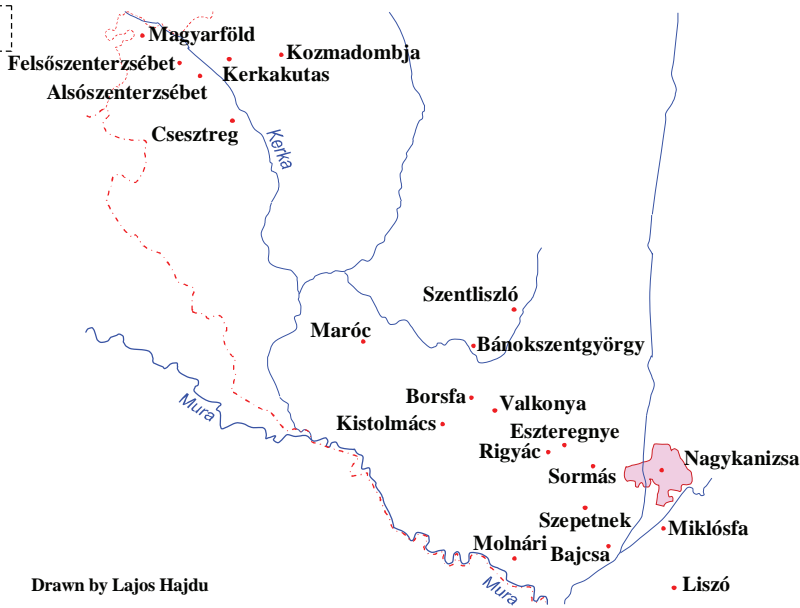


The original residence of deported families in Kónya closed camp between 1950 and 1953. 2. Map

1



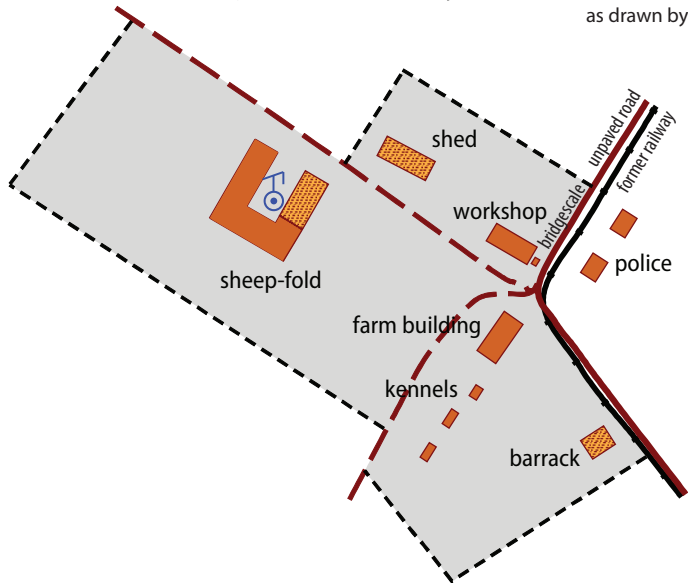
2



Drawn by Lajos Hajdu

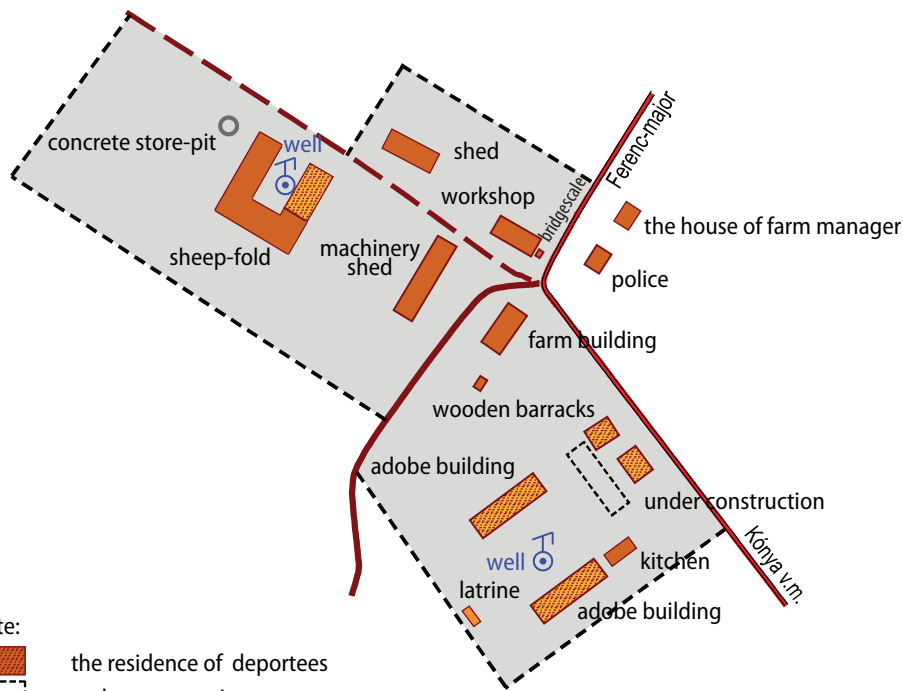
Plan of a building-site of Kónya, on 28 June, 1950

as drawn by Béla Jolsvai

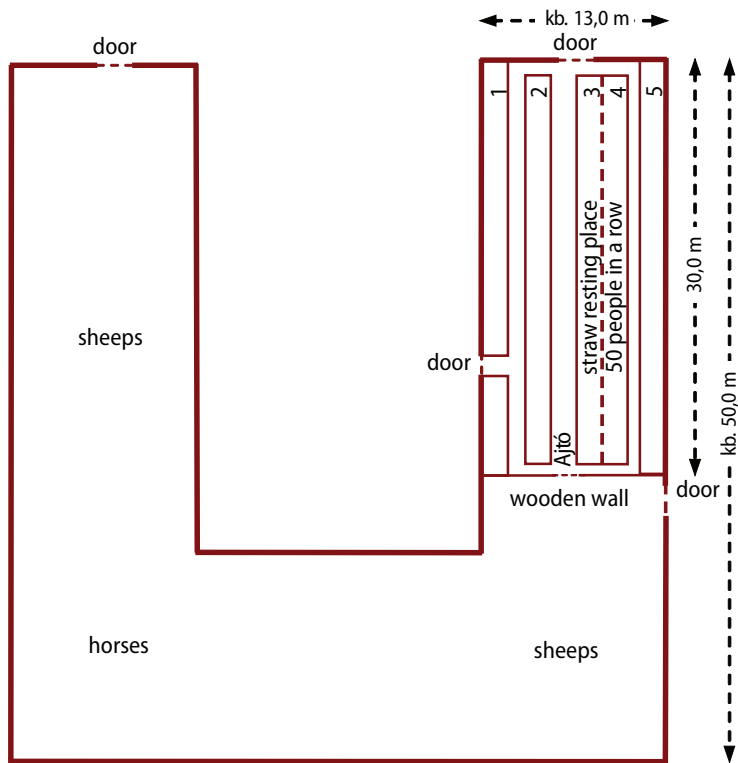


On the beginning of 1953

as drawn by Béla Jolsvai

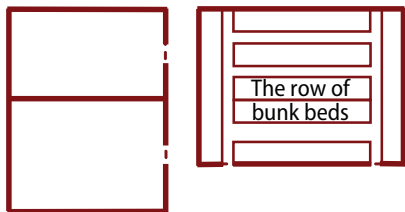


SHEEP-FOLD IN KÓNYA



THE BARRACK.

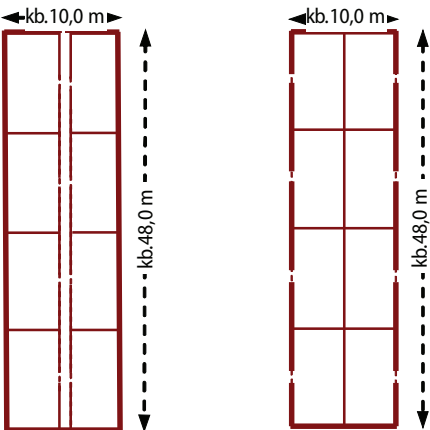
Each of them inhabited
140-150 persons



Drawn by Béla Jolsvai

ADOBE HOUSES.

12-14 persons per room





Sheep-fold in Árkus from-outside. Source: Erzsébet Papp

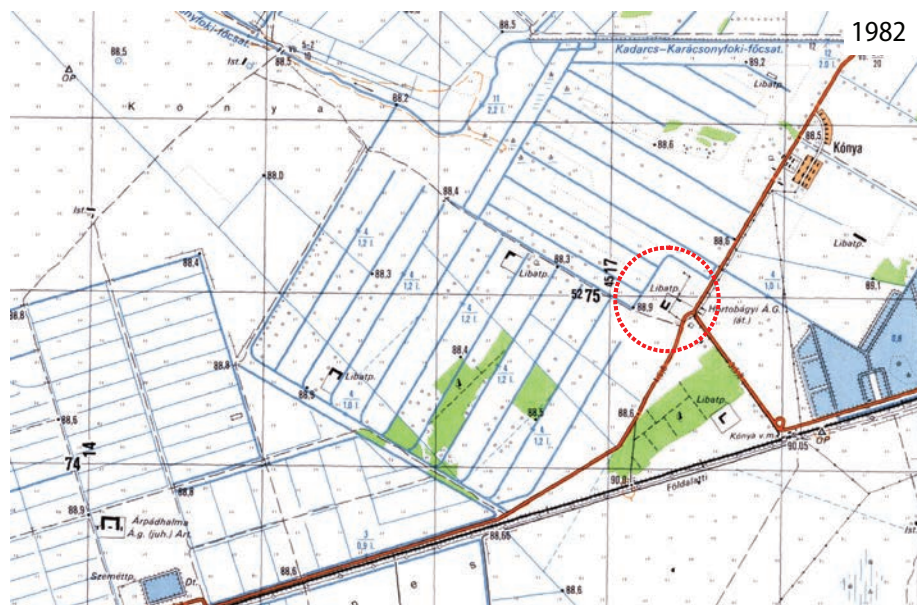
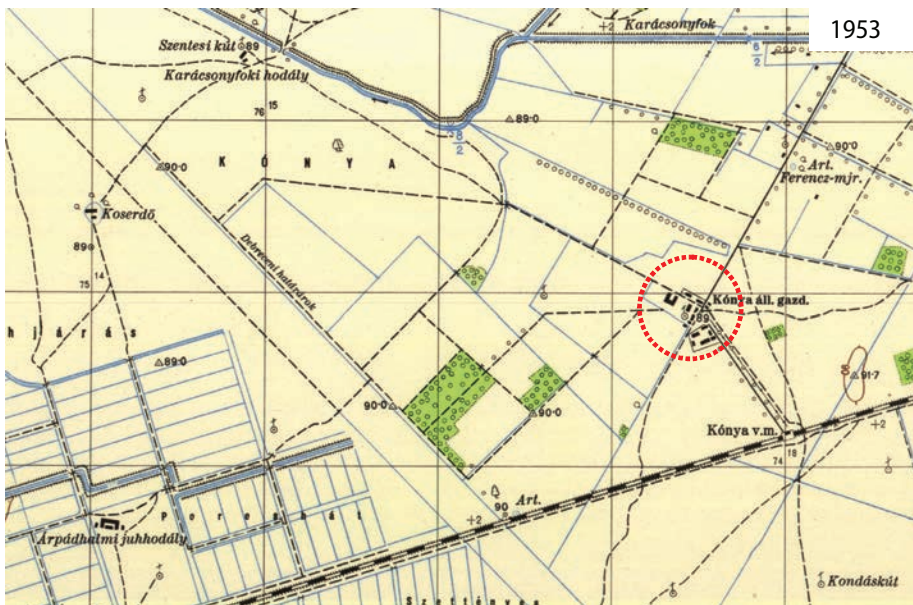


The inside of sheep-fold in Árkus. Source: Erzsébet Papp

Military map of Kónya in 1953 and 1982

(1:25000) detail of L-34-18-B-d military map

Archives of the Institute and Museum of the Military History





Deportation Monument in Budapest, inaugurated on 22 October, 2010

*of János Kádár, Minister of the Interior. These families, ranging from a 2-month old baby to a sick 80-year-old man were deprived under the same slogan of human liberty, of every movable and immovable property, on the pretext that they presented a danger to public safety and order. The reign of terror branded them in a humiliating way as kulaks, Titoists, hirelings of the West, and capitalist lackeys.”*²¹⁸

Due to the lack of documentation, he couldn't prove the existence of closed camps. But he was applauded and received letters of congratulations. The documents concerning the closed camps were secret until 1994²¹⁹ or 1995.²²⁰ It was only 11 years later, after Dezső Varga Nagy's speech that the documents became public. I came across them in 2000 and first published the documents kept in the central archives of the Interior Ministry in 2001. I learned from these documents that the Rákosi government had set up 12 camps which were guarded by police with dogs, that is the “K” corps. The documents are kept today in the Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) [Hungarian National Archives].

The expulsion of families without trial, but only on the decision of the police, was carried out in two ways in the 1950s. Forced labour camps under police surveillance were set up for 10,000 people. Or they moved 14,000 people banished from Budapest in the summer of 1951 and sent them to villages, mainly to kulak families, and kept them under police surveillance. The latter we call resettlement. They had to work, also under police surveillance, for their daily bread.

The expulsions to the Hortobágy began on 23 June, 1950 and, at first, families who lived in settlements along the southern border zones ended up there.

The Immediate Antecedents of the Deportations, The Establishment of the Frontier Zones

The event that led to the establishment of the frontier zones, the antecedent, was the deterioration of Soviet-Yugoslav relations. Stalin expected the Communists of the Socialist Bloc countries to ostracise the Yugoslav comrades and “the running dog, Tito”. The antecedent in this country was

²¹⁸ Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of Parliament on June 20, 1990.

²¹⁹ “The Interior Ministry of the Hungarian Republic ended the qualification designation with its decree no. 1-a-2009/1994 to take effect on 28 June, 1994.”

²²⁰ The qualification ended with law LXV. 28 § of 1995.

the Rajk show trial. The local antecedent on the border was a murder. The Party secretary of Lengyelkápólna was killed in a drunken row on a farm. The locals considered the death of the Party secretary on 3 January, 1950 a crime of moral turpitude. But the Central Directorate ²²¹ took it as a manifestation of the intensifying class conflict. The Secretariat's memoranda prove that the AVH delegates made the local party leaders understand that they could not see the obvious, that this case was a case of "terror", the murders were committed by members of the anti-democratic kulak organisations, who were following the instructions of Yugoslav agents. The summary court condemned the murderers, István Bodó, Antal Császár, and Imre Ördögh, on 2 February, 1950 and carried the sentence out that very day. Imre Bodó and Antal Császár were executed, and Imre Ördögh sentenced to life imprisonment. ²²²

Gábor Péter's ²²³ declaration dealt with the double threat presented by the collusion of the foreign Titoist enemies with the domestic reactionaries to kill the outstanding Communist, who worked day and night. Imre Kiss was turned into the propaganda motive for setting up the southern frontier zone. "We must stop our most dynamic party activists from becoming victims of terror." The Secretariat decided at its meeting held on 18 January, 1950 that the 14 people who, according to Gábor Péter, knew about the murder but didn't report it, had to be expelled from their homes together with their families. The murder of Imre Kiss, party secretary of Lengyelkápólna, brought the attention of the leadership to the need, that in order that the organizations to be defended alongside the Yugoslav border and the reactionary elements of public administration to be replaced, the armed forces must work together more intensively with the AVH and the border guards.

The frontier zone was set up on 12 April, 1950. The political and administrative measures ²²⁴ were formulated, which had to be put into effect along the frontier zone. Seventeen districts and 300 communities of six counties were placed into the 15-kilometre-long frontier zone. From 1 July, 1950 the residents of the

²²¹ MOL M-KS-276.f.54 cs.82 ő.e. 10 January, 1950 memorandum/report

²²² ÁBTL. 3. 1.9 V-16434.

²²³ **Gábor Péter** was chief of the Department of Political Police of the Budapest police force between January 1945 and December 1952; later he headed the AVO, then the AVH.

²²⁴ **István Orgoványi**, 2001.

frontier zone had to carry an identity card with photo,²²⁵ and only those with these special identification cards could remain in these areas.

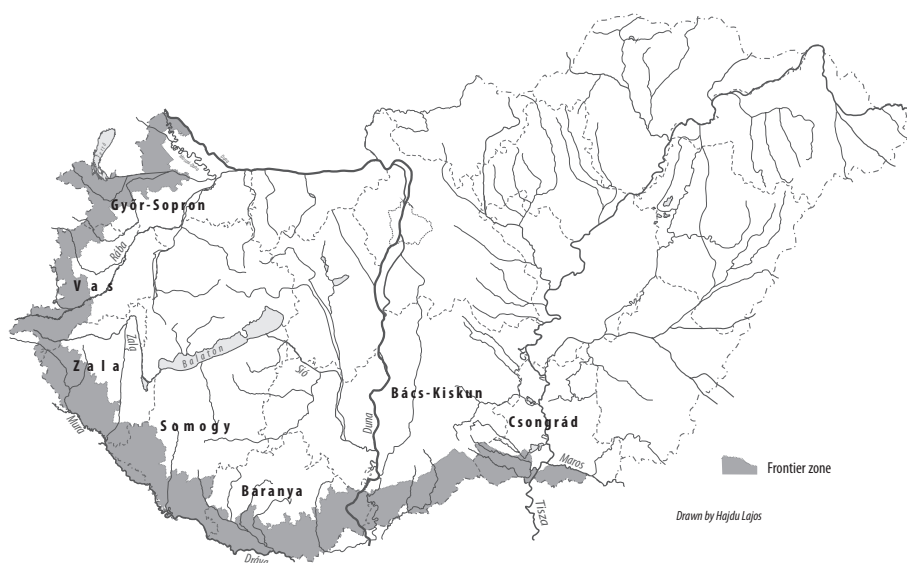
“Decree no. 00208/1950.1/9

To the sub-prefects of Baranya, Bács-Kiskun, Csongrád, Somogy, Vas and Zala Counties. I inform you that from the first of July, 1950, no one can travel to the communities (towns) listed in the note attached without an identification card issued by the police [...] It will be issued between 20 June and 1 July, 1950 and it must have a full-face photo.

I am making the sub-prefects personally responsible for carrying out this decree to the letter.

Budapest, 30 May, 1950”

Frontier Zone Established in 1950



²²⁵ Zsuzsa Hantó, 2000, pp. 406-407. In the first volume of the book, *Families in Labour Camps*.

List of actively hostile elements of the village Hercegszántó

33

AVH. Bács-Kiskunmegyei Osztály. Bácsai Alosztály.

33

Szigorúan titkos nyv

Tárgy: Kimutatás Hercegszántó községben
élő ellenséges személyekről

Hercegszántó község a Jánosfalvi határ-
tól 3 km.-re fekszik.

J e l e n t é s .

Bács, 1952. évi március hó 6-án.

Jelentem, hogy a Hercegszántó községben élő ellenséges hadilitottságra
osztályidegen személyekről az alábbi kimutatást készítettem:

Kulák:

Andrin Bertalan szül: Hercegszántó, 1887. anyja Szaboljev Éva, jelenleg
19 kh. földje van, lakhelye Hercegszántó, Vöröshadsereg u. 57. A múltban
24 kh. földje volt, melyen állandóan alkalmazottat tartott. A hivatalos
kuláklistán szerepel 1948-tól.

Baltin István szül: Hercegszántó, 1892. anyja Vólin Rozália, fm. a múltban
24 kh. földje volt, jelenleg 14 kh. földje van. A múltban foglalkozott
még más, cement, valamint fakereskedése is volt, lakik Hercegszántó,
Felsőszőlős u. 24. szám alatti lakos, 1948-tól a kulák-listán szerepel.

Blassovin Mária szül: Hercegszántó, 1883. anyja Nikolin Agota, fm., a múlt-
ban földje volt jelenleg 24 kh. földje, jelenleg 24 kh. földje van, jelen-
leg szerepel a kuláklistán, lakhelye Hercegszántó, Róssa Ferenc u. 8. szám.
A legutolsó tagozat alkalmával kijelentette, hogy most az Szász falu-
hoz tagozatát fogják és kolhozok lesznek és ott mindenki enélkül lesz.
Az 1900-as években járt ki Amerikában. Ellene több ízben volt eljárás
indítva gazdasági szabotázs eseteleményekért.

Bartulov István szül: Hercegszántó, 1886. anyja Blassov Anna, fm., a múlt-
ban 24 kh. földje volt, jelenleg 20 kh. földje van, lakhelye Hercegszántó,
Róssa Gy. u. 19. 1948-tól szerepel a kuláklistán.

Balatinszón Mária szül: Hercegszántó, 1887. anyja Prodan Johanna, fm., 24 kh.
földje volt és jelenleg is 25 kh. földje van, mely állandóan kibeszél-
te volt kiadva, 1948-tól szerepel a kuláklistán, lakhelye Hercegszántó,
Kossuth L. u. 61.

Irf. Csáthy Józsefné szül: Hercegszántó, 1920. anyja Gyurity Mária, fm.
Hercegszántó, Petőfi S. u. 9. A múltban 26 kh. földje volt, ahol állandóan a
kalmazottat tartott, jelenleg 13 kh. földje van. Nevezett ellen több íz-
ben volt már eljárás indítva gazdasági bűncselekmény miatt 1948-tól
szerepel a kuláklistán.

Irf. Csáthy Józsefné szül: Bartulov Rozália Hercegszántó, 1896. anyja Jelti-
Mária, fm., htb. Hercegszántó, Petőfi S. u. 8. szám alatti lakos. A múltban
29 kh. földje volt, jelenleg 13 kh. földje van. 1948-tól szerepel a kulák-
listán.

Á B T L 3. 1. 5.

0 - 9553 28

Source: ÁBTL 3.1.5. 3.1.5. O-9553 9553

*List of hostile individuals: kulaks, former gendarmeries,
former police agents, anti-democrats*

Exp. 1950 MAR. 1-3 50

V. részleg.

Törvény: Kitelepitésre javasolt személyekről kimutatás.
/ Birok György. /

Hiv.sz. 188/1950. Piz.

H e l e n t é s.
Szeged. 1950. március 11.

Hivatkozással a fenti sz. utasításra, az alant megnevezett személyt javasoljuk kitelepitésre.

S i r o k György sz. 1906. október 11. nős, egy gyermekes, kulák, földműves, anyja: Német Erzsébet, Hercegszántó, 8 sz. alatti lakos.

Kulák családból származik. Három leány testvére, Hercegszántó községben él. Elemi iskoláit ott végezte. 1922-ben Kecskeméten, mezőgazdasági szakiskolát végzett. Szülei, 1928-ban elhaltak.

1926-ban nősült, 1927-ben 20 kat. hold földet örökölt, majd 15 kat. hold földet részben felesége öröksége révén, részben pedig a felszabadulás után vásárolt, így lett 35 kat. hold földje.

A felszabadulás előtt a Függetl. pártnak volt a tagja és mint ilyen dr. Mózes János bpesti ügyvéd, volt KGP képviselővel tartott kapcsolatot, akivel egyébként rokon viszonyban is van.

A felszabadulás után a KGP. lett tagja, és ennek vezetője, 1945-ben bírónak választották, mely tisztségét 1949 év elejéig töltötte be.

Reakciós tevékenységére jellemző, hogy 1946 évben

./.

ABTL 3. 1. 5. 20

Source: ABTL 3.1.5. O-9553

*List of officers of the military, officers of the gendarmerie
and police officers of the village Hercegszántó*

379.

Hercegszántó Községi Főosztály
Rajza Járásai

"Szakmány titkos!"

Tárgy: A hercegszántói rendőrök,
csendőrkök és katonatisz-
tek Horthy ideje alatt.
Adta: "Szakm" ifj. ornátor.
Vette: Pelsőci J. áv. hűgy.
Dátum: 1954. XII. 7-én.

J e l e n t é s

Baja, 1954. december hó 7-én.

T. hó 1-én azt a feladatot kaptam, hogy
írjam össze azoknak a névsorát, akik Horthy idejében rendő-
rök, csendőrkök és katonatisztek voltak.

Hercegszántó községi rendőrvezető volt
a délszláv partizánok kivételével, Báregén Bone János községi
rendőr-el együtt.

Hercegszántó községi rendőrvezetővel
és annak parancsnoksága alatt hercegszántó kettő magyar és k
tő délszláv rendőr volt húszmosabb ideig szolgálatban.

Székely Pál kismaszt volt rendőr Nikes
E. u. 7. sz. Aradi Mátys délszláv kismaszt volt rendőr Mile
K. u. 8. sz.
Kardos Ferenc halász volt rendőr Dózsa Gy. 62. sz.

Vélin Bertalan délszláv juttatott községi
paraszt, volt rendőr Tavasz u. 3. sz.

Hercegszántó községben Balazs Ádám
délszlávborbély házában már a 1914-es háború előtt is volt
csendőrként, egy Kovács nevezetű őrmester volt a csen-
dőr parancsnok, háború után Horthy idejében Vélin Marin dé
szláv Járásai T. u. 1. sz. előző lakóiban állandóan egy 10
tanú csendőrként tartózkodott 1920-é-ben a háromszéki kiűri
tées után Kovács István csendőrként helyettes volt az ő s.
parancsnok kb. 10-évig. Kovács István csendőrként helyet-
tes Szegedre került. Teljesen mint nyugdíjas csendőrként Sze-
den lakik. Húszmosabb ideig mint csendőrként voltak: Kolos
István, Ragály, Tenkés Varga ezeket innit 1 kerülték.

Székely Árpád/ János volt csendőrként le-
szerezt és hercegszántón a csendőrként.

ABTL 3.1.5. O-9552 5

Source: ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-9553

Lists of Yugoslav citizens, individuals with Yugoslav connections

49

SZIGORUAN TITKOS "v" 1

Tárgy: Hercegszántó községben élő jugoszláv kapcsolattal rendelkező személyek.

Jelentés:

Baja, 1953 február hó 11-én.

Jelentem, hogy Hercegszántó községben az alábbi személyek élnek kik jugoszláv kapcsolattal rendelkeznek:

- 1./ **Forgács István** született: Bácskertes 1903 július 8-án, anyja: Játván, anyja: Maros Mária, tsa. tag, MDP. tag, jugoszláv állampolgár, magyar nemzetiségű, lakhelye: Hercegszántó Vöröshadsereg-u. 23.
- 2./ **Tatai Ferenc** született: Bездán, 1924 október 13-án, apja: György, anyja: Magadassia Apollónia, tsa. tag, MDP. tag, jugoszláv állampolgár, magyar nemzetiségű, lakhelye: Hercegszántó Vöröshadsereg-u. 52.
- 3./ **Vécsényi Milenkó** született: Hercegszántón 1914-ben, anyja: Jászó Mária, földműves foglalkozásu, magyar állampolgár, délszláv nemzetiségű, pártunkivüli, lakhelye: Hercegszántó Aradi-u. 155 szám.
- 4./ **Bikicski Milorád né Mándity Milossáva** született: Hercegszántó 1925-ben, apja: Márk, anyja: Patarity Milossáva, alkalmi munkás, pártunkivüli, magyar állampolgár, délszláv nemzetiségű. lakhelye: Hercegszántó Dóssa György-u. 300 szám.
- 5./ **Mándity János** született: Hercegszántó 1880-ban, apja: Miklós, anyja: Illity Mária, földműves foglalkozásu, pártunkivüli, magyar állampolgár, délszláv nemzetiségű, lakhelye: Hercegszántó Dóssa György-u. 406 szám.
- 6./ **Prodán Marín** született: Hercegszántón 1910-ben, apja: József, anyja: Bartulov Viktória, földműves foglalkozásu, pártunkivüli, magyar állampolgár, délszláv nemzetiségű, lakhelye: Hercegszántó Dóssa György-u. 51 szám.
- 7./ **Mándity Mózes** született: Csávoyn 1897-ben, anyja: Vitéz Anasztázia, borbély, pártunkivüli, magyar állampolgár, délszláv nemzetiségű, lakhelye: Hercegszántó Dóssa György-u. 224 szám.
- 8./ **Gorjendác György** született: Hercegszántón 1898-ban, anyja: Simity Anna, földműves foglalkozásu, pártunkivüli, magyar állampolgár, délszláv nemzetiségű, lakhelye: Hercegszántó Zenta-u. 202 szám.
- 9./ **Nikolin József** született: Bórogyen 1887-ben, március 12-én, apja: József, anyja: Illity Klára, tiltartott, pártunkivüli, jugoszláv állampolgár, magyar nemzetiségű, lakhelye: Hercegszántó Aradi-u. 159 szám.

ABTL 3. 1. 5.
0 - 9553

Source: ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-9553

The AVH used—and abused—the rights it was given, and divided the officials and later even the general population into reliable and unreliable. It was the duty of AVH officials sent to the frontier zone to compile files. Lists were made of anti-democratic elements, the hostile elements of a village, kulaks, former military officers, former gendarmes, former officials, former speculators, horse dealers, veterans (*vitézek*), active members of former fascist and bourgeois parties, Zionists living in the community, Yugoslav citizens and individuals with Yugoslav connections.²²⁶ The list of families to be removed by force were compiled on the basis of these data and on the recommendation of local heads of the AVH and MDP [Hungarian Workers' Party]. (Lists of Yugoslav citizens, individuals with Yugoslav connections, hostile individuals: kulaks, former gendarmes, former police agents, anti-democrats, actively hostile elements of the villages.²²⁷)

Between 1951 and 1952 **several** counties and a few provincial cities—Szeged, Miskolc, Várpalota, Nagykanizsa—were also designated as targets for expulsion, altogether 515 settlements. Szeged lay close to the Yugoslav border. Miskolc, Várpalota, and Nagykanizsa were centres for the development of heavy industry at the beginning of economic planning; consequently, these cities had to be “cleansed of enemy elements.” The expulsions were stopped in the summer of 1953. Thus, they had continued even after the death of Stalin on 5 March. Although the exact numbers are unknown, the number of persons removed by force to Hortobágy is estimated around ten thousand.

The Problems of the Use of Terminology (Deported, Settlers, the Settled, Those Placed in Closed Areas, Undesirable Elements)

The twelve closed internment camps were also labor camps, where the inmates were compelled to work under police supervision. According to the letter of the law, only individuals and not families could be interned. The definition

²²⁶ ÁBTL. 3.1.5. O-9557

²²⁷ Files of objects and lists were compiled not only for villages in the frontier zone. We don't know their exact number, for the majority were lost or destroyed. Even the files kept in the Historical Archives of the AVH (State Defence Services) were, as it turned out, destroyed in the meantime.

of deportation used by András Hegedűs²²⁸ on the other hand also included families, the confiscation of real estate, land and other valuables as well. An inventory had to be taken of all confiscated properties.

In the 50's no inventories were taken locally of the confiscated properties of the banished, but at a later date, detailed lists were prepared of the valuables sold. There are examples of public official demanding inventories of valuables. Lajos Badi, resident of Piskó, for example, was removed forcibly with his family on 23 June, 1950. The inventory of his possessions was only made on 8 October, 1952. The inventory also indicated the area of the farm.²²⁹



Kép Lajos Badi
Source: Györgyi Badi

On the instructions of 00384/1950 B.M. [Interior Ministry] IV. Ücs. ²³⁰ individuals taken to closed camps were to be called “settlers” or the “settled.”

“This designation has been hitherto unknown in our law, and neither this nor the restrictions of liberty used belong to the concept of police surveillance, or internment, or expulsions. Based on customs that have evolved in practice, it has become the custom to call expelled individuals “settlers.” Therefore, settlers

²²⁸ Gyula Gulyás—János Gulyás, 1999, pp. 72-73.

²²⁹ Zsuzsa Hantó, 2006, p. 408.

²³⁰ MOL XIX-B-1-j 42. d.0012.

are individuals who have been banished from their place of residence together with their families, and forced to remain on certain state farms in order to prevent them from carrying out enemy activities. Considering that their person and behaviour present a greater danger to society (the inner and outer security of our state) than that presented by those placed under police surveillance or the banished, it has become necessary to use against them the stricter measures restricting their liberty mentioned above."

Telepes [settler] in Hungarian usage is a free employee who was needed in a depopulated area. For example, Empress Maria Theresa, after driving out the Turks, settled mainly German-speakers in the communities of Trans-Danubia. To help the settler (*hospes*), who had a different culture, to fit in as soon as possible, he received from the State and also from the landowner tax exemptions and other advantages for several years. The word settler served to conceal the political content, and to mislead the local population. Still there was a historical similarity. The farmers' world in the Hortobágy and environs, which had been in existence for hundreds of years, was forcibly destroyed between 1945 and 1949. It was partly destroyed by the deported taking away all the movables, by the banished having to move into the farmhouses, and by the general disruption.

In the Communist use of the word in the 1950's a settler became an individual who had to be banished from his residence, so as **"to prevent him from pursuing his enemy activities."** This peculiar use of language, entirely Orwellian, was borrowed from the NKVD apparatus. For example, the men who carried out the beatings in the torture chambers of the Soviet political police were called body mechanics; executions were known as the first degree of Socialist defense. Andrei Makine, a writer of French origin, wrote about this new language after the 1917 revolution in remembrance of his grandmother, Charlotte, who lived in Russia.

"We couldn't find your papers," said the man on his return. Charlotte stuck to her guns. What then happened was as incredible as it was natural. He began cursing, a flow of curses; Charlotte froze, even after two months in the crowded trains, she was stunned. Charlotte grabbed the door handle while the man continued to curse. Then he suddenly jumped up to her and hissed in her face: "I could have you arrested and shot in the yard behind the outhouse! Is that clear, you filthy spy?" On her way home trudging along the snowy fields, Charlotte thought that a new language was being born in this country. A language that she didn't know, this was why she found the conversation so unreal in the office

*of the former regent. Of course, everything had a meaning, this language of revolutionary fervor too, which had led into the sudden swamp, the “bourgeois-spy”, and the pamphlets that regulated the sex lives of Party members. Yes, a new order was taking shape. And every object in the familiar world would get a new name, every being a new label.”*²³¹

The measures relating to “settlers” did not refer to provisions of law. The expulsion resolutions did not specify what precisely were the enemy activities carried out by the heads of families. Moreover, these “enemy” activities didn’t have to be proved; there were no charges, no evidence, no court, no verdict, just removal by force. Due to the lack of legal measures, the objective of taking families to work camps was to prevent “enemy activities.” An enemy could be someone who carried out enemy activities, but anyone who had property before 1948, no matter how small and negligible, was regarded as an enemy. The deportations were carried out without legal procedures; the executors were state defence and police agents, who carried out the expulsions in violation of the prevailing and relevant laws.

The “settlers” could not leave the closed area without permission; they could receive visitors once a month with the permission of the officer in command. No one could be a mediator or advocate for anyone else. A five-year old child, for example, could not be his or her own advocate; if his or her parents protested, for example, because the police of the “K” corps hanged him up by the feet, the parents were given corporal punishment and locked up. Anyone who left the closed area was given corporal punishment or locked up.

During work hours inmates had to work hard, and they could not leave their workplaces without permission. Malingering was punished. An eighth was added to the seven restricting regulations in 1951.²³² Inmates could receive letters and packages of up to five kilos once a month. Letters had to be written in Hungarian only, and the packages could contain only clothing and food. Permission to write letters, delivery of letters and packages sent to the camp were considered favours, and it was up to the officer in command to grant the favour or not.

²³¹ Andrei Makine, 1995, p. 56.

²³² MOL XIX-B-1-j 40 d. 106. 00369.

The Redoubling of the Measures

The final decisions concerning the expulsions from 1950 were made directly by the AVH (Államvédelmi Hatóság), in spite of the fact that they only had the right to recommend internment. Police squads carried out the resettlements, and the police also kept a close watch over the closed camps.

On 9 December, 1952, Police Colonel, department head László Sebestyén wrote this memorandum to Deputy Minister Tibor Pócze in which he claimed that the police and the Ministry of the Interior had only partial knowledge of the Hortobágy “settlers”. Only the AVH had complete information. As a result, László Sebestyén recommended that the Ministry of the Interior not send the petitions to be reviewed to the county police stations, but to the State Defence Authorities. And the AVH would continue the investigations in its own sphere of influence.

“The settlers send their petitions via the stations, district, and county stations to the Ministry of the Interior, where they are collected. The AVH delegate goes to the Ministry of the Interior every two weeks more or less and makes its decisions individually in reviewing these petitions. Depending on their decisions, we will send these petitions to the district police stations of the counties where they have been settled. The authorities and agents subordinate to the district police stations will pursue an investigation of their case, they will ask the opinion of the local Party organisations and councils, as well as the recommendation of the county department of the State Defence Authority (which it didn’t give in every case, or with great delay). After the investigation is completed, the county police station will submit the papers to the Ministry of the Interior, where the State Defence Authority will write on the documents whether the individual is to be released or his petition rejected. Then we order the individual to be released or we reject his petition by the police stations of Hajdú-Bihar or Szolnok counties.”

According to the archives, the Ministry of the Interior sent back to the AVH’s representative even the petitions for exemption submitted to Rákosi’s Secretariat.²³³ On 23 July, 1952, Ferenc Balog submitted a petition to the Interior Ministry’s Department of Public Order in the case of Judit Juhász for exoneration. The Interior Ministry’s Department of the Administration of Order replied that the Juhász family had been taken from Miskolc and settled

²³³ ÁBTL. 2.5.1. 30 d.

in the Borsós farm by the State Defence Authority, so they were not aware of the reason for the resettlement.²³⁴

The Activities of the “K” Corps

Those moved forcibly into these camps were guarded by special “K” corps with trained dogs, which they set onto children under 12 years of age—who wandered around the camps without supervision, while their parents worked—thus causing long-standing wounds and nervous problems. The “K” guards were organised under several departments. In Hajdú-Bihar County they were subordinate to the county police stations and in Szolnok County to the district police station. Thus, the county, or district police stations guard and justice service departments and clerks directed the “K” units. For this reason a lot of mistakes and difficulties emerged in practical matters.

Police Colonel László Sebestyén recommended in 1952 that a six-member police unit be set up in the Hortobágy centre, who could assure supervision that was uniform, frequent, and regular. He recommended that the police chief of the Hajdú-Bihari county police station head the unit. The reorganisation was important, according to Sebestyén, if the state farms where the “settlers” worked (even the ones in Szolnok County) were to be managed by the state farm trust of Hortobágy in Debrecen.

The Rise of the Camp System

The 12 camps established in the Hortobágy and the Middle-Tisza area functioned between June 1950 and October 1953. On 22-23 June, 1950, 1,991 people were taken in 486 wagons from the southern border zone, from five collection stations (Szeged, Kiskunhalas, Pécs, Kaposvár, Zalaegerszeg), to the precincts of the police stations of VII Szolnok and VIII. Debrecen.²³⁵

²³⁴ ÁBTL. 2.5.1.30 d.

²³⁵ In January 1949 János Kádár proposed to the Political Committee of the MDP [Hungarian Workers' Party] that the provincial police stations be closed and replaced with eight district police stations, since the supervision of 26 counties could not be assured. In 1948, the provincial departments of the State Defence Department (AVO) were already working on such a regional division. As a result of this proposal, a Budapest department and eight

The majority of the expelled were farmers, tradesmen, and small shopkeepers. Their movable and immovable property was confiscated and given to the agricultural cooperative shops, the farmers' cooperatives, the local council, or Party organisations and Party functionaries, or a part of the immovables became property for barter.²³⁶ The expulsion from the frontier zones as well as the other violations of law, affected the "class aliens and enemy elements;" that is, the victims of nationalisation were the bourgeoisie, the church, the members of the former political and governing elite, the propertied peasants and their families in the villages.

In November 1950, 2,381 people were taken from the frontier zone and crowded together in the closed camps. (Borzas-Mihályalma, Árkus, Kónya, Polgár-Lenin farm, Kócs, Kormó, Tiszaszentimre Farm 9) The population grew constantly in the closed camps. In July 1951 the closed farm camp of Elep was part of the State farm of Elep. At the end of November 1951 3,361 individuals were kept isolated from the outside world in ten closed camps in the camp of Ebes in late November 1951, and December 1951 in the two counties.²³⁷ In the summer of 1952 the "deportations" began from the provincial cities, at that time from five cities: Nagykanizsa, Várpalota, Hatvan, Miskolc, and Szeged. The Borsós farm was set up in June 1952 and the camp in Lászlómajor in July. This increased the number of closed camps to 12, and increased the number of people interned in them to 7,065 in 1952, which grew to 7,289 in 1953.

The camps differed in the number of inhabitants, their housing, and the manner of their treatment. The largest closed camps with 700 to 1000 people were the Borsós and Árkus, which had several large farm buildings and barns. The camps of Ebes and Elep were closed farms. The population of the camps of Kócs and Tedej varied between 600 to 700 individuals. The camps of Polgár, Erzsébet, Tiszaszentimre 9, Borzas, and Kónya grew to medium-sized camps (400 to 500 people). The camps of Kormó and Lászlómajor were the smallest, 250 to 300 individuals. The population of the Kormó camp remained virtually unchanged ranging between 250 to 260 individuals throughout the whole period. The population of the camp of Tedej also didn't change; since its establishment in December 1951; its population varied only between 660 to 680. After the expulsions of June 1952, and in January 1953, the number of

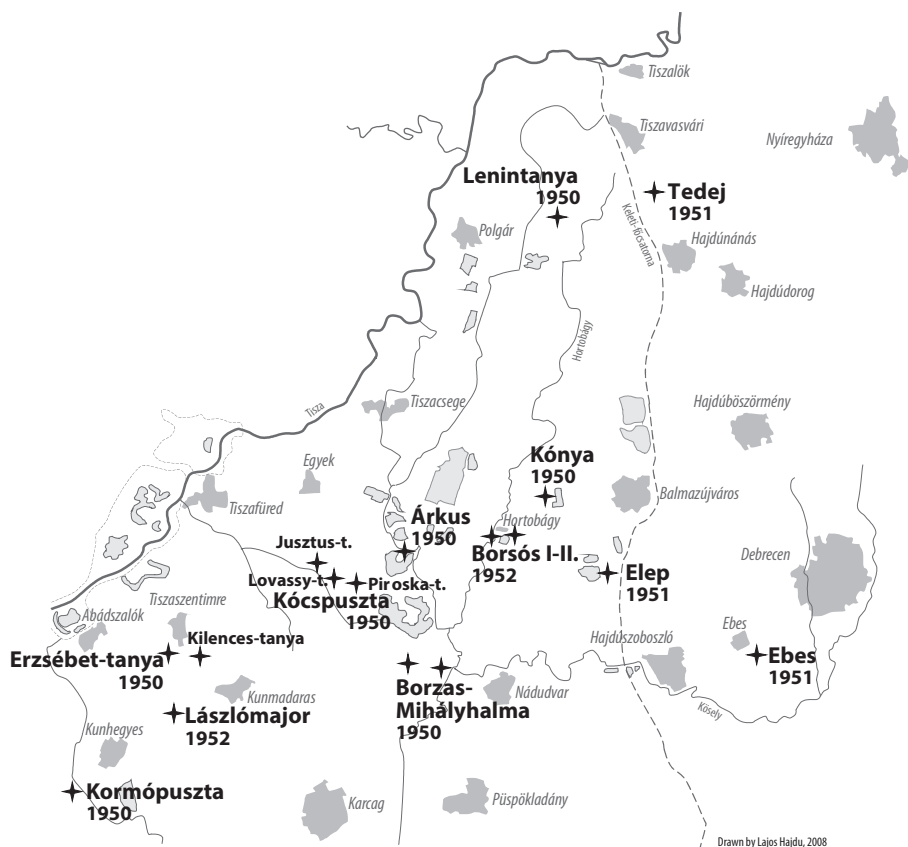
provincial departments were organised—Szombathely, Pécs, Székesfehérvár, the area of Buda, Szeged, Szolnok, Miskolc, and Debrecen).

²³⁶ MOL XIX-A-2gg-h-1957 39.d.

²³⁷ MOL XIX-B-1-j 40. d. 106. 00369.

inmates of the Borsós camp grew to 830 with the addition of 156 persons taken from Kunmadaras. The population of the Kócs and Elep camps doubled to 626 and 910 people as a result of the expulsions from the cities in 1952. The camp of Ebes established in November 1951 rose from 316 to 1,049 after the expulsions from Szeged.²³⁸

The “closed camps” for families deported to the Hortobágy, Nagykunság, and Hajdúság 1950-1953



(Year Established Next to the Name)

²³⁸ MOL XIX-B-1-j 40.d. 106. 00369, 42. d., 0012.

It can be seen from the map that 11 camps were located along dirt roads that went off from smaller connecting roads. They were virtually unapproachable in the rain. One can read from the description of the Polgár camps that the “mud reached the horses’ bellies”. The 12th camp, Borsós, lay along the main road connecting Füzesabony and Debrecen, near the famous nine-hole bridge of the Hortobágy and *csárda* [country inn and restaurant]. One can also see on the map that not every camp can be found in the area of the Hortobágy State Farm, which is a national park today. The archives designate these camps under the name of KÖMI-agricultural closed camps or Hortobágy closed camps.²³⁹



Inside the stall of Árkus
Source: Erzsébet Papp

The situation in the camps did not stay the same from their establishment to their dissolution; for one thing, the population grew continually, for another, it changed for economic reasons and because animals needed stables and barns in the winter. That is why several camps were designated within the 12 camps, such as Tizzaszentimre 9 and Erzsébettanya, Kócspusztá, Jusztus- and Lovassy-tanya, Tiszaigar, Piroskamajor, and Kovách-tanya, as well as Borzas and Mihályhalma. Over time the 12 camps disappeared totally. The barns and stables built to shelter animals in the depth of the *pusztá*, as well as the adobe

²³⁹ ÁBTL 4.1. A-505, 4.1. A508

houses without foundations disappeared without a trace, due to the changed economic circumstances, as well as time, which did its work. The sheep pens of Kónya and Árkus preserved the more significant elements of the original state, but the question is for how long, since these became private property. The changes can be seen from the appendices to the map on the CD.



Stall of Árkus from outside
Source: Erzsébet Papp



Sheepfold of Kónya
Source: Béla Jolsvai

The camps were crowded. The buildings constructed for farming—the machine sheds, garages, maize sheds, stables, cow barns, sheep-pens, poultry-houses, pigsties—became the “homes” of the expelled. Later, in their free time, they were allowed to build adobe houses for themselves. Several hundreds of people lived under the same roof, in the sheep-pens on straw strewn on the ground; they slept on bunk beds made of slabs of wood. Each person had about 40 to 50 centimetres, and if someone wanted to turn over, he could only do so if several hundred people did the same. The pigsties and poultry houses were the “luxury” places, where they put families of two, four, or six members. There was no heating, and nowhere to bathe or to wash up; it was up to the inmates to look after their own hygiene.

The Reasons for the Expulsions

We can learn the reasons for the expulsions from the petitions submitted by the residents of the border zones between the summer of 1956 and the spring of 1957.²⁴⁰ One of the results of the political thaw in the spring of 1956 was the birth of the M.T. decree and resolutions concerning the property demands of certain individuals affected by the creation of the southern border zone.

²⁴¹ As was usual in the ‘50’s, those affected were not informed of the laws or decrees through which they could receive compensation for damages to person and property. The expulsions began from the southern border zone. The confiscation of all movable and immovable property, however, applied not only to them, but also to all the 10,000, who had been taken to the 12 closed camps in the Hortobágy, Nagykunság, and Hajdúság, together with the almost 14,000 who had been expelled from Budapest in the summer of 1951, and those 1,194 expelled from the countryside.²⁴² The decree did not concern them at all.

The Secretariat of the Council of Ministers set up a messenger service in the southern border zone. The heads of the councils affected responded to the questions raised on “K” (indirect) telephones and in writing, then they formulated questions about the petitions for the Secretariat. Antal Apró made

²⁴⁰ Miklós Füzes, 2002, pp. 243-317. Miklós Füzes published a volume of documents on the closed camps of the Hortobágy. A separate chapter deals with the compensation procedures.

²⁴¹ 29/1956 (IX.8) Decree of M.T. no. 2.1555/1956 (IX.II) and 2.174/1956 (X.3)

²⁴² ÁBTL. 4.1.A 505.

a summary of these.²⁴³ The reasons for the expulsions can be gleaned in the course of carrying them out. They were as follows: Southern Slavs were expelled, owing to the Yugoslav connection, or because of their relatives. Hungarians were expelled for various reasons—personal denunciations or because of their origin as class aliens. There was a separate group who never found out why they had been banished. In the detailed analyses of the reasons for the expulsion of certain individuals within the main groups, the same lists appear in every group. In every group there were relatives, there were both indigents and propertied individuals. Those who owned property had various kinds of real estate: a house, several houses, apartments, a farm, land, *kocsma*, mill, farm equipment, livestock, a year's produce, cinema, furnishings, and a combination of all of these. For example, "He was so-and-so's son-in-law", "he had no real estate", "he had a house and some land," "he had a house, *kocsma*, a cinema house", "an auto and other movables". "He owned a block of flats in Szeged", "he had a house, land, farm equipment, furnishings, livestock", "he had two houses," he had 37 acres of land, a farm and movables connected with it," "he had a large house, and an apartment," "he had a house, land, and vineyard," "he had two farms and two houses, farm equipment, and livestock," "he had two houses in Csorva, and a house and 68 acres of land in Mórahalom."

In several cases the person was a professional military officer, gendarme, or fascist. But in none of the cases were the descriptions based on evidence. Even in 1956, no one could find out why families had been expelled for years and deprived of all their movable and immovable property. We saw in the list of "reasons" that anyone, the resident of any settlement could be banished, as there were both propertied and indigent, those of Southern Slav origin and Hungarians.

Decree no. 29/1956 (IX.8.) M.T. "dealt with" the petitions concerning the property rights of certain individuals, who had been affected by the setting up of the former Southern Slav border zone, whose very designation was misleading. It concerned individuals, not families, who were affected by the creation of the Southern Slav border zone. The affected had their property confiscated completely and were expelled from their homes. The §1. concerned persons who were forced to leave, while they forced whole families to leave. The definitive resolutions decreeing the expulsions were drawn up by the Law and Order Department IV of the Interior Ministry in the name of the Minister

²⁴³ Antal Apró was the deputy to the president of the Council of Ministers from 1953 to 1956.

of the Interior. The reason for expulsion was an unnamed “public interest”, as the presence of the above-mentioned was “damaging from the standpoint of defence of the state.” But there is neither reason nor evidence that could justify the expulsion. The final decision did not allow the possibility of appeal, which was logical, since the concealing of the reason for the expulsion did not permit appeal. The definitive resolutions did not fix the length of time nor did they state that the measures were accompanied by the total confiscation of property. According to §1. persons forced to leave could return without restriction, except for those who had been expelled by the court for a crime. Then indirectly the decree acknowledged that departure from the settlement had taken place without a court decision. The decree did not deal with the fact that the majority of those expelled, imprisoned, or executed had been convicted on false charges. (See chapter 1)

§2. decreed that **individuals who had returned with their families** could receive assistance of up to **5,000 forints**, and they could receive loans of **up to 10,000 forints per family** to set up a shop or put their affairs in order. The executive committee recommended the sum to the local community and city council, the same agencies that had assisted the AVH and the police in the expulsions. The possibility of granting assistance was extended even to persons who didn’t wish to return to their former place of residence.²⁴⁴

§3. concerned with the assertion of claims of property rights, but only for immovable property; movables were excluded. For movables they could borrow up to 10,000 forints.

The equipment, machines, and animals necessary for production and as well as essential furnishings necessary for life were not included in this assistance. Nobody could claim compensation for the illegal trials they had endured, for illnesses acquired in the camps, for accidents, nor the death of family members, since the decree excluded compensation claims.

§4. dealt with the terms for giving back houses or immovables. If the house was state property, but a private individual lived in it, it had to be returned to him or her. In other cases, it could be offered in exchange. If there was insufficient exchangeable real estate in the settlement, then a house and real estate from the neighbouring community had to be given to the family.

²⁴⁴ Decree no. 34/1956 (IX.29) M.T. complemented Decree no. 29/1956 (IX.29) M.T. Paragraph 2 was supplemented by point 3: 3) Those who were forced to leave but don’t wish to return to their former residence can be granted assistance in accordance with para (1).” It should be enforced from 1 September, 1956.

§5. regulated the land, by returning the land or exchanging it, if the state farms or cooperatives used the land of the banished or leased it out.

§6. dealt with cases in which the banished person did not wish to return to his place of residence. He should be offered land and real estate in exchange.

§7. concerned rates and taxes. "If the person forced to leave could not use his house or land, or if the revenue gained from them did not come to him, the taxes due for that time must be written off." "Delivery obligations must also be cancelled, the arrears of taxes and delivery obligations due during the period before his or her departure." The Decree was signed by András Hegedüs, president of the Council of Ministers.

The claims which had been used from 1 September, 1956, had to be submitted by 31 December, 1957. After that the heads of the council had to compile the list of names of the expelled and their property. They made recommendations individually for the sum of assistance to be allocated, or of those who wished to return who could get a loan for relaunching their farms. The majority of families received assistance, even those who didn't wish to return to their former place of residence. The Ministry of Finance ensured additional credit for this assistance of 2.2 million forints for the counties of Baranya, Bács-Kiskun, and Szolnok, 1.5 million forints for Zala County. These loans weren't allocated in fact, because it took months to prepare the contracts, and in the meantime the political will had changed.

Several questions were raised concerning the return of property. What would happen to it when it wasn't recorded in the land register, but was nationalized under the name of the property owner listed on the contract? Could the descendants present their inheritance claims? What was the solution if the nationalised house was exchanged? What should happen if the houses and apartments were used by others? Several questions also came up about movable property, in spite of the fact that the decree concerned only the return of the immovable property. What should be done if the furniture had been moved to the offices of the district party and council organisations? Should they pay the owners the sums earned from the sale of the movable property? Could they give the property owners copies of the inventories made after the deportations? Could they return the movable properties taken in for safe keeping?

Several deportees raised the question of rehabilitation and they asked for written confirmation that their banishment had violated the law.²⁴⁵

The documents provide information about the questions formulated; the answers were postponed until 1957, and the relevant documents weren't to be found.

Two examples of practical application can be given. The decree made possible the return and restoration of real estate in 1956. In the words of Péter Esterházy the worst thing that can happen to a person in a dictatorship is that he begins to hope. He begins to hope that he can be a citizen again and no longer an outcast. That there were communities that did not follow the decree nurtured this hope.

"The farmers' cooperative of Piskó broke up in 1956 and its president who had been brought there from elsewhere was taken home near Pécs. They stopped in front of our house and József Punak, who had come with them from Piskó, came in to us and said: Lajos, the house is empty, come home. My parents began to pack immediately and they moved back into our house; in the barn they found 10 or 12 cows among the cooperative farm's cattle. They came to an agreement with the head of the cooperative that my father would get these cows in exchange for the livestock that had been taken from him. He had taken a great load on his shoulders, for all those animals had to be fed and cared for. He could look after of them, for he wasn't afraid of work and he was only 50 years old at that time. He was sustained by hope, and he was able to do again that which he understood and loved. He thought he could begin his life anew and start from scratch. The trouble was that there was nothing left for the animals to eat. My father didn't give up; he solved even this impossible problem. He borrowed money and bought feed for the animals. Good people helped him. All winter long he took care of them, fed them, and when spring came the animals were taken from him with the excuse that they were needed to help pay off the 1.5 million forint debt of the farmers' cooperative.

He was bereft again in the spring. He bought a pair of colts which he used to plough the land. He was given arable land; he sowed oats and harvested a bountiful crop. Someone in the village said: "Bandi is back and the land is productive." He realised that you couldn't farm without animals and equipment. They began talking again about the need to reform the cooperatives, they thought that they could give the most to their daughters too, if they educated us and were

²⁴⁵ Miklós Füzes, 2002, pp. 243-317.

*with us. In the spring of 1958 they sold the house in Piskó and moved to Pécs, where they bought a small house with a large garden. My mother tended the garden and my father became a miner. By the time I graduated I applied to university as a miner's daughter, but the x ("class enemy") sign was also on my papers."*²⁴⁶

Some people turned to their superiors. After the decree was issued, the members of the administration were still the same as before, and they couldn't decide "what to do". Even the author of the law contributed to the uncertainty by saying that it concerned only those individuals affected by the creation of the southern border zone, and thus it didn't concern the property claims of every affected individual. The "comrades" turned to the secretariat of the Ministry of the Interior to ask whether they should proceed in accordance with the decree or follow the familiar orders of the Ministry.

*"When I was in my electoral district one András Csőke looked me up. Currently he is living on the outskirts of Jánoshalma under the number 409, and he said that he was expelled in 1950 from Bácsalmás to Kormópuszta and released in 1953. He asked me what was going to happen to them? He had 46 hectares and a house. Everything was confiscated, his furniture, land, and house. I couldn't answer his question."*²⁴⁷ It was Mrs. István Iván's job to carry out the decree, but what use is the law if the administration doesn't carry it out?

The answer came back that it was the dictatorship again and it didn't occur to anyone to act in accordance with the laws, because "hope had died." Some families received up to 5,000 forints in aid and separately, depending on the case, real estate in exchange for their house. In the period after the suppression of the revolution, they took away again what had been given back. People were forced to hunker down for mere survival so as to safeguard the future generation's possibilities of earning a livelihood.

The property of the deported and banished was used by public institutions and former officials and their descendants, then given back during the period of privatisation and compensation. Gábor Görgey got 280, 000 forints' worth of compensation coupons for his parents' furnished villa, which had a large garden. An acquaintance bought the villa with the garden. The owner asked 100 million forints for it, and finally they agreed upon 80 million. In 1950 an AVO agent got the villa, his son bought it, then resold it after the regime

²⁴⁶ Excerpts from the reminiscences of Györgyi and Zsuzsanna Badi.

²⁴⁷ Miklós Füzes, 2002, pp. 251-252.

change. By sheer coincidence the writer was able to observe a fascinating episode in the national drama of property being bandied about.

*“Generally, those who were the favourites of the system were still living in these stolen allocated houses, after the class enemy was obliterated from them. They could buy the confiscated apartments for ridiculous sums—to the greater glory of Communism which disowned criminal private property and they even got a 15-year loan from the OTP [Hungarian National Bank]. Thus, the property of the historical families, the former ruling classes and bourgeoisie finally ended up where it supposedly belonged historically: to the officials of the victorious working class, that is, to the faithful servants of the system, as private property entered in the land register, while the original owners slowly perished, most of them miserably.”*²⁴⁸

The unlawful measures of the 1950's, the steps taken for rehabilitation and compensation for property damages, varied significantly depending on whether the victim was a Communist or not.

I will cite Júlia Rajk's material in the rehabilitation measures of the Rajk trial as an example of Communist rehabilitation. Júlia Rajk got an apartment in József Katona Street in district XIII and the furniture, equipment, as well as clothes that she had requested. The house where she and László Rajk lived when they were taken away was not their own, but were given to them from the Party for their use. Based on archival sources, we can divide her material rehabilitation in three steps. First she got an apartment, then she could choose furniture and equipment from the store room of XIV. class; finally, anything she wanted was either bought or made for her.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁸ Gábor Görgey, 1999, pp. 72-73.

²⁴⁹ MOL XIX-A-2-gg 48. d.

Report

Bellügyminisztérium
XIV. Osztály.

L. Lpm. 956 IV. 18.
"Szigoruan titkos!"

88-34-1/1956.

J E L E N T É S.

P i r o s L á s z l ó Bellügyminiszter Elvtársnak!
B u d a p e s t .

Rajk Lászlóné elvtárs rehabilitációjával kapcsolatban az alábbiakat jelentem:

Utasításra 1955. október hónapban kapcsolatot létesítettem Rajk Lászlóné elvtárral és a XIV. Osztály raktárából berendezési és felszerelési tárgyakat szállítottam a XIII., Katona József u. 21. sz. I. em. 15.sz. alatti lakásába.

Ezt követően Rajkné elvtárs ismételtén beadott kérelmére, a kapott utasítás értelmében folyamatosan vásároltuk meg az általa kívánt bútort és egyéb tárgyakat. A vásárlásokat a XIV. Osztály beszerzője Rajkné elvtárral együttesen - kívánalmainak megfelelően - végezte. A vásárolt tárgyakat minden esetben Rajkné elvtárs választotta ki.

A vásárlások elhuzódását indokolja egyrészt, hogy Rajkné elvtárs részletekben adta elő kívánalmait, másrészt egyes tárgyak beszerzése hosszabb időt igényelt, és korábban raktárból kiadott tárgyak egy részét később Rajkné elvtárs nem találta megfelelőnek és azt visszaadta.

Mindezen körülmények mellett Rajkné elvtárs részére leszállítottuk az alább felsorolt tárgyakat.

A XIV. Osztály raktárából:

- 1 db. szekrény 2 ajtós fényezett,
- 1 " tálaló kicsi fényezett,
- 4 " szék támlás kárpitozott,
- 1 " szék karos kárpitozott,
- 1 " asztal ebédlői 8 személyes fényezett,
- 1 " recamie 1 személyes flóderozott,
- 1 " láda fás konyhai /festett/
- 1 " asztali tüzhely /zom. LUNA/
- 1 " kombinált szekrény üveges résszel,
- 2 " füstcső egyenes 112-es,
- 2 " füstcső könyök 112-es,
- 1 " csőrözsa 112-es.

A raktárból kiadott tárgyak értéke kb.

15.000.- Forint.

polyamatos vásárlással megvásároltuk és leszállítottuk:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| 2 db. bőrönd | 965.- Ft. |
| 2 " szőnyeg perzsa | 4.187.- " |
| 1 " szőnyeg perzsa | 2.400.- " |
| 5 fm. szőnyeg futó | 275.- " |
| 14 m. függönyanyag csipke | |

Magyar Országos
Levélár

./.

1397

XIX-A-2-gg - m.m. - 1956

(480)

Source: MOL XIX-A-2-gg-1956

1 db.	porszívógép villany	1.410.-	Ft.
1 "	padlókefélgép	1.500.-	"
1 "	táskairógép	2.400.-	"
1 "	kávéfőző villany	193.70	"

Háztartási cikkek /edények, étkezészetek
stb./ 1.662.80 "

Méret után készítettünk részére:

1 db.	télikabát szőrme béléssel	3.633.-	"
1 "	átmeneti kabát	1.938.-	"
1 "	kosztüm	2.570.-	"
1 "	női nadrág	417.-	"
1 "	nadrágöv	80.-	"
6.5 m.	loden szövetanyag	1.040.-	"

Megrendelve, elkészítés alatt áll:

1 db.	kombinált asztal	2.024.-	"
6 "	szék kárpitozott	4.860.-	"
1 "	tálalóasztal	2.200.-	"

A kiadott, megrendelt tárgyak összes
értéke: 29.363.50 Ft.

Továbbiakban Rajkné elvtárs az alábbi tárgyakat kérte tőlünk:

1 db.	könyvvállvány /értéke kb./	800.-	Ft.
1 "	rádióasztal	500.-	"
1 "	jégszekrény	6.000.-	"
1 "	zongora pianinó	16.000.-	"
1 "	rádió törpeszupper	2.000.-	"
4 "	kép	6.000.-	"
1 "	fényképezőgép	3.000.-	"
	könyvek	6.000.-	"

Ö s s z e s e n : 40.300.- Ft.

Rajkné elvtárral a közelmúltban megbeszélést folytattam, az utóbbi bekezdésben felsorolt berendezési tárgyak részére történő biztosítása ügyében és vele úgy állapodtam meg, hogy ezen tárgyak értékét készpénzben bocsátjuk rendelkezésére.

Kérem Miniszter Elvtársat engedélyezze, hogy az utolsó felsorolásban még kért tárgyak értékét /40.300.- forintot/ kiadhas-sam, mellyel Rajkné elvtárs anyagi rehabilitációja befejezést nyer.

Budapest, 1956 április hó 16-án.

Nytsz: 26877

4 pld.

K:DI/Dné.

Csik Ferenc
Csik Ferenc/
áv.örgy.
osztályvezetőhelyettes.

Magyar Országos
Levélár

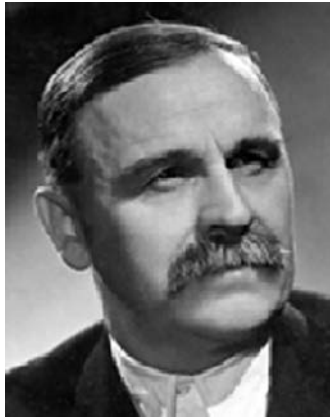
On 16 April, 1956 Ferenc Csehek State Defense/AVH major, deputy department-head wrote a report to László Piros, Minister of the Interior ²⁵⁰ concerning the rehabilitation of Júlia Rajk, since several people had complained of the way the case was dragging on. The rehabilitation was begun in October 1955, when Ferenc Csehek negotiated with Júlia Rajk to choose furnishings and equipment from the XIV. class store-room. The objects chosen by Júlia Rajk were delivered to her apartment at the Interior Ministry's expense. Then Mrs. Rajk repeatedly petitioned them to purchase equipment for her. They did so with the help of the purchasing agent of the XIV. class, in every case as Júlia Rajk asked them to do. Nevertheless, the purchases dragged on, because Mrs. Rajk constantly had new desires, or she had the things she had chosen and which had been delivered sent back and asked for others. Meanwhile Júlia Rajk decided that she needed bespoke furniture and made to measure clothes too. Finally, she listed a few things which were indispensable to her apartment. At this they asked Mrs. Rajk to determine the monetary value of the things that she still needed and it would be paid for in cash. Ferenc Csehek asked the Minister of the Interior for permission to pay the value of the last things requested, so that they could conclude "the material rehabilitation of Comrade Mrs. Rajk."

In the second half of this book, those recalling these events report the value of the compensation coupons that they received for their confiscated property and their lost or curtailed liberty. János Legeza's property was confiscated, in addition to his rank, pension, and freedom. The confiscation of his property is documented in an official report. A special record was made of the valuables in the house. His descendants petitioned repeatedly for the return of the house and the articles of value, but their petition was rejected in every case. This, in spite of the fact that they informed Mária Legeza, Mrs. Ervin Bajor, officially that her father, János Legeza's conviction in 1950 was declared null and void by the Budapest Military Court based on the law XXVI of 1990. Another example of the Orwellian truth, that some are more equal than others.

²⁵⁰ **László Piros**, Minister of the Interior from 6 June, 1954 took part in the re-examination of the show trials in the committees charged with rehabilitating the victims.

“Peasant-Socialist Sectarianism”

Péter Veres’s birthplace was the Hortobágy. In his childhood and later as a writer he was concerned with the “historical conflict between the poor, the day labourers, the descendants of the cotters’ families and the rich and the large landowners and the possibilities of resolving these problems. In his opinion, this centuries-old historical antipathy was resolved between 1949 and 1950 as a consequence of the policies of “you can’t make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear.”



Péter Veres (6 January 1897 - 16 April 1970) was a Hungarian politician and writer, who served as Minister of Defence from 1947 to 1948.

I quote his words:

“Mátyás Rákosi and his comrades didn’t notice that the poor peasants began to pity the decent farmers branded as kulaks and to empathise with them for their humiliations; thus, the local class conflict, on which they were trying to build their policies for the villages and peasants, was coming to an end. This is a calamitous sociological ignorance which manifested itself as political myopia.

By 1951-52 the mood of even the messianic left-wing peasantry began to deflate. The great majority began to lose their faith, and even the socialists began to have their doubts: was all this a good idea?”²⁵¹

Péter Veress’s fate is graphic: as a little boy, he wished that the rich and lordly might know what the lives of the poor were like, but he was shattered

²⁵¹ Péter Veres, 1967.

when it became a reality. It was history that removed him from the “peasant-socialist sectarianism that had almost become fossilised in his consciousness.”

“I don’t wish to pass judgement, for I can find traces of “revenge-radicalism” even in my own earlier attitudes, although I was never a “bloodthirsty revolutionary”. When I was still a child, starting out as a farm labourer and a harried day-labourer, the feeling of humiliation boiled up in me, then when I was a young Socialist track-repairman and we were building the railroad station for the fish pond of Hortobágy and next to us in the middle of the salt puszta called Csúnyaföld [Ugly Land], was a Russian prisoner-of-war camp. Later, after I myself had tried out a few prisoner-of-war camps, it popped up in me too: “The hell with them, these stinking lords; we should put them here in the middle of the Hortobágy, then they’ll know what life is like!” In 1945, however, as I wrote, my thirst for revenge evaporated; I was so swept up in the job that history handed me that I didn’t even have them look for the gendarmes that had beaten me. I felt I had a thousand more important things to do, and in any event, the transformation in me was complete, I saw not only my own class, but the entire people, the whole nation.

It seems that history had pulled me out of the peasant-socialist sectarianism which had almost become fossilised in me.

In 1951 and later in 1952 as the national supervisor of the project of reforesting the Alföld, I went frequently to the Hortobágy and I asked Gyula Illyés to come with me so we could have a look at the construction of the power plant in Tiszalök. On our way we had a look around the Hortobágy. At the fish pond I showed him with a barely concealed feeling of pride in those “objects”: small bridges, the light railways on which I had worked. We went up to the large granaries where the fish feed was stored and mixed. Peasant girls and women were stirring the barley, maize, and groats as before. As was my custom I started a conversation with them, I asked them who they were, where they were from, what they earned, etc. etc. It was like pulling teeth to get them to answer. Then the attendant whispered to me that they were the banished and interned. They had been brought from Baranya County by the Yugoslav border.

Stunned, Gyula and I left the granary. We didn’t even go to Tiszalök. We would find the interned there too. Later, as they said at home in Balmaújfőváros, on the Kónya and Vókonya where we worked as farm labourers in my childhood, there were whole camps full of them. They had built living quarters for themselves out of mud and earth, just as I had imagined so long ago.”²⁵²

²⁵² Péter Veres, 1967.

Relocations from Budapest

Kinga Széchenyi's book entitled *Stigmatized* on the relocations from Budapest appeared in the summer of 2008. I won't even try to introduce this excellent book, I'd just like to draw the reader's attention to the fact that he or she can find every important event of the relocations in it, supported by archival and press sources, and personal reminiscences.

I would like to present a few archival documents. I'd also like to point out a few interconnections that emerged from processing the data in the computer about the banished. In September 1950 the leaders of the AVH with the agreement of the MDP [Hungarian Workers' Party] drew up a plan to seize the Budapest apartments of class aliens who had at least three rooms. The liberated apartments were occupied by the families of leaders of the Party and the Ministries, leading AVH and Hungarian Defense leaders. István Dénes informed Ernő Gerő²⁵¹ about those who had been deprived of those apartments with at least three rooms. Without naming names, he indicated who would get them. Gerő added the following observations to his report.

"Comrade István Dénes!

*I would like you to think about the fact that a report will appear in the papers tomorrow about which proles by name (organisation, plant, number of children or family members) have moved into the apartments of the reactionary bourgeois accumulators who have been expelled from Budapest. 22 IX. 1950."*²⁵³

István Friss²⁵⁴ was the leader of the "committee that dealt with those banished from Budapest". We don't know the recommendations of the committee; we know only Gerő's opinion, which Mátyás Rákosi²⁵⁵ added to the report for Mihály Farkas,²⁵⁶ and József Révai.²⁵⁷ Gerő believed that the relocations were necessary; he disputed only the way they were implemented. He was of the opinion that about 100 to 150 people should be resettled every week and the relocations finished by autumn. The disadvantage of this was that those who were to be relocated would be able to sell a few things of higher

²⁵³ MOL M-KS 276 f. 65 ő.e 183 cs.

²⁵⁴ **István Friss:** After returning from emigration, he became head of the state political and public finance departments of the MKP [Hungarian Communist Party] and MDP [Hungarian Workers' Party] until 1952.

²⁵⁵ **Mátyás Rákosi:** Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers between 1949 and 1952.

²⁵⁶ **Mihály Farkas:** Minister the Defence between 1948 and 1953.

²⁵⁷ **József Révai:** Minister of Culture and Education between 1948 and 1953.

value or place them with friends and acquaintances, but as he put it, “in my opinion, we can bear it.” On the other hand, fewer mistakes would be made, it would be less difficult to place them in the countryside, it would be easier to put them to work, and they wouldn’t have to transport people brutally in the middle of the night. Moreover, they wouldn’t have to carry out two actions at the same time: against the Church and against the class aliens of Budapest.²⁵⁸



Relocated families in Mezőberény

On 5 May, 1951 a memorandum was drafted to accord with Gerő’s instructions about the expelling of undesirable elements from Budapest as a result of the talks between Rákosi, Gerő, Friss, Péter²⁵⁹ and Árpád Házi, Minister of the Interior. The resettlements were the Interior Ministry’s job, which it carried out with the help of the AVH. They were begun on 21 May, 1951. The weekly quota of 120-150 families were relocated in three days. After they received the orders, the families were given only 24 hours to pack. The head of the family was allowed to take belongings weighing 500. The other family members could take 250 kg. People were transported by railway, and several families were packed into a wagon. They could not be settled in cooperative villages and cities. Objects of value left behind in the apartments were sold by commission shops, and the plan was to send the price to their owners. They decided to set up a directing group, which was the same as the exemption committee. The

²⁵⁸ MOL M-KS 276 f. 65 o.e. 183 cs.

²⁵⁹ **Gábor Péter:** head of the AVH.

Budapest Party Committee—László Fehér; the Council of Budapest, György Kiss; Ministry of the Interior, Lieutenant-Colonel György Rudas, and the AVH Major Imre Sándor would delegate a member to each group.



Relocated families in Mezöberény

According to the final report that can be found in the archives²⁶⁰ during the resettlements begun on 21 May, 1951 and which lasted until 18 July, 1951, 5,182 families and 12,704 individuals were removed forcibly from Budapest. The basic list of “undesirable elements,” who lived in Budapest, cited 6,644 families and 17,530 people, but only 5,893 resolutions were delivered. The reason for this was that some of the families had left their apartments and houses on their own initiative and had moved in with friends and relatives in the country, or they had found a sublet in Budapest so that family members separated, in this way, tried as individuals to avoid being carried off. The members of the Nikolits family, for example, separated. Of these 583 families or 1,316 members moved to the country, four families, and eight individuals went abroad, 10 heads of families had been arrested earlier; 85 families, 155 individuals could not be relocated until 18 July. Fifty-five families with 66 persons went to hospital, and 14 had died. The report indicated 751 families with 1,569 persons. Even after the delivery of the resolutions, they could not

²⁶⁰ MOL MK-S 276 f 65 cs. 184 o.e.

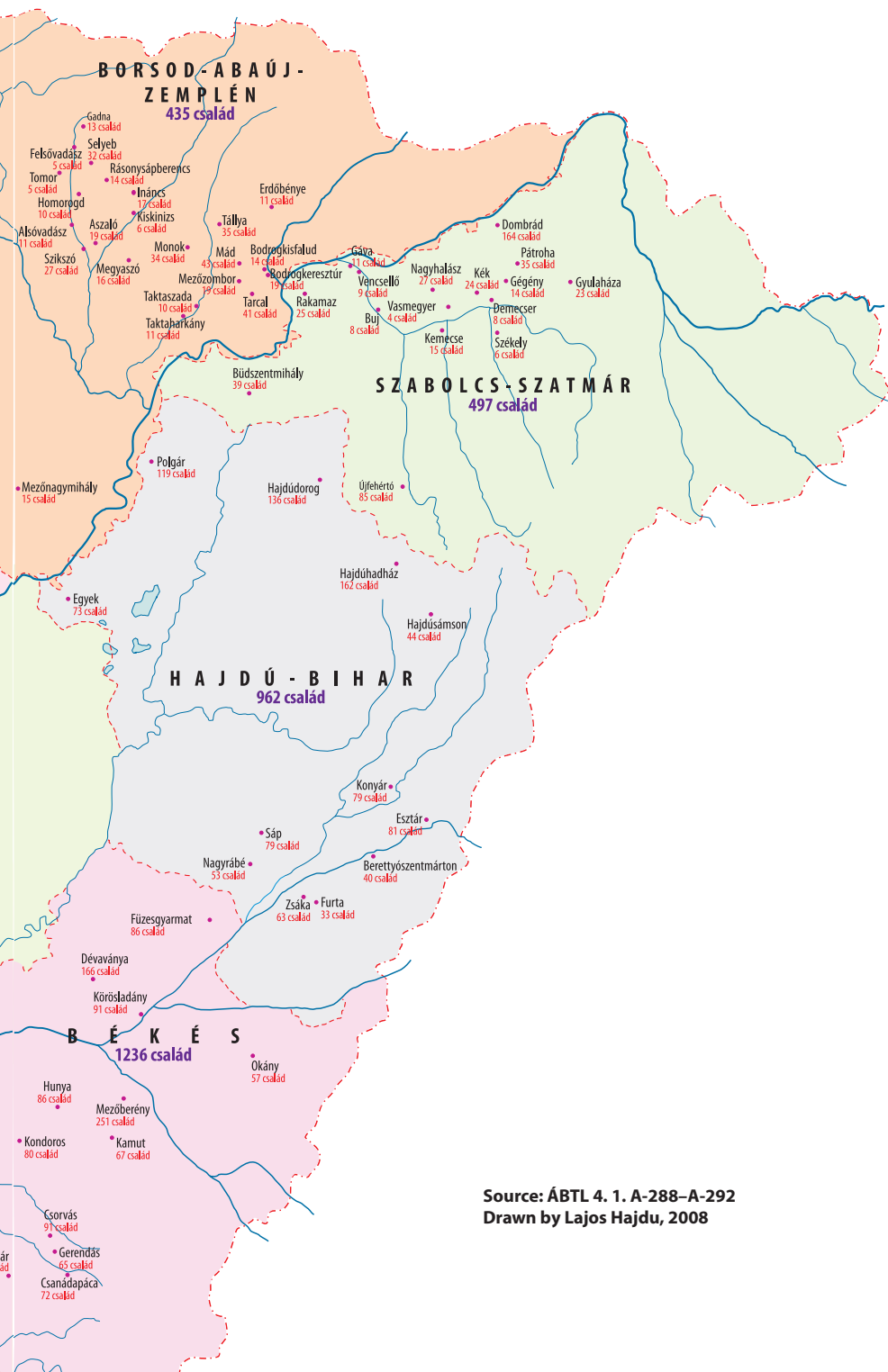
**The place of destination of the families
expelled from the 5th district of Budapest in 1951**



Drawn by Lajos Hajdu, 2008

The places of destination of expelled families from Budapest in 1951



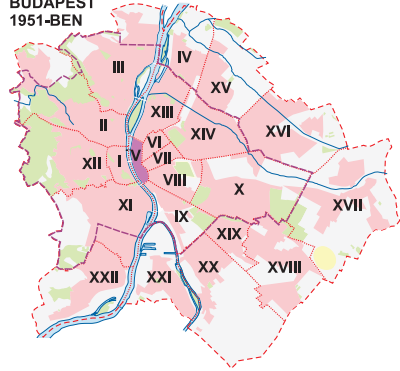


Source: ÁBTL 4. 1. A-288–A-292
Drawn by Lajos Hajdu, 2008

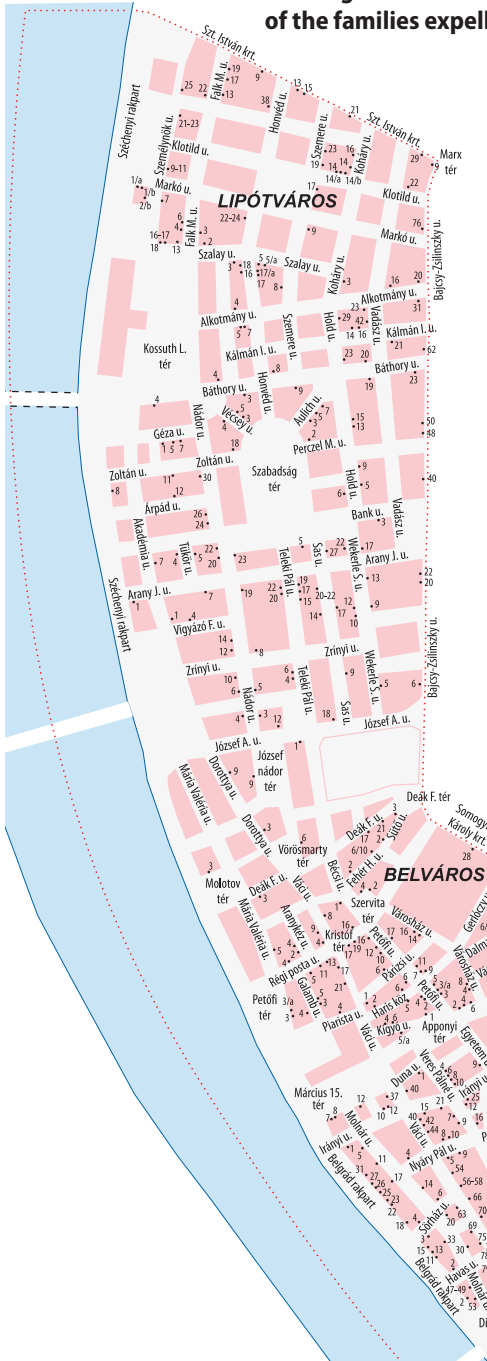
The original residence (street and number of house) of the families expelled from 5th district of Budapest in 1951

Downtown, Lipótváros

BUDAPEST 1951-BEN



- administrative border of Budapest until 1950
- administrative border of Budapest in 1950
- administrative border of district
- built-in area in 1951



take all the families, for 629 families with 1,884 individuals were exempted, 13 families with 32 individuals escaped, and six families with 10 individuals tried to commit suicide, of whom four families with six individuals were successful. Those carried away included family members who had received the resolutions even in their country home and whose family members were still moved to residences that were set aside for them; Elek Nagy Verseggy's wife and two sons were an example. Sixty families out of 5,182 were allowed to move in with a family that would take them in, instead of the prescribed place of residence, insofar as this was allowed by the council connected with the place of residence of the host family.



Relocated families in Mezőberény



Relocated families in Mezőberény

In 1953, according to the report of the execution of the legally binding decree concerning the general amnesty, those relocated from Budapest numbered 13,670 individuals.²⁶¹ In the course of computer processing the lists in the archives, a third fact emerged concerning the number of resettled: 10,911 individuals, in spite of the fact that the above summaries were based on the same list. There are several mistakes in the names and dates of birth, and we began to correct the lists by including the descendants of the families affected, insofar as this was possible. As a result of the corrections, the number of those relocated rose to 11 214. The list of names in the CD appendix of the book can contain mistaken data, as we did not succeed in reaching the descendants of each and every family. That is why we ask the reader, if he or she is able to correct this list and has creditable sources, to be of assistance. In several cases, family members were missing. We rectified some of them. We wrote the corrections and addenda in italics, indicating that we have changed the original documents. The CD contains the addresses of those who had been relocated from the 22 districts of Budapest by street and house number according to district. At the same time the maps of the districts show those settlements where they moved the resettled according to county. The coloured appendices of the book contain the county and within them the map that indicates all the settlements “places of residence” of the relocated, as well as the map of the residences of those banished from the 5th district according to

²⁶¹ MOL MK-S 276 t. 65 cs 184 o.e.

street and house number, that is, the map of the place they were taken from and the place they were taken to, according to county and settlements.

The occupations of the heads of the banished families indicate that they were involved with the tasks of executive administration on a national level, there were members of Parliament, who had taken part in committees or had been participants in and responsible for county and property administration and jurisdiction. Soldiers and police officers were banished, as well as farm managers and members of the economic and political elite who often possessed significant fortunes not only in Budapest but also in the country. Among the military officers, officers of the gendarmerie, police officers, chief officials, and detectives were 1,321 individuals. The heads of national administration—ministers, state secretaries, under-secretaries of state, chief counselors, ambassadors, envoys, chief consuls and prosecutors were banished. Among the members of county and local administration and jurisdictions, there were 279 individuals—lord-lieutenants, sub-prefects, mayors, chief constables, town clerks, lawyers, judges, counsels. Of the members of the economic elite, 275 heads and managers of factories, 262 big businessmen, 241 landowners and large tenants, 190 owners of factories and plants, 170 bankers and bank managers, 117 owners of hotels and restaurants.



Relocated families in Mezőberény



Relocated families in Mezöberény

The Occupations of Heads of Families Banished from Budapest

Attributed occupation	Békés county	Borsod-Abauj-Zemplén county	Hajdú-Bihar county	Heves county	Pest county	Szabolcs-Szatmár county	Szolnok county	Total
Officers of the military, field officer	264	59	205	98	20	92	223	961
Officers of the gendarmerie, field officer	19	2	21	5	3	6	15	71
Police officers, field officers, detectives	73	22	64	44	4	25	56	288
Commander of the Fire Brigade		1		1				2
Minister	7	3	3	1			4	18
Under-Secretary of State, Chief Counselor	27	3	17	14	5	14	26	106
Officials of the Ministry	90	35	63	49	7	32	50	326
Ambassadors, emissaries, consuls-general	1	1		2			6	10

Attributed occupation	Békés county	Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county	Hajdú-Bihar county	Heves county	Pest county	Szabolcs-Szatmár county	Szolnok county	Total
Member of Parliament, members of the Upper House	3	2		1	1	3	7	17
Lord-lieutenants, sub-prefects	8	2		2		1	6	19
Civil servants, functionaries	21	2	12	14	3	5	13	70
Financial counsellors, chief counsellors		4	11	4	1		16	36
Mayors	1	1		2	1	1	3	9
Presidents of council				2			1	3
Chief constables, district administrator	1		3	2			4	10
Notaries		1	1	3	1		1	7
Politicians	2			1		1	3	7
Attorneys general, prosecuting attorneys	10	2	3	3		2	6	26
Lawyers	12	4	13	9	2	8	11	59
Judges	12	3	7	30	5	6	4	67
Legal advisers	1	2					2	5
Bankers, bank managers	42	23	28	22	3	11	44	173
Post officer directors		1	1	4	1		2	9
Stock-brokers	3	3	1	4	2		2	15
Aristocrats	4		1	1		1	11	18
Land owners, tenants of large landholdings	60	17	34	28	2	15	79	235
Farm superintendents		1					1	2
Stewards of estates, farm managers	2		1					3
“Plutocrats”		1						1
Owners of factories, plants, owners of institutions	22	23	50	39	10	22	28	194

Attributed occupation	Békés county	Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county	Hajdú-Bihar county	Heves county	Pest county	Szabolcs-Szatmár county	Szolnok county	Total
CEO heads of companies, heads of firms, managers of factories, managing directors	43	38	34	57	8	21	26	227
Directors of film companies, film entrepreneurs	1			2				3
Managers of mines	1	1	1	2		2	3	10
Owners of cafes, restaurants, inns, and hotels	31	12	21	26	2	5	16	113
Construction entrepreneurs		1						1
Shop owners	2		1			3	3	9
Film directors		1						1
Theatre secretary-general		1						1
Owners of cinemas	1			1				2
Owners of newspapers, editors of newspapers, journalists		1	2	1		1	1	6
House owners	2	2	6	24	3			37
Jewellers, goldsmiths, jewel merchants	4		2	1			8	15
State Wholesalers		2	6					8
Wholesalers	45	38	58	51	9	17	55	273
Businessmen	2	1	10	2	1	2	4	22
Directors	3		1	2			1	7
Engineers	1							1
Technicians				1				1
Priests or Ministers	1							1
Teachers of colleges	1							1
Ballet dancers			1					1
Persons of independent means (self-employed)							2	2

Attributed occupation	Békés county	Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county	Hajdú-Bihar county	Heves county	Pest county	Szabolcs-Szatmár county	Szolnok county	Total
Housewives			1	1				2
Race-horse trainers, Race-horse stable owners			1			1		2
Brothels, brothel owners Procuresses		8		10		2		20
Prostitutes		2		1		1		4
Together	823	326	684	567	94	300	743	3537
The members of the families of all these and their kith and kin (spouse, daughter, son, grandson and granddaughter, mother, father, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother and sister, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, nephew, niece, aunt, uncle, stepmother, relative)	1659	685	1387	1068	183	719	1291	6992
Child born in exile	1							1
Widows and widowers (members of families, relatives, former... widow/widower)	166	47	113	74	6	47	106	559
Occupation, family relation isn't indicated	14	29	6	25	1	12	18	105
Altogether	2675	1095	2190	1734	284	1078	2158	11214

The largest number of families were banished from the IInd, XIth, XIIth, Vth and Ist districts, the fewest were 20 individuals from the XXIst district. Those banished from the individual districts were distributed throughout seven counties, thus increasing the vulnerability of the families, for they were forced to depend on the kindness of strangers, people who suffered the same fate, and those who took them in, instead of relying on the help of relatives.

Relocations by District and by County

Residence	The place of destination (county)							
District	Békés county	Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county	Hajdú-Bihar county	Heves county	Pest county	Szabolcs-Szatmár county	Szolnok county	
I.	447	43	60	125	22	103	222	1022
II.	669	123	93	315	29	125	326	1680
III.	93	58	3	36	6	33	73	302
IV.	1	2	1	6	1	61		71
V.	342	217	25	140	15	29	414	1182
VI.	3	103	294	91	18	27	94	630
VII.	83	45	33	45	9	1	299	515
VIII.	10	29	393	148	33	64	43	720
IX.		52	321	59	49	111	69	661
X.	6	6	16	10	4	42	5	89
XI.	560	88	294	282	19	142	298	1683
XII.	372	168	159	231	30	78	206	1244
XIII.	62	79	31	77	40	47	99	435
XIV.		31	363	65		8	6	473
XV.		1	1	9	7	35		53
XVI.		6		12		43	1	62
XVII.		8	2	2		49		61
XVIII.		3	46	12		12		73
XIX.		4	45	27		12		88
XX.	22	21	1	19		2		65
XXI.	4	2		10		3	2	21
XXII.		5	3	13	2	51		74
Altogether	2673	1094	2184	1734	284	1078	2157	11204
No particular district indicated	2	1	6				1	10
Altogether	2675	1095	2190	1734	284	1078	2158	11214



Relocated families in Mezőberény

On 24 May, 1951, Hugo Tamm, Swedish ambassador, wrote a report to Foreign Minister Undém about the relocations from the Hungarian capital. Hugo Tamm stressed that the order to relocate was based on two decrees that had been issued in 1939, which had been used against the Jews during the war. That is why he called the procedure deportation.

“The deportation of the ‘reactionary elements’ from the capital predicted by the embassy in other connections, has begun. The moment I learned from an informed source that the Interior Ministry had compiled a list of 6,000 people of whom 500 had been ordered to leave their Budapest places of residence within 24 hours and who were taken by lorry to villages in three different counties, 80 to 100 kms from the capital, where they were assigned houses that belonged to peasants or agricultural labourers. They had been recruited for industries in Budapest and other enterprises in the capital. The deportation order was based on two decrees issued in 1939 which had been used against the Jews, but which had been repealed later in 1945. These two decrees ordered that those individuals, whose continued presence in Budapest presented a danger to society, had to be relocated. The deportations of families, which were going on at this writing, and until now primarily affected members of the old aristocracy, as well as former military officers, high-ranking officials, as well as the owners of nationalised

enterprises, etc., mostly elderly people, but also numerous younger family members, regardless of whether they were employees, or whether they had jobs. The spacious and comfortable apartments in Budapest were distributed most probably among the higher-ranking members of the Communist Party or the Soviet "experts." No compensation was given for the apartments taken or for movables, which they couldn't take with them. Whereas the majority of the deported most probably didn't have any property, (there was no other economic equipment) since the personal movables, which were sold [from which they were separated] gradually so they could obtain the material means to make a living. Due to the changed circumstances the possibilities of making a living had to be considered to be particularly limited.

As a result of these measures, the mood in broad circles of the capital bordered on panic. According to the data, at a given time about 50,000 individuals were living in constant fear of suffering a similar fate. There were several among the deported whom I know personally."²⁶²

The support and help given by the Chorin family

The New York Times reported several times in 1951, about the family displacements in Hungary. The Hungarian colony in the US also had first hand information about the inhuman treatments of their friends and relatives in their native country.

Mrs. Rudolf Strasser, Daisy Chorin, published a book about her family in 1999 (Osiris publisher) in which she remembered this period.

"The news from Hungary became more and more frightening. The wave of deportation started. Many of our friends were expelled from Budapest to farmsteads all over the country. This took its toll not on them only but on the farmers and hosts as well. Though we could not do much from America, we tried to help as much as it was possible. We managed to send food and clothing

²⁶² UD Eu HP vol. 585. Dnr.11:200.-30.5.1951 Original typed manuscript. Sent round the Foreign Ministry. Informed the king, the Prime Minister, the headquarters staff and the state police, as well as the following Swedish embassies: Belgrade, Berlin, Bern, Bonn, Brussels, Bucharest, The Hague, Copenhagen, London, Moscow, Oslo, Prague, Paris, Rome, Sofia, Warsaw, Washington, D.C., Vienna and the Swedish representative to the UN in New York. Reported to the entire Swedish press, **Péter Solymossy**: Swedish Report on the Relocations (manuscript).

*packages through a Swedish Charitable Organization to these unfortunate peoples. We sent long list of addresses to Sweden, which we collected from all over the free world, thus strived to help the neediest. I do hope that our efforts were of help.*²⁶³

“Much before this, my parents helped their friends and former employees through IKKA (the only organization through which packages or money could be sent from the US to Hungary).” - said Daisy Chorin in our interview in 2010.



Andrassy Avenue, 114, in Budapest – Park Avenue 1000

A large part of the documents on the help of Ferenc Chorin and family was placed in the Historical Archive of the State Security Services through Agnes Szechenyi, who brought the documents to Budapest, on behalf of Mrs. Strasser, (Daisy Chorin) in 2010.

CHORIN Ferenc was able to get in touch with a Director of Skandinaviska Banken, Eric Björkman in order to solicit help to ease the life of the deportees in Hungary. Through him, we got in touch with a Swedish Child-Care organization Redda Barnen. This organization was able to collect food, clothing which was sent to Hungary and distributed among the deportees. The packages weighed four and a half kilo each, the weight limit the Hungarian government allowed. There were special packages for men, women or children. The Swedish government approved this action but refused to cover the postal

²⁶³ Mrs. Rudolf Strasser Chorin Daisy, 1999, p. 589

costs needed for duty free delivery. (3 Dollars per package) . The Chorin family together with the support of their friends collected the money.



Ferenc Chorin, New York, 1951

In the documents of this correspondence we find several lists of the addressees. Most of them were compiled by private persons who were members or friends of the deported and expelled families. Daisy Chorin collected them from all over the world.

“People from all over the world sent us addresses and names of those most in need in Hungary. I remember only a few names of those friends of my family who helped us greatly in this effort. Foremost my aunt Edith Weiss, Paul Fellner, Laszlo Pathy, and many others”—said Daisy Chorin in our interview in 2010.

Between November 1951 and October 1952 Daisy Chorin corresponded with Margit Levinson, the Presidentin of the organisation Redda Barnen.

The Swedish organization prepared and sent gift packages containing food, clothing and other items of necessities for men, women and children. According to documents during the one year in which delivery of the packages was possible, more than 600 packages were sent.



Edith Weiss In Budapest, 1952



Daisy Chorin speaks up at the meeting of the National Union of Manufacturers (GYOSZ)

We found among the papers a 122 page long list, containing 3000 names. The peculiarity of this list is that it identifies the deportees, and gives their exact addresses. Since the compilation of such a list was exclusively the task of the AVH the names and the addresses must have come from Senior government officials. Also, we have no information, how this document was smuggled out into the free world, since no original copy could be found in the archives.

It also turns out from the correspondence that the Chorin family continued their helping activities through several channels even after May 1952.

Many of those, who received one or the other of these packages, remember some of the typical trademarks of its contents (Swedish coat of arms on the buttons of a coat, ect.)

According to a letter, sent by Daisy Chorin to Margit Levinson on May 31, 1952, the Hungarian government suddenly did not allow anymore packages to be sent. There was no official explanation. "I am very much concerned with this new Hungarian regulation and I do not know how those affect the continuity of these gift packages. I am afraid that as the political situation gets worse world over, the regulations will be more and more severe in Hungary. There are certain rumors that the postal communication between the united States and Hungary will be stopped altogether and for the present moment the US post office do not accept any mail to be transferred to Hungary. You can well imagine, that the need for your wonderful Swedish packages was never bigger that it is at the present moment in Hungary. As it is the only means by which people can get packages for the moment."²⁶⁴



Ferenc Chorin and his daughter, Erzsébet

²⁶⁴ Daisy Chorin to Margit Levinson, May 31, 1952

Emőke Solymosi Tari: László Lajtha, a composer in the time of dictatorship

László Lajtha, one of the greatest Hungarian composers of the first half of the twentieth century. From 1928 Lajtha was a member of the International Commission of Popular Arts and Traditions of the League of Nations and then a member of the Commission of Arts and Letters until the outbreak of the World War II. He was also a member of the committee of the International Folk Music Council, based in London. From October 1947 to October 1948 spent a year in London, together with his family, at Hoellering's invitation, where he composed the film score for Murder in the Cathedral, based on a drama by T. S. Eliot). In 1948 his friends suggested him, not to return to Hungary because of the systemic change. While his sons decided not to return to Hungary, Lajtha with his wife returned. Upon his return, he was dismissed from his job, he remained unemployed and was unable to earn his retirement pension. To further complicate the family's life, he was refused a passport for 14 years, his works were rarely played in Hungary, and he was classified by the authorities as a "political resistance fighter."



László Lajtha
Source: Inheritance of Lajtha

László Lajtha (1892-1963) is one of the greatest Hungarian musical talent of the 20th century. He achieved outstanding heights not only as a composer but also as a teacher, a researcher of folk music, a church conductor and even as an international cultural diplomat. Lajtha began his musical education in Budapest, and later studied in Leipzig, Geneva and Paris. In the French capital he was a student of Vincent d'Indy at the Schola Cantorum: this institution founded as a rival of the conservatory gave specific attention among other things, to the teaching 16th-18th century Renaissance and Baroque music.

Throughout Lajtha's oeuvre, the influence of the Baroque and 20th century masters such as Couperin, Rameau, Debussy and Ravel is strongly present. He has been regarded as a composer "in the French style" with much justification. Although this type of labeling has its dangers—especially in Lajtha's case, who never wanted to imitate anyone and developed an independent and characteristic musical language. It is certainly true that in the period when the Hungarian musical culture was under a dominating German influence, he was attracted to the Latin spirit from his youth. The French musical circles—the profession as well as the audience—acknowledged Lajtha as their own: this is shown by the successful first performances of many of his compositions in Paris as well as the fact that a Parisian publishing house, Leduc signed a contract with him. Lajtha is one of the few Hungarians who have been elected associate of the French Academy of Arts (1955).

His oeuvre of sixty-nine pieces with opus numbers and another one and a half dozen without opus is characterized, besides the French influence, by its constant reference to Hungarian folk music. Joining Bartók and Kodály, Lajtha began collecting folk songs in 1911—at the age of 19. His work collecting instrumental folk music had a pioneering significance. He was awarded with the Kossuth Price in 1951 for his activities as a folk music collector. Internationally acknowledged as a scholar of the first rank, he was the only Hungarian board member of the International Folk Music Council in London. Although his compositions were played much more frequently in Western Europe than in his homeland, he held important post in Hungary in the middle of 40ies. He was the director of the Hungarian Radio, the Museum of Ethnography and the National Music Conservatoire, where he taught for decades.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁵ HUNGAROTON HCD 31776 Translated by Dávid Oláh

The most outstanding and most characteristic pieces of his oeuvre include his symphonic works (among them his nine symphonies unique in the 20th century Hungarian music) and the rich treasury of his chamber music pieces. The ones regarded as the most “French style” among the latter are the compositions containing harp and flute parts—five peaces.

First Lajtha declared, that he would not accept the Kossuth-Prize²⁶⁶. But on his friends’ advise and in order to protect his family, he decided not to refuse it. Finally he gave the then enormous sum to his wife with the instruction to dispense it to the last penny. The wife recalled this as follows:

“I was walking around like a charitable angel. Margit Kónya showed up, a devout Catholic neighbour who had been deprived of her pension. I took 300 Forints out of my pocket and put the money on her table. There lived a musician couple in the house, also deprived of their pension. They were also given 1000 Forints. A colonel from the fourth floor, a good friend and actually the best equestrian in Hungary, was deprived of everything. He also got a certain sum. So did the widow and another corpulent lady from the main floor. Only in this house, 4000 Forints were distributed. Then we considered those who had previously been relocated. A former vice-president of the Incorporated Law Society, a former Hussar colonel, a former landowner from Transdanubia, who had also been skinned. Many more others would have deserved it. My husband was ready to allocate everything of his own, not only the sum of money won with the Kossuth-Prize. For instance, I read in the newspaper about a writer named Ödön Mariay, whom I did not even remember, but was very grateful to Laitha for his help.”²⁶⁷

²⁶⁶ The Kossuth Prize is a state-sponsored award in Hungary, named after the Hungarian politician and revolutionary Lajos Kossuth. The Prize was established in 1948 (on occasion of the centenary of the March 15th revolution, the day on which it is still handed over every year) by the Hungarian National Assembly, to acknowledge outstanding personal and group achievements in the fields of science, culture and the arts.

²⁶⁷ From the interview with Róza Hollós (wife of László Lajtha) **Emőke Solymosi Tari**, 2010, pp. 60-61

*Details from the correspondence of László
Lajtha and Ödön Mariay²⁶⁸*

1.

“8. August, 1952

My Dear Friend,

I hope, you received the remittance I mailed to you a few days ago. I was very glad, that this time I could manage to collect more money than I expected, so you can buy in a bit more firewood than you actually need. I was very sad to hear that you had to survive the last winter without any fuel. Please, send a letter any time, if you need anything or just a word confirming that my parcel reached you...

You are still living in a dream world of arts like when you was young—as you wrote. I am just looking for an opera libretto, but I haven’t found any good idea so far. Would you help me to solve this problem? You could even write it!

With warm regards

Lajtha László”

2.

“My Dear Friend László,

Yes, I got the money from you on Saturday! The cheese and the other food are marvelous, your parcel was a great help to avoid the crisis. I am extremely grateful to you, since the winter is already round the corner and I am freezing in my room even all dressed up in warm cloths. Big storms, snow and mud, it is difficult to do any shopping. I am running out of fuel. I am living a sort of virtual life. I am steadily looking for a good theme for an opera libretto, as soon as I find something, I let you know. I would prefer to revitalize some tales from the old classics.

My best regards to your wife.

Yours ever

Mariay Ödön.”

Parts of the two compositions of László Lajtha: *Missa in tono phrygio* and the “*Revolution symphony*”, related to this period of the Hungarian history, can be listened to on the CD supplement.

²⁶⁸ I am grateful to Ildiko Lajtha for her permission to publish these letters. (Ödön Mariay was relocated from Budapest to a remote farmstead in June, 1951)

Missa in tono phrygio



The cover of the music score
Source: Inheritance of Lajtha

3

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244

On the musical score of the orchestra is written: Budapest, IV-VII. 1950. In diebus tribulationis. That is: Budapest, from April to July 1950, during days of tribulation. László Lajtha, beside Bartók and Kodály the most significant Hungarian master of the first half of the twentieth century, locates with these words both the place and time of his creation: Mass in the Phrygian Tonality. As the widow of the composer remembers it, the original title should have been: Missa in Diebus Tribulationis. It was evident, that in the Hungary of 1950 it was not advisable to give such a title to a work: even to write a mass required great audacity. The austere title, sounding perhaps like a musicological one, takes its origin from that. But if we want to understand the work fully, we have to start from Lajtha's original conception as embodied in the title. The composer wrote this work in one of his most difficult and tormenting periods: the composition burst out of him as an immense cry of pain. (The unusually short time it took refers us to the fact that he worked almost continuously that he "has written out" something of himself.)

Symphony No. 7. Op 63. "Revolution Symphony"

The original descriptive title of his Seventh Symphony, Autumn, was omitted from the printed score referring as it did to the events of autumn 1956. In a letter to his sons, written in 1957 or 1958, he describes the symphony as really very tragic, dramatic and revolutionary, adding that some day it might carry the title Revolution Symphony. The brutal suppression of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 against Communist dictatorship and Soviet oppression made a deep impression on the composer, an impression echoed by the Seventh Symphony.

"I wrote the Seventh Symphony in 1957. The tragic character of the work, gloomy and emotional in its melancholy, was the result of an accumulation of feeling over the years, just as Hungarian poets have always entertained the same emotions. This is natural, since Hungarian history is full of tragic events, which have often raised questions of existence or non-existence. This plan, maturing for many years, was influenced by the events of 1956 too, like ash disturbed by the wind. The musical instruments grieve at the tragedies of Hungary, pray for truth and quote the sounds of the hymn for a peaceful future."

THE AMNESTY OF 1953

Those who had initiated and directed the illegal court cases carried out the rehabilitation of the condemned and gave back the personal freedom of the other victims whose human rights had been illegally violated.

After Stalin's death on 5 March, 1953, a political as well as personal change took place in the Soviet Union. In Hungary these changes derived from the attempts at correcting the policies of Stalin. These changes took shape as an ultimate policy at the talks of the delegation made up of members of the Soviet Party presidency and Hungarian Party leaders, which were held in Moscow between 13 and 16 June.²⁶⁹ As a result of the decision taken in Moscow by Imre Nagy when he was premier for the first time, the Soviet leaders intervened directly in the domestic affairs of their satellites, in accordance with the "hands-on leadership method". The collective Soviet leadership chose Imre Nagy, because they believed that he would provide surety for political renewal. But Imre Nagy was excluded from the political committee, because he recommended that they slow down the farm cooperative movement, and he defended the small peasant landowners. He was one of the few cadres who were of "Hungarian origin". The Soviet Party leaders, particularly Beria, often stressed that it was "Jews" who held the most important positions in the Hungarian Party leadership.²⁷⁰

At the June talks Malenkov, Berija, Mikoyan, and Khrushchev reported on the mistakes made, based on the confidential reports that they were given. Gerő, Rákosi, Dobi, and Imre Nagy spoke about these issues. The MDP [Hungarian Workers' Party] drafted the negotiations document based on that debate; the Soviet Party leaders later wrote down their observations connected with these documents and the tasks that the Hungarian Party delegates had to carry out at home. Concerning the question of legality, the Soviet leaders complained that the Hungarian leadership had brought up this issue in an overly general way. They felt that they had to speak out about what had happened in the past. There was a veritable wave of repression against the population. Out

²⁶⁹ Four copies were made of this memorandum and it was classified as strictly confidential.. The text of the morandum was published by György T. Varga in the 1991 issue of the journal *Múltunk [Our Past]*. [Henceforth, T. Varga 1992]

²⁷⁰ János M. Rainer, 1996, pp. 518-521.

of a population of 4.5 million adults, 1,500,000 individuals were taken to court within three and a half years, and during this same period 1,500,000 individuals were charged with petty offences. They were punished arbitrarily for insignificant things. If these numbers appeared in the document, then the people would understand better, what the new phase meant.²⁷¹

After the leaders of the Hungary Party returned home, the Central Leadership held its meeting on 27-28 June, 1953, where the instructions given in Moscow would become Party directives. The Central Leadership's resolution was not made public, for at the time the final draft was being drawn up, Rákosi received a telephone call from Moscow. Thereupon, Rákosi informed the others that the Soviet comrades asked that the resolution not be made public until such time as the correction of the mistakes had achieved concrete and visible results.²⁷² It is probable that Rákosi exaggerated the call from Moscow, as it was in his interest that the serious critique of his person not be made public.²⁷³ The text of the Central Leadership's resolution appeared for the first time in the 1984 issue of the *Beszélő* [*Speaker*]. Public opinion was probably informed of the policy of the new phase by Imre Nagy's speech on the government programme as Prime Minister given on 4 July, 1953.

The legally binding Decree no. II of 1953, of the Presidential Council of the People's Republic, concerned the general amnesty of those who had been convicted by the courts. It did not extend to those who had committed "war crimes or crimes against the people", or those who had committed "criminal activities aimed at overturning the People's Republic or the people's democratic order or attempted to cross the border". The resolution concerning the general amnesty did not refer to any laws or other legal measures that it would have repealed. In the same way, Decree No. 1034/1953 (VII.26.) of the Ministerial Council of the Hungarian People's Republic ended the practice of placing people under police custody, it ended the internments, as well as annulling the expulsions. Since the legal measures that were repealed were not designated, Ernő Gerő in his letter written to the Minister of the Interior János Győre on 10 July, 1953 drew attention to the fact that only the institution of internment had to be ended, the expulsions did not. The Party would not deprive itself of the possibility of legally expelling dangerous elements if necessary.²⁷⁴

²⁷¹ György T. Varga, 1992.

²⁷² MOL-M-KS-276.F.53.cs.170.ő.e.

²⁷³ János M. Rainer, 1996, pp. 524-525.

²⁷⁴ György T. Varga, 2003, p. 22.

Ernő Gerő wrote a recommendation about the internal instructions on 23 July, 1953 for the Political Committee. Without an implementation decree of execution, internal instructions ²⁷⁵ specified what concerned individual citizens during the period following the amnesty. These internal instructions were strictly confidential, not only in 1953, but also up to and including 1994, ²⁷⁶ or 1995. ²⁷⁷ Those instructions which reached the councils after Imre Nagy's speech contained many uncertainties and contradictions. It was generally acknowledged that illegalities had taken place, but the leaders weren't given guidelines about what was illegal and what their role was in reasserting the rule of law. As the leaders remained the same, those who had carried out the violations of the law took advantage of the ambiguous regulations by attempting to qualify the crimes committed as lawful. For example, the internal instructions drew the leaders' attention to the fact that banished individuals could not demand restoration or compensation for movable and immovable properties, for example, apartments or houses lost during the expulsions. On the other hand, if the expulsion was judged to be illegal, the movable and immovable property should have been given back. If it wasn't then the former and current leaders concluded that the expulsion hadn't been illegal.

How did the banished themselves see the amnesty? István Dér spent 40 months in Borzas-Mihályhalmi camp. I quote from a letter of his that was smuggled out.

²⁷⁵ ÁBTL 4.1. A-508, MOL XIX-B-1-j 41. d. 129. 00451.

²⁷⁶ The Minister of the Interior of the Hungarian Republic ended this classification with its instructions no. 2009/1994 beginning with June 28, 1994.

²⁷⁷ LXV tv. 28.§ of 1995 ended this classification.

István Dér in Hortobágy



“I only found out about that anaemic and defective article, which you must have also skimmed through, from the Communist papers. It doesn’t even contain so much as Imre Nagy’s government programme. Still, what is the essential thing about a legal measure which continues to be valid and which requires permission to settle in certain towns and villages. This also included the border-zone villages. As a result, divided families still could not come together, even though Mr. Imre Nagy, the Prime Minister, promised that everybody should return to the places designated by him, which would have suited the original spirit of the orders. Ultimately, we were released from the ghetto, but we couldn’t go back to our family houses, or at least not according to the resolution...Believe me, Jóska, I don’t expect anything from these people, not even this much. Those who dragged me away from my warm bed in the early of dawn, and later made me a beggar with the basest methods and unlawful circumstances according to a recipe imported from abroad, and without benefit of any court procedure or verdict should not have the power of granting me “amnesty”.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁸ Zsuzsa Hantó, 2002, p. 77.

1953. jinhua 27-en.

Lieders Fiskerim.

Még nem volt szervezem az olyan nehéz és gyakorlatilag megant
 kórkörmömi rendeltetted eredetben áthíngesni. Bár a magyar kommunista
 lapoktól ismerem azt a vérszegénységet és hiányos étkezést, amelyet nyíltan
 és vérszegénységre. És még annyit sem tartalmaz, mint a magyar
 kormányprogramja. Mégis, mi a lényege? A szabadság idejét három hétig
 az eldöntés és most ismét 3 hónapos intervallumot állapított meg a
 szanatóriumok végleges felszámolására. A dolgozó bábja nem is itt kezdődött,
 hanem abban a „jogszabályban”, mely továbbra is érvényben marad
 s mely bizonyos körökben és körökben az a valószínűleg engedély-
 kes köti. És a kérdés az, hogy a határozat közzétevése is az, inkább a szűkített
 szabadság ismét nem kerülhetne ki a szélre. Pedig nagy szerepe van az igazsá-
 gos munkának, az általánosság megjelölés helyre kerülése, mint ami a közt-
 vől kapott pontok vezetése érdekében meg is felelt volna. Híreidre nyíltan
 a gettóval való kiküldetés, de a család hiányában nem juthatnak
 vissza – legalább is a rendeltetést szerintem nem. Először is a két párja az
 a hír, hogy mielőtt még innen kijutnánk különböző helyekre itt az
 fogadalmak megajánlása majd beismertetés, hogy újnak alig van, nagy
 hányan a hírre szűkített. A magyar körökben is sem lehet volna. Sem-
 mi sem alig sem. Akkor inkább maradjon itt. Nem vagyis „még egy”
 látatlan helyre menni és ére, hogy ha az ére nagy rendőrség kényge-
 ritése az alapja. Na halad!

hət vığrednınyben, mi a nıgıy helıyet? m-i-e ıa ı-gı-e beıti
idıben, senkısem tıdın, vısh mıker berıe an a sıv? lıker sa-
dın? ıyıkıv senkısem ııvıt ennek a gıelıcıı kırıkegelmi rend-
lelık, meıy sıerıt Rıth mtaıtın gııvıt, hıvıy hıt dıdın beıne

Borbála Andrásy Pallavicini called the amnesty theatrical.

*“What kind of a theatrical production took place here? So nobody is responsible, nobody can be called to account for the many ruined lives, for so much suffering, grief, and humiliation? So we just transfer power, as if it were all an operetta. One is replaced unpunished, while the other comes forward in the guise of saviour? It is all so easy; with a political move they can transfer political power, and step aside without anyone being held responsible. So we should just step aside and continue our lives? There’s some big trick here. This isn’t a parliamentary country, here you can’t just fail and name a new government. There has been dictatorship here for a long time, that is, self-appointed arbitrary power.”*²⁷⁹

After the amnesty resolution I would like to point out three instructions. One was the schedule regulating the release of the banished. The schedule classified three categories of the released. Those to be released without further ado, those banned from their homes, and those placed under police supervision in their new places of residence.²⁸⁰ Since “...Already in the first weeks, we could see in the course of the committee’s work that a significant number of the hostile elements banished from the southern and western border-zone (since, according to the prevailing resolutions, they were not allowed to return to these border-zones) are streaming back to the cities in the border-zones, or close to those that are not bound by permission to settle (Szeged, Baja, Pécs, Nagykanizsa, Zalaegerszeg, Szombathely, Kaposvár, etc.). Consequently, we recommended to the committee of the National Police Headquarters to ban from the above-mentioned localities individuals who belong first to hostile categories, as well as those heavily compromised from the standpoint of intelligence gathering. Thus, 397 families from the above-mentioned localities, 11 from Tyukod, 14 from Porcsalma, 34 from Kunmadaras, 8 from Etyek, 464 families altogether.”²⁸¹

According to the other report written on 2 September, 1953 the banishment of those released was necessary, for “these individuals, owing to their class and attitude in the southern and western border-zone formed a border gate and basis for imperialist and Titoist intelligence gathering, diversion, sabotage, and all kinds of other hostile disruptive actions. In their decisive majority they were kulaks, former Horthyist army officers, and gendarmes, landowners, aristocrats, industrialists, bankers, and, to a lesser extent, working peasants,

²⁷⁹ Borbála Andrásy Pallavicini, 1990, p. 180.

²⁸⁰ MOL XIX-B-1-j-43. d.154.

²⁸¹ ÁBTL. 4.1.A-505.

village artisans and workers, who also continued to pursue hostile activities, or were suspected of doing so, since they were under enemy influence. Many of those individuals who were recommended for banishment agitated and incited actively and regularly against the system and the cooperative movement.... Those who were in the camps in Hortobágy would cause disturbances in their new residence, not only because of their attitudes and activities, but due to their mere presence. For this reason, these individuals should be watched with the greatest attention.”²⁸²

The third was enacted in the same year, after the June amnesty, on 13 October, 1953, instruction no. 003/1953 of the deputy of the head of public order and training of the National Police Headquarters. It was signed by Lieutenant-Colonel Mátyás Máté, head of the National Police Headquarters, and ordered the police stations to compile records of the kulak elements, the former capitalists and exploiters, and children who were capable of earning money. *“The records must continue to be kept in alphabetical order in chests or boxes, and regional supervisors are personally responsible for watching them regularly; this can also be delegated to agents. Written reports of the results of this observation must be made every three months—except for exceptional cases—and they must be attached with a paper clip to a card. Insofar as any of the individuals listed on these cards moves to another area, the cards must be sent by a messenger if it is within the same district or if it is in another district then it must go, marked with a “Strictly Confidential” label, to the police station responsible for that area.”*²⁸³

The main reason for the failure of the “new phase” and Imre Nagy’s domestic policy was that Imre Nagy consented that *“the new Central Leadership and the new Political Committee should not be very different from the earlier one. It should continue to be full of compromised individuals, servile souls who were willing to do anything, who were incapable of thinking for themselves and who were only able to obey. Rákosi’s creatures, in other words. One of the greatest mistakes showed up here, a weakness, which is an obstacle to every effective politicking: it is incapable of choosing good people, incapable of pursuing a personal policy.”*²⁸⁴

²⁸² ÁBTL 4.1.A-508..

²⁸³ MOL XIX-B-I-j-44.d.

²⁸⁴ Tibor Méray, 1989, p. 62.

Those who had initiated and directed the illegal court cases carried out the rehabilitation of the condemned and gave back the personal freedom of the other victims, whose human rights had been illegally violated.

*"There was just one stratum which greeted the new programme with a lack of understanding and hostility: the group of Communist functionaries. This was not a cohort that was negligible either in importance or in number. A single decade of party rule managed to produce—from the former illegal combatants, earnest young believers, and a large number of careerists—a certain kind of person numbering several hundred thousand, with whom the Party helped to fill the key positions of the country, the paid positions of the Party organizations, the ministries, the army, the police and the leading posts of state defence, the trade unions, the press, the arts, the leading jobs in sports—in short, everything that was in the hands of the Party, the entire life of the country."*²⁸⁵

The survivors could not form a picture of the future up to 1989, for the only possibility open to them was to keep silent. "If you survive, be quiet."²⁸⁶ Open terror was replaced with daily threats. The basic objective, "there is no special national path to building socialism," did not change.

"What happened to you was a misunderstanding, a mistake, but if you don't keep quiet about it, you could easily end up back here, or in the Soviet Union."

That was the charming farewell message of the commanders of the camps of the Hortobágy, Nagykunság, and Hajdúság.

*"They took away a part of my life; not a single photo remains. I can't show my children and grandchildren the way we were as children and young people. That this was how our house looked with all our things, among which we lived. The possessions and souvenirs were burned together with the papers."*²⁸⁷

*"My first trip was to my father's grave in the cemetery. There I told him that the Communists weren't any better in my life than they were then. They can lie, imprison, and kill. Then the sort of life began when the Communists watched every step and every action of the individuals they persecuted."*²⁸⁸

"The real goal was the destruction of a way of thinking, a human attitude, civic courage, the elimination of people who had made no distinction

²⁸⁵ Tibor Méray, 1989, p. 48.

²⁸⁶ Péter Rózsa, 1989.

²⁸⁷ Reminiscences of Mrs. Miklós Dubay Éva Borzso

²⁸⁸ Excerpt from the reminiscences of Dr. István Vörös, entitled, "They all steal"

between dictatorships, who had fought equally hard against both the Nazi and the Communist dictatorships. Domokos Szent-Iványi, for example, stood at the forefront as head of the anti-German and anti-Arrow Cross resistance movement, the “Wolf”. Later he became one of the leading lights of Hungary in the movement the “Bear” to save the country from the Soviets and construct a democratic society up to 1944. Domokos Szent-Iványi was arrested on 24 December, 1946 and, as a defendant in the so-called “conspiracy against the republic,” was sentenced to 10 years.²⁸⁹ *“The tragic fate of Esterházy was just one of many, but he was an example of how the political police and courts of the eastern states treated those who had to be destroyed, for they were in the way.”*²⁹⁰

“Those who were branded as “class aliens”, “reactionaries,” and “criminals” became homeless and outcasts in their own homeland. The fate of the writer Gábor Dzsingiz’s father shows the stations of ostracism. *“In 1945 he was expelled from public life, he was deprived of his job, and henceforth his lot in life was internment camp, prison, physical work, rubble removing, grave digging, knife grinding, vineyard worker, and warehouseman, then after 1956 prison again.”*²⁹¹

I believe that it is the responsibility of posterity to enlighten the children that dictatorship is the work of all kinds of people, as Attila József warned us in his poem, “Enlighten your Child.”

“Enlighten your child,
 Brigands are men...
 And console him,
 if consolation this be
 for the child, that this is true.
 Perhaps mutter a new tale,
 a Fascist, Communist one—
 since the world must have order,
 the reason for order is to make sure
 that what is good is not free.”

(Translation: Erzsébet Csicsery-Rónay)

²⁸⁹ Bálint Török, 2004.

²⁹⁰ Lujza Esterházy, 1991, p. 230.

²⁹¹ Gábor J. Dzsingiz, 2006, p. 163.

BARBARA BANK—ISTVÁN BANDI: DOMICILIU OBLIGATORIU (D.O), OR RELOCATIONS, MOVING TO COMPULSORY RESIDENCE²⁹² IN ROMANIA 1949-1951

What is the D.O.?

The initials D.O. or Domiciliu Obligatoriu²⁹³ stood for compulsory residence. These letters were stamped in purple on identity cards. In the people's democracies, compulsory residence was the "mildest" punishment when compared with prison and other penalties, since it "only" meant a change in residence.



²⁹² **Mária Gál**, 1996, **Zoltán Iszlai**, 2000, pp. 152-168, **József Saád**, 2005, pp. 327-345 (In this book Dénes Kiss's treatise on the relocations from the borderlands during Pentecost, which took place from the Bánát to Bărăgan in 1951. The specialist literature considers these to be internments. **Kinga Széchenyi**, 2008, p. 506-509.

²⁹³ Domiciliu Obligatoriu (Compulsory Residence)

The beggining, when 3500 families were carried off compulsory residence, at the same time

On the eve of March 2 to 3, 1949 the landowners throughout the entire country were collected at the same time and carried off to compulsory residences. Those carried off ranged from new-borns to 80-year-olds; every age and stage was represented. Most were woken up from their sleep by the bailiffs. In contrast with the relocations in Hungary, these were carried out in a sort of surprise attack, without explanation or motive given. Although the decree did not prescribe the loss of freedom nor its limitation, every family affected was transported to designated centers to compulsory residences.

In Transylvania several such centres were functioning in Marosvásárhely, Sepsiszentgyörgy, Nagyenyed, Gyulafehérvár, Déva, and Balázsfalva. This is how Marosvásárhely, owing to its geographic location, became the largest compulsory domicile in Transylvania, for 14 years, the concentration camp for the Hungarian historical aristocracy and—with the exception of those of Háromszék—the landowners of Székelyföld.

This action has affected more than 3500 families throughout the country, mainly the Hungarian aristocracy and nobility. The exception was the case of the landowners of Háromszék, who were taken off to forced labour in Dobruza after a year and a half of compulsory residence.

Collectivisation, kulaks

It was a year later when the mass collectivisation, the liquidation of the kulaks as a class took place. In April of 1950, Gheorghiu-Dej announced the programme of mass collectivisation, and between the winter of 1949, and autumn of 1950, administrative compulsory measures were taken against 80,000 peasants. The authorities sent the entire class called kulak to forced labour camps.

In the next phase of the “warlike situation” that was emerging, the authorities “only” had to carry out the relocations in the western and southern borders of Hungary, or in Romania in the western, southern, and Dobruzan borderlands. In this situation those who lived along the border could not defend themselves. Alluding to the external enemy, the authorities began to liquidate the internal enemies. To do this, however, they had to impress the

image of the enemy into the minds of the public. The relocations “successfully” fit into the “series of actions” whose direct goal was the “sovietisation” of the country.

The Enemy Within

It was the Party’s interests that determined who was an enemy. According to the expression used at the time, in Romania between 1949-51, there was a “village class war” going on which in practice was the first phase of the forced collectivisation. The RMP (Romanian Workers Party—this was the Romanian Communist Party)’s Decree no. 83 of 1949²⁹⁴ modified the law no. 1945/187. on land reform and deprived all those of their property who still owned land of fewer than 50 ha, or agricultural machines. Former teachers and public administration officials couldn’t avoid their fate either. The above-mentioned social classes were called kulaks. The law no. 1949/83 allowed them to keep only food and objects of personal use.²⁹⁵ During these operations, the interior ministry organs and military units carried out administrative measures against approximately 80,000 peasants. They began the forced collectivisation first in Transylvania and Dobruza, where the number of large land holdings exceeded the average in the country. The above-mentioned events were a kind of “forerunner actions” pointing toward the later transport of undesirable elements to compulsory domiciles. Those units that took part in the events of the eve of March 2 to 3, 1949, (they were already Securitate units²⁹⁶), had their

²⁹⁴ Monitorul Oficial (Official Journal) March 3, 1949 no. 83.

²⁹⁵ For further details, see: **István Beczásy**, *Bekerített élet [Enclosed Life]*. Literator Kiadó. Nagyvárad. 1995. MÁRIA GÁL. D.O. photocopied material from the Marosvásárhelyi Interior Ministry Archives.

²⁹⁶ On August 30, 1948 the Siguranca (the state security agency of Antonescu during World War II) was reorganised and continued to function under the name of Securitate within the framework of the Ministry of the Interior. It was an important change, that the units of the Border Guards were transferred from the Ministry of Defense to the aegis of the Ministry of the Interior, the National Directorate of the Work Camps and Prisons migrated from the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of the Interior. In the summer of 1948 the Siguranca (Directorate of Security Police) was set up within the framework of the Ministry of the Interior; it was replaced by the directorate of People’s Security (Directia Generala a Securitatii Poporului—DGSP) the Securitate to be, whose director at the time was Gheorghe Pintilie.

first “rehearsal” in which they gained experience in mobilisation and mass relocations.²⁹⁷

In the years 1949-50 the resistance organised in the region of the Körös, Bihar, Arad and Temesvár drew the attention of the authorities to the fact that they had not completely succeeded in solving the kulak question. Indeed resistance groups were being organised in the Carpathians, which had even taken up arms against the Communist power.²⁹⁸ That is why the Romanian authorities linked the foreign policy situation—the deterioration of Soviet-Yugoslav relations—with the collectivisation. Thus, the authorities could solve two problems with the relocations, the removal of the kulaks and the “unreliable elements”—the ethnic minorities, innkeepers, army officers, and teachers. In this way, the image of the external and internal enemies could be connected—if necessary.

In the province of Bánát in the border zone, the collectivisation wasn't obvious, as substantiated by the data of 1952. In the whole province there were only 118 collective farms affecting 12,000 families and 99 associations. These were brought into being by 3,200 families. The above made up about 12% of the family farms. According to data of provincial committee of the RMP (Romanian Hungarian Party) the collectivised land²⁹⁹ comprised only 34.9% of the arable land of the province. From this standpoint the summer of 1951 proved to be a favourable moment for carrying out the resettlement. After creating the image of the enemy, the authorities had “only” to establish the legal foundation, and they needed to prepare the operation so that they could remove the “reactionary forces.”

²⁹⁷ There are various data in the special Romanian literature concerning how many people were relocated on March 3, 1949: **Mária Gál's** above-mentioned work (p. 31) talk about 3500 families, but during the research in the archives, in the Marosvásárhely district, the list was supplemented by 500 new names (Interior Ministry of Marosvásárhely Archives, 1134 fond, 398-402 pages). In **Dennis Deletant's** book entitled *Ceausescusi securitatea*, he speaks of 17,000 families (p. 33), while **Aurel Serghiu Nicolaescu** puts the number at 100,000 families, or 280,000 persons relocated. p. 119. A more creditable number is given by **Tanase, Stelian**, *Elite și societate*. Humanitas, București. 1998 (p. 158), in connection with the events of 1949, he says that 60,000 persons were given the D.O. (compulsory residence) stamp. (State Security Cabinet material)—SRI (Romanian Secret Police after 1948.) Fond 7778. Vol. 32, p. 1-4)

²⁹⁸ **Mihai Barbulescu, Dennis Deletant, Keith Hitchins**, et al, *Istoria Romaniel*, Grupul Editorial Corint, 2003. Bucuresti, p. 416. It turns out from the reports of the Securitate that the last resistance fighter was killed in the snow-capped mountains of the Bánát.

²⁹⁹ TSZ means hungarian Termelő Szövetkezet. Collective Farm. The forced nationalisation of arable land and private farms by the authorities.

The Border Zone

The border zone was set up in Hungary as well as in Romania, in the area adjoining Yugoslavia. The argument sounded like this: “only persons who were trained and organised and were faithful to the nation in every respect could stay in a certain part of the frontier and the most important places, and a network of these would make it very difficult for undesirable elements to approach and cross the border.”³⁰⁰ Such measures were aimed at hermetically sealing the section of the border. The fortifications in the southern frontier section were spectacular: “They cleared the vegetation along the frontier line, especially in the forests, then they built a barbed wire fence and a defense system made up of watchtowers along a section of the border. They planned to set up a barbed wire fence and minefield along a 450-km-long section. Machine-gun nests and reinforced concrete fortresses and other technical elements were placed in the area of Nagykanizsa and in the triangle of Baranya and between the Danube and Tisza.”³⁰¹ Similar steps were also taken in the case of those who lived along the southern and southwestern Romanian border, first in the border section by the sea. The work of fortification was begun in June of 1950, then later in the southwestern zone the defense works were constructed. During the period between 1950 and 1955, almost 10,000 military objects were set up in the affected border section.

The most affected region of the western border section was the Bánát³⁰² where the waves of the last historical tragedy³⁰³ had just subsided. This region lies in the area between the Danube, Tisza, Maros, Ruska-Poljana-Havas and Southern Carpathians (Szörényi Havasok [Snow-Capped Mountains of Szörény]), thus, the part of the country that stretches from the Maros river to the Lower Danube, and from the Tisza to the historical Transylvanian border line. The north-western part belonged to Hungary, the northern and eastern part to Romania, its western and southern area to Serbia (Voivodina). This region owed its incomparable cultural wealth to its demographic diversity;

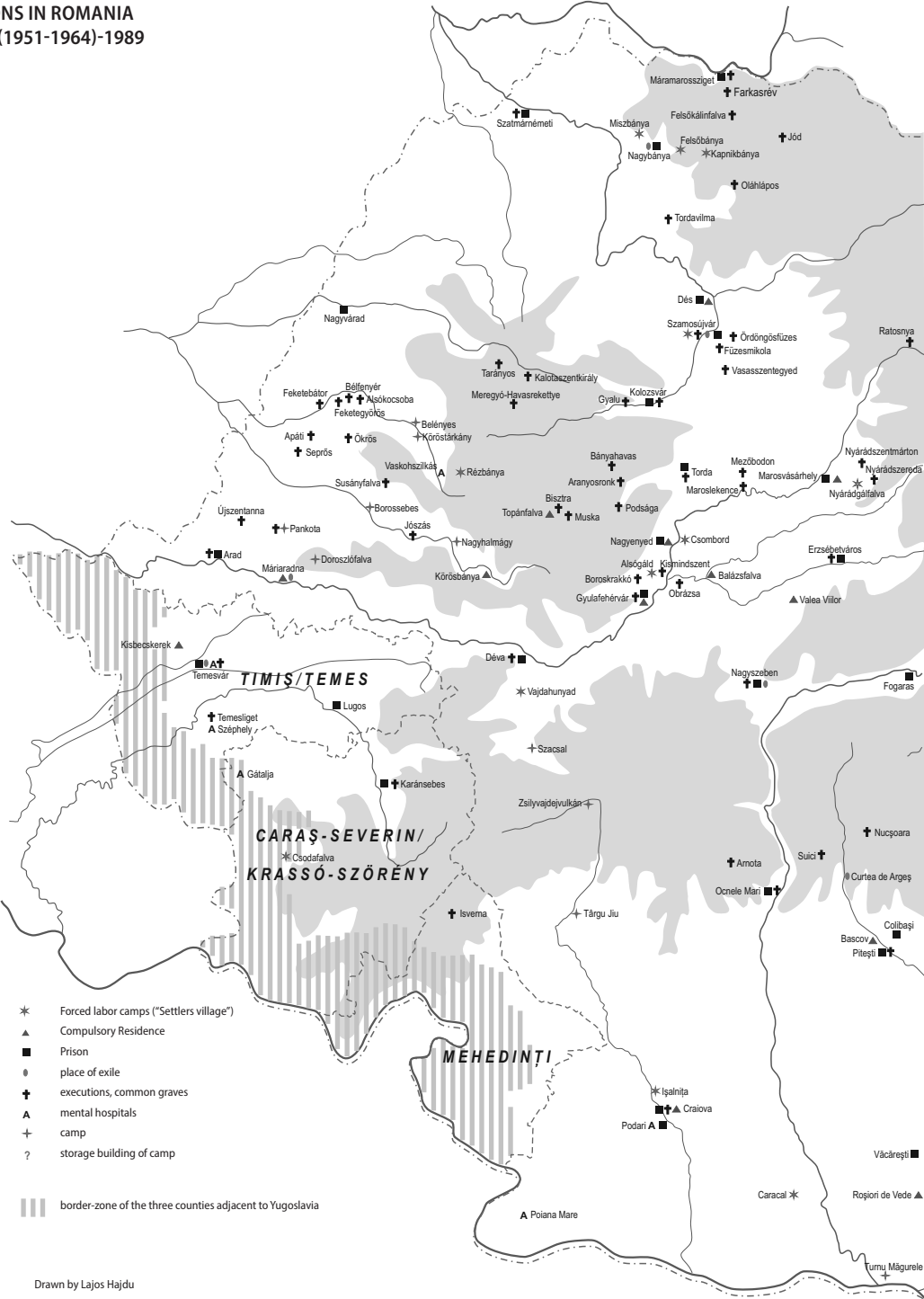
³⁰⁰ István Orgoványi, *Guards of the Iron Curtain*, Rubicon, 2002 issue 6-7., p. 20-25.

³⁰¹ László Kiss, *Closed Camps in the Hortobágy and Nyírkunság, 1950-1953*, in: Telepssors, ed. JÓZSEF SAÁD, Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest, 2004, p. 18.

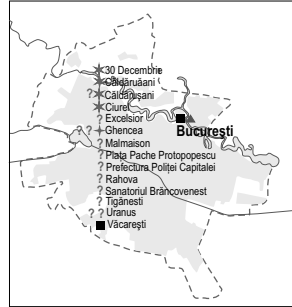
³⁰² Temesköz, Banat in Romanian, in German Temeswaren Banat, in Serbian Banovina (see maps no. 1., 2., 3. or 4)

³⁰³ In January of 1945, a significant part of the Germans of working age were deported to the Soviet Union. Only a fraction of them returns in 1949, but by then all their moveable and immoveable property had been nationalized or given to the Bessarabians.

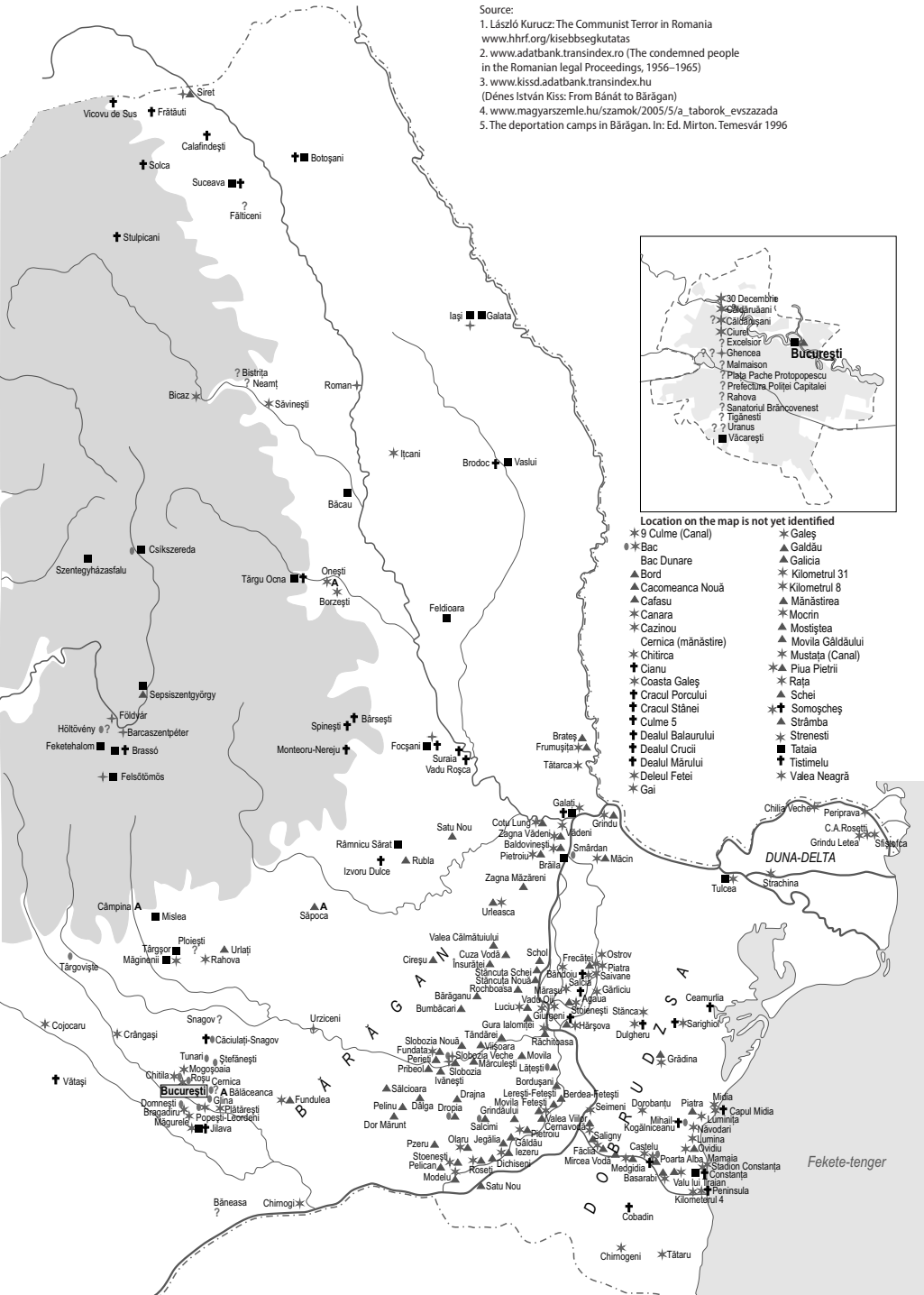
COMPULSORY RESIDENCE
FORCED LABOR CAMPS (“SETTLERS VILLAGE”)
PRISONS IN ROMANIA
1945-(1951-1964)-1989



1. László Kurucz: The Communist Terror in Romania
www.hhrf.org/kisebbszegkutas
2. www.adatbank.transindex.ro (The condemned people
in the Romanian legal Proceedings, 1956–1965)
3. www.kissd.adatbank.transindex.hu
(Dénes István Kiss: From Bánát to Bărăgan)
4. www.magyszarzeme.hu/szamok/2005/5/a_taborok_evszazada
5. The deportation camps in Bărăgan. In: Ed. Mirton. Temesvár 1996



▲ 9 Culme (Canal)	▲ Gales
▲ Bac	▲ Galdau
▲ Bac Dunare	▲ Galicia
▲ Bord	▲ Kilometru 31
▲ Căminca Nouă	▲ Kilometru 6
▲ Cafazu	▲ Măstărești
▲ Canara	▲ Mocirni
▲ Cazinou	▲ Măstieța
▲ Cernica (Măstărești)	▲ Movila Găldăului
▲ Chitrica	▲ Mustata (Canal)
▲ Cianu	★▲▲ Piuș Pietrii
▲ Coasta Gales	★ Rata
▲ Cracul Porcului	▲ Schei
▲ Cracul Stăneș	★▲ Somoșgheș
▲ Cule 5	▲ Strâmba
▲ Dealul Bălaurului	▲ Strenești
▲ Dealul Crucii	■ Tătaia
▲ Dealul Mănăului	▲ Tîșileșu
▲ Dealul Fetei	▲ Valea Neagră
▲ Gal	



this characteristic was used by the Gheorghiu-Dej government in the Soviet-Yugoslav power struggle. The Romanian sources mention Serbs, Germans, Macedonians, Ukrainians, Armanians, but they generally say nothing about the Hungarians, even though the data of the Romanian Statistical Office of 1977 contradict the facts suppressed by the Romanian historians. In the provinces of Temes and Mehedinti, according to the distribution of the administration of the times—today three counties Temes, Krasso-Szörény, Mehedinti—registered altogether 71,502 Hungarian speakers in 1992, while in 1956 approximately 100,000 people identified themselves as Hungarians. In the province of Temes established in September of 1950 and patterned after the Soviet, more than 20% of the population was part of one of the minority communities; this meant around 300,000 persons. Hungarians formed one-third of the minorities in the area.³⁰⁴

Legal Framework

The differences in laws and decrees referred to as well as divergences in their execution were great in Romania. On March 1, 1949 the Ministry of Agriculture modified the regulations of the 1945/187 Land Reform Law. Decree No. 83, which came into force on March 3, 1949, nationalised the land that was left in private hands after the agricultural reform of 1945. It also enacted the series of laws, which allowed the competent agencies to use administrative measures (compulsory residence, relocation, internment in work camps). This decree did not define the concepts of internment and relocation. The fourth section merely ordered three to fifteen years forced labour for those who obstructed or tried to obstruct the expropriation. Based on this section the authorities removed thousands of persons from their homes and took them to designated compulsory residences (D.O.). This “little” legal gap was filled on October 26, 1950 by the Ministerial Council in its Decree no. 1154, which regulated the administrative execution of compulsory residences and relocations of the various social groups.

³⁰⁴ The Romanian specialist literature doesn't even mention that Hungarians were also moved to the camps of Bărăgan. This colourful demographic was liquidated during the events of the summer of 1951.

So as to give the Romanian Ministry of the Interior a freer hand in making decisions, the Ministerial Council modified its Decree No. 344 enacted on March 15, 1951, and further and more precisely defined those persons affected by the measures of compulsory residence. According to this decree the Ministry of the Interior could order the “removal” of any person, if he or she obstructed the building of socialism in the Romanian People’s Republic. Teohari Georgescu Minister of the Interior, Iosif Chişinevschi, Ana Pauker, and Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, Central Committee members adopted this document. This decree, with a few modifications, gave the Minister of the Interior the legal framework within which altogether 40,000 people could be removed in June of 1951 from the southwestern, southern, and southeastern border zone. This same document gave a legal foundation allowing the authorities to transport tens of thousands of people to forced labour without benefit of legal judgment.³⁰⁵ This ministerial council decree came into being on August 27, 1951, well after the relocations and bore the number 326/S.³⁰⁶ It primarily served to solve the manpower needs of the state farms of Galaci and Jalomica provinces (G.A.C.) by putting those settled there to work. Two and a half months after arriving at the wheat fields of Bărăgan, the masses of hovels of the Banatians were acknowledged to be settlements.³⁰⁷

In none of the above legal regulations does the concept of deportation³⁰⁸ appear; probably this expression was considered too coarse. In contrast they used the “softer” expression, such as dislocation—which could mean removal or relocation.

³⁰⁵ Cutting seeds in the Danube Delta, digging the Danube Black Sea channel by hand, various hydroelectric power plants and large industrial works were the jobs assigned.

³⁰⁶ The letter S indicates that the decree was secret, so that it was never published in the statute-book.

³⁰⁷ The above mentioned ministerial council decrees 1154, 344, 326 and 326/S were not mentioned in the Official Journal. The material used here are derived from the State Security Council secret memoranda of the time which appeared on the Internet in its no. 64 of Sfera Politici at www.dntb.ro. The copy of Decrees No. 326 and 326/S is in the BDSZL of Temesvár [Timisoara]

³⁰⁸ This does not refer to a legal approach.

Preparations

On November 14, 1950, the Securitate, with the help of the local party organs prepared the plan of relocations, based on which unreliable or enemy elements could be removed quickly from the security zone.³⁰⁹

One of the guiding principles of the Romanian leadership of the time clarified a declared goal of the relocations, which meant nothing more than assuring the defense of the Yugoslav border.³¹⁰ The relocations were conceived so that the borderland was defined as being within 25 km from the border and would affect various groups. It affected those individuals whom the contemporary authorities and power defined as enemy elements. The direct border zone up to 100 m in depth became a zone where it was forbidden to build or produce anything.

The secret internal documents³¹¹ inform us that the action was directed by the Central Committee of the Supervisor of the Relocations (KKB).

The Central Committee planned two phases of the relocations: preparation and execution. In the first phase the lists of names were compiled as were the means to carry out the relocations. Once the lists were compiled, they were handed over to the Milicia and/or Securitate officers and Party members, who then worked together with the local representatives of the local administration of the designated settlements. They made personally sure that the records were correct. This first phase was planned to take seven days. The second executive phase was carried out under the direction of the Central Committee Supervising the Relocations.

The Central Committee worked out the mobilisation and executive plans which they handed over to the designated units of the Milicia, Securitate, Border Guards, and Army. It was also their job to designate and prepare the

³⁰⁹ **Marinescu, Aurel Sergiu**, *Prizonier în propria țară. București. e.n.* p. 133, **Mihai Barbulescu, Dennis Deletant, Keith Hitchins**, et al., *Istoria Romaniei*, Grupul Editorial Corint, București, 2003. p. 420.

³¹⁰ The Archives of the Association of Deported to Bărgan (BDSZL)

³¹¹ BDSZL contains those documents, which most probably derived from the Central Headquarters of the Romanian Workers' Party and the cabinet office of the Interior Ministry as copies. But neither the date nor the addressee are indicated in any of the documents. Thus, the source of the copies in the possession of the BDSZL cannot be identified. The copy of Decree no. 326 of the Romanian Ministry of the Interior was burned. It is based on this Decree No. 326 that the Ministry of the Interior enacted its own Decree no. 200 BM, based on which the competent agencies carried out the removals.

places and localities designated for the relocated. At the level of the rajon³¹², they set up the relocating committees and designated their leaders. The closing phase of the relocation was the arrival to the designated place. Procurement of the necessary material was an organic part of the preparations. That is what the provincial reports tell us: the cadres responsible organised 19 pantries in the province of Jalomica, where basic materials (salt, matches, tobacco, eating utensils, petroleum lamps, canvas, etc.) were stored. The success of the operation was due to its conspiratorial character, and the preparatory phase was not an exception to this. In the interest of this the Central Committee trained the party cadres and officials, who were then present until the operation was completed. The cadres were given the information pertaining to the various categories of the relocated. The first group was made up of those who “were citizens of the western imperialist states and Yugoslavia”, but also listed were those whom the states mentioned did not recognise as their citizens. This group included the former victims of political purges: civil servants, inactive officers, and free-lancers who had been excluded from professional bodies and colleges. They were ordered to leave the zone affected within 48 hours. They did not have the right, however, to move to an agglomeration centre or settlement in another border zone.³¹³

The second group was the largest. This included the settlers of Bessarabia and Bukovina, Macedonians, those individuals who had served in the SS troops or were members of the German ethnic groups (GEG—Romanian abbreviation), the family members and relatives of those who had escaped from the Bánát, those who sympathised with Tito, smugglers, those who maintained their connections with the resistance, soldiers who had been called up from the area, kulaks and innkeepers, artisans, and land owners and those who were not mentioned or barely mentioned in the Romanian specialist literature³¹⁴, that is, those relocated who spoke Hungarian.³¹⁵ This was the group that the decree punished the most, for they were forced to leave the border zone within

³¹² The rajons were an administrative unit smaller than a country.

³¹³ The complementary material of the resolution can be found in BDSZL. Top secret to enforce the directive of the deportations.

³¹⁴ **Brusalinschi, Dumitru**, *Deportare in Bărăgani, România liberă*. June 1990, number 5, page 2.

³¹⁵ Based on these lists of names that have been made public, of 10,000 people 10% were Hungarians, 50% German and Serbian speakers, and only 40% were Romanians. In spite of this, the Romanian literature generally deals only with the suffering and vilification of the Romanians.

24 hours, under the watchful eye of the Securitate and/or Milicia. The third group was made up of those who also had to leave the border zone within 24 hours, but the large majority had been condemned for political reasons. It also included those who had been convicted of “crimes involving moral turpitude,” who usually had committed “serious economic crimes.” It was very difficult for anyone to be exempted from the categories listed—this was verified by the conception and goals of the initiators of the operation, in whose opinion everybody was a source of danger to the integrity of the Romanian state and to the “building of socialism.” Decree no. 326/1951 announced that “only those persons would be relocated who were identified on the compiled lists on site.” There were exceptional cases of those persons who did not fit into any of the categories. There were several cases in which the individual did not appear on the list and still he or she was taken away. This usually happened when a party official wanted to take care of a personal matter.

The classifications helped the authorities to use those restrictions for which they were given orders, and which concerned the preservation and transportation of material goods. Thus, the persons listed among the first and third groups could take everything with them. The second group could only take goods that were defined according to quantity and quality (foodstuffs, clothes, furniture, household articles, valuables, money, carts drawn by horses or oxen, and a dairy cow). It was planned that they would be taken by train to their destination, but the wagons could not be put on the train, if only because under the best of cases, each family got no more than one carriage. The Ministry of the Interior units were obliged to hand the goods that were left behind to a committee. The committees were made up of delegates from the Ministry of Agriculture and the local people’s councils.

Securitate units arrived from Bucharest, from Tecuci,³¹⁶ Kolozsvár. Border-guard units were ordered from Jászvásár,³¹⁷ Bârlad,³¹⁸ Suceava,³¹⁹ the eastern and northeastern regions of Romania, the areas that lie the furthest from the

³¹⁶ There were four large Securitate headquarters in Romania, which were known as Securitate brigades: Tecuci (Moldova), Bucharest (Wallachia), Constanza (Dobruza), Kolozsvár (Transylvania).

³¹⁷ Jászvásár was the largest border-guard centre.

³¹⁸ Bârlad is in the middle of Moldavia. The border guard came from this border-guard regiment in 1951 whose report I am using in this paper—**Marinasa, Viorel**, *Deportare in Bărăgan*. Ed. Mirton. Temesvár 1996, p. 154.

³¹⁹ **Marineasa, Viorel**, *Deportare in Bărăgan*. Ed. Mirton. Temesvár 1996, p. 154. They carried out ideological orientation as well, trying to make the common soldiers believe that “in this

Banat. The units weren't generally led to the localities by their own training officers, but by specially trained political officers. The operation had to be carried out in one night, at most until 14 hours the next day, by which time the first packed trains had to be on their way to their destination. The routes were chosen with cold rationality. The units from Moldova arriving from Jászvásár and Suceava, and the southern side of the southern Carpathians, and Wallachian railway routes were used as a deployment area. The relocated were transported under the watchful eye of the soldiers or Securitate along the Southern Transylvanian railway routes where they crossed the Carpathians going south and advanced further toward their destination, the eastern Romanian plains. Thus, the retreating Securitate and border-guard units could advance parallel to each other along the Wallachian railway branch to their barracks in Moldavia. That is how it was possible to take back several thousands of soldiers to their barracks in a single day, and to move more than 40,000 people almost without a hitch and in secret to the eastern part of the Romanian great plain, the Danube delta.

In vain did the highest circles order the operation to be kept secret and conspiratorial; still, there were things that happened in the preparatory phase that signalled the events to come. On June 17, 1951 it was announced in Zombolya that large-scale troop movements would take place in the near future; consequently, railway travel was suspended, and no one could leave the settlement. From the report of the party council of Temesvár, it turns out that the portents and rumours gave the basis for the behaviour of the units ordered to carry out the relocations. Three days before the relocations began the Securitate in the settlements of Egres and Nagyősz summoned the individuals, who were on the list to be resettled, to the local Milicia station. On this same day the officer trainees who had got drunk organised a raid in the community, and in the afternoon they ordered the local hairdresser to the building of the local Milicia; he of course could see the large police forces. These three events proved to be enough to create a panic, and enough to make five kulaks disappear. It also happened that the family ties proved to be stronger than the ideology of the time. So it happened that a member of the Milicia rushed to his god-son and informed him in time of the events to come.

part of the country there were a lot of hostile elements who helped Titoist enemies to cross the border", and that the present units were selected to "uncover these and remove them."

It is worth taking a brief look at the actions taken by the Party in the preparatory phase. On June 15, 1951 all the activists were summoned to the provincial party committee; indeed, even a few party members of enterprises and institutions were present where Márton Izsák first provincial secretary and Comrade Feliceanu held an orientation on behalf of the Central Committee concerning the coming operation. Once the operation's objective was made public, nobody could leave the headquarters of the provincial party centre. After the "comrade delegates" received the list of names, the trucks made available to them set off with cold food and 1000 lei per person to the designated settlements. It turns out from the report of the Party council of Temesvár that the Party organs "sensed" that information was leaking from the machinery, for the kulaks were "waiting with packages prepared in several communities." In the view of some people, the intensive preparatory operations had already begun in May. On June 14, 1951 the Ministry of the Interior gave orders to the competent commanders of the border guards to stand by for action. Parallel to this, orders were sent to reinforce the troops and to settle the four battalions of the officers' school of the border guards in the zone.³²⁰

During the preparations the inventory committees were also important; their operations were regulated by special directives and decrees. The committees that dealt with procurement, guarding and managing property and feeding and accommodating the relocated, and allocating them work were designated as *inventory* or *procurement committees*; they had already been set up during the preparatory phase. The inventory committee was made up of delegates from the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Internal Trade, the Ministry of State Planning, the Ministry for Collecting Surplus Produce and Livestock,

³²⁰ BDSZL, Report of the Border Guard Headquarters. "I ask for the following steps to be taken to point out suspicious elements in the Yugoslav border zone: beginning with May 30, 1951 to reinforce the guards on line I by adding 10 to 15 men. Beginning with May 30, 1951 to transfer immediately the fourth battalion of the officer-training school into the resettlement zone. These units would be sent to reinforce line I (the section of the border line with 1-11 km depth) on June 13, 1951 to the designated border zone. The reinforcement operation will end on June 14, 1951. Beginning with June 14, 1951 the frontier of the entire country is to be closed. Every departures and leave will be suspended. Every guard battalion will be given reserve platoons, mounted troops, in the interests of intervention, following and closing, and so that they can be present at the occasion of the summoning on 06. 12 1951 in the settlements prescribed in the appendix."

the Secretariat Concerned with the Business of the Council of Ministers, the Management of Local Agriculture and the National Cooperative³²¹ The work of the Committee was regulated by a secret decree. They organised the procurement of the goods of the relocated that were to be sold, safeguarded the goods, maintained goods taken over by the Ministry of the Interior, ensured the functioning of the agricultural work, the construction of houses for the resettled in the new settlements, gave work to the relocated, and provided them with accommodation and health care. Of course the various tasks were carried out under the conditions determined in the competent ministries' decree. In every province, rajon, and community the inventory and marketing committees were set up hierarchically from the delegates of the People's Council and Ministry of Agriculture. They could begin their work when the resettled were still on site.

According to the secret decrees the relocated had the right to sell everything, except for house and land. Of course freedom of choice did not exist, as the moveable property could be sold only to the designated committees. The prices were set by the state; in fact, they did not even forget to allow for depreciation. According to the decree, poor and medium peasants were allowed to keep the entire price of sale of their goods, while kulaks were allowed only a 50% lower price than the one set by the state. Where it was difficult to determine the boundary between a medium peasant and a kulak, Communist justice and a secret directive fixed the price at 75% of the price determined by the state. In order to keep the appearance of legality the decree prescribed that the relocated be given a receipt for the transaction. The inventory and marketing committees did the buying and selling, but before that they took the moveable and immoveable property based on a record made in three copies from the relocation agencies of the Ministry of the Interior.³²² The inventory records were made available to the central committees responsible for the relocations, moving up the usual hierarchical levels (community, rajon, province). The procurement and inventory committees operated under the supervision and direction of the provincial central committees.

³²¹ Centrocoop—National or Central Cooperative

³²² Interesting, after 1955, nobody knows anything about the compensation cases.



The worried central leadership had already sent Comrade Banu³²³ who “reinforced” the organising work of Counsellor Cotoară and Director-General Danilov.³²⁴ They worked on training more than 2500 mobilised people under the greatest secrecy and “at the highest professional level.” The organisers were forced to carry out the training at five different places at the same time, in order to ram the information into the heads of the members of the future committees by the 18th. The authorities wanted to increase the importance of the operation; that is why at the beginning of the resettlements they sent the Interior Minister to Temesvár. He became the head of the committee responsible.³²⁵ The central committee of the relocations planned the preparatory phase to last seven days; after that elapsed the “Party delegates”, soldiers, border guards, Securitate agents, Milicia members were ready to begin to resettle the “undesirable” Titoist elements.

The Resettlements

Most of the records of the conditions of resettlement originated from the province of Temesvár, or more precisely from two rajons, Nagyszentmiklós and Detta. The Romanian Ministry of the Interior—just like the one in Hungary—took advantage of the authorisation given it by resolution no. 344 section 6 of the Council of Ministers. Based on this the Minister of the Interior

³²³ It wasn't possible to discover what office Comrade Banu filled, but during the operation he was the eyes and ears of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party.

³²⁴ Counsellor Cotoară and Director-General Danilov or Under-Secretary of State were both from the Ministry of Agriculture and were responsible for organisation and education.

³²⁵ Interior Minister Alexandru Draghici was in Temesvar at the beginning of the events.

issued the decree of the ministry no. 200. The result was that 43,899 persons, that is, 10,099 families, were resettled from the rajons of Nagyszentmiklós, Temesvár, Deva, Resica, Oravicabánya, Mehadia, Konstanca and Băneasa.



The recollections of the victims and witnesses about the operation can be presented as follows: The operation was carried out in the settlements of the designated border zones³²⁶ on the night of June 18, 1951.³²⁷ Led by a Securitate officer in four or five cases, a formation consisting of eight border guards, Securitate agents or regular soldiers broke in on a family, herding their members into a room, collecting their identity cards, and perhaps their birth and marriage certificates.³²⁸ The families were informed of the Ministry of the Interior's decree and told that they had to pack as many things as could fit into a wagon in two or three hours. They could take a horse, a cow, a sheep, and a few poultry. Following the instructions, the agencies charged with the relocations informed the persons belonging to the first category that they had to leave the border zone within 48 hours and go to another settlement that wasn't closed or in a border zone. At the same time persons who belonged to the second and third categories were searched for and removed. Persons in the second category were informed that they would be relocated within six to 24 hours with the defined moveable property. Persons in the third category were told curtly that the relocation decree affected only them.

In accordance with the official decrees, every person affected was informed of the kind of transportation method they could use (a wagon that belonged to

³²⁶ The relocations from more than 160 settlements were carried out on the night of Pentecost, but the list is not complete.

³²⁷ The choice of date was no accident; the authorities chose the night of Pentecost Sunday.

³²⁸ **Brusalinschi, Dumitru**, *Deportare în Bărăgan*, România Liberă. 1991, June 6 issue, p. 2, according to the author.

them), and the time in which the packing had to be completed. The authorities also had to inform those affected that any moveable property left behind could be sold to the official delivery committees. After the procedure described above was completed, a guard was placed beside every family belonging to the second group. The border guards or soldiers were to stop anyone from escaping, and destroying any moveable and immovable property left behind. After they had finished packing, the family members were taken to the gathering place, which was usually the train station of the given settlement. The persons who arrived at the station were received by the commander of the consignment,³²⁹ usually an officer of the Interior Ministry. The commander was generally accompanied by several soldiers who escorted the resettled to the unloading station.

The entire process, which ended with arrival at the destination, was supervised by the Central Committee responsible for the relocations. At the destination competent agencies of the area took over the supervision of the groups. The relocations did not go as smoothly as had been planned. The victims often had to wait for hours, or even two whole days under the open sky and in the suffocating heat, and they could not leave³³⁰ until their train arrived. The intensive work of the preparatory phase proved inadequate, as was evidenced by the reports of the Party delegates and also the secret Interior Ministry reports. The schedule of the operation carried out by mobilising several thousand soldiers and interior ministry agents³³¹ can be more or less reconstructed. First the goods of the person to be resettled were seized, inventoried, and then sold. “The collection was completed under good conditions.” That is, it wasn’t a case of sequestration or seizure, but collection, where the “good conditions” referred to the fact that in accordance with the internal decree³³² they managed to expropriate the private property and turn it into public property—State Farms—without encountering any particular resistance.

³²⁹ Consignment was the word used in the official reports of the time. It meant persons who were put on a train to be resettled.

³³⁰ **Marineasa, Viorel**, *Deportare în Bărăgan*. Ed. Mirton. Temesvár 1996. p. 157.

³³¹ **Deletant, Dennis**, *Ceaușescu și Securitatea*. Humanitas. București. 1996. p. 48. “10,000 officers of the Interior Ministry and soldiers took part in the operation.”

³³² The internal briefing no. 010400 issued by the Ministry of the Interior regulated the inventory, evaluation and sale of the goods.

The Party agencies paid particular attention to the work of the inventory committees. It turned out, from the internal instructions, that, after the Milicia had made inventories of the immovable property, the farm buildings, and furniture left behind, the inventory committees made inventories and appropriated the agricultural produce and finally the agricultural machines and utensils. Three persons made up the inventory committees, someone who was sent from the competent local state farm, a delegate from the people's council, and a university student. It was their job to determine the price of the various categories of moveable property based on the price list set by the state, in accordance with the instructions mentioned above. The private valuables were sold at a loss at a price below the one that had been set, but families branded as kulaks were paid 50% of the discounted state prices, if they were paid at all. The above-mentioned internal instructions ordered that a record be made in three copies of the moveable property expropriated. The first copy had to be attached to committee files, the cashier had to keep the second, the third had to be given to the local state farm in the form of a receipt. Not one of the Romanian documents that have come to my notice gave any evidence of such a document being handed to the relocated on the site of the operation. On the other hand, several mention that the victims signed such forms.

Another important matter that appeared in the reports of the settlement delegates was entrainment. According to the majority of the delegates, this took place smoothly, for ramps and steps were placed by the wagons. The real concern was the lack of transport, because the authorities thought that the removal would take place continuously and at the same time, but they forgot that getting trains on the sidetracks was very complicated, and that the border guards, Securitate agents, and troops had to be transported too. The lack of organisation was also evidenced by the fact that there wasn't even a locomotive in Valkány; in Bogáros they needed about 200 wagons, in Kistereme they waited for 50 wagons. As a result, it happened that the relocated were still being transported from the affected area. It turned out that people deprived of their domiciles "waited in the shade" at the train station, or for example, "in Óbesnyő a few heart patients were lying under a tent."

The Party delegates sent a constant stream of reports whose summaries were sent on by the responsible party organs to the competent agencies of the Ministry of the Interior "in the interests of strengthening the worsening class war." The reports depict a calm mood, which was the "result of the work of enlightenment," but some reports described an entirely different atmosphere:

“in Óbesnyő the mood was such that everybody should put his hand on any produce left.” There were settlements where “the atmosphere was heavy, people were restless, there were many ethnic Germans, whose relatives were to be shipped off. Of the people herded together the mood was good; they obeyed orders without resisting.” This report speaks for itself: ignorance and fear reigned. Thus, the work of enlightenment did not always produce its effect. Naturally, there were exceptions, such as for example, in Pészak “where three people tried to back out of the resettlement”, but the “alert” cadres convinced them to comply. This same alertness led them to discover that some of the relocated “were throwing pieces of paper out of the air vents to the neighbour woman.”

The mood of the large majority of the residents of the border zones were characterised by the reports as calm, naturally, after a short “briefing.” The Party and mass organisations held meetings everywhere and went out into the field going from house to house to carry out the explanatory work, indeed to convince people to continue doing their agricultural work.

The leaders of the rajons and provincial Party organisations had already prepared their reports that they would formulate the “satisfactory” motives for the deficiencies that had come up during the operation. The Party secretary’s reports mention: the dispatching of committees that weren’t adequately prepared, in this case the members of the committee were made responsible, because in their ignorance (they’d never been to the area) they “prevented the operation from being completed within the deadline.” The lack of a work plan caused the missing of deadlines set by headquarters in several settlements. In this case the provincial secretary held the local people’s councils responsible, and also blamed this institution and the Milicia when it turned out that they had sent the inventories back and forth to each other for one day. The comrades didn’t shine in the area of class warfare either, the above-mentioned report states, for the inventory committee members were found to be drinking together with the kulaks to be resettled in Kiskomlós and Nagyszentmiklós. Indeed some violated proletarian morals by nicking objects from the houses.

In this case complete responsibility was laid at the feet of the inventory committees responsible, and, based on the report, the Party organisations informed the Interior Ministry organisations responsible. In vain the delegates reported that, owing to the explanatory work, people stayed calm, but the “alarming rumours” caused damage—people didn’t do their work in the field—indeed, some poor peasants were “pained by the kulaks’ departure.”

The provincial Party secretary held the local Party organisations responsible for this phenomenon.



But it wasn't only the little people who were watched under a magnifying glass, but the various apparatuses kept an eye on each other too. The Party organisations wrote an evaluative report on the Milicia's cadres. An evaluative report written in person by the secretary of the rajon Party committee on June 22, 1951, in a severely critical tone, which was suitable for the time, castigated the organisations of the Ministry of the Interior, accusing them of serious charges. "*The spirit of the former police force was noticeable at times*" alludes to the internal enemy, that is, to the fact that in the Milicia's actions "there was a very serious lack of initiative and assumption of responsibility". The secretary of the Party Committee of course knew that, as it turned out, what would have been the job of the organisations, thus "the Milicia...was not the leader of the masses who discovers and exposes the conspiracies and the enemy elements." In contrast with this, based on the reports of the Party delegate, "the zealous" Party secretary was alert and noticed the "deviations from proletarian morality," in fact, the "flagging of alertness with respect to the class enemies." This in practice meant that "in Detta they broke into the sealed house to take furniture to the Milicia sergeant", "in Birda a pig was slaughtered and the Milicia and soldiers had a feast". Finally, the committed secretary declared that the Milicia organisations weren't up to the job. Parallel to the Party organisations, the Securitate agents also gathered information about what happened during the resettlements.

The provincial management of Temes of the Chief Administration of State Security³³³ received reports³³⁴ hourly, based on which the chief administration and naturally the generals responsible for the relocations—that is, the Central Committee responsible for the relocations—could keep track of the events as they developed. Exact reports were made of the movement of transports. The reports even included the numbers on the trains,³³⁵ furthermore, the time of departure, the wagons packed with the resettled, as well the number waiting at the stations, and finally the number of vans necessary but missing.

According to the report of the state security administration of the province of Temesvár summarised on June 20, 1951, 2622 wagons packed with 3537 families left the resettlement zone, but 1693 families packed into 1084 vans were waiting to set off, while a further 3276 families at the collecting points were “getting ready” to be entrained. The plan, thought to be ideal by the Central Committee responsible for the relocations, most probably did not count on the need to also transport the Milicia, border guards, military and Securitate detachments too. On June 22 based on the summarised data, 7780 wagons with 9733 families had already rolled out from the “occupied” areas. Further 601 people “waited” in the wagons and another 893 under the open sky to be transported. In the knowledge of the final facts—according to the available documents this was almost 43,000 persons—it can be said that the

³³³ The Chief Administration of the State Security (DGSS) became the legal successor to the Chief Administration of the People's Security based on its secret decree no. 50 issued on March 30, 1950. The new organisation adapted more easily to the new soviet-style provincial administrative system which had emerged from the administrative reform of 1950. At that time 28 regional administrations began to work in Romania's 28 provinces. Parallel to the regional structure there was the apparatus built up by the special fields of the “renewed” institutions. In becoming independent, the Chief Administration of State Security was strengthened further; indeed, it was already functioning as an independent Ministry beginning with September 20, 1952. In the latter change the emphasis was laid again on the reorganisation of the regional administrations, for in the spirit of the new administrative laws, only 18 provinces were created in Romania. (This administrative law used the principle of centralisation; thus, it was easier to direct and supervise fewer provinces. In contrast, the number of rajons was increased, but their roles were reduced by the Central Party Committee.

³³⁴ In his book *Deletant, Dennis, Ceaușescu și securitatea*. Humanitas. București, 1996, declares that the state security organisations had 42,000 paid informers in the period of time discussed.

³³⁵ The state security administration of the province of Temesvár reported on the relocations: the above-mentioned 27 detachments in 1505 wagons had already arrived at their destination, and 10 detachments in 516 wagons altogether had started off in the same direction. Of these detachments, three started off from the Regional State Railway station of Temesvár.

resettlement operation planned for two or three days lasted much longer than the planners had foreseen. This greatly contributed to the fact that in the neighbouring provinces, indeed even in the provinces of Dolj and Gorj in the more distant south-eastern part of the Romanian plain, “many people, fearing that they would be relocated, left their homes and slept outside in the fields.”³³⁶ or they quickly sold off their valuables at a loss.



The national war hysteria was whipped up by the provincial reports, even the news that trickled in from friendly neighbour states—“according to which the kulaks and small artisans were collected in concentration camps in the Hungarian People’s Republic so as to be sent later to the Soviet Union”—had a perceptible effect on the Hungarian speakers who lived in the western part of Transylvania, indeed even on the Romanians who lived there. Those living in these regions were convinced that the Yugoslav war “foretold” would indeed take place. The news spread among the people, who lived along the Romanian-Bulgarian border, that the Romanian troops had crossed the border and were on their way toward Bulgaria, to help their southern neighbours against the Yugoslav forces.

Parallel to the alarming picture painted of the external enemy, exact reports were arriving through the state security “channels” about the internal reactionary forces. Directors László Erber and László Magyar and the lawyer, Géza Löffler, all of them from Temesvár, spread the news that “the resettlements had begun in Temesvár, Oravica, and other cities,” and even declared that this operation would affect three groups: industrialists, big businessmen, and bankers.

³³⁶ **Marineasa, Viorel**, *Deportare în Bărăgan*, Ed. Mirton. Temesvár 1996. p. 86.

In vain they tried to keep the trains going without interruption, thereby reducing the possibility of the victims getting into contact with the outside world, for it turned out that certain trains had to wait in certain sidetracks for a short while. This made it possible for the news³³⁷ of the resettlements to spread to certain cities of the Romanian plains. From this we learn that the authorities did not reckon that the railway workers would know more about the resettlements than they should. A report blamed the inflamed atmosphere which emerged in the railway workshops of Pitesti³³⁸ at the passing of the trains. The above reports led the leaders of the state-party apparatus to increase the efficiency of the internal security structures, which in practice meant that they broadened the network of informants and surveillance apparatus and raised it to the national level. The results of these measures were verified by the reports coming in from the camps of Bărağan. The network of agents was built up even in the camps.

The Camps

*“Every class was represented in the forced-labour camps of the Danube Channel. These camps were filled with people who had been sent there for political or economic political reasons without benefit of court verdicts of legal validity. At first it was those who had been called up by the army but because they were class enemies, they couldn’t be trusted with weapons (inmates of labour camps—B.B.), and those condemned for political reasons, but later it was mostly kulaks, who were interned in these camps.”*³³⁹

Bărağan was at Romania’s disposal. From the standpoint of the authorities, it proved to be ideal for creating a camp. Similar to conditions in the Hortobágy, here in the artery of the Danube, a theoretically hermetically sealed area without transportation or communication facilities was created in an open field where a strong wind stirred up the sand in summer and winter. Generally the reception sites were indicated so that they should be owned by collective associations. These settlements were designated by resolutions. The resolutions concerning the settlements regulated the supervision of the new

³³⁷ Krajova, Pitesti

³³⁸ Pietest is in the middle of the Romanian plains on the southern slop of the Carpathians.

³³⁹ Mária Gál, 1996, p. 30.

settlements. The resolutions setting up the settlements declared that they had to set up the Milicia stations in the neighbouring settlements or the buildings of the collective farms before the arrival of the inmates. In those rajons where settlements were designated they charged the deputy commanders of the rajons with setting them up and maintaining their continuous supervision.



According to the reminiscences, when people got off the train the first job of the Milicia, who were waiting there was to stamp the seal of the D.O. (compulsory residence) in their IDs. Inmates generally packed onto the lorries waiting there and a few kilometers further in the middle of the wheat fields they unpacked by the posts that indicated the border of the properties. Here the Milicia agent responsible said that the posts indicated the 2500 square meters, the private property, which the state gave those arriving as as a kind of compensation the allotment of Bánát. Furthermore, the state provided every family with a door frame and window. They had to build a house as soon as possible from basic materials (mud, water, and straw) for every family. The desinformation strategy of the agencies worked in the early phases, for when the exhausted people “arrived in the Bărăgan, the residents didn’t dare come near them, for the authorities told them that it was Koreans and Yugoslavs who had arrived.”³⁴⁰

Thus, at the end of June, 1951 new settlements were set up in the rajons of Calarasi, Fetesti, Lehliu, and Slobozia who got their names from the nearby villages and communities. The minorities were represented in large numbers in most of the settlements—as a consequence of the demographic composition

³⁴⁰ **Marineasa, Viorel – Vighi, Daniel**, *Rusalii '51, Fragmente din deportarea din Baragan*, Editura Marineasa, Temesvár [Timisoara], 1994, p. 32.

of the Bánát.³⁴¹ Insofar as the social composition is concerned,³⁴² the numbers refute the anti-kulak ideology loudly proclaimed by the Romanian workers' party. According to the statistics at our disposal, it turns out that only one-third of those relocated were well off, or kulaks, according to the terminology of the time. Thus, a large part of the "new" residents were composed of poor and medium peasants who ostensibly formed the backbone and social foundation of the Communist regime.



The first and most burning problem was the construction of housing all the more as here there were only grain fields, in contrast with the Hortobágy where there were agricultural buildings that could be put to use. At first people just threw together hovels made of sheaves of wheat. According to orders, the deported had to build their houses, even the public buildings (people's council buildings, Milicia stations, hospitals, and schools) in compliance with the plans.³⁴³ The work was supervised by special committees, whose members were composed of the delegates of the Ministry of Agriculture, the temporary settlement committees, and the people's councils—neighbouring community or rajons. Theoretically, the construction materials were provided by the

³⁴¹ There were cases in which the newly established settlements (Rachitoasa), the minorities outnumbered members of the majority nationality: 894 Romanians, 903 Germans, 129 Serbs, 140 Macedonians, 107 Hungarians, 1 Slovak, Poles: *România Liberă*. 1990. June 5 issue, p. 2.

³⁴² An example of this is the 1952 record of the community of Dropia: 85 working class families, 20 artisan families, 329 peasant families of which 159 were poor peasants, 105 kulak families and 12 kulak families of other categories.

³⁴³ BDSZL document. "The deported had to build adobe houses with thatched roofs (...) in accordance with the budget directions 7,000 houses (...) of which half would be type "A", the other half type "B". 326/S 1951 section 6. Type "A" consisted of a room + kitchen, type "B" was 2 rooms + kitchen, the dimensions of the rooms generally varied between 5 to 11 square meters."

Ministry of Transportation. In practice, however, a lot of problems emerged in connection with the construction of real estate. First of all, those arriving had no idea what they were doing in the given place, how long they were to be staying there, and this uncertainty, as can be seen from the reports, aroused vain hopes of returning home. Those who began to build realised suddenly with dismay that the designated region had such a shortage of water, that not only could they not produce the requisite number of adobe bricks, but they didn't even have enough drinking water. They didn't even have enough wood; in fact, if it was sent by railway—infrequently—and it had to be transported to the designated settlement with their own teams of horses. If there weren't enough wagons at their disposal at the arrival of the delivery, they had to pay for the train waiting at the station.



The organisation of the work—as I've already mentioned—belonged to the sphere of authority of the designated committee, but the reports made by the state security apparatus revealed enormous disorganisation in the collaboration between the temporary committees of the settlements, the people's councils, and the Milicia agencies. There were cases when the work brigades were instructed by the temporary committee that they had to make adobe bricks, at the same time the people's councils ordered them out to carry out "voluntary communal works." The construction work progressed slowly and with difficulty, as the state security report stated in August of 1951.

The provisional committees which were set up based on resolution 326/S/1951 were set up in every compulsory settlement. Theoretically, these provisional committees were supposed to defend the interests of the deported, but in truth their role was to inform, at first daily, later, every three days the people's councils of the rajons about the number of individuals put to work,

the transportation vehicles in the settlements, the number of animals and their condition. In addition, data concerning the construction also appeared in the reports, based on which the authorities could gauge the amount of materiel required. Based on the public health information, they could get a picture of how many wells needed to be dug and how many had been completed. The reports paid special attention to how many pregnant women were in a settlement.



Members of the committees were made up of Party members who had been banished for some reason, but the committee leader was delegated by the provincial party committees responsible. Thus, based on the principle of “social justice,” the winning of the expelled cadres was achieved, which in many cases motivated individuals who arrived at the designated places as members of the Party. The new settlements were supervised by the Milicia. Stations were set up even before the “settlers” arrived. These stations were set up at first in neighbouring settlements, later after the official buildings were finished, in the responsible community. The Milicia was not concerned that anyone should escape, for one thing, because everyone’s ID was stamped with the initials D.O., thereby making it clear to every authority the status of the individual. On the other hand, the provisional committee immediately informed the Milicia about everything. It could do this because there were those among the camp inmates who were willing to report to the committee for imagined or real advantages.

In September of 1951, the Milicia directorate of the province of Ialomița instructed the committees in a circular letter that they couldn’t give the residents of the settlements documents authorising them to travel. Any

violation would be severely punished.³⁴⁴ The authorities did everything in their power to keep, to make them keep, to the deadlines set centrally. The provisional committees with open blackmail tried to get people to construct the buildings; that is, they linked the rhythm of construction with the distribution of food stamps. If they fulfilled the production quotas, they would get the stamps. The Milicia also periodically suspended the delivery of packages and letters.³⁴⁵ These measures made the already wretched provisioning of food even more difficult. Officially it was the local agencies of the Association of Consumption Alliances (Centrocoop) which, provided the new settlements with food and articles of common use, but in practice in this case this was different.³⁴⁶



The reports of June 1951 that reached the Party Committee in Bucharest told of enormous disorganisation and shortages of staples, such as bread or maize flour,³⁴⁷ salt, etc. It also happened sometimes that there wasn't even enough to feed the animals either. At first they provided babies and pregnant women with milk powder, and distributed bread with jam for the older children. But already by early August the local committee members reported that the settlements had run out of milk powder ten days ago. In fact, the hopeless situation arose that in the clinics there was no alcohol for use as disinfectant.³⁴⁸ When later, provisions became more "normal", they handed

³⁴⁴ Circular letter no. 1584 of 1951. *Romania Libera* June 6, 1990, p. 2. It sometimes happened that someone who went beyond the 20 km designated zone found himself in a work camp digging the Danube-Black Sea channel.

³⁴⁵ We were informed about this from Resolution no. 6751 issued on September 24, 1951 by the Regional Railway Transportation Service of the Milicia Directorate of Bucharest. This resolution concerned all the settlements of the provinces of Ialomița and Galaci. *Romania Libera*, issue of June 6, 1990, p. 2.

³⁴⁶ The appendix of Resolution no. 326/S issued on June 14, 1951 provided this.

³⁴⁷ Corn grits, the national staple food of the Romanian people.

³⁴⁸ *Romania Libera* issue of June 8, 1990, p. 2.

out bread in exchange for coupons, but only to those who had continuously worked within the framework of state units.

Many people lived from what their relatives sent them. The situation changed somewhat beginning with 1953, for the authorities “distributed land” to the settlers. This land distribution actually meant renting, for those who worked the land didn’t have any property rights over it. The land could not exceed two hectares. Many people didn’t take advantage of this opportunity, if only because anyone who worked a household plot of larger than 0.7 hectares lost their bread coupons. There was very little water in this part of the Bărăgan, which people ordered here experienced for themselves. During the first weeks—due to the lack of proper receptacles—they transported water in reinforced chests within a distance of 5 to 10 kms in wagons. It took almost a year before an adequate supply of water could be provided every settlement by digging wells.



During the expulsions several hundred children³⁴⁹ arrived at the new settlements and they had to be schooled. According to Resolution no. 326/S/1951, the Ministry of Education had to solve their schooling and provide the teachers. Until the schools could be built, the children went to the schools in neighbouring settlements, of course, walking several kilometers a day. According to the description of the educational section of the people’s council of Calarasi rajon, students could have their secondary education only through private means. After finishing elementary school the children

³⁴⁹ From a report made in July of 1951, 170 pieces of bread with jam were distributed in a single settlement, from which it can be deduced that in the 18 settlements of the Bánát, several hundreds of children had to be schooled.

could not continue their studies in day school; thus, the teachers that had been expelled tried to organise their further education themselves. Official examinations were held twice a year, before teachers who had come from the secondary schools of the nearest town on stock farms within four kilometers. The parents paid for the teachers' traveling expenses.



Parents of working age “went to work” on state farms, work settlements and construction sites.³⁵⁰ In addition to the farms that took them on, several neighbouring state farms employed them to work with dairy cattle and at agricultural machine stations. This work was better than the working in the fields. They were often ordered to carry out definitely dangerous work in constructing the various kinds of buildings, water works or military projects. Officially those working in this sphere should have been paid the same rate as civilians doing the same job, but generally they were only paid 50% of the going rate. Thus “very often” individuals went to do day labour for well-off farmers in the neighbourhood where they even got hot meals. The authorities were forced to allow them, as they weren't able to feed people; at the same time, they were informed of everything by “B” individuals. In spite of this, the banished managed to get their relatives in Bánát to send them two wagons full of provisions. The organs concentrated on ensuring that the web of spies should “perform” as expected. In 1953 and 1954 they sent those individuals

³⁵⁰ **Marineasa, Viorel:** *Deportare in Bărăgan*, p. 229-231. The bold lettered names of settlements designate those settlements that were artificially established. After every such settlement generally 2 or 3 localities were mentioned which were state units where those banished to Bărăgan worked. The sources do not mention such work settlements in the case of settlements number 16, 17, and 18.

to the settlement villages who had worked in the work camps of the Danube channel, which had been eliminated.³⁵¹

“Liberation”

After Stalin's death in 1953 the changes that took place in Moscow had their effect on the satellite countries. Romania didn't escape the changes in the Soviet Union, but 1953 didn't bring significant changes in the daily life of those living in the compulsory residences. Minimal change happened in the 18 settlements set up in the Bánát; that is, 42 people were officially allowed to leave in June of 1952, but 11 families arrived from the region of Bihar.³⁵² They had to wait all the way until 1955 for liberation, for there was serious infighting among the group led by Gheorghiu-Dej (Chivu Stoica, Gheorghe Apostol, Nicolae Ceaușescu, Alexandru Draghici and Sándor Mogyorós) to acquire the monopoly of power. By 1952-53 step by step the Dej group had pushed aside the Moscovites (Anna Pauker, László Luka,³⁵³ and Teohari Georgescu.³⁵⁴) Finally Gheorghiu-Dej gained his victory at the plenary meeting of the RMP [Romanian Worker's Party] Central Leadership on May 26-27, 1952, when—using the anti-Semitic and nationalist guidelines instituted by Stalin—they expelled László Luka, Finance Minister, who was held responsible for the failure of the industrial policy and for the deficiencies of the financial reform instituted on January 26, 1952. In addition, he was accused of supporting the kulaks and capitalists and for attempting to set up a Hungarian faction within the Party. At this same meeting of the Central Leadership, Teohari

³⁵¹ The Resolution no. 337 issued on March 11, 1954 by the council of ministers (there was just one article) declared that those individuals who had served their sentences but who still presented a danger to the security of the Romanian state had to be sent to designated compulsory residences. The compulsory residences were set aside in the 18 artificially established settlements. The compulsory residences were for two to six years. The resolution was published in the 67th issue of *Sfera Politicii*. See: www.dnt.ro.

³⁵² *Romania Libera* issue of June 9, 1990, page 2. *Trezor 2*. The yearbook of the Historical Office (Editor: György Gyarmati) Bp. 2002.

³⁵³ **László Luka** was sentenced to death in 1954; this was later commuted to life. He died in 1963 in solitary confinement in the prison of Nagyenyed.

³⁵⁴ **Teohari Georgescu** Minister of the Interior was arrested in 1953, sentenced in 1954, but he was released already in 1955, for he was willing to collaborate with the authorities. At first he worked as a printer, then as director of a printing press. He eventually died in 1976 pushed entirely into the background.

Georgescu was also deprived of his office of Minister of the Interior. The third member of the Moscovite group, Ana Pauker, was censured for mistakes made in accepting Party members; furthermore, she was accused of delaying the collectivisation. That is why she was expelled from the highest ranks of the Party and even lost her seat as Foreign Minister.

With the shunting aside of the Moscovites, the “national line”³⁵⁵ came to prevail more and more within the RWP [Romanian Workers’ Party]. They took power completely when on June 2, 1952 Peter Gróza was kicked upstairs (he was elected president of the Great National Assembly) and thus Gheorghiu-Dej obtained not only the position of first secretary but also of Prime Minister. After Stalin’s death, a group came to the fore within the Romanian Party leadership who essentially accepted the reforms of Khrushchev. There were two important representatives of this line, Miron Constantinescu and Josif Chisinevski “Bessarabian group”. The First Secretary of the Party, Gheorghiu-Dej, expressed self-criticism very guardedly and was extremely careful to place the responsibility on others. He continued the purges that he had begun under Stalin’s time. Lucretiu Patrascanu³⁵⁶ who was arrested in 1949 and after six years of interrogations was sentenced to death and executed in 1954.

In order to gain Khrushchev’s confidence, Gheorghiu-Dej, at the same time as Patranescu’s execution, announced that the title of Party First Secretary would be discontinued. The new first secretary of the Romanian Workers’ Party became Gheorghe Apostol, while Gheorghiu-Dej continued to fill only the position of Prime Minister. The struggle for power that began in 1953 was concluded with the victory of the Gheorghiu-Dej line³⁵⁷ in the meetings of the Central Leadership of the Romanian Workers’ Party held between June 28 and July 3, 1953. Dej quickly reorganised the economy. Resolution no. 2004 of July 17, 1954 of the Council of Ministers ended the Danube-Black Sea channel works. The ending of one of the largest investments in the Socialist

³⁵⁵ Gábor Hunya, Tamás Réti, Andrea R. Süle, László Tóth, *Romania 1944-1990: Economic and Political History*, Atlantisz, Bp. 1990, p. 224.

³⁵⁶ Lucretiu Patranescu: Minister of Justice between 1945 and 1948 was sentenced to death without public trial and executed in 1954.

³⁵⁷ Josef Chisinevski and Miron Constantinescu were accused of pursuing the Pauker line and thus they were deprived of power. László Balogh, *The History of Romania*. Aula, University of Economics and State Administration, Bp. 2001, p. 183.

Bloc released enormous financial resources, which enabled the funding of new priorities.

Expelled persons were released in two waves from compulsory residence. The first large group, 5491 families, were released from the restrictions of compulsory expulsion in the interval of February to June of 1954 by the review committee led by Colonel Wilhelm Einhorn. The official resolution justified the lifting of the compulsory residence in every case that the individuals affected were old, sick, or had been sent to the locality by mistake.³⁵⁸ This clemency procedure did not include families who had been expelled from the western border zone; that is, the instructions from on high ordered that families expelled from the western border region not be granted exemptions.

Based on Order no. 161 of June 29, 1954 of Interior Minister, Alexandru Draghici, the second committee established in accordance with the Interior Ministry's Resolution no. 6100 and 6200 during the course of the year 1955 granted exemptions to all those, fulfilling Order no. 200/1951 BM [Interior Ministry]—who were relocated as a result of Resolution no. 326/1951 of the Council of Ministers. We learn from the documents that they were relocated as a result of this resolution. The documents also show that in spite of the decrees granting general clemency, 328 individuals (112 families) were not allowed to leave.³⁵⁹ Thus, then when Gheorghiu Dej spoke about releasing the political prisoners, in reality it was just a case of requalification. Memoranda verify that as late as 1960-61 "D.O." individuals were still in compulsory settlements.³⁶⁰ Based on D. Brusalinschi's report,³⁶¹ the traces of only two settlements could be found by the early 1990s. When they remember the moment of release, all those remembering said that authorities took the identification papers from

³⁵⁸ Sfera Politicii, issue no. 67, p. 4. www.dntb.ro

³⁵⁹ Already in 1953 the State Security Ministry decided that those who had been relocated from the border zones, dangerous elements who emphatically should be investigated based on the reports coming from the settlements. The Extraordinary Association brought into being for this purpose, whose members included Al. Draghici, Minister of State Security, Vladimir Mazuru, Al. Nicolschi, deputy ministers and General Pavel Aranici, thought 250 cases important, whose families had to continue to stay in their D.O. (Compulsory Residence) status. **Marineasa, Viorel**, *Deportare in Bărăgan*. Ed. Mirton. Temesvár 1996, p. 137.

³⁶⁰ By 1964 of 328 individuals only six were still in compulsory status. Of these six three were living as compulsory residents in villages built by the Banatians for a definite time and three for an indefinite time. Sfera Politicii, number 67, p. 4. www.Dntb.ro.

³⁶¹ D. Brusalinschi is a teacher in Bucharest, who published an investigative report in the early 1990s.

everyone,³⁶² and continually talked about how the Party had made a mistake and they recommended that everyone forget what happened and particularly not talk to anyone about what happened to them.



Based on the resolutions of the Ministry of the Interior of 1950, the families that had been relocated from the western border zone were “free” again, but actually they confronted the big questions afterwards. That is, how and with what (resources) could they begin their lives anew. The answer to this was given “more or less” by the Resolution no. 2694 of the Ministers’ Council issued on December 7, 1955, which was signed by Chivu Stoica, the president of the Ministers’ Council.³⁶³ According to the decree, the real estate, house and land would have to be restored to those returning. In case the house of the person affected was being used by a state institute on his return or it had been demolished, compensation had to be paid. This compensation must not exceed 50% of the value of the real estate determined by the state. If the real estate was used by an individual employed by a state institution, the employee was obligated to give the house or building back to the former owner.

The restoration of land proved to be an easier issue, for as a result of the unsuccessful collectivisation, the state had a lot of land that it could give back to those entitled to it. In vain was there enough land, those returning didn’t rush to get the land back, because they wouldn’t have been able to fulfill the high delivery quotas. Those returning to the villages, at their own request, had to take up the state farms or cooperatives in accordance with the usual proceedings.

³⁶² They stamped the D.O. seal on the id. photos, so that the ids had to be changed.

³⁶³ Stefa Politicii, no. 67, p. 9. www.dnt.ro. In people’s consciousness their liberation was mainly connected to this resolution.

There were three months allotted to pay compensation beginning with the issue of Resolution no. 2694 of the Council of Ministers. The financial cover was assured by the Ministry of Finance based on the proposal of the Council of Ministers. Outside of the above-mentioned resolution no other legal regulation was issued; the authorities considered these events of the period to be closed. But the rehabilitation or vindication of the aggrieved parties of the period between 1951-1955 did not happen either in the Gheorghiu-Dej period or the Ceaușescu golden period. The D.O. category that was shaped by the Communists in the 1950s accompanied and haunted the victims all the way to 1989, for this designation remained in the records of the authorities.³⁶⁴

³⁶⁴ In Gyergyószentmiklós there lived an elderly woman until 2001 who had her still valid id card stamped with the D.O. seal.

THE ARISTOCRACY, TARGET OF THE GERMANS AND THEN THE SOVIETS

Hardly any member of the Hungarian political elite and the aristocracy, was pro-German between the two world wars. The aristocracy was essentially pro-English and pro-American; it took part in the resistance movement, and helped to prepare a separate peace agreement with the Soviet Union in 1944. The aristocracy took an active part in rescuing Jews and the politically persecuted. Thus, the Gestapo, and their local henchmen, the Arrow Cross, as well as the Soviet NKVD and their local henchmen, the Muscovites, were first to turn against them, for the national and international prestige that these aristocrats enjoyed, their wealth and national identity enabled them to play an important part in the resistance.

I would like to show the fate of the aristocracy beginning with the 1940's by describing the victimisation of individual members of these internationally known families. I chose these families, for not only was their property, moveable and immovable, completely confiscated, but they were also prevented from fitting into the new social order.

Let us remember the words of Péter Esterházy's great-grandfather, who thought that the secret of eternal life did not lie in castles, but in respect for a nation's past, its history, traditions, and values. The Muscovites did not wish to promote and preserve the national traditions, but rather to transform or destroy them. They were robots, well oiled and, once set in motion, carried out Stalin's orders without thinking.

Zita Pallavicini, grand-daughter of Antal Pallavicini saw her grandfather's fate in the following way in 2007:

*"My grandfather would have liked to assimilate into the military, or working-class. But it was his trial in 1957 that showed most clearly that this was an impossible fantasy. It turned out that those to whom he wished to belong, callously testified against him; they hated him like poison. Assimilation is a difficult issue. My parents visited my grandfather in prison. An official there spit on my adolescent father, and informed him that 'there was no use for his kind'. I myself don't wish to assimilate into any social group. What environment could be attractive in Hungary today?"*³⁶⁵

³⁶⁵ János Adonyi Sztancs, 2007, pp. 85-86



The Family of the Marquis of Pallavicini

Source: János Adonyi Sztancs, 2007, 80.p.

Antal Pálincás (Pallavicini) was executed on December 10, 1957 for the crime of organising to overthrow the people's democratic order".

An excerpt from the indictment:

"Major Antal Pálincás (Pallavicini), the accused comes from a land-owning family. His father, Marquis György Pallavichini owned about 2,000 acres of land. After the accused obtained his school-leaving certificate he went to the Ludovika Academy, where he was made second-lieutenant in the armoured corps. In 1944 he engaged in anti-German activities, and joined the resistance movement, headed by Bajcsy-Zsilinszky. He was later taken prisoner by the Soviets and fell seriously ill. A Soviet doctor saved his life. He returned to Hungary in 1946 and as second-lieutenant was given a post in the Ministry of Defense. That same year he was made lieutenant, later captain in 1948, then major in 1950, and

was posted to Piliscsaba as commanding officer of a battalion, then. that same year, he was sent to Hatvan as regiment commander. In 1951 he was sent to Aszód as chief, then was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel. In 1954 he was degraded to major because of a shooting fraud and was placed in a lower-ranking job. He was sent to Rétság in June of 1955, where he became head of Pf:9001 corps. He served there until his discharge on January 4, 1957. During his years of service, he received praise 13 times. He was awarded the bronze order of “Hungarian Freedom” in 1948 for his anti-German activities. He joined the Hungarian Communist Party in 1947, but after joining he was reduced to a candidate under supervision, then in 1954 he was expelled from the party. His two brothers escaped to the west after the liberation; his mother also fled west in November of 1956.”³⁶⁶

The bill of indictment did not mention that his father, György Pallavicini had spoken out against the anti-Jewish law in 1943, in the Upper House. His older brother György Pallavicini was taken to Dachau by the Germans. A few months after his release he was sent to Northern Siberia by the NKVD where he died in 1949 at the age of 37.

His mother, Borbála Andrassy Palavicini, was relocated in 1951, and deprived of her pension. The decisive factor in the execution of Antal Pálincás (Pallavicini) was his class background. After the suppression of the revolution of 1956, Kádár’s government wanted to convince the world that the revolution was unleashed by an “enemy”, “class enemies”, “reactionary elements”, American agents, and it was led by former Horthyist officers. Antal Pálincás (Pallavicini) who accompanied Prince Primate Mindszenty to Budapest on October 30, 1956 fulfilled these criteria.

József Mindszenty³⁶⁷ was arrested on December 26, 1948, and they began torturing and interrogating him in Andrassy út 60. Mindszenty was sentenced on February 8, 1949 in a show trial to a lifetime of penal servitude. But because of his illness and the protests of the “free world,” he was put under house

³⁶⁶ ABTL V-147-842.

³⁶⁷ The Venerable **József Mindszenty** (March 29, 1892—May 6, 1975) was Hungarian cardinal and head of the Hungarian Roman Catholic Church as Archbishop of Esztergom. He became known as a steadfast supporter of church freedom and opponent of Communism and the often brutal Stalinist persecution in his country. As a result, he was tortured and given a life sentence in a 1949 show trial that provoked worldwide condemnation, including a United Nations resolution. Freed during the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, he was granted political asylum and lived in the U.S. embassy in Budapest for 15 years. He was finally allowed to leave the country in 1971. He died in exile in 1975 in Vienna, Austria.

arrest first in Püspökszentlászló, then in Felsőpetény. During the early days of the 1956 Revolution, the AVH ended Mindszenty's imprisonment. Major Antal Pálinkás-Pallavicini escorted József Mindszenty at his request to the castle, the palace of the Prince Primate in Budapest. After the suppression of the revolution, this act was judged a crime, more specifically, the crime of organising to overthrow the people's democratic order.



József Mindszenty and Antal Pallavicini in 1956
Source: János Adonyi Sztancs, 2007, 85.p.

Count György Széchenyi, the great-grandson of the older brother of István Széchenyi, the “greatest Hungarian”, also took part in the resistance movement led by Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky. He was arrested by the Gestapo on October 18, 1944. Thus began his 12 years of persecution and imprisonment. He was arrested by the Russians on January 18, 1945, then he became the prisoner of the AVH. His older sister who had saved 11 Jewish compatriots from deportation was also arrested by the NKVD and sentenced to eight years of forced labour. After her release, she could not return to Hungary, but was exiled to Siberia where she had to live in forced residence.

Count György Apponyi, who was named a Jewish agent and was known for his activities fighting against the Nazis, was also arrested by the Gestapo on March 22, 1944. György Apponyi was the son of Albert Apponyi, the head

of the negotiators sent to Trianon. He was first taken to the prison on Fő utca, then sent to Mauthausen. He survived, but remained in the west rather than returning home.

Count István Bethlen,³⁶⁸ an outstanding Prime Minister of the period of the Horthy regency, he also played a leading role in reconstructing the country after Trianon.



*István Bethlen prime minister (1921-1931)
Source: János Adonyi Sztancs, 2007, 24.p.*

Under his leadership the country achieved a wide-ranging consolidation. During this period, under the Bethlen—Peyer pact, he promoted the Klebersberg school program to raise the level of the lower classes. He went into hiding after March 19, 1944, that is, during the German occupation. He was caught by the Russians in December of 1944, kept under house arrest, then in April of 1945 taken to the Soviet Union, so as to preclude any attempt on his part to lead the anti-Communist forces. He died on October 5, 1946, from paralysis of the heart in the hospital of Butirskaya prison in Moscow.

³⁶⁸ **Count István Bethlen de Bethlen** (October 8, 1874, Gernyeszeg—October 5, 1946, Moscow) was a Hungarian aristocrat and anglophile statesman and served as Prime Minister of Hungary from 1921 to 1931.

Baron Vilmos Apor, bishop of Győr stood with the persecuted without regard to denomination or ethnic identity during the German occupation and after the Arrow Cross putsch. He lost his life in the episcopal see on April of 1945, trying to save girls and women who were taken by the Red Army.³⁶⁹



Baron Vilmos Apor

Source: János Adonyi Sztancs, 2008, 162.p.

Count János Esterházy was a landowner of Upper Northern Hungary, who defended the interests of Hungarians, represented the values of the peaceful coexistence of Hungarians and Slovaks, and under the Tiso government, was the only representative of the Slovak parliament who voted against the anti-Jewish law. Throughout his entire life, he stood up for progressive ideals and good relations among peoples. He was a forerunner of the idea of modern Europe. The Soviet army carried him off, then seriously ill, he was taken back

³⁶⁹ Blessed **Baron Vilmos Apor of Altörja** (Segesvár [Sigisuaara], 1892, February 29—Győr, 1945, April 2) was a bishop.

to Slovakia where he died in prison. *“On the 15th of May, 1942, the Slovak National Assembly unanimously voted a law—decree ordering the deportation of the Jews. János Esterházy, the sole deputy of the Hungarian minority, was the only one who openly refused to vote the law declaring that he would never vote a law so utterly opposed to his Christian and democratic principles.”*³⁷⁰

Count László Vay, son of Margit Zichy, was imprisoned in the prison of Balassagyarmat in October of 1944, by the Arrow Cross. In 1945 he was beaten to death by drunken Russian soldiers, while trying to rescue his daughter from soldiers who had taken possession of his castle.

Count Ferenc Batthyány worked in a forced labour camp in the Soviet Union between 1944 and 1955.



Ferenc Batthyány and his spouse Marietta Esterházy
Source: János Adonyi Sztancs, 2007, 16.p.

Count Bálint Batthyány, the last direct descendant of the martyred Prime Minister, Count Lajos Batthyány, of the Revolution of 1848, also ended up as a prisoner in Russia during the Second World War. His aunt, Count Katinka Andrassy, the “Red Countess”, wife of Mihály Károlyi, brought him home after she travelled to Siberia. A few years later he was arrested by the AVH. As a result of the conversation he had with them in Andrassy út 60, Bálint

³⁷⁰ **Lujza Esterházy**, 1991, **Imre Molnár**, 2010, p. 425.

Batthyány left his teeth in Andrásy út 60. After his release, even though he had a diploma, the count was able to work only as a labourer.

Count Antal Esterházy was caught by the Soviets in Sárissáp in September of 1944. After interrogating him, they wanted to send him to hospital because of his wounds, but the local Communists asked for him and shot him dead at the border of Sárissáp.

Baron Ede Atzél went to Moscow in October of 1944, at the request of Regent Horthy, to prepare the ceasefire agreement. On December 3, 1944, he went to the Soviet headquarters in Gödöllő as negotiator. He was arrested by the NKVD. His family never found out what happened to him.



Baron Ede Atzél

Source: János Adonyi Sztancs, 2008, 98.p.

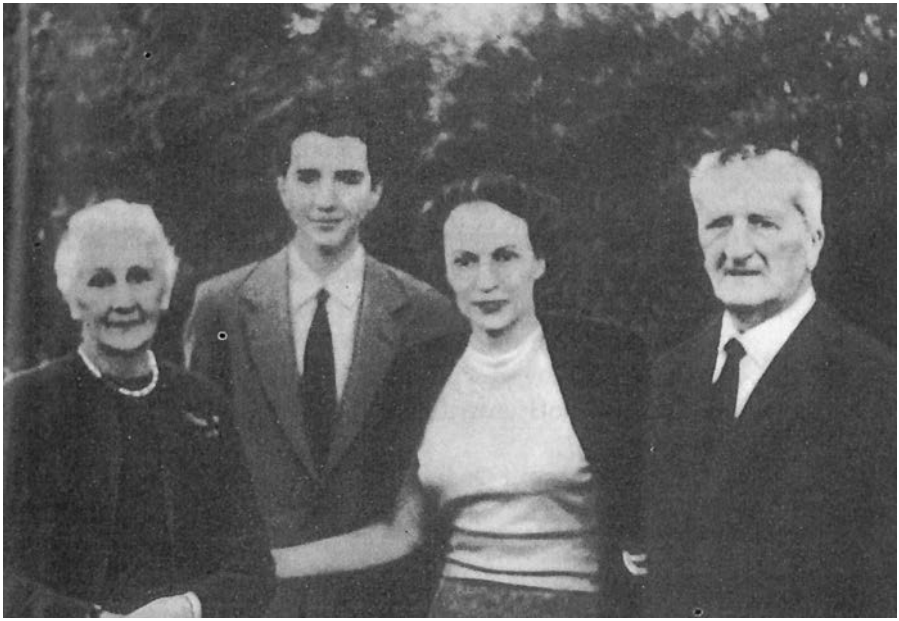
Countess Éva Gyulai Edelsheim and her husband, **Count Ádám Kendeffy** were arrested by the Gestapo. They were taken to Vienna from the prison of Sopronkőhida, then to Mauthausen, but by then the camp had been liberated.



Éva Gyulai Edelsheim and Ádám Kendeffy

Éva Gyulai Edelsheim—who was the older sister of the widow of the regent's eldest son, István Horthy—wrote in her “Snapshots from my life”

“One day in January 1945, we were arrested and taken away Ádám and I. I can’t tell you how that happened because it was very sudden. The end of the war was close, and the Germans decided that we were anti-German. Ádám once said that it would have been much better if Hitler had stayed with his painting rather than enter politics. Since my sister Ily married into the Horthy family that connection was also a strike against us. By this time the Germans had arrested the Regent, his wife, my sister and her young son István and took them to Germany.



Mrs Miklós Horthy, István Horthy the grandchild, Ilona Edelsheim Gyulai and Miklós Horthy

They took us first to the nearest town Nagykanizsa, and put us in a Jewish apartment that was occupied by German soldiers...We got out of the train in Sopron. That was a big town, and near it was Sopronkőhida, one of the largest prisons in Hungary. It was crowded with political prisoners; there were common criminals there as well...We stayed for quite a while in Sopronkőhida. I'd say we stayed for about a month in the hospital wing, and then we were transferred to the big prison and put in cells. Those prisons were horrible. When you were in the corridor you could see everything downstairs. The cells were full of bugs. When I lifted my pillow, hundreds of lice crawled out from under it. There was no chance to wash...We were about sixty people but only three women. One of the prisoners was Pali Jávör who was a well known Hungarian actor, and he couldn't take it. They arrested him instead of his wife who was Jewish...Later we had to get into a cattle wagon again and the train started. I looked out but had no idea where we were. However, when we got out of the wagon for a few minutes I saw "Prison Camp Mauthausen" written on the wagon's side. I realized that they were taking us to that awful camp. We had heard what was happening in those camps. That was the end. We should do everything to prevent them taking us there. We couldn't really do anything about it, but

*we were lucky because when we arrived at Mauthausen they had started to evacuate the prisoners. We couldn't get in there and that saved us. We never got into the camp at Mauthausen—we were only close.*³⁷¹

The German occupiers arrested the leaders of the country, even the regent at the same time the Arrow Cross took control of the government. On October 15, 1944, the Gestapo arrested Lieutenant-General **Szilárd Bakay**, the commander of the Budapest army corps, and head of the bailing-out office. Miklós Horthy's only living son was ambushed and captured by the Germans, and he was put on a truck, rolled up in a rug. The Germans also arrested Lieutenant-General **Károly Lázár** bodyguard, the commander of the regent's guards, **András Kállay** lieutenant of the guards, the son of Miklós Kállay, the Prime Minister, and on the morning of October 16 even Miklós Horthy, the regent himself. The prisoners, with the exception of the regent, were taken to Vienna, then to Mauthausen concentration camp. The reign of the Arrow Cross leader Szálasi began the moment the regent left the country as a prisoner of the Germans. Earlier, on the day following the occupation of the country by the Germans, March 20, 1944, the Prime Minister, **Dr. Miklós Kállay of Nagykaló**, took refuge in the Turkish embassy. In mid-November 1944, after the Arrow Cross putsch, he was forced to leave the embassy. He was arrested by the Gestapo and ended up first in Mauthausen, then in Dachau.

These examples demonstrate that the Hungarian political elite, headed by the aristocracy, retained their strong national identity and played a significant role in national politics, even during the calamitous times of the 20th century. The German and later the Soviet occupiers were fully aware of this, and purposefully tried to eliminate the aristocracy and political elite, even to the extent of physically annihilating them. Beginning with 1945, the Muscovites slandered them, emphasising their “parasitical and exploitative” activities, even branding them anti-Semites.

³⁷¹ Countess Éva Edelsheim Gyulai, 2006, 50-62 pp.

The NKVD's Activities

The NKVD, the Soviet secret police, who accompanied the Red Army into Hungary played an important role not only during the war, but even after the signing of the peace treaty as an advisor. The officers of the Soviet political police collected every politically important individual and interrogated them. Their objective was to reveal the political events of previous decades and the emerging situation in 1945. During the last months of 1944, as soon as the Soviet army set foot on Hungarian soil, the NKVD arrested the members of the national resistance movement, except those who had been prisoners of the Gestapo or who had been sent to concentration camps and didn't return to Hungary after their release. The Soviets knew that those who fought for the country against the Germans, would do the same against the Soviets too. The wave of arrests that started in 1944 was intended to prevent this. That is how all those who actually or potentially defended their national identity ended up in internment or in labour camps. A few were put in prison not in 1944, only later, for they were decorated for their past in the resistance; indeed they were even given temporary posts. Count Géza Pálffy, for example, was decorated in 1945 for his fight against the Nazis. A year later, he was interviewed on Time Magazine, in which he described the outrageous behaviour of the liberating Red Army in Hungary. The American journalist named his informant in the article only by his initials, "Count P-G". The NKVD promptly gave Géza Pálffy the opportunity to make a change of environment. So far as his family knew, he died in the GULAG in 1952.³⁷²

Stalin built up a dictatorship with total power. The famine in the Ukraine caused the death of millions, but the Generalissimo had even his own soldiers executed by the thousands, and tens of thousands between the two world wars. He had 27,000 Polish officers shot in Katyn.³⁷³ In January of 1945, in the so-called Hannibal manoeuvre, the Baltic sea units of the German navy carried out the greatest evacuation of all time to save the German population from Soviet revenge. They were ordered to save first the elderly, women, and children. They shipped 2.2 million citizens and military personnel from the ports of Danzig-Gotenhafen-Hela to Germany. The Soviets carried out a

³⁷² János Adonyi Sztancs, 2007, p. 177.

³⁷³ A documentary film was made of this massacre, but the most moving was Andrzej Wajda's feature film that was much like a documentary.

submarine attack at night on three ships and sank them. 20,000 people lost their lives, including 9,000 mainly women and children, during the sinking of the “Wilhelm Gustloff”.

To illustrate the brutality of the Soviet army, I will quote a few lines from Ilya Ehrenbug ³⁷⁴ whose fly-sheets reached the Soviet soldiers in tens of thousands: *“Red Soldier! You have reached German soil! The hour of revenge has come! Kill, red soldier. Kill! There can be no mercy! No German is innocent! Humiliate as many German women as you can! Don’t give a fig for anyone or anything! The German beast has no soul, the German child, if he grows up, will be your enemy! Kill, Red soldier! Kill!”*

These murderous handbills were signed not only by Ehrenburg but also by Stalin, which gave these fly-sheets added weight. They prove that Communists killed and committed violence in the war, and even later during peace, against nations and peoples on written orders and for ideological reasons. According to article 6 of Nuremberg law, these were war crimes, crimes against humanity.

Stalin could have used the starving millions in the battle against Hitler’s troops, but Stalin was already preparing to expand the Soviet empire into Eastern-Central Europe, and planned to pulverise any resistance. Beginning with Yalta and the collapse of the German empire, he methodically built up his power even in the Soviet occupation zone. The script for the sovietisation of Hungary was ready. It was carried out first by the Soviet army, then the NKVD, which followed them immediately, then Stalin’s Communist agents, the “Muscovites”, who had been prepared in the Soviet Union and then sent to Hungary. It is noteworthy that the Muscovites imprisoned even those Hungarian Communists who had been forced to emigrate to the west but then returned, such as Pál Demény, or eliminated from power in other ways, such as Ernő Normai.

The “Liberating” Soviet Army

The brutal entry of the Soviet troops—advance guard, freely robbing and pillaging—seriously affected the entire Hungarian nation. Scores of tragedies accompanied the appearance of these soldiers. Based on family stories that

³⁷⁴ **Ilya Ehrenburg Grigorevich** (January 27, 1891—31 August, 1967, Moscow) Russian writer and journalist.

were told to me, and the totality of documents, we are probably talking about hundreds of thousands of cases of murder, rape, looting and pillaging.

In one community in Fejér county, for example, the village leaders decided that it was a better idea to head off trouble, so they went to the approaching Soviet army. They were dressed in their Sunday best, dark suit, coat, and shiny boots. The Soviet soldiers arrived at the edge of the village and were glad to see the delegation. As a sign of their friendship, they took from each peasant his shining boots and other articles of clothing.

In a castle nearby also in Fejér County, the lord of the manor invited the Russian officers to dinner. After the delicious dishes, wine was served of which the “guests” drank copiously. Thereupon, they began to importune the lady of the house whose husband leaped to her defense. He was shot five times, the wife only later. The front was full of such tragedies.

The castles were prime targets, for officers were often billeted there. The Russians left with full pockets and full wagons. It wasn't the valuables, furniture, and books carried away that caused the most concern. Tens of thousands of Hungarians throughout the country were degraded and humiliated; wounds were caused that could never heal and were never spoken aloud. But these were still only the phenomena of the front and brutal acts; it was the wealthy who suffered the most from the looting.

November 1944: the Muscovites Return Home at Stalin's Orders

In the period before they were ordered home, they lived in fear and dread in a house in Moscow, 10 Gorky Street, on the sixth floor of the famous LUX Hotel where one could enter only with a photo identity card. Generally, families had only one room. There was a common bathroom for taking baths and showers. The WC was also shared. Cooking took place in the communal kitchen on each floor. Not even family members dared speak to each other. The atmosphere in the hotel was extremely cold, introverted, and people lived in isolation from each other. The purges decimated even the residents of the LUX Hotel, as well as the circle of friends of the arrested. The black cars known as black crows came regularly to carry away the residents of the hotel; not even the women and children were spared. They were nothing but little specks in a vast machinery who could be crushed at any time. They lived in

hope that they would survive the next day without being arrested, that they would see their nearest and dearest again who had been taken to the GULAG. The philosopher, György Lukács, also lived in the Lux Hotel with his wife and adopted son, Ferenc Jánosy,³⁷⁵ who was sent to a work camp. The latter owed his release to Jenő Varga,³⁷⁶ Beria's³⁷⁷ card partner. Mihály Farkas, a member of the later "four-in-hand" lived in this hotel too with his family. After the outbreak of the war, the husband of his sister, Bertalan Hován escaped to the Soviet Union to fight against Fascism. *"What happened to him was not an individual tragedy: instead of spending his years in the Soviet Union battling Fascism he was sent undeservedly to an NKVD concentration camp."*³⁷⁸

After returning home, they could choose their own villas, together with furnishings and personnel. The owners of such chosen apartments or villas who still lived in them were forced by trumped-up charges to move out, and the heads of families ended up in interment camps. These apartments and villas were owned by the Communist Party, and the Party could revoke the right to their use at any time. This dependent, vulnerable relationship determined their situation throughout, even when their living and material conditions changed. They continued to be specks of dust that could be crushed at any time by Moscow; nevertheless, they were given unlimited power in their own country, which they wished to hang on to. They learned how in those years spent in the LUX Hotel.

The liquidation of the power structure of the Horthy regime commenced. Stalin's apparatus entrusted this to the local agents, the Muscovites who spoke Hungarian and knew the field. The Muscovites had not lived in Hungary since 1919. They changed their Jewish religion to an internationalist faith. They were totally aware of the fact that they had to carry out every order without thinking, or they too would end up in a concentration camp in Hungary or

³⁷⁵ **Ferenc Jánosy** (1914-1997), economist, György Lukács's adopted son. He lived in Vienna from 1919, then in Berlin, and finally moved to Moscow in 1933. He was deported to Siberia between 1942 and '45, and returned home in 1946. He began working for the National Planning Office in 1958, and wrote numerous works on economic reform.

³⁷⁶ **Jenő Varga (Jenő Weissfeld)**, Nagytétény, 1879, November 6—Soviet Union, 1964, October 8) teacher, social democratic politician. During the time of the Soviet Hungarian Republic, he was people's commissar for finance and president of the People's Economic Council from March to July, 1919. After the fall of the Commune, he emigrated to the Soviet Union.

³⁷⁷ **Lavrentij Pavlovich Beria** (Merheuli, 1899, March 29—Moscow, 1953, December 23) Soviet politician. Between 1938 and 1953, he was chief of the Soviet secret service (NKVD).

³⁷⁸ **Vladimir Farkas**, 1990, p. 25.

in the Soviet Union. They methodically broke down the various sectors of society on instructions.

With Soviet help they raised the Communist programme of action in 1945 to the level of a government programme of the provisional National Assembly. The Smallholders' Party won the election of 1945, nevertheless, the Communists were granted local advantages, because the Soviets insisted on a coalition government. One after the other they took over the police and administrations. As Hungary had waged an offensive war, Hungarian democracy was limited from the outset by the ceasefire agreement signed on January 20, 1945. The English and Americans entrusted the Allied Supervisory Committees to the Soviet commander; thus, already in the first six months the Communists managed to take over interior affairs, under the leadership of Ferenc Erdei. Ostensibly, Erdei was member of the Peasant Party; in truth, he was a secret Communist.

During the years following the Second World War II until 1947, during the period of coalition government the Communists could not hope to take over power completely. As possessors of the Interior Ministry, they organised in the background a daily battle to take over national, county, and local positions. The weapons of the battle: the people's court trials, the screening procedures, and "B" lists, which enabled them to dismiss tens of thousands of people from their jobs in the ministries and public administration. They hoped that until the signing of the peace treaty they could take power as a result of this undermining work and that they could keep it even after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops.

This hope did not materialise; for this reason, the Communists launched their campaign against the Smallholders' Party in December of 1946. The charge against the arrested Smallholders politicians was that they had taken part in a conspiracy against the republic, which was aimed against the government—that is against themselves. It was obvious from the outset that the objective of these show trials was to destroy the majority Independent Smallholders Party. The second line of the party leadership was the chief accused, Minister Endre Mistéth at its head. The accusation was helped by the fact that the defendants were members of a secret society, which had been disbanded in early 1944, the Hungarian Fraternal Community. Since they couldn't prove the political accusations satisfactorily, membership in this organisation was used as a pretext. Following Rákosi many people even today mistakenly call the whole affair as "the Hungarian community trial".

The actual objective of the trial was to compromise the leaders of the Smallholders' Party and take power. Since Béla Kovács, the chief secretary of the Smallholders' Party was protected by parliamentary immunity, and the national embassy did not agree to hand him over, the Russians arrested him on February 24, 1947. He was the most outspoken, and he was in a position which allowed him to make fewer compromises than Ferenc Nagy, the Prime Minister. Béla Kovács responded to each attack with an equally sharp attack. He was the main enemy; he was the one they wanted to eliminate.

The American member of the Allied Control Committee protested against the arrest of Béla Kovács in a sharply worded memorandum, but in practice no one intervened. This outrageous event without parallel, however, contributed to the Truman Doctrine, which stated that **a new totalitarianism was coming into power**, the United States had to stop it, and America had to support the right of nations to freedom. Actually, this marked the beginning of the Cold War.

Seven trials took place beginning with December 1946, 250 persons were arrested in the Smallholders' trials, 229 defendants were hauled into court. Dr. György Donáth was sentenced to death, and the sentence was carried out. The main trial could not prove anything against Donáth. He provoked the death sentence with his incredibly brave conduct, testifying that he had been interrogated by the Soviet authorities in the course of the investigation. László Varga, who was counsel for the defense in the trials against the Smallholders—mentioned in 2000 that it was one of the most moving experiences of his life when the accused, Donáth, left unguarded for a moment, summoned the others and asked them to testify against him in everything, for he didn't have a wife, and he knew that the others had families. By that time Ferenc Nagy, Béla Varga and many others had left the country.

Beginning with 1947, after the arrest of Béla Kovács and the construction of totalitarian power, the social differences between individual citizens ceased. Those who did not unconditionally support the Communists—regardless of their previous past in the resistance or their professional skills—ended up included in the category of enemies to be defeated and liquidated. Thus, the aristocrats were made to understand that there was no room for them, not only as politicians, but also in public administration and even in civilian life. Count György Széchenyi was arrested again in April of 1947, and was freed in 1956, when he left the country where there was no place for the likes of him.

Beginning with 1947, power over the Party passed to the “four-in hand,” Farkas, Gerő, Rákosi, and Révai. Stalin entrusted them with the leadership of the Communist Party, which had just emerged from illegality, confident that they would carry out Soviet policies without hesitation. The Jewish members of the “four-in-hand” had broken with their religion a long time ago, and joined a world of ideals whose dogmatism and extreme sectarianism is unknown perhaps in any religion. George Orwell described the world of ideas of the leaders as double think, as a kind of intellectual AIDS.

Robert Conquest characterised their assistants, the executors in his book *Reflections on a Ravaged Century* as follows: “Without a doubt, there are elements in every country, who waited psychologically for the suitable moment and regime...in Hungary it was the rabble that appeared in the 1940s; they were handed historical opportunities by Rákosi and Farkas. Such a morally and intellectually half-educated strata exist in one form or another everywhere in the world.”³⁷⁹

In the wings, the Communist Party—even during the coalition period—worked actively to achieve total power. József Száberszky³⁸⁰ was chief of the operative technical sub-department, which bugged telephones and opened letters and read them, and looked at the galley-proofs of the daily newspapers of the various parties. Only the AVO were allowed to read these proofs. Their objective was to prepare the Communist Party for “attacks,” which they got because they had broken the law, for example, with the people’s court trials, the “B” lists, and the screening of civil servants.

The recruited agents carried on a campaign to compromise leaders of the non-Communist parties that were not to their taste, then later they arrested them (Domokos Szent-Iványi, István Csicsery-Rónay, Kálmán Saláta, Béla Kovács), also those who had been forced to leave their country (Prime Minister Ferenc Nagy).

³⁷⁹ Robert Conquest, 1999, p. 97.

³⁸⁰ József Száberszky in the rank of lieutenant-colonel led the IX operative technical sub-department of the Political Police Department beginning with January of 1945. Száberszky’s task was to collect compromising data connected with the life and activities of all the politicians, Party functionaries, as well as high-ranking state employees, and keep a secret registry. Száberszky and later Gábor Péter sent the conversations overheard with these personalities chosen for observation taken by short hand, and the information collected illegally from their correspondence straight to Mátyás Rákosi. In 1949 even one of the most tried and trusted leaders of the Communist Party, József Száberszky was transferred from state defence to public administration.

The Hungarian Muscovites differed from other Eastern European Muscovites: they denounced their own people to the world, particularly the leading strata, as Fascists and anti-Semites. This gave them a pretext for destroying the elite completely. The Slovaks had begun deporting the Jews in 1942, and the only man to protest against this, the Hungarian János Esterházy, hasn't been rehabilitated to this day. They didn't even give his children their father's ashes. Even so, they didn't call their own people Fascists and anti-Semites, but joined the Hungarian Muscovites and branded Hungarians with this epithet. This propaganda line, which has been propounded for the last 50 years, has serious consequences to this day.

Land Distribution was Equivalent to the Confiscation of the Aristocrats' Property

By ending the system of large estates, Article VI of 1945, distributed the liberated land to the agricultural labourers. It is important to note here that what the law meant by agricultural labourers were the destitute agrarian proletariat who were ignorant of farming. The law fixed two methods of expropriating land, expropriation and amortisation. With amortisation they took into account the part of the large estate that exceeded 100 cadastral acres. They differentiated from the political standpoint between the so-called gentry and peasant landowners. The "owners from peasant families" were able to keep up to 200 cadastral acres.

There were two conceptions of land reform. The citizen-peasant Smallholders' Party idea was that giving the small holders land would enable them to set up productive farms. The National Peasant Party and the Communist Party on the other hand wished to distribute land to the agricultural labourers, that is, to the indigent. This last idea won out; thus, instead of productive family farms, very small farms were created, which produced a voting bloc for them. This desire to create a voting bloc determined that the law was wounded in its execution. They did not leave the 200, or rather 100 cadastral-acre farms, when the agrarian proletariat complained about the lack of land with the help of the Communists. The "people's will" superceded the law. The landowners didn't pay rent for the expropriated property; first they delayed this by referring to the low "load-bearing capacity of the state" then they forgot about it. The

reference to the state's load-bearing capacity is important, because in 1991 when the question of compensation arose, this was used as an excuse.

The equipment of the large and medium-sized estates became the property of the machine stations. The basic problem of the new structure was therefore the separation of the productive factors; individual farms did not possess the land and equipment necessary to make them work. Essentially we can speak of land structure and not operating structure.

Their objective was not to change the operating structure anyway, but only to gain time. Rákosi and company wished to avoid the strongly negative peasant response to the collectivisation of the 1919 Hungarian Soviet Republic. The collectivisation began in 1948, and during those few years the land was not transferred to the names of new owners. So the land that was taken from the aristocracy without compensation was distributed not to peasants, but became the property of the state and cooperatives; thus, it was not private property.

During the land distribution, the gentry and aristocracy who had a strong feeling of national identity, were deprived of their property without compensation; thus, they lost even their means of making a living. The contradiction of the land distribution was that the users of the land were soon forced into the Soviet-type kolhoz, and they were forced to eke out a living as wage-workers.

The expropriation of the landowners was an important moment in left-wing justice, but its beneficiaries were not the small peasants or cotters, but a country nomenklatura known as the green barons. The castles were turned into co-operative centers, destroying assets that were hundreds of years old in many cases.

Between 1945-55, Marxism thought, on the pretext of class war, basically confiscated the property of the members of every strata that owned a significant amount of property, including those survivors of the Holocaust who, after returning to their country, threw in their lot with the Hungarian people, instead of the Muscovites. György Faludy, the prisoner of Recsk and Béla Dénes, the president of the Hungarian Zionist movement, who was in an AVH prison for five years each wrote a book about their trials. They lived through the Bolshevik hell as Jews. They are credible and impartial witnesses.

Declassification and Surveillance

The most important feature of the political police after the war was that the leaders of the only party, the Hungarian Communist Party acted from the outset under the direct instructions of the Party Secretary Mátyás Rákosi. Thus, even in the coalition period, they extended their surveillance even to those who exercised power legitimately, primarily the Independent Smallholders' Party and its voters. From January 1945, the job of the political police thus was not to hunt down war criminals based on international obligations, but the surveillance of "enemies" of the Communist Party. They continuously built up the network, expanding the number of informers and agents. The whole system of political police (PRO, AVO, AVH, Interior Ministry Political Investigative Department), its dependent system, with its central and police units and web of secret agents, tried to fulfill this task. The units under a strict hierarchical order and the expanded network of agents covered the entire country. The strands of this spider-web—which reached beyond the borders of the country—ran together in one hand, or more precisely in two until 1953. At the summit of the hierarchy was Gábor Péter, who acknowledged only one political leader to be above him, Mátyás Rákosi. The result was that the AVH was "independent," essentially a quasi-ministry between 1950 and 1953. Rákosi wanted to meet Moscow's expectations and even exceed them. Like Stalin he did not trust the oppressive apparatus, which he had brought into existence and used. He wanted to generalize the whole feeling of being threatened by the society to such an extent that he kept even the political police in continual insecurity and fear.

After the amnesty of 1953, the AVH was integrated into the Home Affairs Ministry, but the political police remained the main insurance power of the system. János Kádár, who put down the 1956 revolution with outside help, reactivated Rákosi's political police under a new name. János Kádár, as a result of a proposal put out in December of 1949, renewed the AVH. Kádár's condition for the successful reorganisation was that the AVH would be directed by Party headquarters. The Party secretary of the AVH's central organisation was therefore the organiser of the Central Leadership. The proposal, then the resolution, which established the AVH, considered it important that there be a regular relationship between Party headquarters and the AVH political department. Thus, Party headquarters took over the direction of the AVH. The AVH, which continued to function under the name, Interior Ministry

Chief Department of Political Investigation, was given a key role in the retribution after the revolution; it was given a significant role even during the period of restoration. The personalities and methods didn't change, but a few compromised leaders joined the apparatus that directed foreign representation or obtained leading positions in Hungarian cultural institutions.

The leading positions of the political police were filled by Communist Party cadres. They carried out their activities under the orders of the Soviet Party cadres. They kept a record not only of the public role of the members of the society. In the private sphere the "inherited" personal data (social status of the parents, religion, political affiliation, relatives living abroad), personal correspondence were recorded as security information, which they kept for the growing number of those placed under surveillance. This information was used by the Party leaders as an important resource for keeping power.

I would like to point out the three different periods of this network: 1947, the year Béla Kovács was taken away, the year the peace treaty was signed, and when the Soviet troops stayed on in Hungary to ensure the reinforcement; 1950 the year the AVH was established, and in 1958 the AVH was restructured and given another name.

- In the spring of 1947, János Kovács, police lieutenant-colonel had this to say at the AVO group leadership meeting: *A change of regime has taken place in Hungary. It took place without bloodshed. The victorious Red Army brought us this change.* ³⁸¹ *The lords of the past system will never resign themselves to the change. The battle will go on within the society. The AVH [State Defense Department] will fight in the frontlines. **This war is class war.*** It turns out from the material of the meeting of the group leaders that many had been released of those who had been interned or imprisoned in 1945. Thus, keeping a file on them and keeping them under constant surveillance became the most urgent task. The political police had to keep a file on them, in addition to the former gendarmes, **landowners, capitalists, members of the former state apparatus.** The leaders and members of disbanded organisations, every member of the former scout movement, everyone who had returned from the "west." A network of agents recruited from high school and university students would ensure the right thinking of the next generation. The most gifted

³⁸¹ **Béla Kovács** was arrested on February 25, 1947 with the help of the Soviet Army, since the Hungarian Parliament had not suspended his right to immunity.

agents would supervise the press, but it shouldn't be known that the AVO was supervising the press.³⁸²

- The AVH was set up in 1950. The job of several subdepartments of the I. Network Department was to track down and punish the enemy within. Department no. 2, the Department for Fighting the Reaction Within, had six subdepartments, which were concerned with uncovering the illegal activities of the domestic reactionary forces and destroying them. Subdepartment no.3 was charged with uncovering the hostile activities of “people of the past” and punishing them. (Former landowners, high-ranking government officials, former members of the gendarmerie, former police officers, etc.)³⁸³ The Anti-Sabotage Department no. 4 also had six Subdepartments, whose main job was to fight against mischief-makers, saboteurs, spies and every kind of person, who carried out hostile activities. Agricultural Department no. 5 had to uncover the hostile activities in the state farms, the tractor and machine stations, the cooperative farms, the agricultural private sector, especially among the kulaks.
- After the suppression of the 1956 Revolution, Kádár wanted the world to believe that the revolution was unleashed by “enemies”, “class enemies”, “reactionary elements”, and American stooges, under the leadership of former Horthyist officers. The state defense organisations (between 1956 and 1962 the Ministry of the Interior III. State Security Directorate) pulled together the former files in May of 1958 naming “aristocrats, capitalists, former members of the Horthyist state apparatus”. In 1958 they launched a national action “for the surveillance of anti-democratic

³⁸² ABTL V-150339 XI/1

³⁸³ Subdepartment no. 1 was charged with uncovering the active remnants of the “underground Trotskyist movement”, “westerners”, “reactionary elements in the political parties and render them harmless. Subdepartment no. 2’s job was to take part in the anti-clerical battle, within this to uncover hostile activities of the Catholic, Protestant, Free Mason, Zionist organisations, and sects, to put an end to these activities and break them up. Subdepartment no. 3 had to uncover the hostile activities of “people of the past” and punish them. (Former landowners, high-ranking government officials, former members of the gendarmerie, former police officers, etc.) The job of subdepartment 4 was to uncover reactionary elements in the social mass organisations, the populations who lived in cities and villages, in various social organisations and render them impotent. A special division was formed in the fight against kulak reactionary elements and kulak sabotage. Subdepartment no. 5 was to uncover reactionary elements active with the offices of the state apparatus, among the intelligentsia, as well as those active in culture, science, art. Subdepartment no. 6 carried out “network-operative work” in the area of Greater Budapest. **Beatrix Boreczky**, 1999.

persons.” Earlier, various files were made up of aristocrats, capitalists, and former members of the Horthyist state apparatus. The special files of the above-mentioned categories were no longer up to date, since their numbers had greatly decreased through death, relocations, emigration west. Within the campaign of “keeping anti-democratic persons under surveillance” the lists compiled based on special files were compared to the data collected in the 1930’s, for example, the Directory of Farmers and Registered gentry, capitalists, owners of industrial plants, etc. The data base compiled in the 1930s served to show how property was organised before 1945 by naming names; this was complemented by the data of the lists compiled beginning with August of 1944. They fixed the tasks to be accomplished in five points. The data to be registered had to indicate how much land the person under investigation owned, how many employees he had, what other kinds of property he owned “before the liberation”, which party he or she belonged to “before the liberation”, was he or she punished “after the liberation”, when, why, to what extent, activities engaged in “during the counter-revolution,” activities “after the liberation” and between 1956 and 1968.

Thus, the aristocracy was kept under constant surveillance from 1945 on, they continued to be watched after the suppression of the 1956 revolution, which continued even after 1958 until the regime change, or until the individual died. The reports made of them often overlapped. These reports on the aristocratic families could be found in files entitled the “aristocrats”, “capitalists”, “former members of the Horthyist state apparatus”, the “mixed enemy category”, in the files of the relocated, or the documents concerning “the surveillance of anti-democratic person”.

The foreign and domestic correspondence of families were also supervised. Notes were made of the content of these letters, and agents who served in Hungary and abroad were given their assignments based on them; they were told whom to watch and where. Questions were raised to which they expected answers. New assignments were made, based on these answers.

It was decided, depending on the case, that the letters would not be sent on to the addressees. I am including the facsimiles of two letters, which I found in the archives, that the AVH didn’t sent on. One of them was a letter Pál Zichy sent to his daughter in Sweden. It turns out in this letter written on November 24, 1952 that Pál Zichy didn’t know that his son was in Recsk. “Pray for our good Péter, if only I knew where he is!”

N.V. 1852. XI. 24.

Drága Inesem!

Kedvesem 11.-én írt leveledet 16.-án.

Ugy látom, hogy a lybirtosabb ha épületben adom
fel Neked a leveleimet. Bizonyára időközben meg-
kaptad az 5.-én írt leveleimet is. — Örülök annak,
hogy jó egészséged van, és a fejednek sem okoznak
túl sok gondot most Neked sem. Andrásról mi-
kenntől-e taláchozod azóta. Kár, hogy nem jött
el Hindenburgnak a kéremével. Ittam neki a kö-
zelgő névnapiára, ha látod majd öleléd meg
helyettesen is. — Itt minden a régiben. Fűnköl
még mindig. — Jó Pénteknapot Te is imádkozzál,
csak legalább tudomás birtosán, hogy hol van !!

Georgie Baranyinban dolgozik Páxi Postán. Utolb-
bi Talán rövidke költésztársra, ^{Wickend-re} el fog jöhetni nem-
kára, szintén azt legutóbbi lapján írta. — Amennyi
megyén sokat nélkülöz Postán, fájnak is nagyon
Táplálkozás, ami nem is gondot okoz. Talán
a tél folyamán élön ide, itt is sok szükség
van a kész is, de legalább a közelműben vol-
na. Gyűjtő baccinál Továbbra is itt éldejelnek,
az őz folyamán Ezen n. kijárt az erőre dol-

O-1252/a

3.

Excerpt from a letter Pál Zichy wrote to his daughter Ines.

In the other letter, Lenke, the former family tutor of Pál Zichy's children, informed his family of his imprisonment.

Nagyvárszany, 1953. márc. 3.

Kedves Lófnő!

Szomorú közléssel
szel teljesítenem a levél megírásánál re-
szem nagyon, hogy meg fog engem érteni.
Pál sógorát Péter fiát is hasonló - há-
lényegileg más - karambol érte febr. 9-én.
Belegyűrt nagyon súlyos, febr. 10-én meg-
vált, volt, hogy lát. egy kutyusok szel hár-
három feküdtnek, de egy második kor-
ziliomon az orvosok megállapították, hogy
legalsóbb négy, és fél kutyus beletelik, mire
felgyűrt. Nem hiszem, hogy ez idő alatt
ima Lófnőnek, itteni korosztályának is
csak elég ritkán. Én márc. 1-én benéltam
vél, a kutyusokhoz képest elég jól mér le-
től, hogy tudassam Margóval a szomorú
hírt. Sajnos részleteket nem tudok írni, de
időnként - ha kívánság - híreket adok hírt
felőle a látogatások után. Sógora kívánsá-
gára én V. ban maradok, saját családomat
sőt nem mőködök innen, esetleg csak ha

O-12752/a

a könnyméreg, könnyes szemem. Erőteljes is
 az anyósom meg, reméljük, hogy együtt ma -
 radhatunk, így könnyebb elviselni mindent.
 Inesnek ma is sok a bánat, félek, hogy
 ő is, Andrást is nagyon meg fogja rendíteni
 Edesapjuk balesete. Bizni kell a jó Istenben,
 aki eddig is annyira megfigyelte őt, ezért
 sem fogja elhagyni!
 Sokszor, szeretettel üdvözlök:
 Lenke

“Nagyvázsony, March 3, 1953”

Dear Countess,

It is my sad task to write this letter. I hope very much that you will understand me. Your brother-in-law Pál suffered a similar—though essentially different—traffic accident on February 9. He is seriously ill. On February 10, it seemed that he would have to stay in hospital for a year, but at another meeting the doctors agreed that it would take at least four and a half years for him to recover. I shouldn't think that he will be able to write the Countess and his relatives here very often. I spoke to him on the first of March, and he seems to be fairly well, considering the circumstances. He asked me to pass the sad news on to you. Unfortunately, I can't write you any details, but from time to time, I can give you news about him, if this is agreeable to you.

At the wish of his brother-in-law, I am staying in Vázsony. I have decided not to move from here, perhaps only if forced by circumstances. Erna and family are here, we hope that we can stay together, so that things will be more tolerable for him.

I will write Ines today too. I fear that she and András will be shocked by their father's accident. We must trust in the good Lord, who has helped him so much, he won't abandon him now.

Lenke”

The file deals in detail with the history of the Hungarian aristocracy, the lawsuits against them, surveillance of them. In the “Aristocrats” file, reports were made on the members of the 63 aristocratic families who were living in Hungary and Austria, 168 persons in all. The personal data, the report on their former wealth was followed by “compromising” data, which concerned the size of their properties and the conclusions that could be drawn about exploitation, then this was followed by the list of things to do in the future.

According to the report,³⁸⁴ individual members of the 50 former aristocratic families were living in Hungary and 13 families were living in Austria: Berchtold, Bissingen, Cristelgy Gatterburg, Gudenus, Haupt-Stummer, von der Lippe-Schausburg (Lippe-Schaumburg), Marenzi, Mensdorf-Pouilly, Rotschild, Schmertzing, Stubenberg, Wernberg.

The 50 families living in Hungary were as follows: Almássy, Abaffy, Ambrózy, Apponyi, Bánffy, Bethlen, Báldi, Bornemissza, Coburg, Csáky, Cziráky, Dezseffy (Desseffy), Degenfeld, Draskovich, Eötvös, Erdődy, Eszterházy (Esterházy), Festetich (Festetics), Hardegg (the same as Erdődy), Foth-Feigler, Hoyos, Hunyady, Inkey, Keglewits (Keglevich), Lepel, Lónyay, Majláth, Márky-Zay, Montenuovo, Nádasdy, Niczky, Orssich, Odeschalchy (Odelscalchi), Pallavichini (Pallavicini), Pálffy, Pejacsevich, Sennyey, Solmossy (Solymossy), Sommsich (Somssich), Szapáry, Szcitovszky, Szechenyi (Széchenyi), Takács-Tolvay, Teleki, Ullmann, Vass Pál (Marquis), Wenckheim (Wenckheim), Windischgratz (Windischgraetz), Wlassich (Wlassics), Zichy.

The appendix entitled “Aristocrats Relocated to One County” shows that between 1945 and 1951 families, who had been deprived of all their goods, and who had been thrown into prison, deported and relocated, were refused permission to settle in Budapest before 1956 and were therefore sent to live in various counties throughout the country after the amnesty of 1953. We can find them in 14 of the 19 counties; of these 14 three were counties in the Alföld [the Great Hungarian Plain], the rest were in TransDanubia, as well as in the villages surrounding Pest. The word resettled refers indirectly to the fact that the choice of residence was not voluntary.

³⁸⁴ The names of individual families were misspelled in the report. I didn't correct these so as to show the intellectual level of the apparatchiks, to show that they were ignorant even of the spelling of these historical names. I am adding the correct spelling of their names in parentheses.

*Aristocrats, capitalists, former members
of the Horthyist State apparatus*

A MAGYAR NÉPKÖZTARSASÁG BELÜGYMINISZTERIUMA

SZIGORÚAN TITKOS!

1981 OKT 20

S Z E R V : **BRFK.**

O S Z T A L Y : **Pol. Oszt. III/d.**

OBJEKTUM DOSSZIÉ

S Z A M : **14-OD-1532**

AZ OBJEKTUM MEGNEVEZÉSE: **Arisztokraták, tőkésék, volt horthyista államapparátus tagjai.**

A Z U G Y K Ö T E T B E N
K Ö T E T S O R S Z A M A :

MEGNYITVA: 19 **58. V. 8.**

LEZÁRVA: 19.....

ARCHIV SZAM: **0-16517**

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A Történeti Hivatal

Source: ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-16517

According to the report, based on the supervision of the correspondence of the aristocratic families, their letters were written to the members of the family, to other aristocrats, and middle-class citizens. The correspondence of the Zichy family is the widest ranging of the 63 aristocratic families.

The heads of the operative group divided the excerpts of the letters into three main categories: whom the family members corresponded with, by name, the subject and content of these letters. Later in a similar way, they dealt with the other aristocratic members of the family, or people whom they designated as “bourgeois individuals.” The content of the letters does not concern us, as they violated the most elementary of human rights, the confidentiality of a letter. Based on what was found in these letters, they tried to find “compromising” information about certain individuals. Agents had to back up the information with confessions extorted from certain persons. Thus, the agents had to find these persons. By continually violating the confidentiality of the letter, the agents were able to formulate their daily tasks: what information they should gather in Hungary about the daily lives, living conditions, places of employment, and their use of leisure time.

From reports on the content of these letters, we find out that between 1945 and 1951 those heads of families who had been interned and imprisoned moved into sublets after their release, so as to spare their families the total confiscation of their property. They tried to find legal employment, and worked in cooperatives as electricians, carpenters, upholsterers, shawl painters. Some made use of their knowledge of languages by giving language lessons, or translating under a pseudonym. Several of the men worked in offices, a few were employed in lawyers’ cabinets. The women gave language lessons; others worked as nurses in hospitals, or worked as house cleaners or seamstresses. The agents followed them closely and reported how many times in the week the heads of families visited their families and on which days. After the relocation begun in May of 1951, even the houses and apartments that were still left were confiscated. Moreover, “class enemies” were ordered to work only as physical labourers. They were not given intellectual work, save under exceptional circumstances, if given permission by the Interior Ministry.

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Melléklet.

II.

Telepített arisztokraták egy megyében.

Pest megyében:

Alsógöd	Almássy család
"	Zichy "
Felsőgöd	Ulmann "
Szentendre	Hedry "
Törökbalint	Eötvös "
Tahi	Kállay "
Dunavarsány	Pálffy "
Vác	Sennyey "
Visegrád	Zichy "

Somogy megyében:

Siófok-Szüllőhegy	Darssewffy "
Somogybába	Inkey "
Balatonszárszó	Lónyay "
Hács	Nitcsky "
Balatonlelle	Pálffy "

Fejér megyében:

Kápolnásnyék	Ambrózy "
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Tolna megyében:

Pálfa	Apponyi "
Szekszárd	Szapáry "

Szolnok megyében:

Jászózsza	Bethlen "
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Baranya megyében:

Sásd	Degenfeld "
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Vas megyében:

Pecöl	Erődy "
Sáskőöröskút	Hoyos "

Komárom megyében:

Majk	Eszterházy "
Ormánd	Somssich "

Borsod megyében:

Ricse	Mayláth "
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ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-16517 9.

Resettled aristocrats (county and settlements)

Source: ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-16517

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38

Melléklet

II.

Veszprém megyében:

Bakonyszentkirály	Eszterházy család
Nagyvázsony	Zichy "
Hévíz	" "
Keszthely	" "

Győr-Sopron megyében:

Dienesfa	Czirák és Pálffy csal.
Sopronhorpács	Mayláth család

Nórád megyében:

Nórád	Mayláth "
Nórádgárdony	" "

Hajdu megyében:

Hortobágy	Márky-Zay "
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Vas megyében:

Nádasdy "

Pest környékén:

Érdliget	Csáky "
Római fürdő	Eszterházy "
Budaörs	Szécsényi "

Egy helyen több arisztokrata család:

Alsó-Öd	Almássy és Zichy család
Felső-Öd	Ulmann

Dienesfa	Czirák és Pálffy "
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Balaton mentén:

Lelle	Pálffy "
Szárszó	Lónyay "
Sírk-Szállóhegy	Dezseffy "
Hévíz	Zichy "
Keszthely	" "

The correspondence with bourgeois individuals showed that they informed their former bosses about the care of their graves, the condition of the former estate, or they told of visiting sick aristocrats, which their relatives, living abroad, asked of them. Also bourgeois individuals drew the attention of these relatives to those who had the greatest need for packages and money. They described the dignity with which people endured their fate that tried men's souls, while doing hard physical labour.

Even after the amnesty of 1953, families could not come together under a single roof, since the sublets did not make this possible. The family crammed together into a single room could not stay together, since the workplace of family members changed regularly. At Party meetings, they drew the attention of the class-conscious Party members to the destructive consequences of the mere presence of the former exploiters. The solution, as they saw it, was for the Party members to excommunicate them, so to speak, and the other employees would be forced to do the same, until the "class enemies" were obliged to leave. Thus, there could be 30 or 40 different seals on an employee's work book, because they were forced to take different jobs. Often the only work they could find was several hundred kilometers away. So the families could see them often no more than once a month. At the same time the wages of physical labourers were so low that temporary lodgings, travel, and supporting the family was made possible by having to go hungry and wearing the formerly high quality clothes until they were falling apart. After finishing primary school, children could continue their studies only in church schools. If there was no room there, they had to work, but only as labourers.

In the period following the revolution, family members who remained in Hungary sought and found employment in Budapest. That is why the political police drafted a report dated November 2, 1961, about the class enemy elements living in Budapest. A partial census was carried out in 12 districts. In the course of this work, 12 cooperatives of artisans "contaminated" with class enemy elements were investigated and information obtained from 13 class enemy groups, whose members met to talk in public places, cafes.

They obtained information from 171 imprisoned class enemies who had been released, though this number did not reflect the exact number of the former political prisoners. The released persons worked in smaller firms as physical workers, for example, Count László Teleki or Miklós Kállay, who had been sentenced to 25 years in the Soviet Union for war crimes, was a physical worker at the Chemolimpex Company. Baron Kálmán Babarczy worked in the KTSZ.

There were exceptions too, for Jenő Pongrácz, who had been sentenced for political crimes, gave language lessons at the Attila József Free University. The KTSZ employed on the average 10% of the class enemies who had been released from prison. An important job of the observers was to verify whether the knowledge of languages and the diplomas of the aristocrats employed as physical workers were put to use by the bosses of the KTSZ (small-scale cooperative), for to do so required special permission from the Interior Ministry. The continual surveillance showed to the affected that the fist of the Party could strike them at any time.

Of the 13 class enemy gatherings, four were broken up as a result of agents planted in them. Some of them were summoned to the police stations for “conversations” where they were threatened with the loss of jobs and other sanctions. Nine groups required further supervision. 1. Count Mária Bethlen met regularly with former aristocrats, but they were able to extract information neither about where she went or whom she saw. 2. What they found out about the former landowner Ferenc Cukor was that he listened to the broadcasts of Radio Free Europe and corresponded with his son who worked for the CIA. 3. The younger brother of the executed minister Bárdossy and other class enemies were regulars at the beer-house in the VIII. District Boulevard and “discussed in a hostile tone the approaching change of regime.” 4. Gyula Kéri, a former construction entrepreneur, an engineer at BUVATI, “met regularly at the apartment of an engineer colleague on pretext of holding soirées musicales.” 5. Former landowner András Kun met with those in a similar social situation in a cafe in the inner city “discussing plans for a possible restoration”. 6. The leaders of the former Hangya cooperative met regularly. 7. János Vaszileszku participated in various political groups of enemy people who had moved from Romania, some of whom had taken part in the counter-revolution. 8. István Butok had meetings with his acquaintances from Transylvania. 9. The lawyer Dr. Zoltán Kacsó held meetings at his home in the Vth district.

They wished to deprive the aristocracy, which had played a major role in the economic, political, and cultural life of the nation, even of the possibility of getting together with congenial, like-minded people. A few still managed to meet in family circles and in public places during the period following the revolution. The reports made of the gatherings, the surveillance served to make them understand that not even this was possible. The political police used various methods. They made up a registry sheet of every individual came up, the material in certain subdepartments of the Ministry of the Interior was combined in the case of certain individuals, and they set new agents onto those under surveillance.

These agents were recruited if possible from the circle of friends or acquaintances of the surveilled. They continued to listen in on telephone calls and read letters, they placed bugs in work places and homes, they made conspiratorial photos, and they tried to find connections and evidence for the persons photographed. They took photos at meetings. There are no sources concerning the fate of the nine gatherings for which further surveillance was recommended.

Some of the listed individuals were given prison sentences of varying lengths, or were placed under “detention for reasons of public security,” because Ernő Gerő had put an end to internment in 1953. Even so they were kept on file, even if they left the country, until their death, for the most part; and their descendants were watched until 1991.

The persecution of the Zichy family

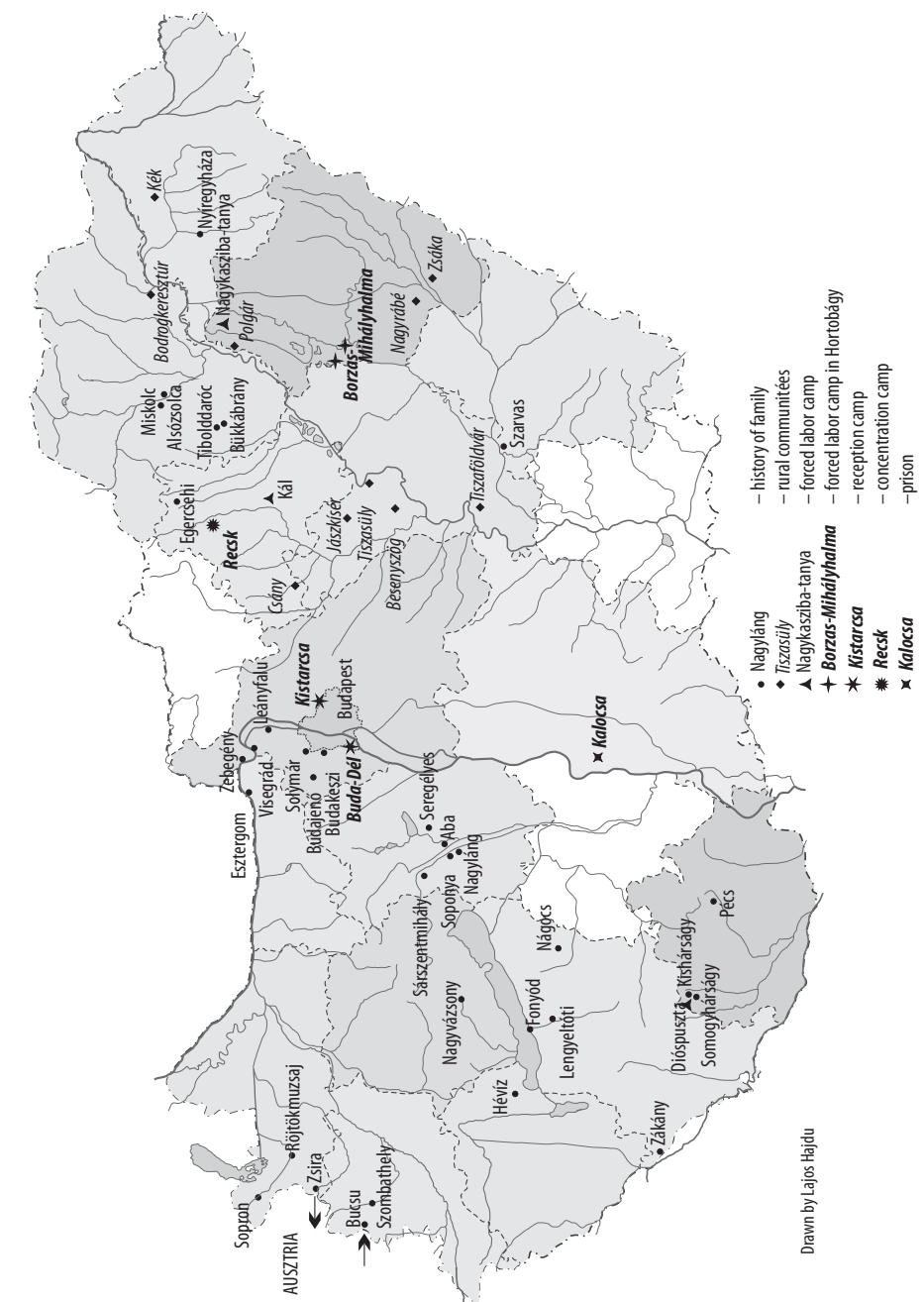
I shall illustrate the fate of the Hungarian aristocracy, during the Second World War and during the German occupation and thereafter, upto 1991, during the Russian occupation of Hungary, using as example the renowned and perhaps largest Hungarian aristocratic family, the 'count Zichy of zics and vásonykeő' family.

Through the individual stories presented hereunder we can sense not only the persecution of this family, but also the processes used against the aristocratic families at large, the nobility in general and in fact all the families who played an important role in the nation's life before the German and the subsequent, much longer, Russian occupation.

I chose the story of the Zichys for several reasons:

- a. this large family of 150-200 living members played a significant role in the history of the country through centuries, including the most turbulent 20th century,
- b. the name 'Zichy' was so well known that it was immediately recognised even by the uneducated Bolsheviks, so the significance of the examples is obvious
- c. members of the family could be found in many corners of and in the most varying positions in the country, so that the examples are representative.
- d. through my research I could reach many members of the family and communicate with them either directly or at least indirectly, so the collection of information was easier and without much risk of error.

The premises of deportation of the Zichy family



Drawn by Lajos Hajdu

Overviewing history

Thirty-eight Zichys suffered loss of liberty between 1945 and 1956. There were naturally several degrees of loss of freedom: simple deportation, forced labour camps, various grades of imprisonment and internment camps, of which the most cruel was Recsk. Beginning with 1945, people could be taken to internment camps as a 'preventive measure', without being heard at court or sentenced by a judge. The 'travel' started always with interrogation (very often in the famous prison of Andrásy street 60.)

Example Z.Nándor

Dr. Nándor Zichy was born in Mosdós in Somogy county. He obtained his diploma in economics in Berlin University, later he got his PhD in Budapest University also in economics. He began to work as secretary for the Hungarian National Tourist Council; he later became the director of the Hungarian National Tourist Office. As such, he travelled the world. Also, he was one of the best Hungarian sport pilots. As pilot for the famous desert explorer Almásy he flew to Asia Minor in his little sport plane. It was a daring exploit which was recognised even by the world press. He later became under-secretary of state in the Teleki government, and played a notable role during the war in the policies of the Horthy government that sought to bail out of the war. After the war, together with István Bethlen, he became "guest" of the Soviet army. He had to endure innumerable interrogations, as he described in his letter written on January 14, 1990.

Nándor Zichy's letter to Elek Baranyi, the husband of Teréz Zichy

"January 14, 1990

Dear Elek,

Your kind letter gave me great joy. When I read of your marriage at that time in a Hungarian newspaper, I would have liked to congratulate you, but I didn't know where to write. I am now rectifying the omission and I wish you and Teréz a very happy 1990. I think of you often when I read your name in connection with the heroic death of István Horthy. If my memory doesn't fail me, that was the day we met for the last time. I will tell you briefly about myself. At the end of the war I took over some land in Fejér County from my father who was ill, and farmed it, until the Russians arrested me. Under the custody of the NKVD they dragged me here and there on foot, then on sleigh, interrogation every night, reports. On the way, our numbers grew. When we arrived in Soltszentimre, there were seven of us, including István Bethlen, General Gerlőczy, Károly Apponyi,³⁸⁵ then Henrik Werth.³⁸⁶ From then to Kiskőrös with my fellow prisoners. I stayed with Werth one more week, they took me first to Kispeszt, then to Buda, and Pest. Then to Balatonalmádi, Szombathely, Baden bei Wien. There, there were 400 of us in the cellar. That was where the Russian war tribunal sat. I got 10 to 20 years of labour camp. I was let out and placed in custody in an empty house. I met the daughter there of the French ambassador, Géza Lakatos, and Szilárd Bakay,³⁸⁷ etc. Lajos Veres Dálnoki was there too. We were released after 1945. The Russians took me straight to Andrásy út 60 and handed me over to the Hungarian political police. Reports again, beatings, I was released, they, took me back, then I was released for good.

³⁸⁵ Count **Károly Apponyi** began his military career in 1899 and he was demobilized in late 1918. He managed the estate he inherited beginning with 1927.

³⁸⁶ **Henrik Werth**, chief of general staff.

³⁸⁷ **Szilárd Bakay**, organised the armed resistance on March 19, 1944, the beginning of the German occupation. He was arrested by Gestapo agents. He was taken to Mauthausen where he was prisoner from October 8, 1944 to May 5, 1945. The Soviet troops that liberated the camp, "illuminated," then let him go home. He was brought before the People's Tribunals, but was exonerated in November. On April 11, 1947, he was lured from Szombathely to the house on Lipp Vilmos Street, 9. He was executed on March 17, 1947 in an unknown place in Sopron or Sopronkőhida.

1920, Jan. 14.
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329

In my absence, the national assembly, citing my activities in the resistance, released 100 acres for me. When I went to take possession of them, the police chief of Székesfehérvár chased me away. Completely destitute I joined with a friend who was a former pilot, I started selling cars, "Zichy automobiles" on Szabadságtér. Here I got in trouble with the economic police. I spent a night there. I had enough. I got an invitation + air ticket to Norway. I bought an emigration passport and flew to Oslo with five dollars to my name. There I met with a wonderful, educated family. I gave language lessons to their three boys. Later I was a pilot instructor with the Norwegian air force, then export manager with a private steel company. I traveled throughout Western and Southern Europe, the Near East, including Persia, Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, and New Zealand. It was very interesting. Then I became the director of a new mining company in Northern Norway with this same company. Fortunately, Oslo remained headquarters, for the mine was on an island next to Alta on the 72 degree latitude. There is a similar mine in Canada, "Lakefield Nephelin Syenite". I was there in Toronto, then in Montreal to spend a weekend with my cousin Ede Pallavicini. If only I had known that you lived there! My second wife is Greek, a close relation to my deceased first wife. When I retired in 1977, I took over the representation of the Norwegian company. I worked seven or eight years more. If you happen to come this way, we would love to see you. We have a guest room with two beds. We would be happy to see you.

Greetings from your old friend.

Nándor"

Lucky Handout of

Reg. baratrippal vidvotol

Márta and her family's fate

Berkesz is a little village in the Nyírség with a population of about 700 today, caught between Ukraine, Slovakia, and Romania. On autoroute no. 4 the border town Záhony lies about 30 kilometers from the crossing into the Ukraine. One can get to Slovakia from Sátoraljaújhely, and to Romania from Mátészalka in a short time from Berkesz. Gábor Vay and Márta Zichy lived in this castle. Their son László Vay was kept prisoner in Balassagyarmat prison by the Arrow Cross, while the Russians took possession of the castle of Berkesz. They broke into and looted the crypt; for a while, the area was full of bones, they could no longer find their ancestors there. László Vay's wife, Margit Andrassy, escaped with her children from Berkesz to find a place where there were no Russians, to survive somehow to the end of the war.

They were approaching Mór, when a wheel of a covered wagon fell off. Margit Andrassy decided that she would take her two small girls to Mór to Miklós Széchen and Aliz Esterházy, who had two small children, a two-year old boy and a four-year-old daughter. Days later they went to the Zichy residence made of cork-wood, which has since burned down. First the Arrow Cross occupied Timár, but at the news that the Russians had entered Mór they went further.

When after a long siege the Russians took Mór, they found a pistol in Miklós Széchen's desk. They pushed him into the garden to shoot him. His wife Aliz went with him. They shot her too, after raping her. Their two small children were left orphans; they were raised by aunts and uncles.

László Vay followed his family to Erdőmajor, but they didn't leave the country with the Germans, although László Vay said that would mean the end of the family. He had endured Russian captivity, he knew what they were like. He was proved to be right. He was beaten to death, his wife raped, Uncle Bibi Zichy was beaten up, but he survived. They hadn't broken his spine like they had László Vay's. A Russian truck took them at dawn into Mór where there was an improvised hospital in a school. László Vay died eight days later. He was buried in a pine chest. (His wife had him taken to Kerepesi cemetery in Pest.)

It can be noted in parathesis that the members of the Vay family did not manage to get to Pest, but went to Esterházy castle in Csákvár. As the castle had been ruined, they rode out the siege in a servant's house. Klára Esterházy was 16 years old when the Russians took possession of the castle. Klára bit off

the end of the nose of the Russian who took her into the cave and shouted so much that two other Russians found them; they too set upon Klára, but she fought like a rabid cat. The Russians got fed up, they hit Klára on the head with their pistol, and left her. She didn't dare come out, only when she heard her name shouted out in the early morning.

István Csicsery-Rónay, Smallholders' Party Politician

Mihály Zichy's, the great painter's great-grandson, István Csicsery-Rónay was in charge of the foreign affairs department of the Smallholders' Party. He was quite young when given this important position. He was arrested in January, 1947.



István Csicsery- Rónay

After the signing of the peace treaty on February 10, 1947, the Communists were afraid of not being able to maintain power. Hungarian society believed

that the limited democracy would become real democracy. István Csicsery-Rónay was sentenced to two years, but he was set free provisionally. Sensing that the next time it wouldn't be the AVO whose "hospitality" he would be enjoying, but that of the Russians, he left the country under quite adventurous circumstances. After spending a few months in Austria and Switzerland, then a year in Paris—by then his wife and small daughter had joined him—until they received the visa to the United States. There a little Hungary came together, with Béla Varga and Ferenc Nagy at their head.

István Csicsery-Rónay returned home after long emigration only, in 1990 a week after the first free elections. His endurance is demonstrated by the fact that he still continues to edit and publish books, and write dramas at the age of 92.

Péter Zichy

Péter Zichy descended from the Nagyláng branch of the family. His grandfather was Count János Zichy (Nagyláng, 1868, May 30—Nagyláng, Jan. 1944), who after completing his studies in law became deputy clerk of Fejér county. In 1894 he became member of the Upper House, a minister, and member of the directorship of MTA (Hungarian Academy of Science). He was president and later representative in Parliament of the Christian Economic and Socialist Party.



Zichy-castle in Nagyvázsony

Péter Zichy was born in Nagyláng (today part of Soponya) on December 6, 1924. He was brought to Nagyvázsony when he was six months old, because as the second-born of his father Pál Zichy, he could not inherit the estate. One of his uncles, Béla Zichy died as bachelor at the age of 77 and left his property to a member of the Zichy family who otherwise would not have inherited anything. According to a document dated 1925, Béla Zichy³⁸⁸ was the 34th largest landowner of Hungary and the richest member of the Zichy family. In the early 1890's Béla Zichy, like several of his aristocratic friends, was taken by the cult of Lake Balaton, and sold for a moderate price a part of the 100 hectare (hold) wood on the Várhegy in Fonyód to the society headed by the chief medical officer of Somogy county, Manó Szaplonczay. In a few years the latter had the most beautiful line of villas built on the high lakeside. It was called Fonyód-Béla settlement. Béla owned a large block of luxury flats in Pest in addition to the castle of Nagyvázsony and Lengyeltóti. This is how Pál Zichy and his family became one of the largest landowners in the country, and the richest member of the Zichy family.

The fortune of the Pál Zichy's family virtually evaporated after the dissolution of the system of large land holdings and nationalisations. The aristocratic landowners were allowed to keep 100 cadastral hectares (hold), but the means of working the land were nationalised, and the owner of the machine stations was the state and equipment could be rented from it. The food-canning factory of Nyiregyháza went to the heir of the Nagyláng property between 1945 and 1947. This factory produced sauerkraut for the Russian army as compensation. The money received from the Ministry was not enough to pay the employees, so Péter went to Pest to continue his legal studies.

In 1948, his father's estate essentially ceased to function, so he had to get a job so as to be able to continue his studies. His name gained him only promissory notes. To his great good fortune, the Kis theatre employed him as a stage hand from January of 1948, to the end of the season. At the end of the season they informed the employees to find some other job as the theatre would not open again in the autumn.

That is when he decided with his friends, Péter Szapáry and Károly Merán that they would leave the country. On July 25, 1948, with the help of

³⁸⁸ The close connection between Fonyód and the Zichy family began around 1860, when Zsigmond Inkey exchanged his estates in Fonyód and Lengyeltót with that of Count János Nepomuk Zichy, as the Zichy family's estate in Alsóbogát lay in a more favourable site from the standpoint of the Inkey's estate..

Dezső Pongrácz, resident of Bábonymegyer, he and Péter Szapáry crossed the Austrian border at Zsira, while Károly Merán went elsewhere. The Austrian customs officers, however, caught them and handed them to the Russian military command. After two weeks, enough people had collected for a transport; they had been taken back to the village of Búcsú, where they were handed over to the Hungarian border guards. From there they were taken to Szombathely, to the military political office, then on August 22, to the political section of the Department of Defense in Budapest. On October 27, 1948, Péter Zichy was taken into custody by the AVH. The order of internment dated October 28, 1948, signed by Dr. Gyula Décsi, r. Lieutenant-Colonel, head of sub-department.³⁸⁹ He was sent to the internment camps of Budadél and Kistarcsa, then to Recsk, after the camp there was opened. On September 18, 1953 he was released from Recsk, but was kept under police surveillance for nine more years.³⁹⁰ According to his file they followed his case up to November 27, 1969, which was when he was freed from being a “subject wanted by the police”.³⁹¹

Péter Zichy’s³⁹² Proceedings of Inquiry File

We discover from the 65-page proceedings of inquiry file that the 24-year-old Péter Zichy was interned for six months after his attempt to cross the border; then they delayed his release three times, for “after his release he tried to escape again.” From the end of July 1948, to September of 1953, the penalty for the forbidden border crossing was five years of restriction of liberty and forced labour.

The record of evidence of his first hearing was taken on October 15, 1948 at the office of the head of section of the military political department of the Ministry of Defense. The typed report written in the first person signed by the suspect, was obviously not written by Péter Zichy. It is characteristic, however,

³⁸⁹ **Dr. Gyula Décsi** was employed by the political police between 1945 and 1950, and between 1950 and 1952, he was undersecretary of Justice, then first deputy Prime Minister. He was the interrogator of Prince-Primate Mindszenty, whom he warned that “Take note, here the accused don’t confess to what they want, but to what we want them to.”

³⁹⁰ **Böszörményi**, 1990, p. 217.

³⁹¹ “Freed from subject wanted by the police”=person didn’t lose his significance because of his origin as an enemy of the people, but his case no longer interested the police.

³⁹² ABTL 3.1.9 V-76861.

1969 NOV 27

BM A Történelmi Hivatal
az Ety. Hiv. alapján
az iratokat átvette.

SZERV:
OSZTÁLY:
SZÁM:
Vizsgálati dosszié
ZICHY PÉTER UGYEBEN
KÖTET
A NYOMOZÁS KEZDETÉNEK IDŐPONTJA:
A NYOMOZÁS BEFEJEZÉSÉNEK IDŐPONTJA:
ARCHIV. SZÁM:
BM 04. 7. - 3230
V-76861.

“As a member of the former ruling class, since the liberation, I have harboured hostile feelings toward the people’s democracy, expressed my contempt for the achievements of the people’s democracy and the results that the system has achieved, even though those results improved the wellbeing of the Hungarian people. Before the land reform my father had 700 “hold” arable land and 6000 “hold” forest. During the land reform our land was redistributed except for 100 “hold” arable land. From this moment on I felt hatred for the way the interests of the Hungarian working masses were put above our interests. This hatred intensified when even our 100 “hold” was taken away. This happened in the summer of 1946. From then on I saw that the possibilities of an easy life had ended and that I would have to work to earn my living.”

The truth was that even with work he couldn’t earn his living. In 1945, he would have registered for the third year of law school, but since it was a people’s college, even there he wasn’t accepted. The family couldn’t cover his expenses, and he couldn’t find any work. Between 1945 and 1947, he was able to work at his uncle’s foodprocessing factory in Nyiregyháza. In 1948, he went to Pest again to continue his law studies, since he had found temporary work as a stage hand at the Kis Theatre until June 1948. After this job ended he decided to leave the country in July.³⁹³

After what was said, the section head of the military political department recommended Péter Zichy’s internment.

After October 27, 1948, he was taken into AVH custody. The decision to intern was dated October 28, 1948, signed by Lieutenant-Colonel Gyula Décsi, head of a sub-department.

One can read in the final decision that “during the interrogation, he announced that the moment he was released he would try to escape again.”

Péter Zichy said the following during his interview with Géza Böszörményi. “I could see that he didn’t know what to do with me, I didn’t fit in any category that he knew. But still he had to cut the ground from under the feet of this bloke. He said, so you want to defect. It was evening and I was on the second floor. There were no bars on the windows. The window was open; it was a lovely warm evening. He said: “If Austria were on the street here, would you jump out the window” I was angry I said, “Yes.” He wrote down in his record: “He announced that if he had the opportunity, he would try to defect again, etc.”³⁹⁴

³⁹³ Böszörményi, 1990, pp. 212-213.

³⁹⁴ Böszörményi, 1990, pp. 214-215.

BELÜGYMINISZTERIUM ÁLLAMVÉDELMI HATÓSÁGA

Postafiók: 509. sz.

Felesége

154

foralkozású

3. lakos

lakos

8130/1939. M. E. sz. rendelet, 1. §-ának b) pontja és a 228.010/1948. IV./1. B. M. számú rendelet 2. §-a alapján rendőrhatalósági őrizet alá helyezését (internálását) rendelem el.

Indokolás:

Gyarmasított 1948. július 26.-án Eszira község mellett átszökött Ausztriába. A szovjet hatóságok visszatoloncolták Magyarországra. Kihallgatása során kijelentette, hogy szabadlábba helyezése esetén ismét megkísérelné a szökést.

Mivel gyanúsított szökésétől alaposan tartani lehet, ezért a rendelkezésben foglaltak szerint kellett határozni.

Ezt a véghatározatot az 1929. évi XXX. t. c. 56. §.-ának b./ pontja alapján fellebezésre való tekintet nélkül azonnal végre kell hajtani.

E véghatározat ellen a kihirdetéstől számított 15 napon belül a Belügyminiszter Urhoz címzett fellebezésnek van helye.

Budapest, 1948. október 28.

A Hatóság vezetője rendeletéből:

Dr. Décsi Gyula r. alezr.
alosztályvezető

Az előttem kihirdetett és internálásomat elrendelő
határozatban jogaimra történt kioktatás után — meg-
rekszem — fellebbezéssel élök

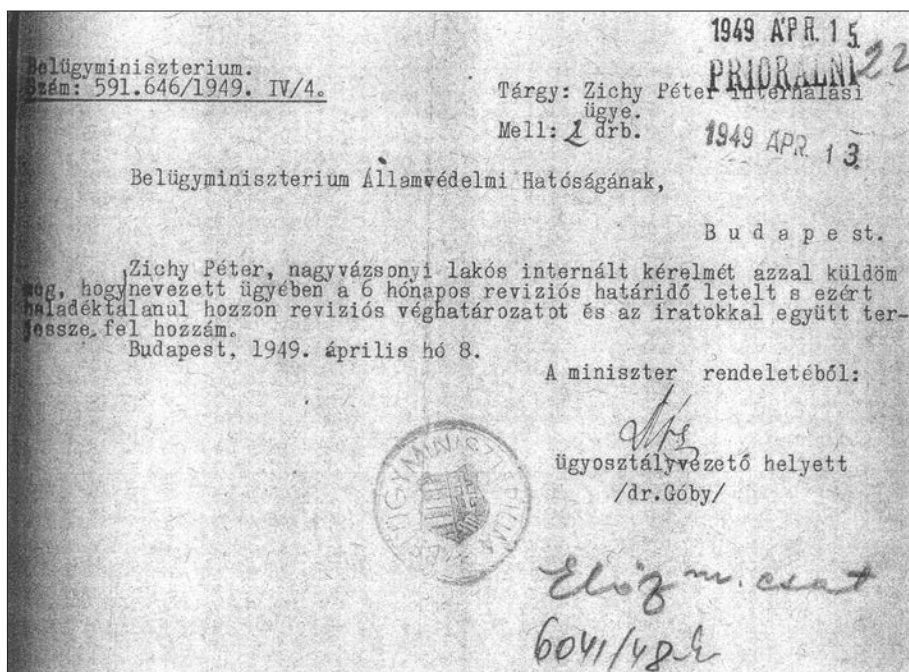
Budapest, 194 *S. Oct. 28.*

Lickey Pilot.

London, U.K., Budapest, 25015, (8).

ABT 3-19 V-76861

After the six months' review deadline had elapsed, the Ministry of the Interior wrote the State Defense Authority on April 8, 1949 signed by Dr. Góby on the subject of Péter Zichy's internment.



Source: ÁBTL 3.1.9. V-76861

Péter Zichy also presented a petition for review. His father Pál Zichy asked his lawyer in Budapest, Sándor Popper, to intervene on his behalf in the case of his son's internment. The lawyer's petition and the reply are not contained in the examination file; on the other hand, we know that he wasn't freed after the six month's review deadline had passed, for the charge said that "after his release, he would try again to defect to the west."

The new final decision was again signed by Dr. Gyula Décsi on April 15, 1949, who didn't believe that there was no longer any reason for keeping him under police surveillance.

In January of 1949, a new charge was formulated against him. On January 1, 1949, a report was made and signed by seven interned, who complained about the fascist behaviour of Count Péter Zichy, Count Ambrózy, Count Degenfeld and Dénes Szalóki.

“At 12 o’clock midnight of December 31, 1948 the voice of the President of the Republic could be heard on the radio. He wished every working person all the best, a better, more successful new year, which would bring us closer to socialism. Afterwards the National Anthem could be heard. People listened to it stiffly at attention. When the sounds of the National Anthem died away, everybody stayed there waiting for something more to happen on the radio. And then something happened that justifiably outraged every right-thinking man. At the sound of the International, the crowd, which had been standing quietly until then left the room ostentatiously, led by a few brigands, here and there an ironic smile could be seen. At the first moment we noticed that those who did this had conspired in advance. When Count Péter Zichy, Count Ambrózy, Count Degenfeld, and Dénes Szalóki moved off, the crowd like an obedient flock followed them. What was outrageous was that even here someone could behave like a fascist with impunity. We mustn’t show mercy to those who make fun of our most sacred prayers, those who used the first moments of the new year to demonstrate the infinite hatred they feel for democracy. It is not permissible that such people use every moment for counter-propaganda, as they did then. Not to mention that we’ve noticed recently that the gentlemen had found their way from digging ditches to peeling potatoes, where the work was easier and where, considering the circumstances, they could continue their right-wing activities undisturbed. In several cases, people came to us who had worked with them and for whom it hurt that this was as it was. “We don’t identify with those who’ve sold this country out, to whom we owe all our misery. We are no longer willing to work together with these people.” They asked them to ask the Lieutenant-Colonel, Sir, to change this impossible situation.

It was sad that they had to worry about things like this even on the eve of the new year, but we must, for these conditions are intolerable and it is necessary to clean up this situation.

Budapest, January 1, 1949”

Based on the report on January 2, 1949, the above-mentioned were locked up in the detention room until further notice.

In Kistarcsa, Péter Zichy worked in the third barrack of the G. Brigade where the following unsigned hand-written note was written about him:

“He is of aristocratic origin, 23 years old, and single. His father was a count, a land owner, and the owner of a caning factory. He studied law and wanted to

escape after their factory was nationalised.³⁹⁵ He is careful with his every word and movement. Even if he is asked an insignificant question, he replies only after thinking it over. He doesn't speak to a stranger about his past nor about his family circumstances. In contrast with most aristocratic youths he doesn't mention his friends and acquaintances in "high places". He grew up in the sad times for us that followed the liberation and so he could not participate in the shallow and carousing life of the upper middle class youths. He said this once in a wider circle. He is a mediocre worker; he is constantly active during work and exercises great self-discipline. Like Gyula Saláta, who is the closest to him socially, he likes to talk to László Fodor; yet his more constant companions were the petit bourgeois youths like Mihály Czeglédi, Sándor Ritzl, József Hidegréti. But he is far from being at the centre of these cliques, but he is a "supporter" or respected honorary member."

On October 20, 1949, a new final decision came about again signed by Dr. Gyula Décsi, according to which he did not consider it necessary to continue to keep Péter Zichy under police surveillance. According to the final decision dated November 10, 1949, signed again by Dr. Décsi, who ended his final decision which he had signed a few days earlier, with the pretext that "the anti-democratic attitude that he showed in the central internment camp makes his continued police surveillance necessary."

The documents don't reveal when he was sent to the internment camp of Kistarcsa. I quote from the writings of his fellow prisoners.

"I was put in the fifth regiment where there were mainly intellectuals. That is where I met my dear companions who were close to me not only because of their similar attitudes but also their age, their character, and their humane behaviour. Most of them became my friends. I became close to Pista Rásonyi Papp, Zoli Nyeste, Ervin Kaas, Péter Zichy, Tamás Perczel, Andorka Hertelendy, Pali Jonás, Tóni Szentirmay, and Tóni Molnár. Except for the last, they were intellectuals all, and they wished to spend their time in noble pursuits. We held evenings devoted to literature, history, physics, astronomy, economics, and mathematics where everyone gave talks about what he knew, and we taught each other, held discussions and conversations, and organised festive evenings for the others on Christmas and New Year's Eve. Anyone who got a package

³⁹⁵ It didn't seem to perturb the informant that the former owner of the preserving factory was Péter Zichy's uncle, János Zichy.

invited the others to a tea party, and we told each other the more interesting and colourful events of our lives."³⁹⁶

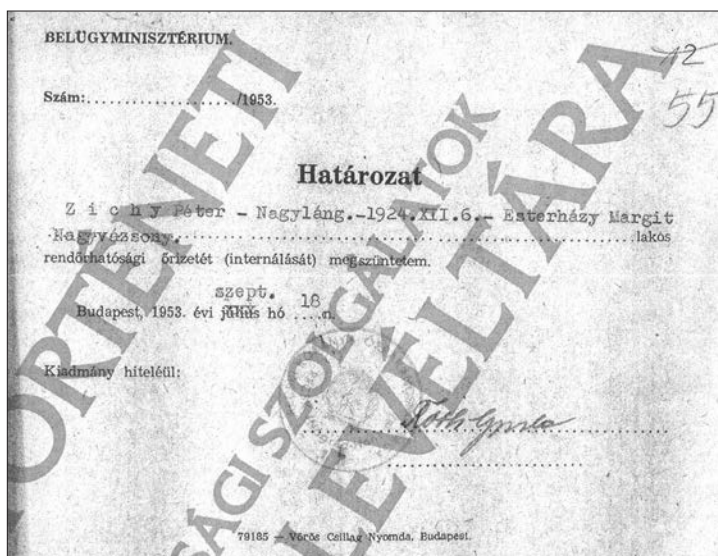
From this characterisation written on August 30, 1952, we learn that he was punished several times in Kistarcsa and Recsk. "He has a bad attitude to work. His average achievement is 70%."

On September 2, 1952, a report was prepared of the suspects in Recsk, but it doesn't say why. Péter Zichy answered the questions, which are also missing, and he repeated his confessions with an addendum: "I feel guilty for trying to escape to the west illegally in July 1948."

From the recommendations attached to the report we find out that among his siblings, "György Zichy is chauffeur, Sándor Pál is a forester, András and Ágnes live in Brussels with their uncle, with whom his parents are in constant correspondence and they receive many packages from him."

On September 18, 1953 he was released from Recsk.

Resolution



Source: ÁBTL 3.1.9. V-76861

³⁹⁶ Sándor Biró, 1989

They had him sign this declaration, according to which anyone who speaks of his internment is liable to 10 years imprisonment.

Declaration

Név: *Zichy Péter*
 Dátum: *1953. szeptember 18.*
 Nyilatkozat
 Aláírás: *Zichy Péter*
 aláírás.

Tudomásulveszem, hogy az internálótáborral és a táborban lévő személyekkel kapcsolatos minden hír, vagy adat "állami titkot" képez. Az "állami titok" megsértését a Magyar Népköztársaság Elnöki Tanácsának 1951. XXII. sz. é. rendelete 10 évig terjedhető börtönbüntetéssel sújtja - amennyiben a cselekmény súlyosabbnak minősül.

Source: ÁBTL 3.1.9. V-76861

After his release, he made his living with occasional work and finally retired as an electrician.

Pál Zichy

In 1953, Pál Zichy's father Péter was sentenced to a year in prison for "the crime of failing to deliver an adequate amount of fat". The verdict was later changed by Veszprém County court by adding the charges of falsifying public documents and lengthening the time to be served to four and a half years. The punishment was a fine of 1,000, later 2,000 forints, and complete confiscation of property. According to the documents, Pál Zichy, paid the fine in full.



Péter Zichy and his wife



Pál Zichy

The falsification of documents, according to the authorities, consisted of the fact that he mentioned seven individuals who assisted at the pig-killing, while the household consisted of only two persons. Moreover, Pál Zichy could not prove in writing that he had taken in his sick brother and family who had been evicted from Budapest, and had taken responsibility for their support. We have these documents in our possession, because they were found in the archives. They were as follows:

Dr. György Zichy asked the Interior Ministry in his letter of June 18, 1951, from Dóda farm in Tiszasüly to be allowed to move to Nagyvázsony. Medical papers testified to his wife's illness—tubercular inflammation of the peritoneum—and his own (he was lame). Dóda farm is about seven kilometers from Tiszasüly, they lacked medical care and couldn't work either.

I include two statements. One from Domonkos Zichy, the other from Pál Zichy.

Both attest to the fact that they were responsible for supporting a family of five.

On August 6, 1951, Ferenc Cziráki gave permission for György Zichy to move to Nagyvázsony with his family of five.

Later, in the petition to re-open the case, the residents of Nagyvázsony corroborated the statement that György Zichy and his family lived with Pál Zichy in a single household, since the relocated families had been deprived of every bit of property, moveable or immovable, and due to illness, they couldn't accept employment.

According to the March 17, 1955, notice of the Veszprém County court, Pál Zichy's "remaining part of the four and a half years prison sentence, as well as the 1,000 forint fine and 2,000 forint confiscation of property would be cancelled."

It is a fact that the 3,000 forints were reimbursed.

Statement of Domonkos Zichy

Rich Spring is near

Liability

Ketlon, kag kiki'i munika
wa'o ekye'eche mabame o'lema
vadeletemu'i, a peko a mabame'i
vabemut a pami kiki'i' tade'poku
e'k'he'u, kiki'i' munika wa'o ekye'e.
kadekut vamu adeke' m'u' miki.
ket' kaga' kag mune'kiki'y vau.

dagom onihet ka grottebel
 herenik ditineten igen herenik her

de megeho^o hokom hui opanete is
kelato di munda akh fure is
kashueta van

Dec 1957 minus \$0.05
Stacy Donahoe

Also wrote Tausien by way of Elliott
before leaving, says she is a very cheerful
rich woman who has married in 1842.
about the 1st of March. just coming into

226, Minitan pnyfoponoyat lakodoye-
lentoyat kitlem  —

Pis. r. p.



Statement of Pál Zichy

Nyilatkozat.

Alulírott Zichy Pál nagyvársonyi (Veszprém m.) lakos ezennel kötelezően kijelentem, hogy a Belügy-miniszter 3.471. sz. határozatával Budapest kerületéről kikiáltott öcsémel: Zichy Györgyöt / Nagysámg, 1900. V. 4. / és nejét: nőt. Hladik Endrét / Mosdós, 1912. K. F. / valamint kis leány gyermekét / János, 1939; Béla, 1942; és Mária Terézia, 1944. / volt budapesti lakosokat, akiket Füzessily községbe áttelepítettek, - Nagyvársony községben levő lakószámra befogadom és serény ellátásukról gondoskodom.

Nagyvársony, 1951. június 11. - én.

Előttünk, mint tanul előtt:

Zichy Pál.

Nagyvárosi Tanács
Előttünk

Nagyvársony község Tanácsa ezennel igazolja, hogy Zichy Pál nagyvársonyi lakos a fenti nyilatkozatot a községi Tanács előtt tette és aláírta és az abban vállalt kötelezettségét teljesíteni tudja.

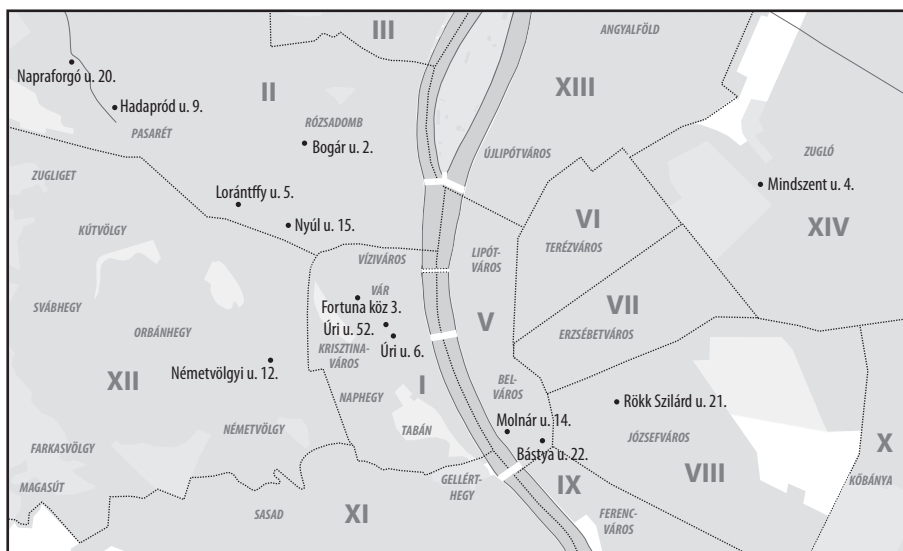
Nagyvársony, 1951. június hó 11. - én.

Nagyvárosi Tanács
Előttünk



Füzesvárosi Tanács
Előttünk

Relocation from Budapest



Dr. Hajdu Lajos, 2008

*The original residences of the members of the Zichy Family
who had been expelled from Budapest*

In addition to internment and prison the relocation meant a further loss of freedom of two to three years for the members of the Zichy family. While we have archival documents only for the 15 families relocated from Budapest, we know that even those who lived in the countryside had been expelled from their homes, but there were no lists compiled of those. They too were deprived of all their moveable and immovable property. Even pensions were taken away from the pensioners, and active persons could only take on work as unskilled workers, which usually meant heavy physical labour. Those who had finished primary school were not allowed to go to the state middle-schools, but a limited number of them found places at church schools (of which only eight existed, and only after due pressure from the west). University students, such as Péter Zichy, could not continue their studies. They were regularly dismissed from their places of employment, and in the end, the only possibility left for Péter Zichy was to leave his country. He reached Austria, but in vain, for the Austrian customs officers handed him over to the Russians. So he ended up in Recsk. If the members of the Zichy family didn't end up in prison or in work

camps, they were, as minimal punishment, expelled from Budapest. I recount their fates from the recollections of their still living family members.

The “residences” of the members of the Zichy family after deportation from Budapest



Drawn by Lajos Hajdu

Mrs. István Csák, Mária Margit Zichy (Our relocation and a few antecedents)

I was born in Budapest on May 23, 1947. My mother was Mrs. György Zichy, Mária Vay, my father was György Zichy. My siblings were Alice Zichy, György Zichy, János Zichy. I lived in Pasarét, Hadapród u. [st.] 9, with my parents and my paternal grandparents in a three-room apartment. My father was a practicing economist in 1945. In 1947, he was a private official (based on his birth certificate). My father's younger brother Antal Zichy defected to Canada.

My maternal grandfather, Count László Vay, born in 1897, was beaten to death by Russian soldiers using their rifle butts, when he set off to find his daughter,³⁹⁷ whom the Russian soldiers had kidnapped. Eight days later, he died of his wounds. My maternal grandmother, Margit Andrásy,³⁹⁸ was kidnapped three times by carousing drunk Soviet soldiers on the same night her first husband was beaten to death. Margit Andrásy's second husband, Dr. Elemér Buttler³⁹⁹ (1889-1970) was taken to Kistárca by the AVH.

When I was four years old, AVO agents rang the bell one night in 1951, and gave us 24 hours to pack our most essential things. We were taken to Polgár in Hajdú-Bihar County accompanied by armed guards. We were put up in a kulak family's barn where they had just driven out a flock of geese.

My father worked as a road labourer. The nearest settlement was Tiszapolgár where my parents could come only at night (after a certain period of time) but by then the shops were closed. In winter we gathered dry cow dung on the pasture, which we used as heating fuel. Conflicts were a daily happening with the kulak family. My young brother György was born in Hajdúnánás on May 1, 1953. Mátyás Rákosi promised monetary reward to the family to whom a child was born on this day. Of course, we never got anything.

After Stalin's death in 1953, we moved to Tiszapolgár in August, and got a rented room for the whole family (seven persons). That was where I started

³⁹⁷ **Klára Vay** (Mrs. Imre Hosszúfalussy) (daughter of Count Margit Andrásy, and granddaughter of high-sheriff Count Gábor Vay) 1933-1999.

³⁹⁸ **Count Margit Andrásy** of Csíkszentkirályi and Krasznahorkai (Vajai and Luskodi Count Mrs. László Vay, then Baron Mrs. Elemér Buttler of Elbensberg and Ischitzi [from 1948] (the daughter of Count Sándor Andrásy) 1902-1984.

³⁹⁹ **Dr. Elemér Buttler** studied law, obtained a doctorate in Political Science and managed his estates. He was representative of Nógrád County.

first grade. Six months later my grandparents went to Tiboldaróc in a sub-let (my grandfather had had an estate there earlier, that was how he knew the people there). I moved to Solymár with my parents and brothers and sisters, also in a sub-let. My father worked as a textile painter in a textile factory in Budapest, under rather unhealthy conditions, as an unskilled worker. Six months later we set off for Tibolddaróc to our grandparents. My father worked there in the vineyards, while my mother carried water on the State Farm. In Tibolddaróc, the council president forbade the residents from giving us accommodations as we were class-aliens, so after three years we moved into a dilapidated building donated by the church in nearby Bükkábrány. That was where my young brother János was born in 1960. My father and mother worked in the construction industry in Egercsehi.

My sister Alice and I finished elementary school with outstanding grades. We would have liked to continue our studies at the secondary school of Mezőkövesd, but we needed the permission of the Bükkábrány council president, which we didn't get. He declared that so long as he was president of the council the Zichy girls would not go to secondary school. Three years later my father was transferred to Miskolc, so we moved to Alsózsolca into a one-room sub-let with a dirt floor and no electricity. My father worked as a labourer in Miskolc and my mother carried mortar at the Kilián housing estate in Miskolc. While they worked, we children were home alone. That was when my mother decided to ask for help from Katalin Andrassy (my maternal grandmother's second cousin). One day a black car appeared; we children were home alone. It turned out that at Mrs. Károlyi's request two men came to have a "look around" to see whether we really were living under such poor conditions. Soon afterwards we got notice that we could move immediately to Miskolc or—if we could wait—to Budapest. We couldn't wait.

That was how we got to Miskolc on Melinda Street in a two-room apartment with all the modern conveniences. Our grandparents in Miskolc lived in a sub-let nearby, where the owners could walk through their one room. My grandmother cooked on an oil-stove to help my mother take care of the four children. Meanwhile my father finished the school to be a skilled stonemason (about which we were inordinately proud), and later construction industry technician. Later he was appointed head of the cement-mixing plant. That was his last job when he died in 1979 of lung cancer at the age of 57. My mother advanced up the ladder, she worked at the same firm at first as a storer in the

warehouse, then as a technical translator and interpreter (she could finally use her English, German, and French). She died in 1986 of breast cancer.

I was 16 when I got a job in public health and I registered in the correspondence course of Ferenc Földes Secondary School, then I finished the lab technicians' school. To this day I work in public health as a lab technician. I have two daughters, Krisztina and Zsuzsanna. I live in Budakalász. My sister Alice and her husband defected and went to Calgary, Canada in 1979, where they live to this day. My younger brother György worked in Hungary as a geodetic surveyor. He defected with his wife and two children (Gergő and Eszter) and went to Calgary, Canada, where they live to this day. My other younger brother János worked for a construction company as group leader/foreman. He stayed in Miskolc with his wife and three children (Orsolya, Balázs, and Dénes).

In 1956, my father's younger brother, who lived in Canada flew back to Austria, he sent a lorry for us, but my father could not leave his country.

Count Ödön Zichy and his wife, Count Gabriella Bethlen's family



Castle of Zákány

Count Ödön Zichy, hereditary member of the Upper House, his wife, Countess Gabriella Bethlen were the owners of Zákány Castle. They were thrown out from the castle in 1949, after they were forced to leave Bihar County in Transylvania after the Treaty of Trianon 1921, and 1944 again. The library of the castle and most of the trophies were burned in the castle's courtyard in 1944, but some of the books found their way to the library of Novosibirsk in the Soviet Union. The antique furniture was thrown out onto the courtyard where it was at the mercy of sun and rain. Ödön Zichy, having grasped the situation, moved with his wife and sister-in-law, Irma, to Hévíz, near Lake Balaton, where they lived modestly in a small sub-let room. Supporting themselves was a big problem for the elderly people; they lived in an unheated room in the winter. After the 1953 amnesty, the wife of their eldest son, Mrs. Aladár Zichy, Erzsébet Walkó, moved them to Visegrád after their release from the Polgár deportation.

The file of Aladár Zichy (Ödön Zichy's eldest son)⁴⁰⁰

The order banishing Count Aladár Zichy from Budapest was issued on July 5, 1950. The Ministry of the Interior's order signalled that Aladár Zichy, living in a sub-let in the apartment of widow Mrs. Árpád Sípós was a member of the family, and it involved the main tenant and her daughters as well. At the time of the relocation, however, Aladár Zichy was already living in Budajenő. Gyula Házi wrote a report about this in July 6, 1951, to which he attached two documents. One of them attests, with the porter's record, that Aladár Zichy lived in the above-mentioned residence from 1947 to June 30, 1951. According to the other document, signed by Imre Palló, opera singer who won the Kossuth-prize [the highest honour that Hungary can give anyone]—Mrs. Sípós's husband, Brigadier-General Árpád Sípós, participated in the resistance movement led by Lieutenant-General János Kiss. In this interpretation, they requested a review of the relocation order on July 6, 1951.

On July 7, 1951, the policeman who supervised the move verified that on July 1 of that year Count Aladár Zichy moved to Budajenő Fő utca [st.] 85. This document is important because it indicates the number of the train on which the widow Mrs. Árpád Sípós and her daughters traveled to their new residence.

⁴⁰⁰ ÁBTL A-00163

A 1952 document provides information about the fate of Aladár Zichy, who moved to Budajenő. In his notes of July 4, 1952, Ferenc Cziráki instructed the head of the police station of Heves County to keep an eye on Count Aladár Zichy, who was being released from the internment camp, and accompany him to the village of Kál and place him under police surveillance with an order to appear before the police once a week. Ferenc Cziráki indicated the motive for internment; this was in contrast with the documents published hitherto which claimed that he could not be relocated, because he had escaped. The subject was later captured and interned. Count Aladár Zichy arrived at the village of Kál on August 5, 1952. I couldn't find any documents in the archives pertaining to Aladár Zichy's internment.

Aladár Zichy, Jr.'s Reminiscences⁴⁰¹

The family could suffer without complaint and weeping and moaning. I wasn't raised to be bitter. We didn't suffer the worst fate, for we survived physically. We weren't tortured to the point of disfigurement. And religion conserved our soul.

In 1944-45 we lived in what is Slovakia today, on our mother's estate.⁴⁰² A German general chose it for his headquarters, so they occupied half of the castle, and built enormous bunkers beneath the park. For this reason, there was a great predilection for shooting at us and bombing us during the last months of the war. Finally, the Soviets surrounded the Germans army corps and destroyed them. They pulled us out of the cellar and handed us over to the Slovaks; the Slovaks came with the armed forces to take us away, because we didn't want to confess to being Slovaks. They drove us over the pontoon-bridge to Esztergom with altogether 25 kilos of baggage.

We fled to Buda to our maternal relatives. Mama sold her last remaining rings and bought a house together with my maternal grandparents, where we lived between 1947 to June 23, 1951. Then secret police turned up one night and handed us a slip of paper on which there was no sign of who had sent it. There wasn't even a signature on it, but it informed us that our house had

⁴⁰¹ Excerpt from an interview with **Aladár Zichy** on September 2008.

⁴⁰² **Lajos Walko** was Minister (Trade, Finance, Foreign Affairs) from August 24, 1921 to October 1, 1932 for the Bethlen, later the Károlyi governments. (He appeared on the list of the relocated as a former Minister for Foreign Affairs—Zs. H.)

been nationalised and that we would be taken away within 24 hours. We were allowed to pack 250 kilos per adult. They didn't come in 24 hours, but sooner.

When the lorry arrived, they pulled my maternal grandparents and my mother up on it leaving us three children on the street. My young brother was four years old, my sister 10, and I was 12. We were left on the street because they said we weren't on the list. The car rumbled off; we stood about before the door, we didn't know what to do. Then the neighbours opened their windows and looked in amazement: what were three children doing there at night? Then one by one brave families took us in: a neighborhood dentist took my sister, I was taken by the mother of a classmate, my younger brother was taken in by our cook who was with us when the house was expropriated. She took my brother to Zákány, to the original Zichy village. A few weeks later a secret service woman turned up at the family where I was staying and dragged me into the car. They didn't say a word to the family about where they were taking me. They dragged also my sister away and stuck us into an orphanage somewhere here in Pest, but I haven't a clue where. That was the worst experience of my life, that voice, that inhuman style. Well, it was not a place for children. Fortunately we did not stay there long, for the AVO woman came again. She wasn't really unfriendly. She brought my younger brother from the country. They took us on the train—an endless journey—over the Tisza river, to Tiszapolgár. But we hadn't any idea where we were. We met another car in which they were taking Zsiga Széchenyi bácsi (the famous hunter and writer). Then we arrived at a farm and found my mother there in a goose pen. We were overjoyed to see each other. From this it is clear that happiness is relative.

Our grandparents were staying with the same farmer. They were very sweet people, kulaks, as they were called in those days, even though legally they didn't fit into that category. In the only room, which was around 2 x 4 meters—originally it had been a pantry—there was an elderly landowner lady, in addition to our grandparents. The authorities had put Mama there too, but to make it easier for the elderly people, Mama moved out into the goose-house. So we moved into the goose-house, too. We had a lot of adventures there. The ground water seeped up and when you woke up and stepped off the plank, you fell on your face or your hind-part, for the water had frozen. There was no door, just a canvas, with which we tried to scare away the cold. When it began to thaw, the melting snow dripped, and the rain fell in. The farmer cut weeds for the roof, but one night a cow got free and tried to reach the weeds.

She leaned over with her two feet on the goose-house; we were afraid the hovel would collapse.

In the goose-house there were a few planks on the adobe bricks; four people slept on it. You couldn't even turn around. We had no news of father. Mama found out something later and dispatched me on a bike in illegality to try to find father. That was in 1953, before we were released. I cycled along the Tisza River, and slept on hay stacks where people looked like they were friendly. My mother had given me some bread.

On the fourth day I found father in the village of Kál, some 100 and odd kilometers away, where he was sent after internment, and placed under police surveillance. When I arrived in the village, I asked where the "prisoners" were. They said that they were hoeing the bean field. I went there and asked after 'Aladár bácsi'. I was shattered for when I found he was virtually blind. Once he had been radiated for some skin problems (allergy ?) and this supposedly harmed his eyes. Also in the early days of his imprisonment he had had to stoke the furnace, and apparently the heat did not do his eyes any good either. He was not blind before. At first he developed a cataract, then glaucoma, later his sight improved after an operation, but this was later, much after 1953. In any case, I didn't understand what good he could do for socialism with his hoeing, for he clearly couldn't really see the beans. The fact is that I greeted him, and he asked me, who I was? I couldn't even answer, for it hurt so, that my own father does not recognise me. Then he said my voice was like Karli's—one of his younger brothers—but my shape is like Tomi's—his other brother, he said. He asked me then again, who I was. I said that I was his son.

The prisoners saw that something unusual was happening here, and they told the guard to let Aladár go home. The guard let him go. They were living in some private quarters. I spent the night there with them and I got something to eat, but I didn't dare stay longer, so they wouldn't catch me on my 'illegal' visit, and I started off home, to the goose stable, for Mama. Thanks God, I didn't get caught and in the eyes of a 14-year-old, this adventure was a great heroic deed.

Before the amnesty, I made my exit, - illegally again - for on the first of September, I had to go to Esztergom to the Franciscan secondary school. Otherwise, I hadn't any chance at all of being accepted anywhere for secondary studies due to our "peoples' enemy" status in communism. Mama somehow got a message to the Franciscans who knew me because in Pasarét (a district of Budapest) I had been an enthusiastic altar-boy. I was accepted in

the school, for I was an excellent student. Mama said, go; I did and managed to get to Esztergom by train. After the liberation we were forbidden to return to Budapest. My maternal grandparents were thrown out of their castle in Zákány, so we couldn't go there either. Then Mama said she was going to try to get at least near my school in Esztergom and looked for a room. She found a room in Visegrád for the maternal grandparents and one for us in Zebegény. The paternal grandparents had to leave the castle in 1949, before they had found only two rooms to live in. They went to Hévíz in a room which leaked when it rained. We didn't even have money for heating fuel. When Mama saw this, she found us another room in Visegrád and settled them there. Thus Mama could get the family together as if by magic in two villages and three separate rooms.

I hardly knew anything about father, for in 1956, in November, after the Russian invasion, Mama put a prayer-book into my hands, told me to disappear somewhere abroad and see to it, that I become an honest man. To this day, I don't know where she got her courage from. I didn't go by myself. There was a Franciscan priest, my former prefect, who was young and spirited; he had been to military school before joining the Franciscans. In the last hours of the revolution he was the commander of Budavár and rushed around in his monk's habit organising the defense against the invading Russians. When the Russians broke in on November 4, they looked for this monk first. He went to the Franciscan provincial: father, 'here I am'. The provincial told him, you broke your vow of obedience, you ran away to fight, which was a heroic thing to do, but it wasn't right to abandon your class. So after all that, if you still want to be obedient, then immediately go West, for you've caused enough trouble already. The father, it seems, was still thinking about whom or what he could still save. At the last minute, he sent word to me through another Franciscan monk that there was a way out and I should join. That very evening the Franciscan biked out to Visegrád, sat me on the bar and cycled back to Pest with me. That was when I saw people hanging from the trees. It was very difficult to struggle across the border, the dogs barked, the mines blew up. I could barely orient myself; the snow of late November was falling. Finally we caught sight of a man wearing a foreign uniform, and we gave ourselves up—to an Austrian gendarme. We were taken into the cellar of a castle, , where we got a bowl of hot soup. That was very good. Four years later I found out that the castle belonged to my own cousin, and at one time had belonged to my other (Batthyány) great-great-grandfather.

Thereafter I didn't see my family for 12 years. I dared come home only when I got appointed to my first UN mission. My mother nursed the elderly ones until the grave. In the deportation she got a case of neuritis in her thigh and her right leg began to get paralyzed. A medical student gave her injections secretly. Mama kept her leg, but dragged it for the rest of her life. When I think of that, it makes me sad, but I do realise that fate dealt much more severely with thousands of others.

The expulsion of Count Mária Ludovika Zichy's⁴⁰³ family 1951–1953

Dr. Elek Versegghi Nagy and his second wife, Count Mária Ludovika (henceforth Lilly), as well as their three children (Elizabeth from the first marriage, Elek, and András from the second marriage) were expelled on May of 1951, and taken to Tiszasüly Kolopfürdő (Szolnok County).

The expulsion of the family took place in a rather unusual manner. Elek Versegghi Nagy and his youngest daughter from his first marriage⁴⁰⁴ Elisabeth were expelled from Budapest (District I, Űri u. 6), while the other part of the family: Lilly and her two sons (Elek and András) were arrested in their castle in Rőjtökmuzsaj. The castle and the land surrounding it became the property of Elek Versegghi Nagy, ambassador to the Vatican. He transformed the castle through an enormous investment. He had the pool built based on Alfred Hajós's design. Beside it he had a little Japanese house built made of wood with a thatched roof.

⁴⁰³ Was born on January 24, 1909 in Élesd (Romania today). Her mother's name was Gabriella Bethlen. On April 25, 1935, she married **Elek Versegghi Nagy**, ambassador to the Vatican and minister plenipotentiary. Her children were Elek, 1937, András, 1941. She died in Budapest (Máriaremete) on July 8, 1991. She is buried in the community cemetery of Leányfalu.

⁴⁰⁴ **Erzsébet Versegghi Nagy**, student, was born in Rőjtökmuzsaj in 1931. Her husband was Guido Dlačhy, her mother Erzsébet Janssen, her address at the time of relocation: Budapest I, Űri u. 6, wasn't on the list of the relocated.



Castle of Röjtökmuzsaj

The imposing wood paneling of the hallway of the building, the fireplace with a marble coat-of-arms, the plaster ceiling, as well as the chapel which was beautifully renovated can still be seen today. In the 1930's the castle of Rőjtök had a lot of visitors. For several years, Prince Primate Cardinal Dr. Justine Serédi spent his holidays here. The crypt of the Verseghegy Nagy family can be seen in the castle park. Elek Verseghegy Nagy's father, Dr. Ferenc Verseghegy Nagy, the outstanding legal scholar was buried here in 1928. Elek Verseghegy Nagy's wife died in 1934 at the age of 34, leaving behind seven small children. She too was buried in the crypt. In 1936 Elek Verseghegy Nagy married again Countess Mária Ludovika Zichy who gave birth to two sons, Elek and András. Of Elek Verseghegy Nagy's children, Péter died a hero's death, and the four of them left the country in 1944. Elek Verseghegy Nagy and his wife were deported to Tiszasüly-Koloptanya in 1951.

One evening in May Lilly and her two sons were awakened from their sleep in the castle of Rőjtökmuzsaj. They were informed of the warrant to arrest them. On suspicion of trying to escape, a warrant was issued to arrest the entire family. The reason for this was that Lilly's husband did not consider the banishment resolution to be final; his lawyers assured him that the decision was not binding. With her daughter and two light suitcases she went by taxi from Budapest to Kolopfürdő. She did not take advantage of the space in half a lorry and the 48-hour deadline that the deportees were given to pack and save their valuables. The next day the official organ and the lorry's driver thought that Lilly had escaped and been caught with her two sons. They allowed her to hire a haulier at her own expense, then, accompanied by two policemen on bicycles, they were taken to Sopron. After spending three days in Sopron city jail, it turned out that the rest of the family hadn't escaped at all; in fact, they were the first to arrive at their compulsory residence. The authorities then decided that they would unite the family and took Lilly and her two sons to Kolopfürdő.⁴⁰⁵ In this way they arrived at the designated compulsory residence without any clothing or personal things, where the other deportees had already settled in more or less and weren't overjoyed that they would have to share the small space with three more people.

⁴⁰⁵ **Elek Verseghegy Nagy, Jr.**, student, was born in Rőjtökmuzsaj in 1937. His mother's name was Mária Ludovika Zichy. Her address at the time of expulsion; Rőjtökmuzsaj (Sopron County) wasn't on the list of the relocated.

The elegant-sounding Kolopfürdő [Kolop Baths] which was represented on most maps in this way, actually consisted of two dilapidated bath houses and one farm-building, in which nine families, 26 individuals altogether had been placed. Only the portable well-drilling apparatus that appeared now and then was reminiscent of the baths. It brought up radioactive mud for the Gellért baths for medicinal purposes.

The building which completely lacked amenities had neither running water, nor electricity. The water of the well was not potable. Drinking water was brought in by water cart for money by the inventive neighbour farmer. They could go to the next farm for water with a can, but in addition to carrying the heavy load, they had to deal with two fierce dogs. A dilapidated tile stove and two iron stoves, as well as a hooded furnace provided some heat. The nine families were able to cook on a kitchen-range. They used rice straw, corn husks, and brushwood from a nearby acacia grove.

The most important activity, which was the most strictly required by the authorities and strictly supervised, was taking part in agricultural work, which in this case primarily meant weeding the rice fields and harvesting rice. In Szolnok County a large-scale rice-growing program was built up in these years, based on the Soviet example. Water was channeled from the Tisza River, and small plots were formed by means of small weirs, rice was sown in them, then they were flooded. The young rice plants growing in the water had to be weeded two or three times a year. This could be done only by barefoot workers, as the rice stalks were fragile. The rice was harvested in late September. This had to be done with a scythe, for you couldn't drive a machine onto the wet plots. Every evening the work was measured and the relocated were given paltry pay, as well as being paid in kind (rice). A cow and a few poultry on the farm complemented the scanty supplies that could be obtained at the grocery shop in Tiszasüly. People often had to queue for hours for bread or petroleum. The infrastructure of Tiszasüly consisted of a primary school, post office, and grocery. There were no doctors or pharmacies. As it was forbidden to leave the village, special permission had to be granted by the police if someone had to go to the doctor or dentist. Police permission sometimes took as long as 30 days. The nearest medical facility was in Kötelke, or Szolnok. Transportation was a daily bus to Szolnok, otherwise bicycle.

Lilly's family had to go out to work on the rice fields, with the other workers, in addition to nursing her ailing and elderly husband. Keeping house under such conditions presented technical as well as coordination problems.

Generally several families wanted to use the single kitchen-range at the same time. Providing the fuel and heating was the men's work: rice-straw for the hooded oven, brushwood and corn-stalks, as well as roots for the fireplace. It was shoddy fuel; it burned out quickly and required constant feeding.

The expulsions were stopped in the summer of 1953 (under the effect of the thaw that followed Imre Nagy's speech), however, no family was allowed to return to its former residence. Most of the expelled naturally wished to settle near Budapest. That was how Lilly and her family got to Leányfalu in a sub-let. It was primarily Lilly's doing that they managed to create a good relationship with the couple who owned the apartment (István Ecseri and his wife), which took on a familial aspect and ended only with the death of the four people. They are all buried in the cemetery of Leányfalu.

Mrs. Imre Kacskovics Katalin Zichy's Reminiscences

The relocations affected our family a little differently. My mother was in the resistance. We spent the war in Kishárság⁴⁰⁶ (Baranya County) where she took in an English pilot whose plane had crashed nearby. My parents tried to ease the lives of people before the war. Mariette Bolza set up a maternity centre in Kishárság for the servants, and operated a model school, where already in 1940, there were radios in the classrooms.

The family was popular with the villagers; we are warmly received there even today even though we go there rarely. I think that is why our 100 hold land could remain in our possession, but it was very difficult to cultivate without the necessary equipment.⁴⁰⁷

The relocations took place the same as elsewhere, for we found ourselves in a neighbouring farm from one day to the next, with a wagonload of stuff, sharing half of a house with a kulak family. They had been thrown out of a part of their home. We've kept up the connection with them to this day. My brother Jenő, my sister Margit, and I moved to Pécs where, for a short while, we had our house. Soon every opportunity for studying ended, thus my sister

⁴⁰⁶ The park of the Zichy castle in Kishárság was created by the former gardener of the famous arboretum of Szarvas, since a member of the landowner family there, Mariette Bolza, the wife of Domonkos Zichy moved in there with her family.

⁴⁰⁷ After the land distribution the equipment of the large land holdings became property of the state in machine stations, thus cultivating the land became extraordinarily difficult.

was sent to Dióspusztá, my brother stayed in Pécs with my father; they worked cutting wood in the Mecsek, then later in a dairy farm, or wherever they got work.

We lived the life of farmers in Dióspusztá where we produced whatever we needed for daily life and raised animals. My mother knitted and tried everything she could think of to earn a little money. Naturally at that time no one needed her knowledge of languages (English, German, and French). She wasn't able to paint, either, although she had had an exhibition in Vienna before the war.

We came to Budakeszi in 1957, where we still live with my family to this day. My father made his living by caring for laboratory animals at the Blood Bank Institute of Budapest. My mother gave language lessons, generally to doctors and their children. Meanwhile she tried to help people as member of the Mária Légio [Legion of Mary], for example, in Budapest, at the "camp" settlement. Probably because of her background and activities, in the great church arrests of 1961, they took her away too, and sentenced her to six years on suspicion of organising to overthrow the state. She did two years' time in the women's prison of Kalocsa. The amnesty of 1963 gave her her freedom. Of course the other members of the family also got their share of harassment. After my mother's release, she continued to give language lessons; she was also given technical translations, then took jobs as simultaneous translator. Her work was highly regarded in professional circles. She began painting again and exhibited both at home and abroad. But she was never accepted by the Art Foundation.

My father emigrated to Ireland in 1963, where he lived until he died. He was director of the exhibition of an American's collection of East-Asian art.

My Zichy grandmother and her children, Nándor, Imre and Mária-Eugénia, went abroad after the war. They lived there until they died. They first came to Hungary after 1989.

The Family's maternal branch: the Bolza family

The Bolza family is of Italian origin. The family's rank of count was granted to Péter Bolza, a knight of the Order of Maria Theresa, for his services during his military career. His son, Joseph Bolza (1780-1862), lord-in-waiting to the emperor and king, built the castle that still stands on the banks of the Körös

River. In 1805 he married Countess Anna Batthyány. That is why the coat-of-arms of the Bolza and Batthyány families adorns the tympanum of the castle facing the Körös. The Anna-Gardens got their name from Anna Batthány. The closed garden on the western side of the sports ground was called the Batthyány Garden until it no longer existed. Joseph Bolza financed the transfer of the secondary school of Mezőberény to Szarvas. Also the signature of the agreement freeing the serfs from the feudal landlords is connected to his name. Moreover, it is the Bolza family that had the Roman Catholic church of Szarvas built.

Pál Bolza was Joseph Bolza's fifth child. He studied law at Budapest University and following the family tradition joined the military. He attained the rank of lieutenant as officer of the second cavalry regiment, and was member of the Upper House. After his father's death in 1881 he inherited the castle and land in Szarvas. In 1895, he married Josepha (1868-1912), the daughter of Count Sándor Vigyázó. His father-in-law was also a garden enthusiast. He renovated the arboretum of Vácrátóti which he owned.



Photos of Szarvas Castle

Mrs. Pál Bolza was patron of the Girls' Society of Szarvas; she organised soirées and literary afternoons. A child was born from her marriage, Mariette (December 15, 1901—July 5, 1996). Josefa Vigyázó died unexpectedly a few days later due to a sudden illness after giving birth. His wife's death took a great deal out of Pál Bolza, and he withdrew to his wife's estate in Somogyhárságy. He moved back to Szarvas only later in 1930, after his daughter's wedding. He spent his time managing his estate and developing his gardens.



Pál Bolza's statue at the entrance of the arboretum of Szarvas

Although the development of the arboretum was begun when his grandfather Joseph Bolza was expelled, the present face of the garden was primarily the work of Pál Bolza. After selling his estate in Austria, his grandfather was the first of the Bolza's to move to Szarvas. As officer of the Guards, the imperial gardens of Schönbrunn influenced him greatly and Joseph Bolza decided to bring into being a park on a large part of his estate. His wife, Anna Batthyány backed his idea. The work of creating the park was continued by the grandson.

Several outstanding botanists turned up in his garden. The Pepi-Garden became a veritable oasis with its own micro-climate in the county known for its extreme weather. The arboretum's name (Pepi-Garden) comes from his uncle's nickname, since it was he who had donated the park to Pál Bolza. Today this is Hungary's largest arboretum. Both characteristic and rare plants of five parts of the world can be found in it. The garden not only satisfies the requirements of those who are interested in botany, but with its beauty and harmony it gives a fascinating experience to visitors who aren't specialists. Pál Bolza gave the garden to the University of Szeged in 1943, in return for caring for it and maintaining it. It is one of the most valuable assets of Szarvas; it is open to the public and is of national importance. The city can thank its attraction to tourists and its fame and reputation mainly to the arboretum. The Szarvas staff were fond of Pál Bolza, "as much as he was an aristocrat on the street, he was a democrat in the castle" his older brother, Géza, said about him. Otherwise Pál Bolza spent the winters in Budapest in his palace on Dísz Tér [square] 7.

In the last years of World War II military officers were billeted in a part of the castle. Pál Bolza left in September of 1944. When the Soviet troops arrived on October 6, 1944, the Count was at the local Havran family circle. He could no longer return to his castle. Then the abbot, József Fetzer, and the lawyer, József Dörnyei, placed him with the Vay family. There he lived until 1946, when his daughter came for him and brought him home in Kishárság. He died there on June 8, 1947, at the age of 86.

Mariette Bolza spent her young childhood in Szarvas. Her father arranged that she should study the more important subjects in secondary school in four languages. She had been drawing and painting since she was a young child. Beginning with the age of 10 she studied with her teachers in their ateliers in the capital. She pursued a lot of sports and rode horseback. Perhaps it was horseback riding that she loved the most. She rode every day for hours, riding a thoroughbred around the Szarvas countryside. She frequently visited the arboretum in the company of her father or of the head gardener. She too loved nature, which shows up in the subjects of her paintings. She also worked in the garden. On November 24, 1930, at the age of 19, Mariette married the attaché Count Domonkos Zichy of Zich and Vásonkeő in Budapest. Three children were born from their marriage: Jenő, Margit, and Katalin. Of them only Katalin (Mrs. Imre Kacs Kovics) is still alive in Budakeszi. She represents

the feminine branch of the Bolza family. The masculine branch of Pál Bolza ended in 1947.

Countess Zichy got to the Austrian capital in 1935, as the wife of a diplomat. There she became friends with the assistant director of the Albertina, through whom she met the famous painter, Böchler, who shared his atelier with her. She made a triumphant debut with her paintings at the Secessionist exhibition. But after Hitler's entry into Austria in 1939, the Hungarian embassy ceased to function.

The diplomat family moved back to Mariette's estate in Somogyhárságy where they began building a new house. The house was being built when the war broke out. Mariette took on service to help the war orphans and widows. During the German occupation, when the English and Americans bombed the country, one of the air battles took place exactly above Hárságy. A German and an American plane crashed (to earth). Mariette nursed both pilots and then buried them respectfully. All this reached the ears of the Gestapo, and Mariette almost became a victim of her noble deed.



Mariette Bolza
Source: Family Kacs Kovics

After the Soviet occupation, for a while she was qualified as a resistance fighter for these acts and they left her 300 cadastral hold/acres of her enormous estate. Up to their expulsion to Dióspusztá, Marietta managed the state farm that became of the former estate unknown to the authorities. The manager of the farm consulted with her in the evenings about what was to be done. Later of course, they were deprived of everything, even of the house they had built themselves. The land (7000 kat. hold) became a state farm. Mariette Bolza lived on the farm in Dióspusztá for eight years with her two younger children. They moved to Budakeszi near the capital in 1957. Mariette supported the family with her knowledge of languages. Her husband took care of laboratory animals in Budapest at the Blood Bank Institute. They divorced in 1959.

Mariette Bolza

Mariette was arrested in 1961. The precedent for her arrest was the Party resolution adopted on June 21, 1960, in which the battle against domestic reactionary forces was directed primarily at the national Communist and Horthyist organizations and the Catholic clerical forces. A large-scale police action was begun in the autumn of 1960 and early 1961, in which, in addition to civilians, about 300 church personnel were taken into custody. The encyclical of the bishops condemning the priests appeared before the court verdict which sentenced them to many years in prison.⁴⁰⁸ Mariette Bolza as a civilian was sentenced to six years in prison for the crime of *actively participating in organising to overthrow the people's democracy state order*. She was freed in the amnesty of 1963.

The motive for her arrest was that Mariette Bolza was the deputy head of the Mária Légio [Legion of Mary] of Hungary. So I will report briefly on the activities of this organisation. The Legion of Mary was founded in Dublin on September 7, 1921, by a few men, who wanted to do something good for the Saviour, and for this reason they took the name of the army and expressions of the Roman Empire (legion, curia, senate, etc.) They thought that Jesus Christ had died for every human being, even for prostitutes. They went into the prostitutes' neighbourhoods and tried to convert them. They had good success.

⁴⁰⁸ Margit Balogh, 2000.

In the time since the founding of this organisation, this Catholic lay apostolic movement spread to every part of the world. In China around 4000 people were killed for these activities, when Mao attacked the churches and religions. The Legion of Mary is maintained by those who wish to go deeper into their faith, live it and pass it on. The essence of the movement is the idea that “as Mary gave Jesus to the world, we have to show Him to human beings every day.” The prayer communities of the movement come together once a week under the direction of a spiritual father; they pray and speak about the tasks of the next week. The members take on about two hours of spiritual care, apostolic work every week, about which they report at the next meeting. They carry out their activities in hospitals, retirement homes, family visits, giving spiritual consolation, physical assistance, apostleship, praying together, encouraging the spiritual life, participating in daily mass, holding frequent Holy Communion, and telling one’s beads.

The Legion of Mary’s activities in Hungary too had as their objective to help people both physically and spiritually who had got in trouble. They visited the barracks camp at the border of Budakeszi, which in 1990 was a home for the homeless, where people lived who had come up from the villages and who had been forced to leave their homes in the country for various reasons. Some of them made a living by breaking into houses, for it was very difficult for them to fit in. Social workers and psychologists did not succeed in helping them find their place in the big city after their former village communities. The members of the Legion of Mary, among others, took on this work. In two years they managed to get the majority of the residents of the barracks to go to work every day, send their pay home, and take up a collection for a regular home under good conditions. Marietta went there on the afternoon of the day of her arrest.⁴⁰⁹

According to Mariette’s bill of indictment⁴¹⁰ the Legion of Mary was “an international bourgeois organisation” which was preparing the Hungarian counter-revolution and already in spring of 1956, had been part of the internal and external reaction. They did in fact exaggerate the existing deficiencies of the society and “*prepared an entire army of foreign imperialist spies and saboteurs to attack our democratic system. These saboteurs came to Hungary as diplomats or as tourists and carried out their subversive work.*” The Legion

⁴⁰⁹ Gabriella Lőcsei, 1990.

⁴¹⁰ Budapest Capital Court T.B. XVI. 9212/1961/5.

of Mary was launched in Hungary by two senators of the Austrian faction of the organisation who “*needed persons who, owing to their origin and political attitudes, oppose our people’s democratic system.*”

After the suppression of the “counter-revolution” in spring of 1957, the above-mentioned members of the Austrian senate visited our country so as to continue more forcefully the illegal action. The objective of the action was to unleash World War III or to continue the counter-revolution and destroy the people’s democratic state system. That was how the external enemy met up with the internal class enemy. “*The accused Bolza with her origin, upbringing, and political attitudes is a class enemy...she is a class alien and a member of the Horthyist-Fascist aristocracy. Her parents were immensely wealthy landowners. Owing to her origin, upbringing, and political attitudes, she is a sworn enemy of our people’s democratic system, thus, these are the motives of her actions.*”

The above was not influenced by the fact that the defendant, Mariette Bolza, had joined the Legion of Mary in the spring of 1959, and not in 1956. According to the bill of indictment in the course of the house search they found many class enemy brochures. The report on the house search—signed by police captain János Mihók, which lasted from 23 hours to 05 hours on February 6, 1961—contains the notes of the documents seized. I quote: “*Church and religious brochures: Praise-Sacrifice, Sincere Word, Spiritual Conversations, Report on God, Instruction for Prayer and Spiritual Life, Report on the Church.*”⁴¹¹

The court sentenced Mariette Bolza to six years in prison as primary penalty and total confiscation of property as a secondary punishment; furthermore, she was banned for six years from exercising her rights as a citizen defined in the laws. According to the bill of indictment, “*The accused Mariette Bolza is from an aristocratic family. Her father Count Pál Bolza owned 4-500 hold land. Her mother was also from an aristocratic family, who owned 3000 hold land. The accused inherited about 6000 hold land after the death of her grandparents and her mother, furthermore a block of flats in Budapest, which was nationalized after 1945. The accused finished school on her own, and married Count Domonkos Zichy in 1930, who also had large land holdings; her husband was attaché of the Hungarian embassy in Vienna.*”

The complete confiscation of property meant the following: a portable Hermes typewriter, a packet of typing paper, pocket calendars, addresses and telephone numbers, 30,400 forints in 100 forint notes and jewels worth 75,000

⁴¹¹ ABTL.313-V-146877/1

forints. It can be read on page 12 of the bill of indictment that the accused had offered jewelry worth about 160,000 forints to purchase a community house.

During the trial Mariette Bolza was held in Gyorskocsi utca, then she was taken to the prison for women in Kalocsa. The prisoners helped each other to obtain medicines. When they announced sewing classes, Mariette volunteered, because you got a notebook and writing utensils with the course. She could make portraits of her fellow prisoners, the guards, and political commissars. She made a Christmas calendar for her fellow prisoners. When the others saw her work, they began making tiny souvenirs for each other. One of their fellow prisoners who was illiterate and whom Mariette was unable to teach to write, got hold of green rags and candles, from which she made a Christmas tree. Even the guards helped to prevent anyone from disturbing the banned Christmas festivities, where they sang Our Father and the Himnusz [National Anthem].

In 1962, her older daughter died leaving two orphaned young children. She couldn't attend the funeral; even though even a murderer was allowed go to the funeral of his nearest and dearest if he was accompanied by guards. Mariette Bolza wasn't even allowed to write a letter to find out what had happened exactly. The political commissar believed that "the children of people like Mariette Bolza should croak". This was the only time when hatred came into her heart for those keeping her prisoner.⁴¹²

On her release from prison, she had great difficulty in finding work, until a benefactor helped her to obtain work as a technical translator and later as simultaneous interpreter. Her earnings helped her *continue to paint*. Her paintings found their way abroad. In 1988 they won a medal at a prestigious French exhibition. In the 80's she was acknowledged even here at home.⁴¹³ A permanent exhibition of her oil paintings and aquarelles was set up in the Szarvas Arboretum in 1985. According to a critic her style was realistic; she painted refined, evocative, graceful aquarelles and oil paintings. Her primary subject was nature, plants, trees, flowers, and bushes painted with portrait-

⁴¹² Gabriella Lőcsei, 1990.

⁴¹³ Her one-person shows include 1975—Medikus KISZ Club, Budapest, VIII. district, Baross u. 28, 1976—Galerie der Kernst, Basel 1984—Tessedik Sámuel Museum, Szarvas, Kertészeti Egyetem [Horticultural University], Budapest, 1988—József Attila Cultural Centre, Budapest—Borkombinát, Eger, 1990—Eger, 1991—Hyatt Atrium Hotel, Budapest, 1993—Library of the Apáczai Educational Centre, Pécs, Art works in a public collection, Basel—Szarvas, arboretum, permanent exhibition.

like precision. She also painted buildings (monasteries, castles, and churches). People were of secondary importance to her.



Marietta Bolza oil-paintings

She died after a brief illness in Budapest in 1996. Her grave is in Budakeszi.

The treatment the Zichy castles received was hardly better than the treatment of their owners

Nágocs

The Rubidó-Zichy castle's oldest part—a mansion—was built in 1711. Wings several stories high were added to the castle, then the two parts were united. In 1921 another story was built above the mansion. For two centuries the castle had been the property of the Zichy family, which married into the Rubidó family. They were of Croatian origin, but were descended from Zrinyi on the maternal side. The last owner was Iván Rubidó-Zichy the ambassador, who managed to escape in time with his five daughters during the Russian depredations. During the war, the local Russian command of the Soviet Army moved into the castle. The commander left with rich pickings; what was left became the prey of local “curiosity seekers”. The Russians broke open the crypt in the castle park searching for jewelry, but they were poisoned by the fresh corpses. One of them even died. They also broke open the ancient family crypt beneath the church. The former diplomat, Iván Rubidó-Zichy, who

returned, tried to settle matters temporarily, but he and his family were soon relocated. The bones from the crypts were later scattered about; the skulls became “peculiar balls” for the children of the boarding-school.

Zákány

This building, which had been built mainly as a hunting lodge, was rebuilt as a castle by Ödön Zichy in 1913. He moved her when he lost his estates in Transylvania as a result of the Treaty of Trianon. He raised seven children with his wife, Gabriella Bethlen. In 1944, the German troops took some of the equipment of the farm, (in the '70's. for this reason the family got 4,000 forints from the Germans as compensation, which at that time could buy three black-and-white television sets). The Bulgarian troops, which came in with the Soviet Army, on the other hand, didn't do much damage. The Communist group that took possession of the castle in 1947, burned a large part of the library and trophies, then, after imbibing the right amount of alcohol, their leader, swinging his feet in a window of the castle, shouted in the direction of the village, “Now, I'm the Count” (locals' account). They took possession of a large part of the castle, and put the family's antique furniture out in the rain. For a short time the family lodged with the locals. The president of the council in the '60's informed the family that they would take over the crypt of Zákány, let them take their dead where they willed. The expenses of exhumation and “resettling” of the dead naturally fell onto the family, which was continually in dire financial circumstances. It can be mentioned here that at almost the same time the Bethlen ancestors had to be taken from the Kerepesi cemetery. That was how the extended family moved together in death.

Mihály Zichy, a “Prince among Draughtsmen”

Mihály Zichy, the “prince of drawing”, was scion of the famous Zichy family, but from its landed gentry, not the aristocratic branch. One of his sepia drawings, the *Grave Robbers*, and his great painting, *The Triumph of the Genius of Destruction*, foreshadowed the fate of the Zichys and most Hungarian families. Near the end of 1944, the Russian soldiers plundered the Zichy family's crypts in Zákány, Nágocs, and Berkesz. The devastation, the

wanton destruction, affected not only the castles and crypts of the Zichy family, but Hungary as a whole fell victim to the looting and pillaging, as depicted by Mihály Zichy in his painting, *Triumph of the Genius of Destruction*. The enormous canvas painted for the Paris World Exhibition of 1878, portrayed the destructive forces of civilisation. The “thousands of people massacred”, the “wailing of virgins”, the “lament of widows”, the “clash of weapons” and the “sun that sets in a pool of blood”.

Part of the library of the Zichy castle in Zákány ended up in Novosibirsk, paintings and art treasures wandered to the Soviet Union by the thousands and to the homes “allocated” to party officials in Hungary. A small number of valuables were destroyed, priceless leather-bound books were used as mud bricks and to stoke fires, paintings shot up, porcelains broken, salons and furniture degraded as lavatories or ruined by the vicissitudes of weather. The destruction of buildings and other objects of memory was a lesser concern. The modern incarnation of the *Genius of Destruction* wished to finally wipe out the past. In the words of Péter Esterházy: “*There is no past, no history, there is no country, and no tradition. The Communists are the present, the brutal now.*”

APPENDIX

A Hungarian count, who found a patron in Comrade Khrushchev

Count Wenckheim lived with his wife in a sublet in Visegrád in the '50s. They lived in real penury, they had hardly anything to eat. It was small donations that kept them alive. And the hope that they would be able to go abroad one day. They submitted their applications to emigrate 14 times, and been refused as many times. The last one was two days before that certain day (1964).

The certain day was the visit of the Soviet Chief Party Secretary to the former royal palace in Visegrád. Khrushchev arrived with an enormous retinue, a troop of Soviet and Hungarian party comrades and security guards. They were just showing the whole palace to the Comrade Chief Secretary. On their way out Khrushchev happened to look down from the staircase of the palace just in the right moment to see an old man with an enormous white beard on the other side of the road. He saw in him certainly the image of a wise old Russian. Pushing aside the Hungarian and Russian security guards and comrades, he suddenly hurried down the stairs to the other side of the road and with the talent of a great politician for popular gestures embraced the oldcount Wenckheim heartily. "Tovarich, tovarich!" he said overjoyed...

The security guards, - discovering the identity of the Tovarich, - took the film from all the cameras present and put them into the sun.

But Tovarich Wenckheim could really be glad in the end. Two days later the permission to emigrate was brought to his house in a black (security service) car, even though he hadn't even asked for it.

Well, that's what it's like when someone has a great and true friend!

Record of the Data of Persons on the Kulak List of the Village of Pécsvárad

Name	Motive
1. Antal Máyer, Sr 361.	11 acres 1,359 square-fathoms land area with a value of 128 gold crowns. He has a water-mill, a threshing machine and is the main shareholder and chief miller, together with his son, in the steam mill of Pécsvárad. He had a permanent hired hand and a coachman.
2. Gyula Pető 363	5 acres 740 square-fathoms land, 70 gold crowns. He has a threshing-machine, mill and a distillery, he had a lime burner and brick kiln, he had a permanent farmhand, did not pay contributions, he is currently interned. He made his workers work hard and exploited them cruelly.
3. János Bihecz	2 acres 266 square-fathoms land, 38 gold crowns. He had a pub, did not employ a farmhand, did not pay contributions, currently works in the mines. He was imprisoned for being a fence and for sabotaging the sowing and harvest.
4. Mrs. János Merk, widow 360	18 acres 46 square-fathoms land, 207 gold crowns. She had a water-mill, she employed farmhands to work the land; she also had a pig fattening farm, she was punished for endangering the public supply and for fraud.
5. Jenő Helyek	15 kh 422 square-fathoms land 330 gold crowns. He had a butcher's shop. Paid contributions. Kept a permanent employee.
6. Károly Liszál	4 acres 705 square-fathoms land, 22 gold crowns. He had a pub, didn't pay contributions, didn't have any employees, he got on the kulak list because he had a pub.
7. Antal Wittenbergh 372	20 acres 26 square-fathoms land, 330 gold crowns. He had a butcher's shop, paid contributions, had a permanent employee.

Name	Motive
8. Alajos Méhes 359	14 acres 1,312 square-fathoms land, 201 gold crowns. He had a soda water plant, didn't pay contributions, the soda-water factory was run manually, he didn't have an employee; he worked in Upper Northern Hungary as an innkeeper. He was interned as "an enemy of the people" and imprisoned for sabotaging agricultural production.
9. Ferenc Harmat	He did not own any land, he had an untreated leather depot. He was interned for black market dealing in leather, he kept a permanent coachman for his two horses.
10. Márton Scháth 365	3 acres 520 square-fathoms land, 38 gold crowns. 100 acres leased land. He paid contributions, kept a permanent farmhand.
11. István Scháth 366	He worked for long years in Szilágypuszta as bailiff.
12. István Pécsi 364	10 acres 401 square-fathoms land, 119 gold crowns. He had a pub, didn't pay contributions, didn't have a hired hand. He was listed as an innkeeper.
13. Antal Koch	7 acres 828 square-fathoms land 79 gold crowns. He had a water-mill, which he inherited, but was closed down and dismantled more than 20 years ago. He didn't employ anyone. He was added to the kulak list because of his mill.
14. János Jager 357	33 acres 1,581 square-fathoms land, 407 gold crowns. He owned a water-mill. He kept a permanent hand whom he exploited ruthlessly.
15. János Gönci 352	15 acres 1,406 square-fathoms land, 168 gold crowns. He acquired his land as an allotment after the liberation when he worked as workshop foreman; he bought and sold confiscated animals, furniture and employed a permanent hand.
16. László Anschau	A wholesaler, had no land, didn't pay contributions. He had employees whom he exploited, he had house servants too. Punished for activities endangering public supply.

Name	Motive
17. István Orlai 362	2 acres 1,460 square-fathoms land, 50 gold crowns. He had a threshing-machine, merchant, he had a grocery shop, he didn't pay contributions. He didn't have employee. He was listed because he had a threshing-machine. He earned the money to buy the machine as a miller's assistant.
18. Ödön Vadász 371	9 acres 1,271 square-fathoms land, 200 gold crowns. He had a pub, a shop, kept a permanent employee.
19. Sándor Molnár	1 acre 1,155 square-fathoms land, 47 gold crowns. He had a pub which he leased, his original occupation was blacksmith, he bought and sold horses, he had an employee, he was convicted for concealing weapons.
20. József Stork 368	2 acres 1,476 square-fathoms land, 37 gold crowns. He had a pub, didn't pay contributions. He had a grocery shop, he didn't have an employee, he was added to the list for being an innkeeper.
21. György Stork 367	25 acres 130 square-fathoms land, 368 gold crowns. He didn't pay contributions. He had a permanent employee whom he exploited mercilessly.
22. Widowed Mrs. Lajos Erdélyi 351	1 acre 489 square-fathoms vineyard, 54 gold crowns. She was on the kulak list because of her husband who had a pub; she had worked for him, and she married him immediately before his death, so there would be someone to leave his property to. Mrs. Lajos Erdélyi did not lease the pub, she retailed bottled wine from her vineyard.
23. Mihály Vörös 370	The council of Kékesd put him on the kulak list.
24. Márton Grubics 354	The council of Erdőmecske put him on the kulak list because of his father, with whom he hadn't lived in the same household for about 10 years. He was an animal-dealer for the state farm, didn't have any land. He bought and sold animals with his father before 1945.
25. Milán Relics 369	The council of Erdőmecske put him on the kulak list as a horse-dealer.

Name	Motive
26. György Beczek 349	24 acres own land and leased 6-7 kh land. He also worked as a cartwright; he had a workshop with machines, he employed servants, but no one stayed with him for long because of ill treatment. He has had an enemy-of-the-people attitude in every respect. Together with his wife, he was locked up for crimes endangering public supply.
27. Károly Mihály	Owner of a steam-mill. He always had several employees. He had a servant too. He had no land.
28. József László 358	11 acres 800 square-fathoms land, 189 gold crowns. He owned an open-air pool, pub, and distillery. He always had employees and a servant too. He didn't pay contributions.
29. István Gémes 353	31 acres land, gold crown unknown. His father had a pub, which was sold after his death in 1936. The 31 acres of land was shared with his brother. They worked the land together and they lived in the same household. They sold part of the land in 1951, another part in 1952. They never had servants. Currently he farms 2 acres.
30. Sándor Fuller	6 acres 352 square-fathoms land, 80 gold crown. He works himself the land taken on lease, has a leased grist-mill (water). He got on the list because of the mill, he never employed a servant. The mill produces around 1-2 q a week.
31. Dr. László Grósz	Lawyer. 2 acres 198 square-fathoms vineyard, 56 gold crown. He didn't pay contributions.
32. Mrs. Elek Bánusz , wid. 350	Didn't have land, had a stone mine, which she didn't operate, the state took it over. Her husband leased a pub, after his death she continued to lease it; she had a coachman, she had an employee in the pub, she had other employees too.

Name	Motive
33. János Gombos 355	22 acres 465 square-fathoms land, 236 gold crowns. He didn't pay contributions, he was 80 percent war-disabled. The land had been owned jointly with his son-in-law who disappeared, he is completely unable to work, never had a servant, his wife and daughter work the land.
34. Imre Benedek	The child of the kulak Benedek of the village of Erzsébet, hasn't lived together with his father for about a year, currently he is a truck-driver in the mine of Komló, hasn't got any real estate of any kind.
35. János Inhoff	Deceased
36. Márton Puch	Deceased

(The numbers beneath the names are the serial numbers of the final kulak list.)

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XXI..3 f; XXI..36 f.

INDEX

A

Adonyi Sztancs, János 291, 295, 296, 297, 298,
302, 383
Almásy, László Ede 327
Almási, Szabó János 84
Ambrózy Gyula 24, 340, 341
Andrássy, Katinka 297, 352
Andrássy, Margit 332, 351
Anschau, László 176
Apor, Vilmos 296
Apostol, Gheorghe 286, 287
Applebaum, Anne 383
Apponyi, Albert 294
Apponyi, György 294
Apponyi, Károly 328
Apró, Antal 39, 63, 68, 69, 70, 211
Apró, Antal(né) Mrs., Apró, Klára 63, 68
Arany, Bálint 383
Atzél, Ede 298

B

Babarczy, Kálmán 323
Babirák, Mihály 58
Badi, Lajos 136, 201
Badi, Zsuzsanna 215
Baghy, Gyula 127, 128, 129
Bajcsy-Zsilinszky, Endre 292, 294
Bajor Ervin(né) Mrs., Legeza, Mária 219
Bakay, Szilárd 16, 301, 328
Baky, László 79, 80, 81, 82
Balló, Zoltán 79
Balog, Ferenc 204
Balogh, András 58
Balogh, László 287

Balogh, Margit 369
Bán, D. András 392
Bandi, István 20
Bánhidi, Attila 389
Bank, Barbara 20, 91, 99, 111, 116, 383
Bánusz, Elek(né) Mrs. 176
Baranyi, Elek 328
Bárány, Ottó(né) Mrs., Badi, Györgyi dr. 201,
215
Baráth, Magdolna 383
Bartók, Béla 240, 245
Bărbulescu, Mihai 258, 264, 383
Bárdossy, László 39, 324, 383
Batthyány, Anna 365, 366
Batthyány, Bálint 294
Batthyány, Charles 128
Batthyány, Ferenc 297
Becher, Kurt 43, 84
Beczásy, István 257, 383
Bede Fazekas, Ödön 134
Beke, Ferenc(né) Mrs. 190, 383
Beleznay, István 79
Benedek, Erzsébet 176
Benedek, Imre 176
Benedek, Mária 175, 176
Berija, Lavrenty Pavlovich 246, 305
Berkesi, András 32
Bethlen, Gabriella 353, 354, 374
Bethlen, István 295, 327, 328
Bethlen, Mária 324
Bibecz, János 176
Bibó, István 33, 108, 109, 383
Bihari, Mihály 383
Bíró, Mihály 39

Bíró, Sándor 343

Björkman, Eric 235

Bodó, István 194

Bolgár, Dániel 167, 383

Bolza, József 364, 365, 366

Bolza, Mariette 363, 367, 368, 369, 371, 372,
373

Bolza, Pál 365, 366, 367, 368, 371

Bolza, Péter 364

Boreczky, Beatrix 30, 313, 383, 384

Boțhogina, Iulian 384

Bősze, János dr. 58

Böszörményi, Géza 32, 336, 338, 384

Brusalinschi, Dumitru 265, 271, 288, 384

Budimacz, István 125

Butok, István 354

Buttler, Elemér 351

C

Ceausescu, Nicolae 286, 290

Cech, Vilmos 165

Chisinevski, Josif 263, 289

Chivu, Stoica 289

Cholnoky, Győző 97, 98, 384

Chorin, Daisy, Mrs. Rudolf Strasser 22, 234,
235, 236, 237, 238, 392

Chorin, Erzsébet 238

Chorin, Ferenc 235, 236, 238

Churchill, Winston 26, 28, 29, 91, 384

Conquest, Robert 153, 308, 384

Constantinescu, Miron 287

Couperin, Francois 240

Courtois, Stephane 87, 384

Czeglédi, Mihály 342

Cziráki, Ferenc 355

Cs

Csáki, István(né) Mrs., Zichy, Margit Mária 351

Császár, Antal 194

Csávás, István 94, 384

Cseh, Ignác 162

Csehek, Ferenc 219

Cserenyey, Géza 88, 384

Cseres, Miklós 180

Csicsery-Rónay Erzsébet 21, 254

Csicsery-Rónay, István 75, 76, 78, 88, 308,
333, 334, 384

Csiszár, István 134, 135

Csonkaréti, Károly 113, 384

Csóke, András 215

Csóke, Sándor 190, 385

D

Dabóczy, András 22

Dadányi, Miklós 123,

Dadányi Miklós(né) Mrs., Semsey, Mária
124, 385

Dálnoki, Miklós Béla 24, 25, 29, 37, 95

Dálnoki, Veres Lajos 328

Debreceni, József 190, 385

Debussy, Claude 240

Décsi, Gyula dr. 336, 338, 340, 341, 342

Degenfeld count 340, 341

Deletant, Dennis 258, 264, 272, 276, 385

Demény, Pál 303, 385

Dénes, Béla 310

Dénes, István 222

Denkő, András 58

Dér, István 248, 249

Dessewffy, Gyula 58, 385

Dessewffy, Tibor 113, 190, 385

Dimitrov, Georgi 31

Dizseri, Eszter 63, 69, 71, 385

Dlauchy, Guido 359
Dobai, Miklós 83, 85
Donáth, György 88, 89, 307, 385
Dörnyei, József 367
Drăghici, Alexandru 270, 288
Dubay, Miklós(né) Mrs., Bozsó Éva 253
Dzsingiz, Gábor J. 254, 385

E

Ecseri, István 363
Edelsheim, Gyulai Éva 298, 299, 300, 301, 385, 387
Eden, Anthony 26
Ehrenburg, Ilya Grigorevich 303
Eichmann, Karl Adolf 83, 84
Einhorn, Wilhelm 288
Erdei, Ferenc 18, 24, 29, 38, 88, 92, 95, 106, 107, 110, 112, 141, 385
Erdmann, Gyula 91, 92, 385
Esterházy, Aliz 332
Esterházy, Antal 298
Esterházy, János 102, 254, 296, 297, 309
Esterházy, Marietta 297
Esterházy, Lujza 102, 254, 297, 385
Esterházy, Miklós 150
Esterházy, Péter 19, 126, 137, 150, 152, 164, 291, 375, 385

F

Faludy, György 73, 74, 147, 148, 310, 385
Faraghó, Gábor 24
Farkas, László 123
Farkas, László jr. 123
Farkas, Mihály 23, 89, 222, 305, 308
Farkas, Vladimir 305, 385
Fehér, István 91, 97, 98, 386
Fehér, László 224

Fekete, György 136
Fekete, Sándor 134
Fenesi, Ferenc dr. 39
Fetzer, József 367
Fodor, Gyula 69
Fodor, László 342
Friss, István 223
Fuller, Sándor 175, 176
Füstös, Gedeon 122
Füzes, Miklós 20, 91, 97, 98, 190, 210, 214, 215, 386

G

Gábor, József 24
Gál, Mária 255, 258, 278, 386
Galántai, József 386
Gáspár, Sándor 63, 68, 69
Gáspár, Sándor(né) Mrs., Gáspár Lidi 69
Gémes, István 175, 176
Georgescu, Teohari 263, 286, 287
Gereben, Ágnes 386
Gerő, Ernő 23, 55, 109, 155, 167, 222, 223, 247, 308, 325
Gheorghiu-Dej, Gheorghe 256, 262, 263, 286, 287, 288, 290
Glatz, Ferenc 90, 386
Gombos, János 175, 176
Görgey, Gábor 114, 124, 215, 216, 386
Grósz, László dr. 175, 176
Groza, Petru 287
Gulyás, Gyula 106, 190, 201, 386
Gulyás, János 106, 190, 201, 386

Gy

Gyarmati, György 22, 51, 87, 286, 386, 387
Gyekiczky, Tamás 387
Gyurgyák, János 77, 387

Gyöngyösi, János 25

Györe, János 247

Györffy, Árpád 97, 98, 387

H

Haas, György 387

Hajdu, Lajos 97, 98, 100, 101, 111, 116, 193, 195,
207, 326, 350

Halnek, Gyula 150, 151, 152

Hambuch, Vendel 91, 387

Hanti, Vilmos 85

Hantó, Zsuzsa 10, 13, 20, 22, 62, 133, 136, 156,
179, 190, 191, 201, 249, 387

Házi, Árpád 169, 223

Házi, Gyula 354

Hazslinszky, Géza 123

Hazslinszky, Karla 123

Hazslinszky, Karola 123

Hazslinszky, Margit 123

Hazslinszky, Tibor 123

Hegedűs, András 106, 167, 201, 387

Hertelendy, Andorka 342

Hidegréti, József 342

Hitchins, Keith 258, 264, 383

Hitler, Adolf 79, 299

Holopcev, Péter 190, 388

Horthy, István 300, 328

Horthy, Miklós 16, 25, 77, 85, 300, 301, 305,
327, 328

Horthy, Miklós(né) Mrs. 300

Horthy, Miklós jr. 16, 24

Horváth, János 58

Horváth, Sándor 388

Horváth, Zoltán 73

Hraskó, Gyula dr. 92

Hunya, Gábor 287, 388

Huszár, Tibor 388

I

Illyés, Gyula 221

Inhoff, Antal 104

Inhoff, János 176

Inkey, Zsigmond 335

Irha, Melinda 167, 190, 388

Ispánovics, János 133

Iszlai, Zoltán 255, 388

Iván, István(né) Mrs. 215

Izsák, Lajos 388

Izsák Márton 268

J

Janics, Kálmán 103, 388

Jankó, Péter dr. 73

Janssen, Erzsébet 359

Janza, Károly 113

Jármay, Gyula 58

Jávor, Kata 167, 388

Jeszenszky, Iván 190, 388

Józsa, Judit 71

József, Attila 254

Juhász Gyula 24, 76, 388

Juhász, Judit 204

Justus Pál(né) Mrs., Edit 73, 74

Justus, Pál 73

J. Gyula 124, 388

K

Kaas, Ervin 342

Kacskovics, Imré(né) Mrs. Zichy
Katalin 363, 367

Kacsó Zoltán 324

Kasztner Rezső 83

Kádár, János 29, 30, 156, 193, 205, 311, 313

Kahler, Frigyes 146, 147, 150, 388, 389

Kajári, Erzsébet 156, 389

Kállay, András 16, 301
Kállay, Miklós 16, 77, 79, 301, 323
Kardos, György 32
Károlyi, Mihály(né) Mrs. 297
Kárpáti, Zoltán 22
Karpati, Frank 21
Kávási, Klára 167, 389
Keleti, Ferenc 115
Kendeffy, Ádám 298
Kenedi, János 147, 389
Keresztes-Fischer, Ferenc 143
Kéri, Gyula 324
Kéri, Kálmán 32
Khrushchev, Nikita 27, 246, 287, 376
Kis, Imre 194
Kiss, Dénes István 261, 389
Kiss, György 224
Kiss, Imre 194
Kiss, János 354
Kiss László 259
Klebensberg, Kunó 15, 295
Klár, Miksa 133
Koch, Antal 176
Kodály, Zoltán 71, 240, 245
Konkoly-Thege, Aladár 127
Kónya, Margit 241
Korényi, Ibolya 167
Kossa, István 59
Kossuth, Lajos 241
Koszorús, Ferenc 78, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 389
Koszorús, Ferenc jr. 22, 78, 84
Kovács, Antal 176
Kovács, Béla 18, 88, 307, 308, 311
Kovács, István 63, 69, 70
Kovács, János 62, 190, 191
Kovács, Kálmán 46
Kováts, Dániel 190, 389

Köhler, Julianna 94, 384
Kövesdy, Zsuzsa 190, 389
Kozma, László 190, 389
Kramar, Zoltán 21
Krúdy, Gyula 147
Kudar, Lajos 136
Kun András 324
Kun, Miklós 388, 389
Kurucz, László 261, 389
Külgusz, Gyulá(né) Mrs. 175
Kutika, Károly 33
Kutor, Lajos 136

L

Lajtha, László 21, 239, 240, 241, 242, 245
Lakatos, Géza 83, 328, 389
Lantos, Tom 80, 81
László, Péter 100, 389
Lázár, Károly 16, 79, 80, 301
Legeza, János 219
Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich 153
Levinson, Margit 236, 238
Liszál, Károly 176
Löffler, Géza 277
Lőcsei, Gabriella 370, 372, 389
Luka, László 288
Lukács, György 151, 305
Lukács, John 26, 389
Lukács, József 190, 389

M

Macartney, C. A. 389
Magyar, Bálint 124
Magyar, László 277
Major, Ákos 38, 39, 48, 390
Majszkij, I. M. 25, 26, 389
Malenkov, Georgi 246

Makine, Andrej 203, 390
 Mária, Terézia 202
 Mariay, Ödön 241, 242
 Marineasa, Viorel 266, 272, 277, 279, 285, 395
 Marinescu, Aurel Sergiu 264, 390
 Marx, István 175
 Máté, Máttyás 252
 Mátyásfalvi, János 22
 Mazura, Vladimir 288
 Merán, Károly 335, 336
 Méray, Tibor 252, 253, 390
 Merk, Vilmos 176
 Mérő, József 39
 Mesterházy, János(né) Mrs., Frank, Irén 92
 Metz, Rezső 125
 Mihály, Károly 176
 Mihók, János 371
 Mikojan, Anastas 246
 Mikó, József 185, 186
 Mindszenty, József 293, 294, 336, 390
 Miskolczy, János 39
 Mistéth, Endre 306
 M. Kiss, Sándor 88, 390
 Mogyorós, Sándor 286
 Molnár, Erik 24
 Molnár, Imre 297, 390
 Molnár, Sándor 176
 Molnár, Tóni 342
 Molotov, Vyacheslav 23, 24, 26, 27, 30, 31
 Morvay Pál 123

N

Nádasdy Nikolits, Andrea 126, 127, 128, 129,
 130, 132, 390
 Nagy, Ferenc 55, 57, 58, 307, 334, 390
 Nagy, Imre 23, 24, 56, 188, 246, 247, 248, 252,
 363, 390

Nagy, István 39
 Nagy, János 175
 Nagy, Varga Dezső 192, 193
 Namier, professor 76, 77
 Németh, Dezső 58
 Németh, Imre 79
 Neulen, Hans Werner 96, 390
 Nikolaescu, Aurel Serghiu 258
 Nikolits, Mihály 126
 Nikolits, Péter 113, 129
 Nicolschi, Alexandru 288
 Normai, Ernő 303
 N. László 342

Ny

Nyeste, Zoli 342

O

Oberschall, Anthony 13, 21
 Ocskay, László 83
 Okolicsányi, Zsolt 22
 Oláh, Dávid 240
 Oltványi, Imre 25
 Orgoványi, István 194, 258, 390
 Orwell, George 149, 308
 Ottlik, Géza 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 185, 390

Ö, Ó

Ö. Kovács, József 167, 390
 Ördögh, Imre 194
 Öze, Sándor 91, 99, 383

P

Palasik, Mária 26, 48, 95, 106, 109, 110, 112,
 391
 Pálffy, György 31, 33
 Pálffy, Géza 302

Pálfi, Imre 57
 Palimay, Ferenc dr. 58
 Pálinskás-Pallavicini, Antal 291, 292, 293,
 294, 391
 Pallavicini András, Borbála 125, 162, 163,
 251, 293, 391
 Pallavicini, Ede 330
 Pallavicini, György 292, 293
 Pallavicini, Zita 291
 Palló, Imre 71, 354
 Papp, Erzsébet 208, 209
 Pásztor, Tamás 58
 Patrascanu, Lucretiu 287
 Pauker, Anna 263, 287
 Perczel, Tamás 342
 Perjés, Géza 30, 391
 Péter, Gábor 29, 33, 69, 109, 194, 223, 308, 311
 Pintilie, Georghe 257
 Piros, László 63, 217, 219
 Pőcze, Tibor 118, 204
 Pogácsás, György dr. 185
 Polgár, Ernő 391
 Pongrácz, Dezső 335
 Pongrácz, Jenő 324
 Popper, Sándor 340
 Pozsonyi, István 169, 171, 185
 Prónay, Pál 43
 Puch, Márton 177
 Puskin, Georgij Makszimovics 38

R

Raffai, István 393
 Raffay, Ernő 391
 Rainer, M. János 26, 246, 247, 391
 Rajk, László 30, 33, 56, 59, 61, 63, 69, 73, 74,
 86, 216
 Rajk, László(né) Mrs., Rajk Júlia 216, 219

Rácz, Árpád 37, 57, 89
 Rákosi, Mátyás 30, 38, 55, 147, 155, 156, 220,
 222, 223, 252, 306, 308, 310, 311, 351, 391
 Ramean, Jean-Philippe 240
 Randall, A.W.S. 76,77
 Rapp, János 171
 Rásonyi, Papp István 342
 Ratkó, Anna 115
 Ravasz, László 63
 Ravel, Maurice 240
 Réti, Tamás 287, 388
 Révai, József 23, 146, 222, 308
 Révész, Géza 31
 Révész, Sándor dr. 39
 Réz, Pál 180
 Ribbentrop, Joachim 27
 Ries, István 24
 Ritzl, Sándor 342
 Romsics, Ignác 189, 190, 391
 Roosevelt, Franklin D. 26, 28, 30
 Rotyis, Péter 38
 Rózsa, Péter 253, 391
 R. Süle, Andrea 287, 388
 Rubidó-Zichy Iván 373
 Rudas, György 224

S

Saad, József 190, 255, 259, 391
 Saláta, Gyula 347
 Saláta, Kálmán dr. 58, 88, 308, 391
 Sándor, Imre 224
 Schiffer(né) Mrs., Szakasits Klára 74, 392
 Schmidt, Jenő(né) Mrs., Tóth, Erzsébet 104,
 105
 Sebestyén, László 204, 205
 Senner, József dr. 58
 Serédi, Jusztinán 361

Simon, István 164
 Sipos, Árpád 354
 Sipos, Árpád(né) Mrs. 354
 Solymossy, Péter 234
 Solymosi Tari, Emőke 22, 239, 241, 392
 Sólyom, László 29
 Somogyi, Miklós 68
 Soós, Mihály 38, 44, 45, 48, 392
 Stalin, Joseph V. 26, 28, 31, 91, 132, 286, 303,
 304, 305, 308, 351
 Standeisky, Éva 392
 Stănescu, Mircea 392
 Stark, Tamás 392
 Stein, George H. 95, 392
 Stoika, Chivu 286, 289
 Sulyok, Dezső 46

Sz

Száberszky, József 308
 Szabó, Ferenc 38
 Szabó, Gyula 133
 Szabó(né) Mrs. Karsai, Mária 22
 Szabó, Miklós 392
 Szakács, Sándor 45, 48, 146, 149, 392
 Szakasits, Árpád 38
 Szalai, Csaba 190, 392
 Szalai, Sándor dr. 39
 Szálasi, Ferenc 16, 43, 45, 301
 Szalóki, Dénes 340, 341
 Szántó, András 113, 190, 385
 Szapáry, Péter 335, 336
 Szaploneczay, Manó 335
 Szarka, László 100, 392
 Szatmári, Sándor 134
 Széchen, Miklós 332
 Széchenyi, Ágnes 235
 Széchenyi, Bálint 125

Széchenyi, Bálint(né) Mrs. 126
 Széchenyi, Éva 125, 126
 Széchenyi, György 294, 307, 393
 Széchenyi, Kinga 190, 222, 255, 393
 Széchenyi, Zsigmond 356
 Szellnár, Aladár dr. 58
 Szendey, Dodó 131
 Szentandrás dr. 136
 Szentirmai, László ifj. 393
 Szentirmai, Tibor 136
 Szentirmay, Tóni 342
 Szent-Iványi, Domokos 23, 24, 75, 76, 254,
 308
 Szerencsés, Károly 38, 40, 41, 48, 393
 Szita, Szabolcs 76, 393
 Szívós, Sándor 38
 Szoltsenyicin, Alekszander 393
 Szöllősi-Janze, Margit 34, 44, 46, 53, 56, 86,
 393
 Sztáray, Zoltán 393
 Sztójay, Döme 43

T

Takács, Ferenc 24
 Tál, Gizella 393
 Tamm, Hugo 233
 Tănase, Stelian 258, 393
 Teleki, Géza 23, 24
 Teleki, László 323
 Teleki, Pál 23, 75, 77, 327
 Thirring, Lajos 99
 Tichi, Antal 176
 Tilkovszky, Loránt 91, 393
 Tito, Josip Broz 90
 Tomka, Ferenc 393
 Tömpe, András 29
 Török, Bálint 75, 76, 89, 254, 393, 394

Tóth, László 388
Tóth, Zoltán dr. 39
T. Varga, György 115, 246, 247, 394

U

Újvári, András 91, 386
Urbán, Károly 391, 394

V

Vadkerty, Katalin 100, 103, 394
Valentiny, Ágoston 24, 37
Valkóczy, József 22
Valuch, Tibor 394
Varga, Albert 190, 394
Varga, András 188
Varga, Béla 22
Varga, Csaba 394
Varga, Jenő 305
Varga, László 307, 394
Varga, Sándor 136
Varga, Zsuzsanna 394
Vásáry, István 24
Vaszileszku, János 324
Vas, István 180
Vattay, Antal 24
Vay, Gábor 332
Vay, Klára 351
Vay, László 297, 332
Vay, Mária 351
Veesenmayer, Edmund 43
Veres, Péter 88, 220, 221, 394
Verseghy Nagy, Elek dr. 225, 359
Verseghy Nagy, Erzsébet 359
Verseghy Nagy, Ferenc dr. 361
Vida, Ferenc 395
Vida, István 88, 395
Vértesi, Mihály 103

Vighi, Daniel 279
Vigyázó, Josefa 366
Vigyázó, Sándor 365
Volin, Lazar 154, 395
Voltaire, François-Marie Arouet 151
Vorosilov, Kliment J. 27, 38
Vörös, István dr. 125, 134, 135, 137, 253
Vörös, János 24, 25

W

Wajda, Andrzej 302
Wallenberg, Roul 82
Walko, Lajos 355
W. Balassa, Zsuzsa 389
Weiss, Edit 237
Wenckheim count 376
Werth, Henrik 328
Winkelmann, Otto 43, 79

Z

Závada, Pál 167, 395
Zichy, Aladár 21, 22, 354, 355
Zichy, Aladár(né) Mrs. Walkó Erzsébet 354
Zichy, Aladár jr. 105
Zichy, Béla 335
Zichy, Domokos 346, 347, 363, 367, 371
Zichy, Domokos(né) Mrs., *see* Bolza Mariette
Zichy, Eleonóra 125
Zichy, György 346, 351
Zichy, György jr. 343
Zichy, Györgyné 351
Zichy, Imre 364
Zichy, János 334, 342
Zichy, László 22
Zichy, Margit 297
Zichy, Mária Ludovika 359, 361
Zichy, Mária Eugenia 364

Zichy, Mihály 333, 374, 375

Zichy, Márta 332

Zichy, Nándor 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 364

Zichy, Nepomuk János 335

Zichy, Ödön 353, 354, 374

Zichy, Ödön(né) Mrs., *see* Bethlen, Gabriella

Zichy, Pál 314, 315, 316, 335, 340, 344, 345,
346, 348

Zichy, Pál Sándor 343

Zichy, Péter 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340,
341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 349, 395

Zichy, Teréz 328

Zielbauer, György 97, 98, 395

Zinner, Tibor 46, 48, 52, 54, 55, 86, 112, 146,
149, 392, 395

Zs

Zsindely, Ferenc 63, 68, 72, 73, 74, 84

Zsindely(né) Mrs., Tüdös, Klára 63, 68, 70,
71, 73, 74, 84, 395

Zsöke, Antal 58

CONTENTS OF CD SUPPLEMENT

CONSEQUENCES OF TRIANON (MAPS)

- Change of the border of Hungary between 1914-1917
- Lost mines of Hungary in 1920
- Lost railway lines of Hungary in 1920
- Lost cultural resources and insitutions of Hungary in 1920

FORCED RELOCATION FROM BUDAPEST

- Relocations by District and by County (2×22 map)
- Relocations by District (22 tabulation)
- List of names of expelled families from Budapest
- The place of destination (county and settlement) of expelled families from Budapest (map)
- Dedication of the deportation monument in Mikófalva, Hungary, June 21, 2008. speech of **Kinga Széchenyi**
- János Mátyásfalvi**: From forced resettlement to „disintegration”

DEPORTATION TO THE HORTOBÁGY, NAGYKUNSAÁG, AND HAJDÚSÁG

- List of names of settlements (the original residence of deported families)
- The “closed camps” for families deported to the Hortobágy, Nagykunsaág, and Hajdúság (map)
- The military maps of the twelve closed camps in 1950, 1982
- The layout of the twelve closed camps
- Edit Gálócsy**: Drawn were made in Árkus closed camp
- Gyula Gulyás and János Gulyás**:
 - In keeping the law – The first documentary film about deported families, those who lived in closed forced labor camps

Dr. Pál Breuer: Founded the Hortobágy Section of the Recsk Association

Iván Jeszenszky: The Ebes story

Attila Jakab: The Ebes Museum –

- The only permanent exhibition in Hungary about the “closed camps” for families deported to the Hortobágy, Nagykunsaág, and Hajdúság
- Deportation Monument in Budapest, inaugurated on 22. October, 2010, speech of **dr. Bence Rétvári**
- The Kulak List of Village of Pécsvárad

FORCED LABOR CAMPS IN ROMANIA

- Forced labor camps in Bánát (map)
- Forced labor camps in Romania (map)

TREATY CONCERNING CZECHOSLOVAK-HUNGARIAN EXCHANGE OF POPULATION 1945–1948 (MAP)

GERMAN-HUNGARIANS DEPORTATION TO GERMANY 1945-1950 (MAP)

DEPORTATION MONUMENTS (Fotos by Mrs. Barnabás Nagy)

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CASTLES OF ZICHY FAMILY

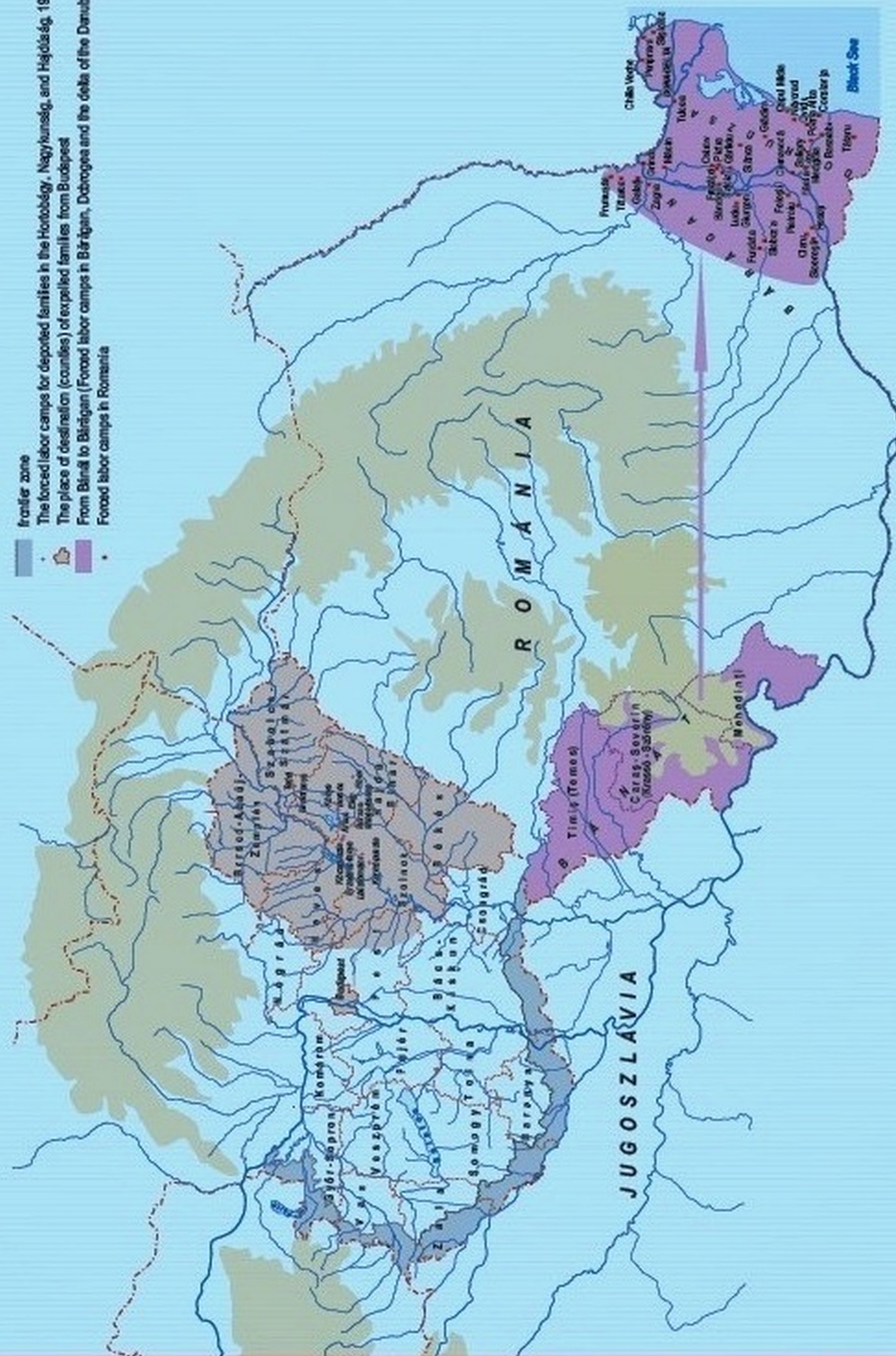
Transfer zone

The forced labor camps for deported families in the Hortobágy. Naeviumsdn and Hald'sdn 1950-1953

The place of destination (countries) of exselled families from Burdenest

the price of cementation (coalmin), on export earnings from diamonds

Second labor camps in Romania



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Banished families

