

Chapter 3

THE POST-WAR ERA

As was the case in the interwar years, the evolution of Ontario's Hungarian community during the post-war era was greatly influenced by events in East Central Europe. The most important development there was the extension of Soviet power hundreds if not thousands of kilometers west of the traditional confines of Russian influence. This expansion of U.S.S.R.'s sphere of political influence came first of all through its defeat of Nazi Germany, and secondly through the gradual subjection of the region to communist rule.¹

Being very much at the centre of the landmass acquired by Stalin's empire during the war, Hungary could not escape these developments. In fact, as an enemy state, it could only expect harsher treatment than allied states, or those that managed to change sides before the end of the hostilities. Indeed, the country became the scene of much bitter fighting during the final phases of the war, and was subjected to a strict occupation regime after it was over. Thereafter it was brought under complete Soviet political control through the gradual establishment of a "dictatorship of the proletariat" a one-party communist state controlled by a communist leadership loyal to Stalin.

These developments in Hungary resulted in the exodus of hundreds of thousands of people. The first and by far the largest wave left when people began fleeing the country in fear of its imminent occupation by the Red Army. The last of them was the exodus that took place in wake of the unsuccessful attempt by the Hungarian people in 1956 to shake off Soviet rule.

Tens of thousands of these refugees from Hungary eventually settled in Ontario. Since Canada was late to open her gates to wartime refugees (the so-called displaced persons), while she

responded generously to the plight of the 56-ers, far fewer of the former settled in Ontario than the latter. Nevertheless, members of both of these groups were to play important roles in the massive transformation of Ontario's Hungarian community in the decades after 1945.

The Displaced Persons

A large variety of people left Hungary during and immediately after World War II. Though the war was the general cause of their departure, their specific motives for fleeing their country of birth were often quite different. Most of them probably left during the winter of 1944-45 because they feared the imminent occupation of their homeland by the Red Army. Some had other reasons. Jews who survived the holocaust often felt reluctance to remain (or to return to) a country that, in their opinion, had betrayed them. Those Hungarian officials who had close ties with the country's pro-Nazi Arrow-Cross regime feared retribution after the war and fled to Germany in the last days of the war. Eventually, they ended up in refugee camps and emigrated mainly to South America. A great number of the officers of the Royal Hungarian Army and Gendarmerie also left the country at this time. After staying in German and Austrian refugee camps for years they scattered to the four corners of the world, including Canada. Still another large group of people who left Hungary as a result of the war were German-speaking Hungarian citizens who were expelled from the country by its post-war regime. In the late 1940s these people were followed by political refugees who chose emigration over life in an increasingly communist-controlled society.²

Canada's gates to Hungarian D.P.s were opened in 1949. In that year well over 1,000 Hungarians were allowed to enter. During the following few years an additional 8,000 arrived before their influx slowed during the early mid-1950s. The majority of the arrivals were adult males. Canadian government statistics describe the bulk of the newcomers as farm workers or unskilled labourers, but this should be taken with a grain of salt: many prospective Hungarian immigrants to Canada denied their education in order to improve their chances of gaining entry as farm workers or manual labourers.³

At least half of the newcomers planned to settle in Ontario. In time even some of those who had gone to other parts of Canada changed their minds and relocated in this province. The 1951

census reveals that out of the 5,500 Hungarian immigrants who came to Canada in the immediate post-war period, 62 per cent were living in Ontario. Almost exactly 20 per cent of the group had chosen Toronto as their home. That city was fast becoming the most important centre of Hungarian community life in Canada, outdistancing Winnipeg, and slowly even Montreal. In Ontario, the second most important such centre remained Hamilton which had attracted some 250 of the new arrivals.⁴

A few words might be said about the relations that came about between the now "old" immigrants (the newcomers of the 1920s) and the new arrivals. Their early contacts, often in the reception centres that were set up for the newly arrived D.P.s, were pleasant enough; however, as time passed some friction inevitably developed between the two groups. As has been explained before, a large portion of the newly-arrived group was made up of upper-class and upper-middle class elements. Their predecessors, the immigrants of the pre-World War II era, hailed mainly from the lower classes. The marked class and cultural differences between them now began surfacing, and became a cause of friction. What made the situation worse, and increased mutual resentment, was the fact that the formerly down-trodden were now the well-off, while the formerly prosperous people were the penniless newcomers. There were examples in this period of onetime servants from the estates of Hungarian noblemen offering employment to their one-time superiors.

Even though the intermingling of the mainly lower-class "old" immigrants and their newly-arrived "social betters" caused some disharmony in the community life of Ontario's Hungarian society, there were many benefits from the arrival of thousands of additional Hungarians.⁵ These benefits were felt first and foremost by the Hungarian ethnic churches. The coming of the newcomers meant, above all, that in many communities the existing Hungarian parishes and congregations expanded in membership. Elsewhere, the coming of the D.P.s made the establishment of new congregations possible. But the most visible benefit the churches received from the new influx was the arrival of scores of refugee priests and ministers. These could assist in the task of catering to the religious needs of both the old and the new Hungarian immigrants. By the early 1950s, the long drought Hungarians in Ontario had experienced as far as the availability of religious leaders was concerned, had come to an end. With clerics being persecuted in Hungary throughout the 1950s, Hungarians in Ontario would be assured of a steady supply of refugee priests and ministers for the time being.

Existing lay associations were less likely to benefit directly from the influx of the post-war refugees. The fact was that the newcomers rarely joined the organizations of the "old" immigrants. The reasons for their not associating themselves with the institutions of the leftists are obvious: their political outlook was nearly diametrically opposed to communism. They had fled the prospect of Soviet rule, or in case of the refugees of the late 1940s and early 1950s, actual communist rule itself, and had no inclination to join any leftist movement in Canada. Somewhat more complex are the reasons why the newcomers usually shunned even the patriotic organizations of the old immigrants. The most important were the class and cultural differences between the two groups. Some of the newcomers simply believed that their predecessors possessed no social graces or refined culture and that shared community life with them would not be worthwhile or even possible. As a result, wherever numbers warranted, the newcomers set up organizations of their own (in which more educated or prosperous members of the old immigration stream were usually welcome). The ethnic churches tended to be an exception to this practice. In them, new and old were expected to be able to get along, something which was easier to accept in theory than to implement in practice.

The reluctance of the newcomers to join the lay organizations of the old immigrants was just one of the blows that was dealt to the latter in the post-war period. Another was the increasing availability of social assistance as well as life and other types of insurance from large insurance companies. These developments lessened the immigrants' dependence on their selfhelp organizations, a fact which led to a slow decline of the numerous sick-benefit organizations that had come into being during the interwar years or even earlier. In some cases, however, these immigrant institutions were replaced in importance by ethnic credit unions, often associated with a parish or congregation. An important role continued to be played by a number of the Province's Hungarian "houses." The one in Toronto seems to have been quite typical of these. Its aims were defined by its leaders in 1954 as the improvement of its members' material and social circumstances, the preservation of the Hungarian culture and its passing on to the next generation, the helping of the members in their everyday existence, and the creation of a bridge between Hungarian community and Canadian society at large.

While traditional Hungarian immigrant organizations continued to function with varying prospects for success and longevity, new ethnic institutions were being established in the province by the newcomers.⁶ Some of these were simply the Canadian offshoots of

the political organizations that the new Hungarian emigration was setting up in the West. The best example for this was the scout movement. With the imposition of communist rule in Hungary, the scout organizations of that country were banned, and scouting had to go underground so to speak. However, a free Hungarian scout movement was brought about in Western Europe and the New World wherever there were recent Hungarian immigrants. Its leaders were recruited mainly from scoutmasters who had left Hungary at the end of the war or in the postwar years. During the early 1950s Canada became an integral yet separate part of a Hungarian Scout movement in exile. Half the Hungarian-Canadian scout troops were located in Ontario.

One of the best-known Hungarian organization in Ontario today is the Helicon Society of Toronto. It is famous above all for the sumptuous annual balls it organizes, but it performs an even more important function in promoting Hungarian culture through supporting a school program and helping Hungarian artists and writers. It is a by now largely forgotten fact that the Helicon Society, much like the Hungarian scout movement, was at one time a part of an international movement of the post-war Hungarian emigration. Interestingly enough, similar Helicon societies failed to survive in other parts of the New World, while the Toronto branch of the movement prospered. Its vitality is a testimony to the strength and relative importance of the post-war group of immigrants in the Hungarian community life of Toronto and its environs.

Another international organization of the post-war immigrants that became very much Toronto-bound is the Rákóczi Association. Like the Helicon Society, over the years this society also performed various functions and to some extent overlapped in its membership with the other organization. It differed from the former partly in the composition of its leadership (coming mainly from former members of the Royal Hungarian Armed Forces), and in its involvement in ventures that had Canada-wide, or continentwide ramifications. The success of both of these societies can be attributed in part to certain individuals whose drive, determination and organizational abilities allowed these immigrant institutions not only to survive for decades, but also to prosper. While it would be difficult to list these people in a short study such as this one, a few might be mentioned by name. Tivadar Borsi was involved in the founding of Helicon society. Gyula Torzsay-Biber was the guiding-spirit behind the operations of this same society from its early days to the 1970s, while Miklós Korponay, a younger man, struggled tirelessly for decades to keep the Rákóczi Association in prominence.

Even more important than the establishment of the Helicon and the Rákóczi associations was the creation in 1951 of a viable federation of Hungarian organizations in Canada.⁷ It may be recalled that the Hungarian-Canadian war-relief movement disintegrated during the winter of 1947-48. Relief efforts continued, however, both through the Kossuth Federation and through a new organization of the "patriotic" Hungarians, the Council of Hungarian Churches and Clubs for Suffering Hungarians. The Council did not achieve the respect needed to enable it to speak on behalf of all or at least the majority of Hungarians in Canada. The need for an organization that could do just that was emphatically pointed out to Hungarians in the summer of 1951, when a delegation of Hungarian-Canadian leaders, many of them from Ontario, appeared before Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent to bring to the government's attention the political grievances of Hungarians behind the Iron Curtain. St. Laurent advised the men present to establish a nationwide Hungarian-Canadian organization that could speak with authority on behalf of all Hungarians in Canada.

The efforts to establish just such an organization took place mainly in Ontario. At first a provisional federation was set up with the participation of leaders and Hungarian ethnic organizations from Toronto and elsewhere. Next, a call was issued for a founding convention. It was signed by six persons, including some of the Hungarian ethnic group's most prominent religious and lay leaders. The convention was held in December of 1951 in the basement hall of Toronto's St. Elizabeth of Hungary church. The meeting established the Canadian Hungarian Federation (CHF), an organization that exists to this day. There was no conflict between the "old" immigrants and the newcomers in the founding of this organization: the leaders of the 1920s wave of immigrants received most of the positions on the federation's executive.

Within a few months' of the CHF's establishment, many of the large and influential Hungarian-Canadian organizations joined it. Especially encouraging was the participation of religious congregations. This was undoubtedly the result of the fact that Hungarian-Canada's most prominent churchmen had supported the idea of a federation from the outset. Probably because of the important role some priests and ministers had in the federation, the organizations of the left stayed away, and a few that joined at first withdrew shortly thereafter. Their absence did not damage the cause of Hungarian-Canadian organizational unity: the early 1950s were time of the Cold War and no Canadian government would have expected "patriotic" immigrants to cooperate with Communists. More serious

than the absence of the left was the lack of proper financing for the federation. Knowing probably that the proposition of collecting fees from individual Hungarians was hopeless (as the Hungarian Canadian Federation of the late 1920s had found out), the leaders of the new federation planned to collect membership dues from member organizations only. These dues were so modest however, that they left the CHF with a very small income. Partly as a result of this, the federation could not play a prominent role in Hungarian ethnic affairs for many years. The event that catapulted the CHF into prominence in the end was the Revolution in Hungary in 1956 and its aftermath in Canada.

The Events of 1956

On the 22nd of October, 1956, anti-government demonstrations took place in Budapest, Hungary.⁸ The next day the unrest spread and erupted into a full-scale uprising against the country's Soviet-backed regime. The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 had many and complex causes. Basically it was a popular uprising against a Stalinist-type communist dictatorship. Soviet-type rule had been imposed on the country during the late 1940s, under the leadership of Mátyás Rákosi. During the early 1950s the communists' grip on the country increased and was accompanied by police terror, persecutions, show trials and a radical transformation of the Hungarian nation's economic, social and cultural life. The drastic measures to transform the country's economic system led to large-scale mismanagement, a decline in living standards and worker dissatisfaction. The extreme forms of political repression resulted in seething hatred of the regime by a wide range of persecuted groups. The excessive demands made on the peasantry in form of forced collections, and the campaign of forced collectivization in the countryside alienated Hungary's rural folk from the regime. The half-hearted attempts at retrenchment from the Stalinist methods that were made after the start of de-Stalinization in the Communist Camp served only to increase the Hungarian people's disdain for the regime they had to endure since Rákosi's rise to power. Under the circumstances it was not surprising that the news of anti-government demonstrations, and of clashes with the police, sparked a nationwide uprising against a hated and despised regime.

The week that followed the events of the 23rd of October in Hungary saw the complete collapse of communist authority. Not

even the use of locally stationed Soviet troops could save the Hungarian communist government. Only the intervention of some twenty divisions of freshly “imported” Soviet forces could re-establish the authority of the communists. That intervention began on the 4th of November. Before complete communist control was reimposed – and the country’s borders were once again sealed shut – over 200,000 Hungarians fled Hungary in part to protest the crushing of their attempt to rid their country of foreign rule. The arrival of Hungarians in the West was to have important consequences on the Hungarian community of Ontario.

Developments in Ontario

The news of the outbreak of the uprising in Hungary was received by the Hungarian community in Ontario with great interest. In Toronto, which by then was the largest and most influential center of Hungarian life in the Province, all regular social and cultural activities were suspended and frenzied work was started in hope of aiding the revolution in Hungary.⁹ Many of the Hungarian community’s efforts aimed at calling national and international attention to the events in Hungary. Another type of activity aimed at protesting against Soviet intervention in Hungary. Throughout these days many demonstrations were held in Ontario, the most important taking place in Toronto and in Ottawa. In the latter city a long motorcade passed by the Soviet Embassy. At the same time that these demonstrations were held, Hungarians were collecting money for medical supplies to be sent to Hungary, donated blood for the same purpose, and a few people were beginning preparations for the despatch of volunteers to fight in Hungary.

After the massive intervention by fresh Soviet troops on the 4th of November, these activities were transformed into efforts to help the revolution’s refugees. As it became obvious that supplies of food and medicine could not be sent into Hungary, the money and other donations collected for this purpose were diverted for refugee resettlement programmes. In the meantime, funds continued to be raised for the benefit of the refugees.

How many of the thousands of Hungarians who were streaming into Austria at the time would eventually re-settle in Canada was not clear at the time. The Canadian government was at first somewhat slow to act in the matter.¹⁰ It did place Hungarian refugees in a preferred status as far as processing for admission was concerned, but it failed to take decisive action for their wholesale admission. As

the public demand for vigorous steps increased, the government changed its policies. Some of the calls for the free admission of the refugees came from Ontario's churchmen and newspapers; especially emphatic was the call issued in this matter by the Toronto *Globe and Mail* on the 24th of November. Four days later the federal government announced a dramatic programme of refugee admission, allowing for the speedy transportation and permanent settlement of thousands of Hungarian refugees in Canada. According to J.W. Pickersgill, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration at the time, the government made its decision in this matter before much of the demand for a change in policy was made (see the Honorable Jack Pickersgill's comments on this printed in the appendix to this volume).

In this process of arranging for the re-settlement of refugees in Canada, an important role was played by the government of Ontario. During the second half of November, several steps were taken by Queen's Park to prepare the entry of Hungarians into the Province. J.P.S. Armstrong, Ontario's Agent-General in London, was sent to Vienna to gain an impression of the approximate number of refugees who would be interested in settling here. In the meantime, a delegation of Ontario officials met with Pickersgill in Ottawa to discuss Queen's Park's plans for the bringing of Hungarian refugees to Ontario. Apparently, the Ontario government was ready to charter ships and aircraft for bringing Hungarians across the Atlantic, but abandoned these plans when it learned that Ottawa had made arrangements to undertake this task. The provincial government however, did go ahead with a scheme of establishing refugee reception centres to accommodate on a temporary basis an as yet undetermined number of refugees.¹¹

The federal government's new policy on refugees, announced in Ottawa on the 28th of November, envisaged the admission to Canada of an unlimited number of Hungarians from the refugee camps of Europe. The cost of transportation was to be assumed by the government, and admission was for permanent rather than temporary purposes. To facilitate the transfer of refugees to Canada, negotiations were undertaken with transportation companies to provide passage. Pickersgill flew to Vienna to oversee the re-vamping of the procedures used by his department for the processing of refugees for immigration purposes. This involved the relaxing of application and screening procedures to the extent that in some cases a full examination of the newcomers was postponed until after their arrival in Canada. Measures were also taken for the temporary relocation of a large number of refugees in Holland,

France and Britain until their admission to Canada could be put into effect.¹²

In the meantime, the movement of Hungarian refugees to Canada had already started. The pace of refugee arrivals picked up early in 1957 when it was decided that Hungarians should be transported here with the Air Bridge to Canada or the ABC scheme. This plan had originally been devised to bring British immigrants to the country, but when the Hungarian refugee problem presented itself, the decision was made to fill any vacancies on ABC flights with Hungarians. Before the fall of 1957, over 200 such flights took place from Britain, and many of them brought refugees. For some time in this period, two aircraft chartered for this purpose, brought Hungarians to Canada directly from Vienna. Others made their way here by transatlantic ships that left the ports of Western Europe or Italy on periodic basis.¹³

Some statistics on refugee arrivals might be of interest. By the end of 1956, 4,167 had reached Canada. By the fourth week of January, this number had reached 9,913, and by the end of that year, 36,718. By this time most of those who had been in temporary asylum in Holland, France and Britain, had reached Canada. The influx of refugees declined considerably after 1957. Authoritative sources estimate the total number of refugees coming to Canada to be 37,565.¹⁴

Helping the Refugees

While the governments in Ottawa and Toronto devised their admission and re-settlement policies, the Hungarian community of Ontario was involved in preparations for their reception. A major aspect of these preparations was a campaign to raise funds for the benefit of the refugees. The campaign had its beginnings in the collection of money for the helping of the Revolution; however, when it became obvious that the uprising would be crushed, the aim of the campaign was changed to aiding the refugees. At first the fund-raising effort was handled by the Hungarian community itself, but when it became obvious that it had neither the expertise nor the institutional structure to handle a major campaign, the Red Cross took over. Many prominent Canadian public figures participated in the drive. In the end, close to \$900,000 was collected.¹⁵

While money was collected by the Red Cross, the Hungarian community concentrated on helping the refugees who were arriving daily. Newcomers were welcomed at ports and air terminals. They

were transported to reception centres or to homes of long-time Hungarian residents. Those refugees who were not placed in government-maintained lodges, were given food, clothing and temporary shelter. Many of them were also helped in finding apartments, jobs, and in the purchasing of household necessities. Many Hungarians in Ontario took complete strangers into their homes, and for weeks or even longer treated them as relatives. While this kind of work was being done by individuals, Hungarian-Canadian immigrant institutions were also deeply involved in the work of helping the refugees in their re-settlement. Much of this organizational work was being done by the ethnic churches. Some of these functioned as reception centres, placement offices, and places that maintained family counselling as well as basic language training. Often religious differences were blurred, and refugees in need of advice or help went to whichever church had the best reputation of offering a sympathetic hearing and effective aid. Still another task for the leaders of the Hungarian community's organizations was to intervene with Canadian authorities if any refugee, perhaps in ignorance of Canadian customs or laws, got in trouble with the police.¹⁶

There can be no doubt that this kind of help was extremely valuable to the newcomers. The reception of newcomers by friendly and helpful co-nationals must have been reassuring to bewildered people who were coming to a world they knew very little about. The aid and comfort that was extended to Hungarian refugees by Hungarians who had been living in Ontario certainly helped in their early adjustment to social, economic and cultural conditions in this country.

The Refugees: Social and Occupational Composition

The Hungarians who came to Ontario in 1956-57 were predominantly young people. Of the 37,565 refugees who entered Canada in 1956-57, almost a third were under the age of twenty four, while only about 5,000 were over forty-five.¹⁷ Thousands of them were university students, intent on careers as professionals. In regard to the religious composition of this mass of refugees it should be mentioned that two-thirds of them were Roman Catholics, Catholics being the most numerous in Hungary's population. The rest of the refugees were made up of Protestants and Jews. The members of the Jewish faith or origin were over-represented among the newcomers. It has been estimated that almost 7,000 Hungarian Jews

entered Canada after the revolution.¹⁸ Hungary's Jews were a highly urbanized group, and there is every reason to believe that the overwhelming majority of those that came to Canada settled in the main centres of Jewish-Canadian culture: Montreal and Toronto.

According to well-informed sources, professional and intellectual elements were over-represented among the refugees. Nearly a quarter of refugee men, and more than a third of refugee women belonged to this category.¹⁹ A great many of them were engineers, medical doctors and technicians. A large portion of the refugees, and especially of refugee men, were skilled workers: mechanics, metal workers, electricians, pipe fitters etc. Apparently, agricultural workers were hardly to be found among the masses that left Hungary.²⁰ The majority of the refugees came from Hungary's cities, in particular, from Budapest. It is not surprising that most of these newcomers settled in Ontario's cities, especially Toronto.

Those Ontarians who had expected the 1956 wave of Hungarians to fill unskilled jobs in the Province's labour market were probably disappointed as most refugees quickly graduated from these positions to something more in line with what they had been doing before their departure from their homeland. This transition from menial work to semi-skilled, skilled or even highly skilled positions was especially quick for people with skills that did not require extensive re-training in language and Canadian practices. Thus, technicians, some engineers, professionals such as musicians and artists, had an easier time in resuming their earlier career patterns than, for example, lawyers or teachers in the humanities. A few of the latter would never be able to make the transition to the Canadian equivalent of their professions in the "old country."

A large portion of the refugees were college or university students. It has been estimated that more than a thousand of these had entered Canada before the opening of the 1957-58 academic year. Many of these students originated from the city of Sopron, located only a few kilometers from the Austrian border. In 1956 Sopron had two institutions of higher learning, a school of forestry and an institute of mining engineering. During the revolution the students of both schools joined the uprising. For a while, they even contemplated the defending of their city against advancing columns of Russian tanks. When this plan came to naught, most of the students, and many members of the two schools' faculty, fled to Austria, some of them carrying their weapons with them. There they waited, some with the hope that they would return to their hometown along with Western or United Nations forces that would liberate their country from Russian occupation. Soon, however, they

realized that their fate would not be a return to Hungary but exile in the West.²¹

The largest concentration of these refugees from Sopron were the students and faculty of the forestry school. At first they thought of reconstituting themselves as a Hungarian college in Austria, but the Austrian authorities balked at the idea fearing that the Soviets would accuse their country of violating its recently won neutrality. Accordingly, the Soproners made inquiries elsewhere, and in the end it was Canada that accepted them as a school. During early 1957 the Sopron forestry people: students, faculty and families of the latter, moved to British Columbia, and in the fall of the year resumed their studies in their own school which became an adjunct of the Forestry Faculty of the University of British Columbia. The school existed until the last of its students graduated in 1961.

The students of the Sopron mining engineering school were not able to reconstitute their institution in exile. Even though most of them came to Canada, they could not resume their studies in a body, and in their own language. Nevertheless, they made up the bulk of the over one hundred Hungarian refugee engineering students that registered in the University of Toronto in the fall of 1957.

Adjustment to Canadian Life

Rebuilding their disrupted lives was not easy for the Hungarian refugees who settled in Ontario during 1956 and 1957.²² Some of the difficulties they encountered were the same that had faced members of previous waves of immigrants from Hungary to this land. These were the problems of adjusting to a new social and cultural environment and learning a new language. But other problems were different. The 1956 refugees had gotten used to a social and economic system that was very different from Canada's, or for that matter, from that of pre-war Hungary. Hungary of the 1950s was among other things a welfare state where the individual's dependence on the state was accepted and even fostered. Certain sections of society, such as children of industrial workers, were even pampered, provided they supported the country's new ideological system. While much if not all of Hungarian society endured a very low standard of living, people were assigned to jobs by state employment agencies, accomodation (however substandard) was found for those favoured by the state, education and medical care were free, and paid vacations were provided for many workers. For people who took these things for granted, the idea of having to find

jobs, apartments on their own, and paying for college education as well as for vacations, came as a shock. The refugees found freedom in Canada but they felt that they exchanged it for a great deal of social security. True, for a while the Canadian state did support the refugees, but this might just had the effect of encouraging some to expect state support not on a temporary but on a permanent basis. Of course, those refugees that found satisfactory work soon abandoned any craving for state handouts and might even revelled in the wages they got, which seemed much higher than those that they had been used to in Hungary. Yet even these people were prone to "culture shock" when they had to pay high fees for medical care or for the college education of their children. A few refugees, however, quickly adjusted to Canada's free enterprize system and became involved in business ventures, usually on a small scale at first, and made a quick adjustment to Canadian social and economic values.

A more complex problem was the process of emotional adjustment to the change that had taken place in many-a-refugee's life. Unlike members of previous waves of immigration from Hungary, the refugees did not have a chance to reconcile themselves to the idea of leaving their native land before their arrival to Canada. The "old immigrants" had months if not years to contemplate the prospect of abandoning their homeland, relatives, friends and everything else they had been close to. In contrast, most of the refugees made the decision to leave Hungary in an instant. Many of them never even contemplated leaving their country until they found out that the police were looking for them, presumably because of their role in the events of the Revolution. These people left at once (if they were lucky), and headed for the Austrian or Yugoslav border. A few weeks later, they found themselves in Toronto, or Hamilton, or Welland, or some other Ontario centre, and only then did they have time to reflect on the tumultuous events that had crowded their lives since those heady days of late October. Some of them went into shock or were overtaken by grief. Many refugees came without their families; these found the prospect of being separated from their loved-ones hardly bearable.

Professional people, skilled workers, intellectuals had still other problems in adjusting to Canadian conditions. Professional practices, technical procedures, educational preparation in the various occupations, were different in Hungary and Canada. Hungarian doctors, dentists etc., for example, could not get their degrees recognized in Canada. They had to pass Canadian examinations before resuming their practices. This was not easy for many, largely

because of the language barrier. Most technicians had to get used to imperial measurements. Many refugees simply had to re-educate themselves in the process of resuming their old careers.

Impact on the Hungarian Community in Ontario

The coming of the refugees had a great impact on the Hungarian communities of Ontario.²³ This is particularly so in the case of this province since nearly half of the refugees that came to Canada settled here rather than other parts of Canada. The 1961 census figures indicate that Toronto received the largest number of them of any city in Canada: nearly 8,700. Hamilton became the home of about 1,350 of them, and Ottawa of 700. In the case of Toronto and Hamilton this meant that an existing Hungarian community doubled or tripled in size, but in the case of Ottawa, it practically brought the birth of a new Hungarian colony. Another city to receive a Hungarian community, however small, was Kingston.

The social, cultural and economic impact of the coming of the refugees on Ontario's Hungarian community is more difficult to gauge. The arrival of tens of thousands of people was bound to have a profound effect on an immigrant group hardly more numerous than the mass of newcomers. The coming of the previous group of Hungarians had resulted in a substantial increase in the number of Hungarian ethnic organizations in the province. To some extent the same phenomenon was observable after the arrival of the refugees.

Several of the organizations of the Hungarian "freedom fighters" went into exile after November of 1956, and some of these established "branches" in a number of countries, including Canada. One such organization was the World Federation of Hungarian Freedom Fighters, whose Canadian branch became known as the Freedom Fighters' Federation of Canada. Quite often in its existence it operated out of Toronto. Another Hungarian refugee organization was the Federation of Hungarian University and College Students. After the suppression of the uprising in Hungary, this organization established itself in the West and maintained its headquarters in Western Europe. One of its more influential branches was the Federation of Hungarian University and College Students of North America. Within the latter organization sub-branches came into existence. Some of these existed for some time in Ontario, but only at the University of Toronto did a viable local unit exist for more than a brief period. At one time, some of the Canadian refugee students aspired to a separate national status

within the wider federation rejecting the idea of being represented at the Federation's world congress by delegates chosen mainly by the American branches of the North American refugee organization. The controversy over the status of the Canadian refugee students did not last long however, as these organizations proved ephemeral. Once the people who had been active in the Hungarian student movement of 1956 completed their university studies, their organizations gradually became social clubs for students of Hungarian background, refugee and non-refugee alike. At the University of Toronto such an organization existed throughout most of the 1960s, but thereafter only at such times as an enterprising student or a group of students bothered to keep one functioning.

Despite the example of the Freedom Fighters' and refugee students' organizations, in Ontario the refugees were not prone to the establishment of many new ethnic organizations. Perhaps by 1956 there were so many of these (established by the "old immigrants" and the D.P.s), that there was little need for new ones. The possible exception to this generalization is the birth of a few artistic and professional groups after 1956, most of them brought about by refugee artists, musicians or professionals. Perhaps the best example for one of these is the Kodaly Choir (later Ensemble) of Toronto, about which more will be said later in this volume. Other examples were organizations of professionals; in the course of time Hungarian engineers, writers, agronomists, teachers all had their more or less successful (or, one might say, more or less ephemeral) associations functioning in Canada, many times with their headquarters being in Toronto or another Ontario city.

While the coming of the refugees had an important impact on the organizational life of Ontario's Hungarian community, and even more important consequence of their arrival was the fact that they created an expanded market for Hungarian culture in the province. The addition of thousands of persons to the existing Hungarian colonies in the province, only few years after a previous group of Hungarian immigrants had arrived, led to a substantial expansion of all kind of cultural (including sports) activity within this ethnic community. This meant that some special types of immigrant activities that could not be feasibly carried out before, became possible with increased numbers. Ethnic schools could be organized for children even where previously numbers did not warrant their establishment. Soccer teams could be brought into existence in places where before there were not enough young people to play the game on the level of other, often larger ethnic groups. More importantly, some sub-groups within the province's Hungarian

community now could flourish as a result of the influx of more of their members. Perhaps the best example for this is Toronto's Jewish-Hungarian community. After 1956 this sub-group would be responsible for a great deal of cultural and other activity. Some of this, such as Hungarian-Jewish religious life, was exclusive to the sub-group, but other aspects of it, for example the maintenance of a Hungarian-language theatre, was shared with the larger Hungarian community.

The Hungarian Ethnic Press from the 1950s

The best historical evidence of the increase in the cultural, social and other activities of Ontario's Hungarian communities in the 1950s, mainly as a result of the coming of the D.P.s and the refugees, was the growth and increased diversification (and, in some cases, sophistication) of the Hungarian-language press in the province.²⁴

At the beginning of the new, post-war Hungarian immigration to Ontario, little was left of the Hungarian-language press that was started by the previous wave of Magyar immigrants. What market there was for Hungarian newspapers and periodicals was filled by press-products from outside of the province. The most widely-read Hungarian-Canadian newspaper in Ontario was the *Canadian Hungarian News* of Winnipeg, but there were also several American-Hungarian papers that had large circulation here. Of the papers founded in Ontario in the interwar years, only the *Worker* survived.

The 1950s changed this situation dramatically. At least a dozen new papers were founded during this decade, some of which survive to our very day. The *Kanadai Magyarország* (Canadian Hungarians), one of the large Hungarian-language papers in the province today, was started in 1951 by László Kenesei. The *Magyar Élet* (Hungarian Life), in many ways the former paper's rival, transferred its operations to Toronto from Argentina in 1957. Both of these papers have several thousand subscribers and are read in Ontario as well as other Canadian provinces and American states. The *Menora Egyenlőség* (Menorah Equality), still another sizable paper, was started in the early 1960s and serves the Hungarian Jewish community of the province, and indeed, much of North America. All three of these papers are printed in large format and their spread varies from eight to sixteen pages. All three are produced in Toronto.

The 1950s and early 1960s saw the establishment of numerous other Hungarian-language press-products in Ontario. Many of these were quite specialized publications. Perhaps the most special-

ized of these were two Toronto papers that dealt only with news of the sports world. Because these papers were quite unique in the history of the ethnic press in the province, it might be worth while to tell their history in some detail in a few paragraphs.²⁵

It is a widely-known fact that the 1950s marked the golden age of Hungarian sport. Though a small country both in size and in the size of its population, Hungary was a sports superpower. Hungarian athletes were competing with those from the United States and the U.S.S.R. for top honours in international competitions, and Hungary's national soccer team scored victory after victory against such established giants of the soccer world as England and Scotland.

Among the thousands of Hungarians who came to Ontario in this decade there were many athletes and even more sport enthusiasts. Their thirst for sport news, and especially, sport news from Hungary, created a demand for an ethnic information service. It was in these circumstances that Toronto's *Sporthíradó* (Sport News) was born in January of 1954. Its founder was Kálmán Bálint, a sports-enthusiast who came to Canada in 1951 and who, within a few years, opened a book-store, acquired a press, and launched a number of unique publishing ventures which survived until his health deteriorated in the 1960s.

Bálint's first undertaking was the launching of the *Sporthíradó* in January of 1954. As he had no formal training in sports or sports reporting, he recruited as editor another Hungarian immigrant, Géza Szuper, a soccer coach. Bálint became the publisher, Szuper the editor, and Mrs. Bálint produced the publication with a Gestetner machine. As the little bulletin was sold for only a dime, production costs had to be covered from the profits of the Bálint family's book-selling business.

The publication's first issue appeared on 23 January 1954. It was entitled *Sport és Társadalmi Híradó* (Sport and Social News). It contained mainly soccer news: information on the coming World Soccer Championships, and speculations about the forthcoming match between Hungary and England. Subsequent issues occasionally featured political news, news of the Toronto Hungarian community, notices about services of interest to newcomers, and, occasionally, an editorial. The latter were anti-communist in tone. One of them stated that the explanation for the great achievements of Hungary's athletes lay mainly in the fact that Hungary's communist regime was in position to reward lavishly those who lived up to its expectations, and could punish with impunity those that did not.

The publication changed little during the balance of 1954. It appeared fortnightly, more often if there were sport events of

interest to Hungarians, less if there were problems with production. Distribution was through the Bálint family's bookstore, a few Hungarian restaurants in Toronto, and similar places in a few other Canadian cities. As time passed, the number of distribution places increased, and a few centers in the United States were added to the list. The number of community notices also increased with the passage of time.

In 1955, the paper assumed the title *Sporthíradó* (Sport News). Appropriately, the coverage of community events became limited to minimum, although there would be more news of Hungarian sport activity in North America. Changes during the next few years would be an increase in the paper's price to 20 cents, and the introduction of an annual subscription fee. A more important change would come in December of 1957. The Bálint family had purchased a press, which made the publication of the *Sport News* in newspaper form possible. An enclosure in the 4-page newspaper was another press-venture launched by the Bálints, the *Magyar Nők Lapja* (Hungarian Woman's Weekly). Readers were told that for the time being the two papers (similar in format and size) were to be considered as one newspaper.

In 1960 Bálint and his editor, Szuper, parted company, but the latter took the paper with him and continued to publish it. As Szuper registered the paper first, he kept the original title. Bálint also continued with the venture, and published the *Magyar Sportheradó* (Hungarian Sport News). His new editor was another post-war newcomer, László Szilvássy, a writer. During the following year the Bálint family's press was damaged by fire and publication ceased for some time. In November of that year the *Hungarian Sport News* was revived by another Hungarian publisher and sports-enthusiast, Károly Székely. About eight years later, Székely sold the paper to László Berta, still another Hungarian publisher. Berta, however, soon left for the United States, and an end came of this particular venture in Canadian ethnic sports news publishing. It was just about this time that Bálint, the paper's original founder, died. The *Sportheradó*, now in Géza Szuper's hands, survived him however, and was still on the newsstands when information for this volume was collected.

By then some of the Bálints' other publications had ceased, as did many of the other, smaller and often more specialized press-ventures that had been born in the 1950s and the 1960s. A few of these might be mentioned by name, while their detailed history awaits examination by historians.²⁶ The *Egységes Magyarság* (United Hungarians) served the Hungarians of the Niagara Peninsula. The

Élet: Dohányvidéki Kisujság (Life: Little Newspaper of the Tobacco District), served the Delhi and Tillsonburg area. Among the religious papers that for a time appeared in Ontario were the Roman Catholic *Szív* (Heart), and the Reformed *Uj Élet* (New Life). Still another publication was the *Világhiradó* (World Review), launched by the Bálint family. This magazine tried to interest Hungarians in the entire diaspora, bringing news and pictures from all countries where there was organized Hungarian community life. Alas, this enterprise also went the way of many of the other contemporary ventures, and had to leave Canada and later cease publishing altogether.