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Migrations during World War II*

The number of the inhabitants of Hungary—if we take into account the current territory of the country—was 9.000.316 on January 31, 1941. The first census after the war was held in January 1949 and it recorded that 9.000.204 persons were living in the country. The difference between the figures of the 1941 and 1949 censuses is some 110.000. The decrease of the population by 110.000 can be regarded as relatively insignificant if we consider the casualties of war and the inevitable mobility during the war. It is still so even if we take into consideration also the natural growth of the population in the years of the war and subsequent to the war, which did not surpass the 300.000 persons. It might seem on the basis of the figures of the censuses before and after the war as if the war had not left any profound marks on the population. Yet, these censuses record only snapshots on the situation of the population and thus, the results do not inform us about the fact that a great part of the population was replaced between 1941 and 1949 as a result of the migrations during the war and the deportations. The losses of war, the fleeing of masses, and the resettlements brought about a change in the ethnic aspect not only of the Carpathian Basin but also of East Europe as a whole. Although post-war population mobility differs in its character and volume from the removal of people which took place in the first years of the war, the two migration movements are closely connected to each other: the refugees of 1944–1945 were mostly those settlers who, between 1938 and 1943, arrived from the territory defined by Trianon, from outside the historic borders.

The kind of nationalism, which aimed at the creation of an ethnically homogeneous nation state was the main driving force of the events in Central and East Europe. This idea regarded the national minority as a foreign body and given this, it took its liquidation and assimilation to be the responsibility of the majority nation. In the young Central and East European States, which were still in the phase of the establishment of the nation but at the same time had minorities, the fear of falling apart resulted in the endeavours aimed at weakening the minorities with instruments chosen according to the possibilities the international arena or their political arrangements granted to them.

The idea of the nation state was not a new phenomenon. The foundations of the currently used conception of the nation were laid down by the French encyclopaedists. According to the great encyclopaedia, a nation is made up of all those, who are the subjects of a sovereign power. The French Constitution of 1791 declared it that the country was one and indivisible and all of its citizens belonged to the French nation. All this appeared when the country was practically multilingual and only a minority spoke the French of the administration. Its application took countries to pieces and brought to life others. Unified Italy and Norway were established on the basis of this principle, while

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multiethnic empires—Turkey, Russia, and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy—were dissolved after 1918. The thoughts of that epoch of Gusztáv Gratz summarize best the significance of the nation conception after World War I. He wrote the following in his study entitled 'Political Development of Modern Times': '*The principle of nationality has a strong suggestive influence on the masses even today and maybe more than ever. People are willing to make such sacrifices for it, which they would be reluctant to do for anything else. There were times when people threw their life away, went into exile or to the stake because of their religious beliefs. These days, the principle of the nation rules over the minds with an equal might.*'¹

It was Hitler, who began the large-scale development of an ethnically homogeneous German Empire, to start the domino effect of migrations in the war. Between 1929 and 1943, Germany entered into as many as nine contracts aiming at 'moving the German ethnic groups home' with various East and Southeast European countries (Italy, Estonia, Latvia, the Soviet Union, Romania, Croatia, and Bulgaria). Some 800.000 German 'folks' were settled in territories annexed to Germany during the first years of the war.

However, the programme of the formation of an ethnically homogeneous nation state by means of deportations emerged not only on the part of Germany. Sabin Manuila, director of the National Institute of Statistics, prepared the Romanian plan of 'permanent arrangement' for Marshall Antonescu in October 1941. According to the plan, the removal of some 6,2 million people would have been necessary in order to turn Romania 'Romanian'.² They expected the realisation of this from a 'heroic' generation. Manuila planned not for the short run for sure, as the outlined population exchanges should have been carried out for the most part in regions, which were not under the supervision of Romania. During the war, 'only' the removal of the Jews and Romas of Bukovina and Bessarabia into Transnistria was carried out. The majority of the about 300.000 deported Jews died because of the mass executions and the inferior living circumstances in the ghettos of Transnistria.

It was a peculiar coincidence that parallel to the elaboration of the Manuila plan, the leader of the emigrant Czechoslovak government in London, Eduard Beneš launched a campaign in the autumn of 1941 for the 'solution' of their minority question through deportations.³

The idea of creating an ethnically homogeneous country occurred also to Hungarians. Prime Minister László Bárdossy mentions in his memorandum written to Miklós Horthy on August 26, 1946, that Henrik Werth, chief of staff, urged on the deportation of ethnic Slavs and Romanians living within the borders in one of his memorials. The exact content of this document is unknown; nobody has examined the plan on the level of the government. '*The design elaborated in the memorial of the Chief of Staff is fic-*

¹ Gratz, Gusztáv, A Jelenkor politikai fejlődése [Political Development of Modern Times]. In: *A mai világ képe*. Eds.: Kornis, Gyula, Gratz, Gusztáv, Hegedűs, Lóránt, Schimanek, Emil. Vol. II. Királyi Magyar Egyetemi Nyomda, Budapest, s. a. p. 290.

² Szász, Zoltán, Tévutak keresése [Searching for wrong ways]. In: *História*, 1999/8. pp. 17–20.

³ On the campaign of Beneš see Korom, Mihály, Az Atlanti Chartától a potsdami kollektív büntetésig [From the Atlantic Charter to the collective punishment of Potsdam]. In: *Századok*, 1998/3. pp. 553–581.

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tion; we cannot even think of its practical execution but its realization—given the power conditions of the Hungarians—would not be in the interest country either’ commented Bárdossy on the idea.⁴

Some crazy schemes were published on the journalistic level. In the beginning of the campaign against the Soviet Union, Péter Vida pressed the ‘repatriation’ of the kin peoples of the eastern territories, the Bashkirs, the Chuvash, and the Mordvinians in his article entitled ‘*For a Hungarian Carpathian Basin*’.⁵ Sándor Dessewffy came forward with the idea in the February 1943 issue of the *Erdélyi Szemle* (Transylvanian Review) that ‘we either have to eliminate our ethnic groups from the country—to forestall their independent national ambitions in advance—or, much rather, we have to create such circumstances that they would assimilate of their own free will’. Dessewffy would have wanted to transfer ethnic groups, which were present on the territory of 15 counties onto the territory of one or two counties. He would have moved settlers to the depopulated areas over from the scattered farms of the Alföld, the market towns that were unable to develop any further, and from among the eastern kin nations.⁶

The minority policy principle connected to the name of Prime Minister Pál Teleki rejected the idea of the nation state and found even the forced assimilation to be contrary to Hungarian traditions and interests. The conception of Teleki urged on the introduction of various forms of autonomy taking into consideration the stage of development of the ethnicities and the situation of their settlements.

The conception and ethnic policy of Pál Teleki was embraced by a wide consensus in the Lower House. Only the Hungarian Nazis opposed the ideas of the Prime Minister. On June 7, 1940, Kálmán Habay and Pál Vágó submitted a bill on the ‘Self-government of the ethnic groups living on the territory of the Hungarian Holy Crown’. Thus, the Hungarian Nazis wanted to introduce an ‘ethnic group’ autonomy instead of the system of territorial autonomy. They based this on the principle that, with the exception of the Jews, all nationalities had the right to arrange their own ‘ethnic communities’. Although the organization on the basis of the principle of ethnic groups tallied with the endeavours of the Nazi inspired ‘popular German’ movement of the Germans of Hungary, the plan was not backed up officially on the part of Germany. The debate and the press campaign induced by the bill ended with the exclusion of Habay and Vágó from the Parliament.

The official guiding principles of ethnic policy aimed at the formation of a consensus between the state-forming Hungarians and the ethnicities. However, not even the most complete realisation of the ethnic conception would have satisfied the Slovaks, Romans, and Serbs, who had belonged once before to a majority nation. In defence of their eth-

⁴ *Horthy Miklós titkos iratai* [Secret documents of Miklós Horthy]. Eds.: Szinai, Miklós and Szűcs, László. Kossuth Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1965. p. 307.

⁵ Vida, Péter, *Magyar Kárpát medencét* [For a Hungarian Carpathian Basin]. In: *Kárpátmedence*, September 1941. Vol. I. no. 5.

⁶ The study of Sándor Dessewffy is analysed and quoted in Juhász, Gyula, *Uralkodó eszmék Magyarországon, 1939–1944* [Prevailing ideas in Hungary, 1939–1944]. Kossuth Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1983. p. 172.

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nicity, the minorities in Hungary relied primarily on their mother countries, the governments of which endeavoured to retaliate for the imagined or real offences against their co-nationals ended up outside their borders on the Hungarians under their rule.

However, on the basis of an ethnic conception, the Hungarian leadership refused every initiative, which would have changed the ethnic composition of historic Hungary by force. The Hungarian government was not willing to accept population exchange and the modification of borders offered by Romania right before the Second Vienna Award (1940) because it would have resulted in the elimination of Hungarian ethnic blocks and diaspora outside borders of that period.⁷ The Hungarian government clung firm to the ethnic status quo of 1918, and it tried to mitigate the consequences of the intensive settlement policies conducted by the succession States starting from the early 1920s by the use of expulsion or, in case of the Romanians, with a voluntary population exchange agreement concluded with the mother country. The statistically verifiable strengthening of the Hungarian ethnicity on the territories returned between 1938 and 1941 was due to the voluntary migration of the population and the departure of the Slovak, Roman, and Serb settlers. Hungary did not conduct a comprehensive settlement policy but a great number of civil servants arrived to the re-annexed territories for the development of public administration. The exact number of civil servants and members of their families transferred from the territory defined in Trianon is unknown.

There are three main sources at our disposal on the mobility of the population between the territory defined in Trianon and the re-annexed territories. The first is the comprehensive report of the Central Statistical Office (hereinafter CSO) of July 29, 1946 on the number of persons who moved to the territory defined in Trianon between 1938 and 1945.⁸ The second fundamental source is the material of the Department I/2 of the Ministry of Welfare (social services for refugees, prisoners of war, and deported persons) on refugees and deportees.⁹ The third source is the census carried out by the CSO on the beginning of 1949. One of its data lines reports on the number of the population on the basis of their residence before 1938.

According to the comprehensive CSO report of July 29, 1946, Hungarian authorities found 49.324 Hungarians who moved to the re-annexed territories between 1944 and 1945 and then returned to Hungary after the war. 16.468 arrived from Czechoslovakia, 4.371 from Transcarpathia, 15.486 from Transylvania, and 12.999 from the Southern Region. The figures of the Ministry of Welfare refer to the refugees arrived between the summer of 1946 and July 1947, so they complement the data published in the CSO report. Unfortunately, the reports of the Ministry, which otherwise involve detailed and a number of categorization aspects, did not mention the refugees of the mother country separately. However, the settlers leaving the territory defined in Trianon (civil ser-

⁷ On the Romanian offers see Schechtman, Joseph, *European Population Transfers, 1939–1945*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1946. p. 426.

⁸ Archives of the Central Statistical Office, Barys legacy

⁹ The pertinent materials of Department I/2 (social services for refugees, prisoners of war, and deported persons) of the Ministry of Welfare are in the possession of the author.

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vants, the members of their families, and other settlers) arrived with the first wave of refugees after the end of the war. Even if the figures of the CSO report (which depicted a period during the war) regarding the 'refugees of the mother country' might not be completely accurate, they reflect the magnitude of the number of those well, who transferred to the re-annexed territories in the first years of the war.¹⁰ We also have to remark that not only civil servants could be found among the settlers of the Southern Region, but also many 'vitéz', whose number amounted to 2.325 persons together with the members of their families.¹¹

Another source of the strengthening of the Hungarian population was the immigration of the South Transylvanians. Their flight to the territory defined in Trianon and the re-annexed territories started even before the beginning of the Romanian–Hungarian negotiations of Turnu-Szeverin in July 1940. The wave of refugees expanded relevantly subsequent to the Second Vienna Award of August. The number of those who fled into areas under Hungarian administration was significant still in 1941 and 1942 as well. We have only one resource at our disposal on the number of the refugees: the registration of residence changes carried out in February 1944 by the National Central Alien Control Office. According to this, 190.132 persons crossed the border between January 1, 1938 and February 1944.¹² The majority of the South Transylvanians, 106.000 persons settled in North Transylvania, while the rest found a new home in the country area defined in Trianon. The figures of the survey were included both in the Peace Preparatory Materials compiled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1945–1946 and in the international scientific literature dealing with migrations.¹³

Although population exchange and the removal of blocks of ethnic groups were completely extraneous to the Hungarian ethnic conception, two organized population removals were carried out indeed. Both cases involved endangered Hungarian ethnic groups living outside the historic borders or close to them. Also these transfers contributed somewhat to the growth of the Hungarians inside the borders.

The Szeklers of Bukovina lived beyond the Carpathians and they were moved into Hungary because of their uncertain fate there. Their situation became critical when the Soviet Union annexed Bessarabia and North Bukovina in the summer of 1940. The Romanians fleeing from the Soviets were accommodated in the houses of emigrant Ger-

¹⁰ The Hungarian Displacement Commission was established for the execution of the Czechoslovak–Hungarian population exchange pact signed in February 1946. József Komanovics, with reference to a report of the Commission estimates the number of 'mother-dependent' Hungarians (those, who settled in Slovakia after 1938) displaced from Slovakia to be 23.150 as opposed to the 16.468 persons indicated by the CSO. See Komanovics, József, *Lakosságcsere Csehszlovákia és Magyarország között a II. világháború után* [Population exchange between Czechoslovakia and Hungary after World War II]. In: *Polach Mihály Műszaki Főiskola Tudományos Közleményei*. Pécs, 1977/2. p. 84. Source: OL 336/eIn. 233/1947

¹¹ Kocsis, Károly and Kocsis-Hodosi, Eszter, *Ethnic Geography of the Hungarian Minorities in the Carpathian Basin*, Geographical Research Institute, Research Centre for Earth Sciences and Minority Studies Programme of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, 1998. p. 151.

¹² *Magyar Statisztikai Szemle* [Hungarian Statistic Review] 1944/9–10, p. 397.

¹³ Jacob, Siegel, *The Population of Hungary*, Washington, 1958. p. 35.; Schechtman, Joseph, *European Population Transfers, 1939–1945*. Op. cit. p. 429.

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mans according to the Romanian-German pact signed on October 22, 1940. In the part of Bukovina, which remained under Romanian rule, the authorities confiscated not only the former German properties, but also the houses of the Szeklers. The despoiled Szeklers of Bukovina looked for asylum in Hungary first in smaller groups, and then in masses after the autumn of 1940. The Lower House accepted the position statement of principle on the transfer of the whole ethnic group on its meeting of November 13, 1940. Prime Minister Pál Teleki answered the following to the interpellation of Representative Zoltán Meskó: *'We have ensured that all would be done in order to bring back as soon as possible from the Regat of Romania—which is not the homeland of Hungarians—first those Hungarians, who are not tied there by any properties and then those, who have properties but could sell their land.'*¹⁴

The Hungarian government signed the agreement on the deportation with a Romanian leadership, which longed to get rid of the 'foreign' ethnic groups, on May 11, 1940. They marked the villages of the expelled Serb settlers in Bácska to be the place of their new home. In the course of this settling, 13.198 Szeklers of Bukovina were moved to the Southern Region. Together with the refugees directed to Bácska but not arriving in an organized manner, altogether 17.700 persons participated in the only comprehensive Hungarian settlement operation.¹⁵ At the end of 1941 and in 1942, the resettlement of smaller groups of the Moldavian Csángó amounting altogether to some 2.500 persons was carried out as well.¹⁶

The 'repatriation' of the scattered Hungarians in Bosnia emerged with the unfolding partisan movement in December 1941 (on the topic see the study of Béla Makkai in: *Kisebbségkutatás*, 2000/3.) In conformity to the agreement signed in Zagreb in the beginning of April 1942, the Croatian government consented to the resettlement of the Hungarian population of three villages in Bosnia: Gunja, Vucinjak, and Brcko. The agreement was later expanded to include also Bjelina. During the several times interrupted settlement, which dragged on until September 1942, 1552 persons were accommodated in Bácska.¹⁷ Hungarian-Croatian negotiations started on population exchange in the beginning of February 1944. However, only a pact on refugees was signed due to the rapidly deteriorating military situation but it was not executed because of the closer and closer front.

Thus, between 1938 and 1944, almost 210.000 Hungarians fled to the mother country or moved to the re-annexed country areas, primarily to North Transylvania and the Southern Region, from outside the borders of those times. The Hungarian population

¹⁴ *Az Országgyűlés képviselőházának naplója* [Diary of the Lower House of Parliament]. Budapest, 1940. p. 345.

¹⁵ Ősi Oberding, József, A bukovinai székelyek dunántúli letelepítése [Settlement of the Szeklers of Bukovina in Transdanubia]. In: *Agrártörténeti Szemle*, 1967/1–2. p. 185.

¹⁶ Schechtman, Joseph, *European Population Transfers, 1939–1945*. Op. cit. p. 436.

¹⁷ A. Sajti, Enikő, *Délvidék, 1941–1944* [Southern region, 1941–1944]. Kossuth Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1987. p. 102. Joseph Schechtman, with reference to the German papers of the period, indicated 1400 persons were displaced. *European Population Transfers, 1939–1945*. Oxford University Press, New York, 1946. p. 436.

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of the returned territories was further expanded by the settling civil servants, whose number together with their families surpassed a little the 50.000 persons.

We have only few numerical data on the fate of the Czechoslovak, Romanian, and Serb settlers, and the other 'unwanted persons'. Moreover, the short studies, which appeared in the scientific literature, are often contradictory. We know it from the researches of Loránt Tilkovszky that 647 settler families departed the re-annexed strip of land of Upper Hungary after the First Vienna Award and left some 20.000 cadastral acres of land. The proprietors of another 36.500 cadastral acres fled even before the entry of the Hungarians. The number of those who left can be estimated to be between 5.000 and 10.000 on the basis of these data.¹⁸ The majority of civil servants and settlers moved in there while the Czechoslovaks were leaving those lands in the autumn of 1938 with the help of the Czechoslovak government. As far as the opinions on the character population changes are concerned, scientific literature speaks both of 'voluntary' emigration and 'expulsion'. We have to mention that the fate of former Czech civil servants and settlers transferred to the eastern part of the Czechoslovak in the 1920s was uncertain too, since after the proclamation of independent Slovakia, the Hlinka Guard removed the majority of the Czech population (about 120.000 persons) from the country on the instructions of the minister of internal affairs.¹⁹

With the assistance of the German Consulate of Huszt, some 7.500 Ukrainian Nationalists left Transcarpathia and moved to East Slovakia.²⁰

Between Romania and Hungary, a peculiar 'population exchange agreement' was in force: it based on volunteering. With reference to the Second Vienna Award, the two countries agreed that the Romanian population of North Transylvania could move over to Romania in the six months subsequent to the introduction of Hungarian administration. The Hungarian population was also granted the right of free resettlement to the Hungarian territories. In reality, the agreement only legalised a process which had already been going on, and during which about 220.000 Romanians left North Transylvania as opposed to the above-mentioned 190.000 Hungarian settlers.²¹

The way Hungarians treated the Slovak and Romanian settlers was made more moderate by the fear of the retorsions of the Slovak and Romanian governments

¹⁸ Tilkovszky, Loránt, *Revízió és nemzetiségpolitika Magyarországon, 1938-1941* [Revision and ethnic policy in Hungary, 1938-1941]. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1967. pp. 74-75. Hungarian authorities expelled some 5.000 persons from the territory of Upper Hungary re-annexed to Hungary after the First Vienna Award. With regard to the figure see *Zprávy statneho plánovacieho a statistického úradu*, Bratislava, October 01, 1946. p. 90. The following work quotes the source: Kocsis, Károly, *Telepítések és az etnikai térszerkezet a Kárpát-Medence határvidékein, 1944-1950* [Settlements and the ethnic configuration in the border areas of the Carpathian Basin]. In: *Migráció*, Tanulmánygyűjtemény, I. Eds.: Illés, Sándor and Tóth, Pál Péter. KSH Népegyüttműködési Kutató Intézet, Budapest, 1998. p. 126.; See also Janics, Kálmán, *A hontalanság éve* [Homeless Years]. München, 1979. p. 206.

¹⁹ Daxner, I., *L'udáctva pred Národnym súdom 1945-1947*. Bratislava, 1961. p. 73. Quoted in: Kocsis, Károly, Op. cit. p. 126.

²⁰ Tilkovszky, Loránt, *Revízió és nemzetiségpolitika Magyarországon, 1938-1941* [Revision and ethnic policy in Hungary, 1938-1941]. p. 164.

²¹ Schechtman, Joseph, *European Population Transfers, 1939-1945*, p. 430.; Kulischer, Eugene, *Europe on the Move. War and Population Changes*, New York, 1948. p. 159.

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against the Hungarians living in their countries. As there was nothing to fear from the occupied Serbia, the actions of the Hungarian public administration were very resolute—at least in the beginning—in the Southern Region.

The Hungarian troops entering the Southern Region received the order that the immigrants and settlers who had arrived there after 1918, had to be expelled from the reoccupied territories. The commanders of the 3rd Army which executed the occupation of the region, Lieutenant General Elemér Gorondy-Novák ordered the establishment of temporary internment camps on April 21. The gathering of Serbs marked out for removal began. The deportation order applied neither to the Croatian settlers nor the spouses of those of Hungarian and German nationality. Those who were captured during the cleansing operation were deported to the Serb territory under German military administration or, illegally, to Croatia. Contradictory figures are available on the number of the removed persons. According to Hungarian sources, 15,000 Serbs were deported,²² the German source of that period mentioned 35,000 persons, but the Commission for Refugees established by the Serb puppet government led by Milan Nedic estimated the number of the deported persons and the refugees to be 56,000.²³ Serb scientific literature indicates the number of those expelled by the Hungarian authorities to be ranging between 25,000 and 150,000.²⁴ The source of the latter figure is evidently one of the reports of the German military command in Serbia, prepared right after the Hungarian entry to Bácska: ‘... the Hungarian government is planning to deport to Serbia those about 150,000 Serbs deprived of their personal properties and having food enough only for three days, who had been presumably settled by the Yugoslav government to the area between the Danube and the Tisza Rivers awarded now to Hungary’.²⁵ However, the deportation plans were not realised; the execution met with the opposition of the German occupying authorities in Serbia. Although the German-Hungarian negotiations continued on various levels until the spring of 1942, the German party had no interest in accommodating the persons expelled from Hungary in Serbia, as the homeless population would have only added to the reinforcement of the developing partisan movement. The partisans constituted a great problem also in the Southern Region. The retaliatory campaign of the Hun-

²² On the measures of the Hungarian military administration and its consequences see Gosztönyi, Péter, *A magyar honvédség a második világháborúban* [The Hungarian army in World War II]. Európa Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1992. p. 55.; Macartney, C. A., *October Fifteenth* Vol. II. Edinburgh University Press, 1961. p. 13., and Csima, János, *Adalékok a Horthy-hadsereg szervezetének és háborús tevékenységének a tanulmányozásához (1938–1945)* [Contributions to the study of the structure and activity of the Horthy army (1938–1945)], Honvédelmi Minisztérium Központi Irrattár Kiadása, Budapest, 1961. p. 59. On the position statement of the German command in Serbia see *A Wilhelmstrasse és Magyarország* [The Wilhelmstrasse and Hungary], Op. cit. p. 581, 584.

²³ The data on 35,000 persons comes from the secretary of the German Embassy, Karl Frahne. On the source of the German and Serb figures see A. Sajti, Enikő, *Délvidék*, Op. cit. p. 43.

²⁴ Source of the estimation of a minimum of 25,000: Milosevic, Slobodan D., *Izbeglice i preseljenici na teritoriji okupirane Jugoslavije, 1941–1945*. Beograd, 1981. p. 276. On higher estimates see Kasas, Aleksandar, *Madari u Vojvodini 1941–1946*. Filozofski Fakultet u Novom Sadu, Novi Sad, 1996. p. 39.

²⁵ *A Wilhelmstrasse és Magyarország. Német diplomáciai iratok Magyarországról 1933–1944* [The Wilhelmstrasse and Hungary. German diplomatic documents from Hungary, 1933–1944]. Eds.: Ránki, György, Pamlényi, Ervin, Tilkowszky, Loránt, and Juhász, Gyula. Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1968. p. 581.

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garian armed forces in January 1942 is often referred to by the recent Serb scientific literature as genocide.²⁶ The liquidation of about 1.000 Jews and 4.000 Serbs, an operation aiming at the intimidation of partisans and not the Hungarian population, was not a genocide because the systematic liquidation of the Jews would start only in 1944. Moreover, the idea of complete or partial liquidation or deportation of the Serbs had never been considered by the Hungarian government.

In Central and East Europe, the genocide expression can be correlated only with the fate of the Jews during the war. Although the German-type idea of 'race' was alien to the traditional Hungarian conception of the nation, the Hungarian legislation followed the German example with respect to it. The Jews were not regarded as a part of the Hungarian nation after 1938. However, the irrationality of the 'race' policy is indicated by the fact that the number and economic and intellectual power of those Hungarians was reduced, who were living on the territory of the re-annexed territories with the expulsion of the Jews from the Hungarian nation and then their liquidation. That is, those were weakened, whose strengthening had become the primary aim of the governments during the war. Only about 40% of the 800.000 Jewish population of Hungary lived to see the end of the war. However, while the proportion of survivors was 50–60% in the current territory of the country, it was only about 30% in the country areas disannexed once more from Hungary.²⁷

With the advancing Soviet army, the ethnic reorganisation started in 1938 continued with a new impetus. The time has come for the East European countries at the side of the victorious powers to enforce their national ambitions unrestrictedly. The principles of 'collective guilt' and punishment were added to the demand of the creation of the 'pure nation state'. The assertion of the principles, which strengthened one another, led to the most large-scale and drastic institutionalised retorsion after the Second World War. The detailed description of the retribution campaigns, the expulsions and resettlements, and the deportations to the Soviet Union subsequent to the war do not belong in the subject matter of this short study. All I want to do here is to draw up the balance of the refugee waves and deportations.

As the Soviet army was pushing forward, masses of persons of German nationality were fleeing together with the retreating German army from the territories, which belonged to Hungary during the war. Also Hungarians took flight first of all from the territories re-annexed between 1938 and 1941.

Detachments left Bucharest at the end of August 1944 to take vengeance on the Hungarian population behind the Soviet army. The units, named 'Maniu Guards' after Juliu Maniu, politician of the peasant's party, inundated the territory of North Transylvania around mid-September. They carried out mass murders among others in Szárazajta, Csíkszereda, and Csíkszentdomonkos (Aita Seacă, Miercurea-Ciuc, and Sandominic).

²⁶ Klajn, Lajco, *Genocid i kazna*, Novi Sad, 1991; Kurdulija, S., *Atlas ustaskog genocida nad Srbima 1941–1945*. Istorijski Institut SANU, Beograd, 1994. karta Br. 6.; Kasas, Aleksandar, *Madari u Vojvodini 1941–1946*. Op. cit. p. 215.

²⁷ On the casualties see Stark, Tamás, *Hungarian Jews during the Holocaust and after the Second World War, 1939–1949*. East European Monographs, Boulder-Columbia University Press, New York, 2000.

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Although the Hungarian Democratic Federation in Romania collected several documents and memories on the actions of the 'guards', the number of the victims of the retaliatory campaign is unknown.²⁸ The Sanatescu government dissolved the Maniu Guards on November 16, 1944, but the regular Romanian army continued the cleansing operations along the Fekete-Körös River. Retorsions were carried out also in Yugoslavia. Serb partisan units decimated the Hungarian population of the Southern Region. The works of Hungarian authors estimate the number of Hungarian victims of ethnic cleansing in the Southern Region to be 20.000. The number often present in publicist writings has been confirmed recently by Károly Kocsis and Eszter Hodosi on the basis of figures of the Yugoslav census. However, the Serb Aleksandar Kasas indicates in his book published in 1996 that only some 5.000 persons fell victim to the operation against 'war criminals'. Kasas refers to Yugoslav data of the period but does not name specific sources.²⁹

The wave of refugees arriving from Transylvania, the Southern Region, and Transcarpathia, reached its peak in the late autumn of 1944 but a few settlers arrived to the territory defined after the war as late as 1947.

According to the summarized figures of the CSO and the Ministry of Welfare, 13.000 persons arrived from Transcarpathia, 94.000 from Romania, and 65.000 from Yugoslavia before the summer of 1947.³⁰ These data include also the number of civil servants and family members who settled in these areas after 1938 and then were forced to return. These results are indirectly confirmed by the 1949 census carried out by the CSO, which indicated that the number of settlers arriving from the neighbouring countries 'on the basis of the residence of the population before March 1938' was the following: 9.552 from Transcarpathia, 102.721 Romania, and 34.514 from Yugoslavia. These figures reveal only the population of autochthonous Hungarians in Transcarpathia, Transylvania, and the Southern Region and do not include the about 30.000 'mother-dependent' Hungarians moved there after 1938. The CSO added the Szeklers of Bukovina fleeing from Yugoslavia—some 20.000 persons—to the ones arriving from Romania, as they had been living in their native land back in 1938.

Only the Czechoslovak government strove after the creation of an ethnically homogeneous state. Eduard Beneš, leader of the emigration government, had been proclaiming since 1941 that after the war Czechoslovakia would be the state of the Slavs only. However, the Allied Powers consented to the deportation of 'just' about 3 million German inhabitants. The removal of the Hungarians was supported only by the Soviet Union.³¹

²⁸ *Fehér könyv az 1944. őszi magyarellenes atrocitásokról* [White book on the anti-Hungarian atrocities in the autumn of 1944]. RMDSZ, Kolozsvár, 1995.

²⁹ Works on the subject written by Hungarian authors: Matuska, Márton, *A megtorlás napjai* [Days of retorsion]. Montázs Könyvkiadó, Budapest. p. 376.; Cseres, Tibor, *Vérbosszú Bácskában* [Vendetta in Bácska]. Magvető, Budapest, 1993. p. 276.; Kocsis, Károly and Kocsis-Hodosi, Eszter, *Ethnic Geography of the Hungarian Minorities in the Carpathian Basin*, Op. cit. p. 153. From the Serb part see dr. Kasas, Aleksandar, *Madari u Vojvodini, 1941–1946*. Filozofski Fakultet u Novom Sadu Odsek za Istoriju – Knjiga 38, Novi Sad, 1996. p. 178.

³⁰ CSO Archives, Barys legacy, and the pertinent materials of Department I/2 (social services for refugees, prisoners of war, and deported persons) of the Ministry of Welfare.

³¹ On the question see Korom, Mihály, *Az Atlanti Chartától a potsdami kollektív büntetésig* [From the Atlantic Charter to the collective punishment of Potsdam]. *Századok*, 1998/3. pp. 552–581.

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The idea of expelling the Germans and the Hungarians became a government programme after April 1945. However, the deportation of Hungarians and Germans had started even before the proclamation of the 'Kosice Programme'. Thus, the Potsdam Declaration of August 1945, which ordered the transfer of Germans, only confirmed an already ongoing reprisal. Nevertheless, Western Allies did not agree to the expulsion of Hungarians in Potsdam. Still, the convention on 'population exchange' signed on February 27, 1946 under Soviet pressure was a success to Czechoslovakia. It laid the basis of the deportation of as many Hungarians from Upper Hungary as the number of Slovaks, who wanted to move over to Slovakia. However, the Hungarian question could not be permanently resolved with the convention because 'only' 50.507 Hungarians could be transferred in its framework, while the number of persons moving into Slovakia amounted to 50.958 persons.³² The refugees, the expelled, and the deported constituted altogether 120.000 Hungarians, who had to leave Upper Hungary.³³ As the Czechoslovak claim of unilateral deportation of 200.000 Hungarians had not been included in the Peace Treaty signed with Hungary because of the opposition of Western Powers, the Hungarians in Upper Hungary began to be scattered within the country. In conformity to the public work decree no. 88/1945, 43.546 Hungarians were transported to the Czech part of the country from 393 settlements between October 1946 and February 1947.³⁴ Also the 'reslovakisation' campaigns of 1946 and 1947 served the modification of the ethnic composition of the population in Upper Hungary. 282.000 Hungarians were classified as Slovaks during it.³⁵ Károly Kocsis—primarily on the basis of census figures—estimates the number of Hungarians returning to their ethnicity in the 50s and 60s to be 140.000, '...while the "reslovakisation" of another 140.000, mostly city dweller former Hungarians and their descendants, proved to be successful'.³⁶

The issue of the deportation of Germans from Hungary was considered a 'secondary theatre of war' of the Czechoslovak campaign aiming at the transfer of the Hungarians of Upper Hungary. The Soviet delegation—representing the Czechoslovak interests also—insisted on the part of the Potsdam Declaration which dealt with the Germans in Hungary because they wanted to accommodate the Hungarians of Upper Hungary in the houses and on the properties of the Germans. The Potsdam Declaration divided

³² These are the figures of the Hungarian Displacement Commission. Source: Kugler, József, *Lakosságcsere a Délkelet-Alföldön* [Population exchange in South-eastern Alföld]. Osiris-MTA Kisebbségkutató Műhely, Budapest, 2000. p. 196.

³³ According to the 1949 census, 90.668 Hungarians came from Czechoslovakia on the basis of the residences in 1938. According to the data of the CSO, the number of the so-called 'mother-dependent' Hungarians who settled after 1938 was some 20.000. Károly Miltényi and Lajos Thirring statisticians estimate the number of those arriving from Upper Hungary to be 130.000. See Kovacsics, József, *Magyarország történelmi demográfiája* [Hungary's historic demography]. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1962. p. 257., and Miltényi, Károly, *Magyarország demográfiája* [Demography of Hungary]. In: *Demográfia*. 1959/2–3. p. 403.

³⁴ Vadkerty, Katalin, *A deportálások. A szlovákiai magyarok csehországi kényszerkőzmunkája 1945–1948 között* [The deportations. The Bohemian forced labour of Hungarians in Czechoslovakia between 1945–1948]. Kalligram, Bratislava–Pozsony, 1996. pp. 42–43.

³⁵ Vadkerty, Katalin, *A reszlovakizáció* [Reslovakisation]. Kalligram, Bratislava–Pozsony, 1993. p. 109.

³⁶ Kocsis, Károly, *Telepítések és az etnikai térszerkezet a Kárpát-medence határvidékein (1944–1950)* [Settlements and the ethnic configuration in the border areas of the Carpathian Basin]. Op. cit. p. 130.

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Hungarian political life. The Smallholders' Party and the Communist Party expressed their reservation; the National Peasants' Party supported the plan on transferring the Germans, while the Social Democratic Party opposed it. It is beyond doubt that the transfer of the Germans would have made the accommodation of the more than 200.000 refugees easier. However, the Hungarian government did not want to embrace the principle of collective punishment exactly for the sake of the Hungarians living outside the borders. Thus, it could not voluntarily fulfil the conditions for the accommodation of the Hungarians of Upper Hungary. The Allied Control Council for Germany resolution of November 20, 1945, provided for the transfer of 500.000 Germans and also the Chairman of the Allied Control Commission, General Vorosilov pressed this contingent. Yet, the Hungarian government believed that the deportation of maximum 310.000 Germans was feasible. In reality, some 200.000 Germans were transferred to Germany before June 15, 1948, with three fourths of them accommodated in the western sectors.³⁷ Not the abandonment of the principle of collective guilt put a limit on the transfers but the lack of spaces in the occupation sectors.

The deportation to the Soviet Union stands out from among the forced population movements connected to the war both with respect to their size and the number of their victims. The removal of the civilians was carried out in two waves. The first wave when masses were captured happened right after the military operations. When a larger settlement was occupied, the Soviets gathered and carried away the people generally under the pretext of the elimination of ruins. We have only data fragments at our disposal about the number of the removed. The second great wave came about one or two months after that. The order of the Soviet Headquarters (Stavka) of December 16, 1944 and the circumstances of its execution indicate the punishing character of the deportations. It ordered the 'mobilization' of German civilians on the territories of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria.³⁸ We can conclude on the basis of the available documents and recollections that the local Soviet commands had to capture a given number of persons. Thus, they carried off those who had a German name and then also those who had a Hungarian name from the areas not inhabited by Germans. The number of civilians deported between the autumn of 1944 and the summer of 1945 might reach or even surpass the 200.000 persons. Thus, about one third of those Hungarians who fell into the captivity of the Soviets (some 600.000–650.000 persons) were not soldiers but were taken prisoners as civilians after the end of the fights. As even according to the most optimistic estimations at most 400.000 returned home from the camps of prisoners' of war, about 200.000–250.000 persons fell victims to forced labour.

The refugee wave started in the autumn of 1944 reached its peak in the spring of 1945. In the last months of war one could flee only toward Germany. Due to the prisoner-taking operations and the news on ethnic and political cleansing, about 500.000–1.000.000 Hungarians decided that the refugee fate would be more secure than the encounter with

³⁷ Ibid. p. 133.

³⁸ Karner, Stefan, *Im Archipel GUPVI*. R. Oldenbourg Verlag, Wien, München, 1995. p. 27. The order concerned men between the ages of 17 and 45 and women between 18 and 30.

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the Soviet army. After the political situation had been stabilized, the majority of the refugees returned. The International Refugee Organization took part in the accommodation of 62.000 Hungarians but the number of those who remained in the West is slightly greater than this, as the figures of the organisation do not include the number of those who settled in Germany.³⁹

The great number of Hungarians who fled to Hungary from the disannexed territories considerably offset the losses the country suffered due to the westward population movements, the war, the persecution of Jews, and the Soviet captivity. This is the main reason of the rather small differences of the figures of the 1941 and 1949 censuses beside the high rate of natural growth.

Homogenisation endeavours continued in the decades following the war in Central and East Europe. Although proletarian internationalism was the official ideology, the traditionally multinational Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Poland got closer than ever before to the realisation of the so much aspired nation state with the gradual emigration and liquidation of Germans and the Jews who had survived the age of disasters.

³⁹ Holborn, Louse W., *The International Refugee Organization*. The Special Agency of the United Nations, London, New York, Toronto, 1956. p. 238–239.

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