STUDIES

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Generation Groups in the History of Hungarian Minority Elites

This study discusses an issue that forms part of the historical periodization of Central European Hungarian minorities. It attempts to map the development of elites who constructed and led Hungarian minority communities, as well as the strategies and socialisation frameworks they developed for these communities. This issue represents one component of the development structure in which I interpret the history of Hungarian minorities. This model also focuses on periods defined by epochal divides, and the changes in relations that can be reconstructed from texts and activities of elites throughout various periods. In this study, "relations" refer to the following integration approaches: minority elite views on society and the organisation within their own community; the relationship between the minority and (majority) central governmental institutions; the relationship between the minority and the (linguistic) mother country; and adaptive approaches of the minority towards international processes and intellectual movements.[1]

In this study I present generation groups and strategies by offering an overview of the eighty-year-long development of elites representing Hungarians living abroad. In doing so I would like to continue efforts began in the thirties. At that time, the central issue of debates concerned to what extent the intellectual-cultural-spiritual development (in modern terms "the values") of Hungarians who became a minority was different from "public

[1] For a more detailed explication of the three-element model see Nándor Bárdi: Összezárkózás és szétfejlődés. Kísérlet a magyar kisebbségek történetének periodizációjára. [Tight-drawing and diverging evolution. A periodisaton of the history of minority Hungarian societies] In Fedinec Csilla (ed.): *Nemzet a társadalomban*. [Nation in Society]: Budapest: Teleki László Alapítvány, 2004. 251–274.

spirit" in Hungary.[2] I cannot undertake to answer this question, but detailed information can be obtained from the research of the Balázs Ferenc Institute and György Csepeli–Antal Örkény–Mária Székelyi.[3] Furthermore, I do not aim to complete the indispensable group-bibliography suggested by László Szarka.[4] Instead, I attempt to grasp a group socialized in a given context of policies towards minorities and Hungarians, and to map their strategic choices and decisions.

Comparisons tend to blur differences in this research, but as the elites living in different countries were in contact with each other, and could become acquainted with each other's ideas through literature and media, it can be proven that they have influenced each other. Group-similarities allowing for the (re-)construction of groups is also sustained by the fact that, as the chronological sketch shows, the period frames are roughly the same.

The history of Hungarian minorities in Central Europe in the interwar period involves four countries (Austria, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and the Kingdom of Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia). After 1944, with the annexation of Transcarpathia to the Soviet Union, their numbers grew to five. Then, after 1989, with the independent statehood of the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Croatia we can speak of these processes occurring in eight states. In this study I discuss only the four largest Hungarian minority groups, since it is in their case that we can speak of more or less continuous institutionalisation of minority society and of autonomously organised communities in the political sense as well.

Before mapping the generation groups, I would like to point out the most important epochal divide. The history of Hungarians abroad can be divided into four main periods: a) in the interwar period, Hungarians abroad

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2 For an overview of the issue and published documents see Nándor Bárdi: A kisebbségi értelmiség önképe a második világháború előtt. [The self-image of minority intellectuals before the Second World War] *Magyar Kisebbség,* Nr. 3–4, 1998. 55–59. See the studies of Béla Nánay, Pál Szvatkó, István Borsody, Ferenc Kende, József Venczel, Imre Mikó, Jenő Krammer, 60-127.

3 Dobos Ferenc (ed.): Az *autonóm lét kihívásai kisebbségben*. [The Challenge of Autonomy] Balázs Ferenc Intézet – Osiris, 2001; and Csepeli György – Örkény Antal – Székelyi Mária: *Nemzetek egymás tükrében. Interentikus viszonyok a Kárpát-medencében*. [Nations – Reflecting Each Other. Intererthnic relations in the Carpathian Basin] Budapest: Balassi, 2002.

4 Szarka László: A (cseh)szlovákiai magyar közösség nyolc évtizede 1918-1998. [Eight decades in the history of the Hungarian community in (Czecho)slovakia.] In László Tőth – Tamás Gusztáv Filep *(eds.): A (cseh)szlovákiai magyar művelődés története 1918-1998.* [The history of Hungarian culture in (Czecho)slovakia] vol. I., Budapest: Ister, 1998. 55.

lived in constitutional monarchies in two states,[5] and in civic republics in two others (1918—1938/1940/1941.) b) After the first and second Vienna Treaties and in the period from the attack on Yugoslavia until the end of the Second World War, most of the territories where minority Hungarians lived returned to Hungary. The younger belonged to the majority nation for the first, and the older for the second time (1938/1940/41–1944). Due to the lack of community revitalisation, the Hungarian population remaining a minority in Slovakia and Southern Transylvania was greatly weakened in its very existence and in its national knowledge. c) The third period is that of the socialist world system, in which, apart from Hungarians in Austria, each community was confronted in a different way with the various versions of socialist minority policy (1944–1989.) d) In the period following the Central European regime changes, and in the context of the establishment of the rule of law and Euro-Atlantic integration, not only the differences in national interests, but, in the case of national minorities, clashes of conflicting nation building emerged.

I consider 1944–45 the most important turning point in this eighty year span, apart from its beginnings with the peace treatises and changes of empire following the First World War. This epochal divide marks four significant changes in the situation of Hungarian minorities.

In the interwar period, political parties representing Hungarian minorities gained legitimacy through Hungarian voters on parliamentary and, in certain cases, local government elections. They formulated their minority policy and promoted the interests of their communities based on these elections. With the demise of constitutional monarchies and civic republican forms of state, or more exactly with rule of law and parliamentary democracy, the situation changed. Those that tried to promote the interests of Hungarians were either institutions created from above by the majority communist government of the given state (Hungarian People's Union, CSEMADOK – The Cultural Union of Hungarian Workers in Czechoslovakia), or certain individuals and groups of intellectuals, who had not been endorsed by their own national minority group in elections. Hence, *we are not dealing with independent minority politics* – as in the interwar period and after 1989 – *but with the promotion of interests in the framework of the given state / majority party government policy towards Hungarians.* The minority group could not formulate its own vision of the future, elect its own leaders or control its own institutions. This,

[5] Royal dictatorship was later instituted in both countries: in the Kingdom of Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia in 1929, and in Romania in 1938.

however, was part of the greater context of the "Leninist nationality policy", the very simplified essence of which was that communists should first come to power (ruling from a single centre, based on the principle of democratic centralization), and then national problems can be dealt with on the basis of proletarian internationalism.

The second change of seminal importance was *nationalisation, collectivisation, and the expropriation of ecclesiastical and community possessions.* This not only meant a significant loss of social and economic positions for minority Hungarian societies, but also made it impossible for them to support their own community institutions. The situation was aggravated by the fact that rule of law ceased in the region, and that peace treaties abolished the international complaints forum which in the interwar period could be used to attract attention.[6] Loss of institutions and atomisation were followed by a near ban on travelling with private passports from the late forties until 1956 making contact with Hungary nearly impossible.

As a result of these social changes, *Hungarian minority societies* that until then could be considered fully stratified *became much more homogeneous.* The strata of landowners, mill-owners, financial and commercial enterprisers, and the bourgeoisie disappeared. The number and importance of burgesses and tradesmen also significantly decreased. Apart from the Holocaust and population exchange in former upper Hungary, deliberate changes of nationality proportions in small Hungarian towns, and the destruction of rich peasantry triggered this. By the fifties, the lack of Hungarian intellectuals became acute everywhere.

As a result of the Second World War, the Holocaust, and of the waves of emigration that followed, the *Jewry* basically disappeared from Central European countries. *Germans* partly *fled* during the Second World War, were partly *relocated* to, or, in the case of Romania, were *"bought out"* by the mother country from the '70s and '80s. Thus, Hungarians remained the most numerous national minority group in the region. *Hungarians therefore became the focus of majority policies towards minorities.* The most numerous ethnic group of the region were the Gypsies. Their problems, however, only caught the attention of political elites in the neighbouring countries in the second half of the nineties. Until then, the Roma issue was dealt with separately from the policy towards Hungarians.

6 The right of complaint in minority issues at the League of Nations.

If we regard the 19th and 20th century history of Hungarians as an instance of Central European nation building, the key historic question would be how Hungarian minority elites created after the First World War used this national knowledge, and how they shaped (or could shape) their communities in the framework of state institutional orders serving other nation building projects.

1. In the history of Hungarian minorities, the first defining generation, the *torn away Hungarians* existed until the thirties.[7] They were basically pre-1918 regional, Hungarian political elites who remained on territories lost by Hungary; elites socialised in pre-war Hungary, and those who participated in the public life in the new conditions, having gone from majority to minority. It was they who mostly determined Hungarian minority policies in the interwar period. Their vision of the future was defined by the hope for the restoration of historic Hungary. They trusted that the change of empire was temporary, and basically, though not without objections, accepted the instructions (and the support) of the Budapest government. In Romania and Yugoslavia, the elite contrasted the new situation with the liberalism of pre-war Hungary (the situation of nationalities and the self-government system), and demanded that the majority elite follow the liberal practices of the early 20th century. The other line of argument they followed existed in all three countries; demanding respect for the stipulations of the minority protection treaty and the national declarations of the (later) winners (the Alba Iulia Resolutions, the Pittsburgh Treaty).

From the phenomena dividing the generation groups, I consider the following to be the most important:

1. The pre-1918 party allegiances and the pro-labour or pro-independent leanings were defined by whether one had been a Member of Parliament or a higher municipality official before the war, or rose to such a position only after 1918.

2. Divergences arising from their respective fields of activities. We must differentiate between the interests of cultural, political and economic minority elites. *The torn away Hungarians* basically corresponds with the following divergences over strategies:

a) Some believed that Hungarians should be organized from below, involving wide social strata. Others held that politics was the task of the historic, ruling classes, which possessed the necessary political culture and back-

7 Béla Nánay: A kisebbségi magyar lélek. [The minority Hungarian spirit] *Láthatár,* Nr. 1, 1937. 3-14.

ground. This was of great importance as in this case leading minority political positions would be occupied by "reliable persons" who would not deviate from the Budapest directives.

b) A debate between activists and pacifists arose concerning integration into the political life of the succession states. In Romania this debate opposed autonomous political organization with a policy of drift and position conservation. In Yugoslavia, activists supported autonomous political organization while pacifists thought more in terms of economic organization and regional-national self-assertion. Yet, the debate carried on in both countries until the formation of parties in 1922. In Czechoslovakia, the same divergence surfaced in debates over participation in ever-changing government coalitions. In Romania, by the thirties, the issue was transformed into a debate over self-organisation of minority society or the sheer preservation of positions, but soon it became obvious that without organising the minority society, the social and economic positions could not be preserved.[8]

c) The twenties cherished a revisionist vision of the future, but the officially endorsed political aim was that of national autonomy. Several autonomy projects were drafted in Transylvania, whereas in Transcarpathia, they demanded the political autonomy promised in the peace treaties.[9] The other alternative vision of the future relied on the development of regional political or cultural ideologies: Transylvanism in Transylvania, autochthonism in Transcarpathia, Slovenskoism in Slovakia, and a local literary idea, the "colour locale" represented by Kornél Szenteleky in Vojvodina.

Szüllő Géza, president of the Christian Socialist Party of Czechoslovakia took the most consequential stance regarding the relationship with the Budapest government and the climate of opinion in Hungary. He gave rather overt primacy to the political values of Hungary over those of the (minority) Hungarians. He followed a national, not a national minority policy.[10] I con-

8 This is clearly exemplified by an anthology of the *Hitel* journal from Cluj: Éva Záhony (ed.): *Hitel, 1935–1944.* Budapest: Bethlen, 1991, vol I–II.

9 Nándor Bárdi: A szupremácia és az önrendelkezés igénye. Javaslatok, tervek az erdélyi kérdés rendezésére (1918-1940). [Supremacy and the demand for self-government. Proposals and plans for solving the Transylvanian question, 1918–1940.] In *Források és stratégiák*. [Sources and strategies.] Csíkszereda: Pro-Print, 1999. 29-113.

10 Béla Angyal: A „magyarországi" és a „magyar" politika vitája a Felvidéken. [The debate between „Hungarian" politics and politics „in Hungary" in Slovakia] In Nándor Bárdi, Csilla Fedinec (eds.): *Etnopolitika.* [Ethnopolitics] Budapest: Teleki László Alapítvány, 2003. 127-140, and Béla Angyal: Szüllő Géza elnökségének időszaka. [The period of Géza Szüllő's presidency] In *Érdekvédelem és önszerveződés. Fejezetek a csehszlovákiai magyar pártpolitika történetéből 1918-1938*. [Interest promotion and self-organisation. Chapters

sider György Bethlen, leader of the Hungarian Party from Romania to belong to the position conservationists. He had, however, been elected leader against the same intents in Budapest, since György Bernády, whose candidacy István Bethlen endorsed in 1924, and whom the governing Romanian Liberal Party also trusted, would not have been able to integrate the minority politics of Hungarians in Romania (to uphold the unity of the party). In Yugoslavia, the Hungarian members of parliament, Imre Várady and Dénes Sterliczky, preferred background-talks to open confrontations, although the Budapest government pressed them for more activism. They did not have significant manoeuvring space, as they could only win a seat in parliament on the lists of the Serbian radical party.

To clarify these categories, in Romania we can speak of the left and right wings of the Hungarian Party. At the time, Károly Kós, Árpád Paál, Miklós Krenner, and György Bernády were considered to belong to the former, while Emil Grandpierre, György Bethlen, Elemér Gyárfás, Elemér Jakabffy, and Gábor Pál to the latter.[11] In Slovakia, József Szent-Iványi, Jenő Lelley, Ödön Tarján, István Maléter can be mentioned among the society-building activists, whereas on the other side István Kürthy, Iván Rakovszky, Géza Szüllő could be named.[12] In Transcarpathia, I consider Ákos Árky, Endre Korláth and Aladár R. Vozáry to have belonged to the position conservationists.[13] In Vojvodina it seems artificial to divide the more important public figures into distinct groups. Their relationship to the Belgrade government offers a possible criterion for differentiation. György Sántha, Imre Várady, Árpád Falcione, Leó Deák supported the autonomous functioning of the party, although one that would

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from the history of Hungarian party politics in Czechoslovakia] Galánta-Dunaszerdahely: Fórum Intézet-Lilium Aurum, 2002. 131-180.

11 Nándor Bárdi: A romániai magyarság kisebbségpolitikai stratégiái a két világháború között. [Minority policy strategies of Hungarians in Romania in the interwar period] *Regio,* Nr. 2, 1997. 32–67. Nándor Bárdi: Az ismeretlen vízmosás és a régi országút. Stratégiai útkeresés a romániai Országos Magyar Pártban (1923-1924). [The unknown ravine and the old road. Finding ways and strategies in the Hungarian Party, 1923–1924.] In *Etnopolitika, op. cit.* 153-194.

12 Béla Angyal: A „magyarországi" és a „magyar" politika vitája a Felvidéken. op. cit. 127-140. For a work uncovering inner stratification and dilemmas see the collection of studies by Gusztáv Tamás Filep: A *hagyomány felemelt tőre.* [The raised dagger of tradition] Budapest: Ister, 2003, 443.

13 Csilla Fedinec: A *kárpátaljai magyarság történeti kronológiája 1918-1944.* [The historic chronology of Hungarians in Transcarpathia, 1918–1944.] Galánta-Dunaszerdahely: Fórum Intézet-Lilium Aurum, 2002. 533. Csilla fedinec: *Iratok a Kárpátaljai magyarság történetéhez, 1918–1944. Törvények, rendeletek, kisebbségi programok, nyilatkozatok*. [Documents for the study of the history of Transcarpathia, 1918–1944] Somorja-Dunaszerdahely: Fórum – Lilum Aurum, 2004.

observe the Budapest directives, whereas Gábor Szántó accepted the full political integration into the political organization of royal dictatorship, and by doing so achieved some small results (the naming of Hungarians to public offices). Former bailiff, Lukács Pleszkovich, the president of the Subotica People's Society in his turn advocated the co-operation of the Vojvodina minorities and leaned towards the democratic party.[14]

2. The second generation appeared in the early thirties, and publicists of the time saw in them the birth of the *minority man.* Members of this generation gained their secondary education after 1918, and no longer belonged to the majority. They were familiar with the official language, climate of opinion, and interest promotion techniques of the given country. They were also in contact with contemporary youth movements in Hungary,[15] with whom they shared the same cultural idols (Endre Ady, Dezső Szabó, Béla Bartók, Zsigmond Móricz, and popular writers). Partly based on the findings of Jenő Krammer, characteristics of their approaches can be summarised as follows:[16] a) They stood for a concept of the nation that no longer included only the historic ruling classes, but peasantry and workers as well. They separated the concept of home from that of patria; and considered their patria their region and Hungary \. In clarifying their relationship to the succession states, they tried to situate their problems in the context of Central European nationality issues. b) The new concept of the nation, which directed their attention towards the village and popular culture, gave their movements more social sensitivity. It became clear that "the preservation of the nation" was impossible without "the elevation of the people." c) This called for modern programs of economic and social organisation. Self-organisation and bourgeois transformation were central to the concerns of all of them, despite their ideological differences. The organizers of minority Hungarian co-operative movements also came from these circles. d) By the thirties it became clear that national autonomy could not be achieved in the existing framework, therefore organizing their own (Hungarian) society, educational system, co-operative movement, training of elites etc. became prominent concerns

14 An overview more detailed than the works of Enikő Sajti, but without any documents published is János Csuka: A *délvidéki magyarság története 1918–1941.* [The history of Hungarians in historic Southern Hungary, 1918–1941.] Budapest: Püski, 1995. 499.

15 Bertalan András Székely: A *közép-európaiság eszméje a magyar tudományban, közgondolkodásban és a közművelődésben.* [The idea of central-europeanness in Hungarian science, everyday mentality and culture] Budapest: Népművelési Intézet, 1984. 61.

16 Jenő Krammer: A *szlovenszkói serdülők lelkivilága*. [The psychology of slovensko teenagers] Budapest, 1935. 77.

in the process of drawing tight the nation. They conceived of national autonomy not only in terms of a legal form provided from above, but, combining the idea of Hungarian union with the corporatism of the time, thought of it as something to be constructed by self-organising social institutions.[17] It also became clear that identity ideologies were unable to cross ethnic boundaries in the political sense, and could only have a cultural and literary impact.[18] e) This was the period when political ideologies became central in forging minority elites into groups. The most important such ideologies were: civic radicalism – anti-totalitarian liberalism, Marxism, social democracy, Christian socialism, National Socialism.[19]

It is easiest to refer to the different generation groups via reference to their movements and publications. In Romania, we can note the Transylvanian Youth group, the *Hitel* circle, the MADOSZ (Hungarian Worker's Union) and the participants of the Târgu-Mureș Reunion (including: Béla Jancsó, József Venczel, Imre Mikó, Sándor Vita, Béla Demeter, Áron Márton, László Bányai, Lajos Jordáky). In Czechoslovakia, the Sarló (sickle) movement and the Prohászka circles can be named (Edgár Balogh, Lajos Jócsik, Pál Szvatkó, Rezső Szalatnai, Rezső Peéry and some other public figures from their generation: István Borsody, János Esterházy, and Andor Jaross). In Yugoslavia the *Kalangya* circle, the reading group of the Subotica People's Society and the Belgrade and Zagreb Hungarian student organizations can be mentioned.

The Second World War prevented this generation from becoming public figures. Most Transylvanian figures ascended to leading positions after the

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17 József Venczel: Metamorphosis Transylvaniae. 65-73., idem, Művelődéspolitikai terv. [A cultural policy plan] 269-277., Dezső Albrecht: Társadalmunk átalakulása. [The transformation of our society] 98-108., idem, Magyar Szövetség [Hugarian Union] 119-120. In *Hitel.* Kolozsvár 1935-1944. Ed. Záhony Éva, Bethlen Gábor Könyvkiadó, 1991, 386.

18 K. Lengyel Zsolt: *Auf der Suche nach dem Kompromiss.* Ursprünge und Gestalten des frühen Transsilvanismus 1918-1928. München: Ungarisches Institut, 1993. 470; György Nagy: A kisebbségi helytállástól a közösségi desirabilitásig és vissza. A transzilvanista ideológiáról. [From minority resistance to collective desirability and vice versa. On the transilvanist ideology] In *Eszmék, intézmények, ideológiák Erdélyben.* [Ideas, institutions and ideologies in Transylvania] Kolozsvár: Kom-Press-Polis, 1999. 7-37. Csaba Utasi: *Irodalmunk és a Kalangya*. [Our literature and the Kalangya] Újvidék: Fórum, 1984. 208.

19 László Virt: *Nyitott szívvel. Márton Áron erdélyi püspök élete és eszméi*. [With an open heart. The life and ideas of Transyvanian bishop Áron Márton] Budapest: Teleki László Alapítvány–XX. Század Intézet, 2002. Szabolcs Ferenc Horváth: A romániai Országos Magyar Párt viszonya a jobboldali áramlatokhoz a harmincas években. [The relationship of the Hungarian Party to the right-wing movements in the thirties] *Magyar Kisebbség,* Nr. 3, 2003. 368–386. Gusztáv Tamás Filep: A *hagyomány felemelt tőre*, op. cit, 443.

reannexation and exercised a great influence on the politics of the Transylvanian Party. MADOSZ leaders organized the Hungarian People's Union after 1944. József Venczel and Imre Mikó again played a decisive role in the academic life of Hungarians in Romania in the sixties, while Áron Márton served as Roman Catholic bishop until the seventies. Of the Slovak and Yugoslav generation group, only members of the communist party later became public figures.

3. The following generation group includes the latter, along with individuals socialized in the forties, who in the fifties *represented Hungarians as old left-wingers.* Here one must be very careful with wording in order to avoid unilateral formulations as we can only analyse individual careers, the instances when and where the given persons were mere power instruments, and when their work included the promotion of minority interests. I include here primarily those persons who in the given period (from 1944 to the sixties) headed Hungarian institutions and represented the community to the outside. These individuals had participated in communist movements within of the given countries before 1944 or even before the war. They hoped that the internationalism the communist party stood for would elevate people from minority existence and would do away with ethnic divisions. They saw securing bilingualism and maintaining the minority system of institutions as guarantees of the preservation of national identity. Since in the interwar period minorities were over-represented in the communist parties of the succession states, and could not really experience negative discrimination, they were deeply shocked by the anti-Hungarian measures of 1945–46, by the prevalence of the majority nation in rapidly growing parties, and by the marginalization of "old nationality cadres" in the sixties. This generation was the first to formulate the grievances of Hungarians in terms of the socialist equality of nations and nationalities, and it was they who built (or in Transylvania defended) the aforementioned institutions guaranteeing the use of the mother tongue. This generation carried out the socialist transformation and revitalisation of their own society.

In Romania, the representative personalities of this group were the leaders of the Hungarian People's Union, Gyárfás Kurkó, Sándor Kacsó, as well as Edgár Balogh, József Méliusz, István Nagy, László Bányai, Lajos Takács, Lajos Csőgör. Whether persons belonging to the innermost circle of Romanian party leadership can be included here presents another case. This is the case for Sándor Mogyorós (Alexandru Moghioroş) and László Luka (Vasile Luca), who as public figures represented the will of the communist party, and not the Hungarians. In Slovakia, those protesting against relocation and population ex-

change, and the leaders of the Hungarian Committee can be included here (Zoltán Fábry – not a party member –, István Fábry, János Kugler, István Major and Gyula Lőrincz, founder and president of CSEMADOK.) In Yugoslavia we cannot point to such a discernible group, but Pál Sóti, belonging to Tito's centre, and through him József Nagy, Mihály Olajos, György B. Szabó, all of whom played a decisive role in the Hungarian affairs of Vojvodina political and cultural life belong here.[20] In Transcarpathia we cannot speak of a distinct group playing such a role, only of individuals representing Hungarians, among whom were author László Balla, and historian János Váradi-Stenberg. Although I have assembled here a great number of careers, I must emphasize the important difference in their attitudes and of the turning points in their sidetracks – suffice it to say one can hardly compare the careers of Gyárfás Kurkó and Balla László.

4. The next generation includes the key figures who, socialized as "left-wingers" in the fifties and sixties, promoted minority interests inside the system in the second part of the sixties. Given the crucial importance of 1968 in each territory, for all practical purposes they can be termed *the sixty-eight generation*. These intellectuals made extraordinary achievements in the field of ideology, as concerns both their relationships to socialism and to the majority nation. We can only grasp bits and pieces of their careers today as the memoirs they have this far published have mostly proven biased when confronted with available archive materials. I see no point in confrontations and callings to account here. What should be of greater interest to us are the complex inner inducements and the complicated workings of give-and-take socialization, which could reveal the mechanisms of the system. It would be presumptuous to analyse these without case studies, which have not been written. What we are dealing with here, however, are not only the individual accomplishments, but through them, the manifestations of the minority, Hungarian, public spirit. CSEMADOK activists, intellectuals organising people's academies, debate clubs, language cultivation movements, cultural festivals all shared enlightening, public-spirited ideals.

The common elements of their careers can be listed as the following: a) they were mostly first generation intellectuals attending some kind of higher education in the fifties and sixties. They became leaders of cultural and literary institutions, and chief editors of journals. b) They were quite familiar

[20] János Vékás: A jugoszláviai magyarság történeti kronológiája 1944-1997. [The historic chronology of Hungarians in Yugoslavia, 1944–1997.] vol. IV. Lexicon, manuscript, TLA Kv 1958/97.

with the majority language and culture. They were well acquainted with the inner workings of party organs and knew how to use this information. c) Apart from propagating the popular service ideology characteristic of the previous, leftist generation, they were also familiar with the language of allusions and double meanings shared by their community[21] (such as the András Sütő's topos: "grass bends but survives"). d) Their activity in the contexts of the given country and its policy towards Hungarians is inseparable from the power struggles inside the given party elites. At this time they tried to present themselves everywhere as autonomous groups promoting community interests. When the failure of this strategy became obvious, they switched to different ones: protest and stepping down, defence of institutions and conservation of positions, emigration to Hungary or serving the given political system. g) While in 1968 they mostly resented the declaration of the Hungarian Pen Club on the shared responsibility for Hungarian literatures abroad,[22] by the late seventies/early eighties they developed their connections with Hungary, and in the last twenty years they have also joined the cultural and political elite of Hungary. From the mid eighties, they played a significant role in shaping the policy towards Hungarians of the Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party, especially in determining Hungarian foreign policy to stop treating the issue as an "internal affair". e) They played a decisive role in minority Hungarian parties dominated by the cultural elites after 1989. Populist Party aims, everyday political work and professional politicians edged off this generation from the frontline. In certain cases, however, they played a crucial part in the selection of new leaders, i.e. Sándor Fodó's opinion of Miklós Kovács, András Sütő's and Géza Domokos' endorsement of Béla Markó's candidacy, the consultative role of Tibor Várady and Nándor Major in the affairs of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians, and the links of László Dobos with Együttélés (Coexistence).

In Romania I include in this group – without aiming at a complete list – Ernő Gál, editor in chief of *Korunk,* Győző Hajdú, editor in chief of *Igaz Szó,* Géza Domokos, director of Kriterion publishing house, author András Sütő, author Pál Bodor, Sándor Huszár, editor in chief of *A Hét*, Károly Király, prime secretary of the Covasna county party organization (1968–1971), and philosopher Sándor Tóth. In Czechoslovakia: jurist Rezső Szabó,

21 A detailed analysis of the issue is provided by József D. Lőrincz: A kelet-európai ambivalens diskurzusról. [On the ambivalent Eastern-European discourse] *Regio*, Nr. 1, 2002. 226–248.

22 *Élet és Irodalom,* May 18, 1968.

CSEMADOK leader László Dobos, jurist József Gyönyör, and literary historians Lajos Turczel and Sándor Csanada. The Hungarian youth movements institutionalised in 1968 present a different stratum, from where Miklós Duray, László A. Nagy, and Sándor Varga emerged. In Yugoslavia, members of the April *Híd* group, who appeared together in the Hungarian literature of Vojvodina in 1950, pursued parallel careers in the Vojvodina political, literary and academic life, but were all connected to the *Híd* journal: author and politician Nándor Major, literary historian Imre Bori, poets József Papp and Kálmán Fehér, and author Károly Ács should be included in this group. A younger group, also familiar with the Western European new left, the first generation of *Új Symposion* consisted of: poet Ottó Tolnai, author László Végel, jurist Tibor Várady, literary historian János Bányai and prose-writer István Brasnyó. In Transcarpathia, this „sixty-eight" group is identical with the first literary circle of their new literature, the Forrás Studio of whom we find author Vilmos Kovács, linguist Sándor Fodó, cultural historian András S. Benedek, poet László Fábián Vári, poet Zselicki József and Gyula Balla.

5. After the changes in the late sixties, the new generation of the seventies and eighties could not completely integrate into the insufficient Hungarian institutions. As compared to the earlier generation, they were much more diverse, and not only in their world views, but as they markedly stood outside party rhetoric and the bargaining mechanisms of national minority politics and created their own system of expression (public discourse and public sphere.) They functioned both inside the system (in editorial offices and educational institutions), and in separate informal/illegal organizations. Thus, for lack of a better term we might call them *self-organizers*, or, to use a more lofty formulation, *minority-dissidents*. Apart from the *Committee for the Protection of Hungarian Minority Rights in Czechoslovakia* and the *Ellenpontok* (Counterpoints) circle, created with the explicit aim to promote minority interests, they formed cultural organisations that could not be integrated into institutional frameworks of the time. Members included young, university-educated, Hungarians who had participated in the Hungarian public life of the universities, were familiar with Hungary (the Slovaks did part-time studies in Hungary), and who were connected to the opposition groups of the eighties.

In Romania the circle of disciples of György Bretter marked the search for a new philosophical language in the early seventies, a language that did not fit into the publication possibilities of *Korunk* and Kriterion. These included: author Vilmos Ágoston, author and philosopher Péter Egyed, philosopher Vilmos Huszár, philosopher Gusztáv Molnár, linguist Sándor

N. Szilágyi, and philosopher Miklós Gáspár Tamás.[23] Political protests had already begun with protests and memoranda written to Ceaușescu and party leaders by members of the previous generation, Károly Király, Lajos Takács, András Sütő, after the Jiul valley miners' revolt in 1977–78. The Transylvanian Report published in 1978 and 1989 by Sándor Tőth and Zádor Tordai addressed western public opinion and illegal media from Hungary. Active resistance began with the 1982 issue of *Ellenpontok* samizdat journal.[24] Hungarians from Romania came to know the publication edited by Antal Károly Tőth, Attila Ara-Kovács and Géza Szőcs primarily through Radio Free Europe. After the authors were discovered and persecuted, Ara-Kovácz and Tőth had no choice but to emigrate to Hungary, where the former founded the illegal *Transylvanian Hungarian News Agency* which tried to provide Western agencies with reliable information concerning Transylvania via several hundred reports issued between 1983–1989. As the genesis of *Ellenpontok* can be partially traced back to the narrowing Ady-circle from Oradea, the *LIMES* circle, functioning between 1984–86, and organised by Gusztáv Molnár, also came into existence due to limited publication possibilities. Molnár served as an editor of the Kriterion publisher and convened potential authors to varying locations to discuss topics relevant to Central European and all-Hungarian processes after the foreseeable collapse of the system. Such participants included among others: Sándor Balázs, Gáspár Bíró, Péter Cseke, Éva Cs. Gyímesi, Ernő Fábián, Levente Horváth, Csaba Lőrincz, Gusztáv Molnár, Levente Salat, Sándor N. Szilágyi, András Visky. Molnár's premises were raided in 1986, after which he emigrated to Hungary. The circle also included Sándor Balázs, who in 1989 published the *Kiáltó Szó* (Voice that Crieth) samizdat with two issues total. In Miercurea Ciuc, the Centre for Regional and Anthropological Research began in 1980 under different names, with the participation of local social researchers. The bases of their researches on everyday minority life and of their institutional analyses at this time triggered significant debates after 1989. The group was also present in the official public sphere through publications in the *Tett*

23 Their collective volume is *Szövegek és körülmények*. [Texts and contexts] Edited and introduction by György Bretter, Bukarest: Kriterion, 1974. 121.

24 The new collected edition of the publication: *Ellenpontok*. Edited by Antal Károly Tőth, Cf. Idem, Az Ellenpontok rövid története [The short history of Ellenpontok] 5-20., Géza Szőcs:Tizenkét képkocka a nyolcvanas évek elejéről. [Twelve stills from the early eighties] 349-354., Attila Ara-Kovács: Tětova ellenállás. Román ellenzék, magyar szamizdat. [Undecided resistance. Romanian opposition, Hungarian samizdat] 355-364., Csíkszereda: Pro-Print, 2000. 368.

(Action) supplement of the A *Hét* weekly and at the Kriterion publishing house. The most prominent members of the group included: Zoltán A. Biró, Júlianna Bodó, József Gagyi, József D. Lőrincz, Nándor Magyari, Enikő Magyari Vincze, Sándor Oláh, Zoltán Rostás, Endre Turós.[25] The *theory of science* group from Sfântu Gheorghe, lead by Levente Salat, functioned as the reading group of local intellectuals in semi-illegal conditions. Neither group addressed political issues directly, but qualified as a "reasoning association", that in the second half of the eighties, defined the non-public debates of Hungarian intellectuals from Romania, as well as the academic–self-interpreting public discourse after '89.

The *Committee for the Protection of Hungarian Minority Rights in Czechoslovakia,* lead by Miklós Duray, was based on a group socialised in the Slovakian club movement, who graduated from the university together in the eighties, with links to the Prague opposition, but connected mainly to the democratic opposition in Budapest. Apart from status reports and school preservation activities, Károly Tóth, as editor of the Madách printing house, organised the programme of Hungarian social research in Czechoslovakia under the heading of the *Új Mindenes Gyűjtemény* series, whereas István Gyurcsik worked in the CSEMADOK as a "legal aid official". Members of the group included: Iván Gyurcsík, László Gyurgyík, Imre Molnár, Zsuzsa Németh, László Öllős, Eleonóra Sándor, and Károly Tóth.

In Yugoslavia we cannot speak of a similar political opposition. A highly qualified group of editors came together around the *Új Symposion* journal, critical of the Vojvodina Hungarian institutions and elites, and attentive to the changes in Hungary. Its members were: János Sziveri, Béla Csorba, Erzsébet Juhász, Alpár Losoncz, and Ferenc Mák. The line taken by the journal, one of reactions to current issues, presented a real problem for the Hungarian cultural elites of Yugoslavia who accepted the extant power relations, and who destroyed the group of editors in a witch-hunt-like manner. This affair, along with other Hungarian "scandals" in Vojvodina, prove interesting not only for their content, but also for the resulting internal reprisals among Hungarian elites – among certain members of the Yugoslav generation of the sixties and those identifying with Titoism in the seventies and eighties – and hence, truly show the divided nature of the elite. This was the country where the well-integrated elite was best connected if not with the central (Belgrade), then at least with local (Vojvodina - Novi Sad) power, and hence, to the ideas of an ideologi-

25 For an overview of the history and researches of WAC, see their web site: www.topnet.ro/wac

cally surpassed period; to Yugoslavism. The most important representative of this Hungarian elite, Nándor Major was the political leader of the region when territorial autonomy of Vojvodina was retracted. This relatively "good situation", and subsequent integration sparked divisions of political organizations of the Yugoslavia Hungarian minority after 1989, or in the manner of István Bibó's, their "political hysterisation".

This attempt at a generation-based periodisation is only a partial approach to mapping the processes of change in the history of minority Hungarian elites, remains to be completed by the two, additional elements referred to in the introduction. The present approach is also limited by the fact that it only analyses these processes from the perspective of the activities of minority elites. To gain a full picture, we should also periodise the Bucharest and Budapest governments' policy towards Hungarians, as well as the transformation of the minority issues in the context of transformations in international relations. Furthermore, I have approached the issue here from the perspective of the elites and macro-correlations, not from an everyday-life, grassroots perspective. The approach could be completed if the minority historical periodisation would be confronted with the epochal divides in the given country's economic and social history.

It is clear from the present draft, however, that the history of Hungarian minorities is basically a history of reactions to changes in high politics. They participated in these processes not as a dominant party, but from a defensive position. Hence, the political stances and minority policies of the elites aimed at maximum exploitation of the given possibilities.

Translated by Vincze Hanna Orsolya