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Restocking the Ethnic Homeland: Ideological and Strategic Motives behind Hungary's "Hazatelepítés" Schemes during WWII (and the Unintended Consequences)*

By the early 1940s in Hungary and Transilvania, some influential members within the Hungarian government, the Catholic and Reform Churches, and secular institutions began advocating for the "*hazatelepítés*" – the resettlement "home" – of the Székelys of Bukovina and the Moldavian Csángós into the territory of Hungary. This was not merely the issuance of repatriation papers. Rather, it was a systematic attempt to relocate thousands of Hungarian-speaking Catholic and Protestant villagers from Greater Romania, induced by promises of reallocated property within southern Hungary and financial assistance from the Hungarian government. In addition, an appeal was made to their sense of Hungarian national consciousness – and where this national consciousness did not already exist, especially in the case of the Moldavian Csángós, an attempt was made to cultivate it.

Both Romanian and Hungarian historians have dealt with this issue of population resettlements. Detailed work in the Hungarian archives

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and publications on the subject have previously been made by Gábor Vincze and Enikő Sajti.[1] On the Romanian side, Viorel Achim has done a great deal of work on the population-transfer schemes proposed by Sabin Manuilă.[2] In addition, Meinolf Arens and Daniel Bein have made valuable contributions to the topic, outlining German involvement in relocating the Moldavian Csángós and more broadly discussing the Csángós in the context of nationalizing and modernizing processes in twentieth-century Europe.[3] This paper will build upon the work of Vincze, Sajti, Arens and Bein, et al.[4] and make new assertions in light of other, unpublished archival material from both Hungary and Romania. Moreover, I will take a more in-depth look at the political and ideological origins of these resettlement schemes within Hungary, and then gauge the impact they had on the Catholic Church in Moldavia in the 1940s – an impact which spurred a clerical counter-reaction aimed at thwarting the expatriation of the Hungarian-speaking Catholics *en masse* from the region.[5]

1 See Vincze's introduction, as well as documents 35–51, in *Asszimiláció vagy kívándorlás?* (Budapest, 2004); "A bukovinai székelyek és kisebb moldvai Csángó-magyar csoportok áttelepedése Magyarországra (1940–1944)" in *Pro Minoritate,* nr. 3 (2001), pp. 141–87; and in English, "An Overview of the Modern History of the Moldavian Csángó-Hungarians" in László Diószegi (ed.), *Hungarian Csángós in Moldavia* (Budapest, 2002), pp. 51–82. See also Sajti's chapter 2 in *Hungarians in the Voivodina 1918–1948* (New York, 2003), pp. 250–97, and her *Székely telepítés és nemzetiségpolitika a Bácskában* (Budapest, 1984).

2 See "Romanian–German Collaboration in Ethnopolitics: The Case of Sabin Manuilă" in *German Scholars and Ethnic Cleansing 1919–1945*, Ingo Haar and Michael Fahlbusch (eds.), (New York, 2005), pp. 139–54; "Schimbul de Populaţie în Viziunea lui Sabin Manuilă" in *Revista Istorică*, vol. 13, nr. 5–6, Sept.–Dec., pp. 133–49; and "The Romanian Population Exchange Project Elaborated by Sabin Manuilă in October 1941" in *Annali/Jahrbuch*, nr. 27 (2001), pp. 593–617.

3 Meinholf Arens and Daniel Bein, "Die Moldauer Ungarn (Tschangos) im Rahmen der rumänisch-ungarisch-deutschen Beziehungen zwischen 1940 and 1944" in Mariana Hausleitner, Harald Roth (eds.), *Der Einfluss von Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus auf Minderheiten in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa* (Munich, 2006), pp. 265–315.

4 See articles by Ágoston Olti, Ignác Romsics, and Béni L. Balogh, among others, in the March 2007 edition of *Századok* as well as in the Hungarian history magazine *Rubicon*, nr. 1–2 (2007); and Zoltán Szász, "Tévutak keresése: Áttelepítési tervek a Magyar–román konfliktus feloldására 1940 táján," in *História*, nr. 8 (1999), pp. 17–19.

5 Credit should be given to Marius Diaconescu, who first placed the perspective and motives of the Romanian clergy in a clearer social-historical context, and whose work utilized new, unpublished sources from the confessional archive in

Specifically, I would like to explore what I call the "ambient history" surrounding the Hungarian-speaking communities east of the Carpathian Basin, as well as the audacious resettlement schemes devised in wartime Hungary. By "ambient" I mean to draw attention to the individuals, ideologies, and policies immediately surrounding and interacting with a given subject – in this case the politicians, priests, and intellectuals and their national-ideological agendas that impacted the Catholic communities in Moldavia. In both Hungary and Romania, the prevailing race-based conceptions of the nation – and the desire to construct a unitary ethnic state – made problematic the efforts to situate (literally and figuratively) their minority enclaves. Such conceptions informed policy prescriptions in *both* Hungary and Romania.[6] These resettlement schemes gave rise to another phenomenon, that of clericalism at a very localized level. In such cases the clergy began to assume roles traditionally reserved for the secular intelligentsia: we witness priests as partisans, as historians, as instruments of national policy, and as arbiters of a collective national-consciousness.

Furthermore, this article will examine some of the more radical manifestations of nationalism and biopolitics that occurred in Hungary in the early 1940s – such as the racialized discourse and categorization of the dislocated Magyars[7] around the Carpathian Basin, the strategy for repopulating with "good Hungarian stock" the territories re-annexed from Yugoslavia in the spring of 1941, and the clandestine use of partisan clergy and historians to serve these ends. In doing so, however, I do not assert that the radicalism of Hungarian biopolitics was the primary factor in nationalizing the debate on Csángó identity or their historical

Iași. See his "A moldvai katolikusok identitáskrízise a politika és a historiográfiai mítoszok között," in István Kinda and Ferenc Pozsony (eds.), *Adaptáció és modernizáció a moldvai csángó falvakban* (Cluj, 2005), pp. 9–20.

6 On race and biopolitics in interwar and wartime Romania, see Marius Turda, "The Nation as Object: Race, Blood, and Biopolitics in Interwar Romania" in *Slavic Review*, Fall 2007, pp. 413–41; and Maria Bucur, *Eugenics and Modernization in Interwar Romania* (Pittsburg, 2002).

7 In the Hungarian language, *Magyar* is the equivalent of the English "Hungarian." With some exceptions, I use the term *Magyars* when referring to those peoples within the broader ethno-linguistic Hungarian nation, whether they resided inside or outside the recognized borders of the Hungarian Kingdom or later the Hungarian national state. My use of the term "Hungarians" typically refers to those citizen-nationals within Hungary's recognized borders, which shifted several times between 1919 and 1945.

narrative. It did, however, contribute to the blowback from Romania and bifurcate both the nationality and ethnicity of Moldavian Catholics: either the Csángós were Hungarian or they were Romanian. With regards to radicalizing the discourse on biopolitics and national belonging, Romania was no exception. Both countries were transformed by their own, nationalized variants of irredentism, revisionism, and fascism, locked in a contest over perceived historical rights and finite national spaces. That said, this article focuses primarily on the more controversial aspects of Hungarian foreign and internal policy, particularly during the prime ministership of László Bárdossy (April 1941–March 1942), and examines what impact biopolitics and race had on policy aims regarding the Magyars from Bukovina and Moldavia. In this respect, the much-discussed Csángó topic has been given a new mission, namely, to be used as a vantage point from which to re-examine attitudes about race and national belonging, as well as the nationalizing processes in Hungary and Romania – processes that converged in Moldavia and gave rise to a new brand of clericalism, which continued through the Communist period.

Historical Context

After the signing of the Trianon Peace Treaty in 1920, Hungary lost over seventy percent of its territory, including large Magyar-inhabited territories, and over sixty percent of its pre-war population. As a result, there were few Romanians left in a truncated Hungary yet very large numbers of Hungarians in the newly formed Greater Romania (despite the fact that almost 200,000 Hungarian teachers, bureaucrats, and members of the old elite emigrated to Hungary). At this time, the population of Transylvanian towns was still predominately Magyar, while the Székelys of Bukovina and Székelys of eastern Transylvania comprised compact blocks of Magyars far from the Romanian-Hungarian border. Many of these Hungarian-speaking communities in Greater Romania became, therefore, socially and politically dislocated (though not physically *displaced*) as a consequence of the territorial reconfigurations confirmed by the Trianon Treaty. Though Bukovina was under Austrian rule from 1775–1918, the Székelys there nevertheless had well-established Hungarian schools and clerical institutions and were, during this period, connected in many other ways to the Hungarians in the Car-

pathian Basin.[8] By June 1940, however, the Soviet Union was demanding the territory of northern Bukovina. As the Red Army advanced, the Romanian government was forced to evacuate much of its population from the region. The Soviet Union occupied northern Bukovina until the Romanian Army pushed out them out during the summer of 1941. By that time, the Soviet Union had deported or repatriated tens of thousands of Germans, Romanians, Hungarians, Poles, and Jews. These scenes would be replayed after the Red Army finally regained control of northern Bukovina in 1944. Consequently, the broader policy of resettling into Hungarian territory the *displaced* Magyars from northern Bukovina can be seen as a just cause. But once inside Hungary, exactly how these communities were used to "restock" parts of the Vojvodina, which Hungary and Germany had taken after invading Yugoslavia in April 1941, is another matter.

Other ethno-linguistic and religious minorities, by contrast, became socially and politically dislocated despite the fact that their homeland and citizenship had long been Romanian; rather, their ethnic, religious, or linguistic differences excluded them from the new, ideologically-informed conceptions of the Romanian national body and its national essence. One such example is the Moldavian Csángós, whose Moldavian homeland (sometimes referred to in Hungarian as the *Csángóföld* – in the east Carpathian space, along the Siret River Valley and in north Moldova, around the town of Roman) was neither appropriated nor seriously contested, but whose national identity in wartime Romania was contested as never before. Unlike the Székelys of Bukovina, the Csángós constituted a *pre-national*[9] ethno-linguistic and religious community that had long resided in Romania's national space. Even the Hungarian-ness of the

8 The settling of Székelys into Bukovina occurred after 1764. The province was officially recognized as Romanian territory by the Treaty of St. German, signed in 1919. For a detailed history of the Székely of Bukovina, see Ádám Sebestyén, *A bukovinai székelység tegnap és ma* (Szekszárd, 1989).

9 That the Csángós constitute "pre-national" ethno-linguistic collectivities is subject to much debate and interpretation. Arens and Bein endorse this view, p. 270. See also Vilmos Tánczos's discussion on the self-perceptions of Csángó communities vis-à-vis the national developments of Hungary and Romania in "About the Demography of the Moldavian Csángós" in László Diószegi (ed.), p. 137; and for a contemporary perspective on the politics of Csángó research, see his "Szappan a kredenc sarkán, avagy a csángókérdés tudománya és politikája" in *Kisebbségkutatás*, vol. 10 (2001), nr. 1, pp. 53–63.

Csángós is, generally, limited to their use of the Hungarian language, for they have played no part in the great historical movements that from the first half of the nineteenth century created the modern Hungarian nation and society.[10] Today, the Hungarian-speaking Csángós are at once dislocated from their ethnic and linguistic "homeland" (Hungary) and entrenched in a nation that, frankly, has no place for them as non-Romanians, despite their genuine but peripheral participation in the history and national development of Romania.

Resettlement schemes and ethno-national mobilization in Hungary

Ethnic heterogeneity in the Carpathian Basin had often posed dilemmas for the Hungarian Kingdom. Moreover, since the late nineteenth century, birthrates amongst the ailing Hungarian peasantry had fallen, especially across southern Hungary. During the interwar period, this was presented in Hungary as a demographic crisis.[11] One cause of this was the self-imposed "one child" (*egyke*) policy amongst small landholders, by which Hungarian peasant families from one generation to the next retained as much property as possible by handing down undivided shares to fewer heirs.[12] The sheer misery of life and the state of health in rural Hungary contributed to the falling birthrate amongst the predominately agrarian Hungarian families.[13] At the very least, this translated into a fear of being outbred by others – by enemies. Moreover, large contingents of Catholic Germans had settled into southern Hungary (they had been encouraged first by Austrian empress, Maria Theresa, in the latter half of the eighteenth century). Following the collapse of Austria-Hungary in October 1918, the southern Hungarian territories known as the Bácska and Baranya (which formed parts of the area commonly known as the Vojvodina) were relinquished to the newly-formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (Kingdom of Yugoslavia after 1929). Over the fol-

10 Tánczos, "About the Demography of the Moldavian Csángós," ibid.; and "Hungarians in Moldavia" in *Hungarian Heritage*, vol. 3 (Budapest, 2002), pp. 23–4.

11 For an in-depth discussion of the demographic crisis and the ethnic and confessional heterogeneity that had formed in southern Hungary by the interwar period, see Paul Hanebrink, *Defending Christian Hungary* (New York, 2006), pp. 128–34.

12 Hanebrink, p. 131.

13 Nicholas Nagy-Talavera, *The Green Shirts and the Others: A History of Fascism in Hungary and Romania* (Stanford, 1970), p. 60.

lowing two decades, policies aimed at de-Magyaraizing these territories (which already had a clear South Slav majority) were implemented. These events and pressures combined to decrease the percentage of ethnic Hungarians, who had been an absolute minority prior to WWI in the Vojvodina. Moreover, the demographic shifts resulting from in-migration and the above-mentioned socio-economic problems continued to alter the ethnic composition inside southern rump Hungary.

By the 1930s, a new generation of Hungarian social scientists and some politicians began in earnest to examine the socio-economic problems that beleaguered rural Hungary. But solutions to such problems necessitated the kinds of reforms that the ruling conservative elite in Budapest was unwilling to consider. In this atmosphere, the notion of *faj* or "race" emerged as a more powerful instrument in mobilizing Hungary's national elite and policy makers. The term crept into discourses within leading intellectual circles, and with great utility it refashioned social, political, and economic concerns into new and more salient biopolitical ones. Race was thereby instrumentalized so as to transcend social, religious, and even territorial divisions, so that national problems became problems for the entire ethnic nation rather than a particular class or rank.

The racial argument indeed mobilized sentiment – not least within the Churches – and prompted the idea that Magyars from abroad should be resettled into territorial Hungary for the sake of national-biological rejuvenation. As a result, a growing number of nationalist intellectuals and social scientists began to construct a new view of the Hungarian peasantry, which was reconceived as "authentic" Magyars, deriving from purer racial stock. This included those Magyar peasants outside territorial Hungary.

Both the Catholic and Reformed Churches – as well as the Unitarian, Hungarian Lutheran, and Hungarian Greek Catholic – promoted the *hazatelepítés* agenda. The Bishop Prohászka Society [*Prohászka Ottokár Társaság*] and a number of other Catholic organizations in Hungary and Transylvania wrote letters to the Hungarian Prime Ministry and Foreign Ministry, encouraging a policy of population resettlements. However, it was the Reformed Church in the southern Hungary and in Transylvania that began agitating most ardently for the need to import "authentic" Magyars into the region, especially Calvinist ones capable of working the land. Resettling Calvinists into ethnically and confessionally heterogeneous areas along the southern border was, moreover,

viewed in terms of national defense.[14] One Calvinist priest from the village of Börvely, located in northwest Transylvanian, on the Romanian side of the border, wrote to then-Prime Minister Pál Teleki on 3 March 1941 that, "our bodies are degenerating."[15] This because of the villagers' practice of endogamy; they were surrounded by Romanians and refused to mix with their only other neighbors, the Swabians (Germans) of western Transylvania. The priest thus appealed to Teleki to relocate ethnic Magyars from the Transylvanian villages in order "to strengthen the nation and ennoble the race."[16]

In April of 1941, Hungary permitted its territory to be used as a staging ground for the German *blitzkrieg* on Yugoslavia. Following the German onslaught, Hungarian troops re-occupied the Bácska and Baranya. The most pressing need for the Hungarian government was to reinforce its multi-ethnic, sensitive border areas by repopulating them with Magyars.[17] But where to find such authentic Magyars? Uprooting and restructuring Hungary's own population to rejuvenate these re-annexed lands was an impossibility, and legislating its way to ethnic homogeneity would require time the country did not have. However, engineering the transfer *en masse* of Transylvanian and other foreign Magyars was one possible solution, especially given their treatment as undesirables in surrounding nations.

Despite the logistical and political obstacles of relocating these populations, by the spring of 1941 – with Bárdossy now Prime Minister – these resettlement schemes had been planned with great detail, attempted, and in some cases realized. The Bárdossy government – under the considerable influence of then-State Secretary in the Ministry of Interior, Miklós Bonczos – sought to reconstruct the Hungarian national state along ethnic principles, first by means of expatriating its own undesirables and expropriating foreign-owned land and property,

14 Hanebrink, p. 133.

15 Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) K28, 163 csomó, 271 tétel, Bukovinai magyarok támogatása-Magyarországra történő áttelepítésének ügyei, 1941–44 (Bundle 1), pp. 5–6.

16 Ibid.

17 Hanebrink, p. 133; Vincze (citing the memoirs of General Henrik Werth, Chief of the General Staff of Hungary's pro-German officer corps), "A bukovinai székelyek és kisebb moldvai Csángó-magyar csoportok áttelepedése Magyarországra (1940–1944)," pp. 152–3; for more on the input of Henrik Werth, see Sajti, *Hungarians in the Voivodina 1918–1948,* pp. 258–60. See also Arens and Bein, p. 278.

and then by restocking those areas with repatriated (and presumably loyal) Magyars. This was modeled on – and justified in Hungary by – similar undertakings in Nazi Germany.[18]

A Bárdossy cabinet meeting on 9 May 1941 made concrete plans for the undertaking of such a scheme, and included a discussion on the creation of the Foreign Magyars Repatriation Committee [*Külföldi Magyarokat Hazatelepítő Kormánybiztosság*].[19] This classified planning session was led by Miklós Bonczos and included, among others, the Ministers of Justice, Finance, and Agriculture. The minutes from the session reveal discussions on how best to move the Székelys from Bukovina into the Bácska and southern Baranya, into those areas that were empty or were "being emptied."[20] It should be noted here that Bárdossy was in fact not yet Prime Minister at the time the decision was made to occupy these areas with Hungarian troops. But whether Bárdossy privately endorsed Hungary's participation in the invasion or rather shared the disapproval of Teleki (who committed suicide over the matter),[21] he nevertheless had – within a month of becoming Prime Minister – a clear set of plans to repopulate and to homogenize these contested areas.

The Bárdossy government had to move quickly. It was noted that because 80–90% of the crops in the area had already been planted, and because people were stealing without compunction, it was imperative they begin the resettlements immediately.[22] Bonczos put forth a plan to resettle tens of thousand of foreign Magyars in up to 62 localities: first, the Székelys of Bukovina (from which 5000 were already in Hungary); then the Magyars from the Burgenland, approximately 18,000 strong; next the Magyars in Croatia, another 10,000; and later those from Moldova.[23] Bonczos suggested settling the first waves of immigrants into

18 See anonymous report in MOL K28, 163 csomó, 271 tétel, Bukovinai magyarok támogatása-Magyarországra történő áttelepítésének ügyei, 1941–44 (Bundle 2, folder 1), p. 230. See also Sajti, ibid., pp. 252, 257-8.

19 MOL K28, 163 csomó, 271 tétel, Bukovinai magyarok támogatása-Magyarországra történő áttelepítésének ügyei, 1941–44 (Bundle 2, folder 1), pp. 149–57. Sajti cites other official planning sessions as early as November of 1940 and February 1941. See ibid., p. 256 and footnote 125.

20 MOL K28, 163 ibid., p. 149.

21 See Nándor Dreisziger, "Was Bárdossy a War Criminal?" in *Hungary in the Age of Total War (1938–1948)*, Nándor Dreisziger (ed.), (New York, 1998), pp. 312–13; and Pál Pritz, "Bárdossy before the People's Tribunal" in ibid., pp. 294–5.

22 MOL K28, 163 ibid., p. 150.

23 Ibid.

the southernmost territories – the most sensitive areas – and thereafter resettling northwards. Furthermore, Bonczos insisted that the Székelys be allocated larger plots of land, so as "to strengthen the Hungarians" since the remaining Serbs were "already strong."[24] In order to buttress these newly-relocated foreign Magyars, especially the Moldavians, Bárdossy suggested settling amongst them Hungarian refugees, as well as the *vitézek* and the families of those men who had died or been injured in the war.[25] (The *Vitézi Rend* or "Order of Heroes" was established by Horthy and open to those (non-Jews) who served with distinction in World War I.) Finally, it was determined that these resettled populations should not be placed next to any German settlements (left untouched, in deference to Germany) lest these Hungarian populations become assimilated.[26] Under mutual agreement between Bucharest and Budapest, the Székelys of Bukovina left for Hungary in the second half of 1941 and were officially granted land and houses in the Bácska.[27]

Institutional and Ideological Support from Hungary

During the early 1940s several government and private organizations did their part to promote not only the restitution of Hungary's pre-Trianon borders, but also the reincorporation of all Magyars into the territorial and biological nation. The Hungarian National-Biological Institute [*Magyar Nemzetbiológiai Intézet*] was established under the aegis of the Society of Public Health [*Egészségpolitikai Társaság*] in 1940 in order to research the means by which a biologically unitary and expansive Hungariandom, 20 million strong, might be created.[28] It had sections devoted to researching biology and Hungarian history, national nutrition, hereditary biology, racial biology, and eugenics.[29]

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24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., p. 153.
26 Ibid.
27 Vincze, "An Overview of the Modern History of the Moldavian Csángó-Hungarians," in László Diószegi (ed.), *Hungarian Csángós in Moldavia* (Budapest, 2002), p. 60.
28 MOL K 148, Egészségpolitikai Társaság–Magyar Nemzetbiologai Intézet 1940–17, 3689 (1075), p. 3. See also Gyula Juhász, *Uralkodó eszmék Magyarországon 1939–1944*, pp. 173–74, qtd. in Hanebrink, p. 168.
29 MOL K 148, Egészségpolitikai Társaság–Magyar Nemzetbiologai Intézet 1940–17, 3689 (1075), p. 3.

Other institutes and affiliations, such as the Hungarian National Alliance of Race Protectors [*Magyar Fajvédők Országos Szövetségének*], also influenced the discourse on resettlements. This was an official subsection of one of the most significant national-conservative organizations, the Association of Hungarian National Defense [*Magyar Országos Véderő Egyesület*]. Groups such as these had their origins in the counter-revolution against the Hungarian Soviet from 1919, and many were led or else nurtured by Gyula Gömbös, who up to his death in 1936 led the radical right and the conservative fascist movement in Hungary.

In a letter dated 2 October 1940, this Hungarian National Alliance of Race Protectors, alongside twenty or so secular, governmental, and religious institutions (including the Arrow-Cross-affiliated National Work Center, the Prohászka Ottokár Society, the Organization of Catholic Students of Budapest, and the National Organization of Catholic Young Workers and Industry, to name but a few) addressed a letter to then-Prime Minister Teleki. These groups asserted that the Hungarian nation "can survive only in quantity and quality if they can be strengthened."[30] The letter continues: "[O]utside the sensitive borders of the empire, many Hungarian brothers are waiting for our calling voice… the question of resettling is not unsolvable. […] For those brothers living outside the historical homeland, there is a chance to settle them back home, maybe through population exchanges… When we think about the wasted possibility, our heart breaks for those living in southern Bukovina and on the Russian and Romanian borders. […] We believe that your highness and the Hungarian government will feel and see that we need to do something right now."[31]

Meanwhile the Institute for Minorities Publications [*Kisebbségi Intézetének Kiadványai*] in Pécs published some highly-charged, nationalist monographs, appealing to the ethnic and national consciousness (as *Hungarians*) of the Csángós. One such book was *The History of the Ancient Settlement of Moldavian Hungarians and their Situation Today* [*A moldvai magyarok őstelepülése, története és mai helyzete*], written under the pseudonym Siculus, in 1942. Siculus was in fact Alexander Baumgartner, known after 1940 as Sándor Besenyő.[32] Earlier in 1940, Baumgartner

30 MOL K28, 163 csomó, 271 tétel (Bundle 1), p. 31.
31 Ibid. pp. 31–2.
32 Sándor Illyés, Ferenc Pozsony, and Vilmos Tánczos (eds.), *A moldvai Csángók bibliográfiája* (Cluj, 2006), p. 327.

penned a monograph entitled *Moldavia, the Great Cemetery of Hungarianness* [*Moldva, a magyarság nagy temetője*], which was also published in German and Italian. As the title suggests, Baumgartner's historicism was couched in violent and impetuous language, directed at Romania.[33] At the time, he played a major role in shaping the discourse on the Csángós. According to Vincze, Baumgartner was professor of theology in the seminary in Iași in the 1930s, and later the information officer in the Hungarian Consulate in Brașov.[34] It appears that he also worked as a journalist and had ties with Germany.[35] In any case, Baumgartner was instrumental in relaying information about the status of Csángó communities and their readiness to relocate to Hungary in the wake of the Székelys from Bukovina.[36]

Another key player is the afore-mentioned Miklós Bonczos, who led Bárdossy's cabinet meeting that planned the repatriation of the Székelys of Bukovina. In that same meeting Bonczos was given the task of setting up and running the government's *hazatelepítés* schemes. Bonczos was an ever-present figure in Hungarian government from the start to the end of WWII. In December of 1938 Bonczos became State Secretary in the Interior Ministry, where he stayed through the summer of 1942. He served in the Kállay government and thereafter Döme Sztójay made him Minister of Interior, a position he stayed in until October 1944.[37] Thus he was involved in the deportation of Hungarian Jews to concentration camps, which started in May 1944. Bonczos escaped to Argentina after the war.

But what were the political-ideological affiliations of the man who orchestrated the *hazatelepítés* schemes throughout the first half of the 1940s? Bonczos got his start in politics in 1926 as a member of the Race Protector Party [*Fajvédő Párt* – aligned with the afore-mentioned *Magyar Fajvédők Országos Szövetségének*], and from 1928 was a sympathizer and trustee of Gyula Gömbös.[38] He was, furthermore, a founder of the

33 Diaconescu, p. 18.
34 Vincze, "An Overview of the Modern History of the Moldavian Csángo-Hungarians," pp. 60–1. See also Arens and Bein, p. 289.
35 Arens and Bein, ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 László Markó (ed.), *Új Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon I, A–Cs* (Budapest, 2001), p. 838. Thanks to my colleagues Eric Beckett Weaver and Christian Clujeanu for clarifying much of this.
38 *Új Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon I, A–Cs*, ibid.

National Foundation for the Protection of the Family [*Országos Nemzeti Családvédelmi Alap*]. In 1943 Bonczos edited and wrote the introduction to a book entitled *Hungarian Land, Hungarian Nation* [*Magyar föld, magyar nép: a megnagyobbodott Magyarország községeinek adattára*],[39] which detailed at length the racial anthropology of the Hungarian nation and its connection to the Hungarian homeland. The volume included contributions from a number of government ministers and academics, such as Lajos Bartucz, the most important Hungarian anthropologist of the interwar period, as well as prominent ethnologists and ethnographers, such as Ferenc Erdei. In the introduction, Bonczos fused the nation and the national homeland: "We are the nation of the land, unbreakable and unchangeable…the ancient Hungarian land, which was watered by blood and sweat…the land which is the symbol of our ever-budding racial strength."[40] Bonczos put forth the nation's "great objective: to get the land, the country, the nation for the Magyar race."[41] Central to the works of Bonczos and others were the poor conditions of Hungarian villages and the plight of the peasantry, who were seen as the essence of the nation or the authentic national body, "the only true expression of Hungary's ancient beauty, art, and customs."[42] Hence his brand racialism and nationalism – as seen in the context of interwar and wartime Hungary – did have a dimension of social justice behind it, however inapplicable to Jews, Slavs, Roma, and Romanians. One of Bonczos's most important works was entitled *Social Problems in Hungary's Lowlands* [*Az Alföld szociális problémái*].[43] He and his ilk saw the degeneration of Hungarian villages and the Magyar race, especially in the south, and wanted restitution – if also for the sake of creating a unitary ethnic homeland, whether on the framework of the Kingdom of St. Stephen or the modern nation state. While many of these advocates eschewed the radical right, Bonczos embraced it.

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39 Zoltán Csuka and János Ölvedi (eds.), (Budapest, 1942). Not to be confused with István Györffy's *Magyar nép, magyar föld* (Budapest, 1942), though the title and dates are peculiarly similar and both include discussions on the link between race and the ethnic homeland. Györffy's tome contains a large section, with several chapters, devoted to the Csángós (pp. 441–72).

40 *Magyar föld, magyar nép*, Introduction, p. 7.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.

43 (Budapest, 1939).

Yet another important figure is the priest József Bálint, who held a number of positions, among them Hungarian Member of Parliament for the Transylvanian Party, Advisor to the Holy See, and Director of the Catholic Folk Association. In a report to the Foreign Ministry, dated 17 July 1941, Bálint insisted that after the repatriation of the Székelys of Bukovina, whom he described as "loyal to their ancient religion and race," Hungary next needed to repatriate the Magyars from Croatia and Moldavia: "we could still save them for our own homeland because they are of outstanding material. If the Romanian government doesn't want to agree to this then we should demand the territory as territory that Hungarians are living on. We should send twice as many Romanians from Transylvania to take the place of the Moldavian Magyars."[44]

This type of racialized discourse, cultivated in Hungarian circles, penetrated other areas. An anonymous report connected with the Hungarian Nineteenth and Twenty-second Army Administrative Commands on the eastern front, asserted that "the lives of the Moldavian Magyars, as the documents show, began before Moldavia was established. In this way we have historical rights over Moldavia. To claim back Moldavia, or even take it back with the power of the army, this is the Hungarian challenge" because the Csángós were "still worth much more than that of the most educated population from the country of St. Stephen."[45]

Instruments of Policy and the Rise of Clericalism

Much of this literature and discourse found its way into Catholic Moldavia. A report from the Romanian secret service out of Bacău, dated 18 November 1942 and entitled "Hungarian irredentist propaganda regarding the problem of the Csángós from Moldova," noted that over the previous year many institutes, associations, journals, and newspapers in Hungary had become preoccupied with the Csángó question.[46] The report also noted that the above-mentioned institute in Pécs

44 MOL K28, 163 csomó, 271.tétel (Bundle 2, folder 1), p. 227.
45 Ibid., p. 232.
46 Arhivele Statului București, Președinția Consiliului de Miniștri, Serviciul Special de Informații (PCM, SSI) f. 63/1942, p. 26. This report is grouped amongst others that were produced within the Centrul Contrainformații, the precursor of the DGSP (Securitate) that was established in 1948.

had published several books on the Csángós, and that "leading Hungarian circles" planned a propaganda system that was being carried out "on the spot," i.e. within Csángó communities. Before it was halted by the Romanian authorities, this propaganda effort was – according to this report – carried out by local Transylvanian villagers loyal to the cause, traveling from one Csángó village to the next.[47]

Another Romanian report later that December noted that two priests, Antal László and Dénes Elekes from the recently-resettled Székely communities from Bukovina, were reappointed as vicars to the parishes in Văleni and in Valea-Seacă, in Catholic Moldavia. According to this report, László "proved to be in the service of Hungary" and was spreading Hungarian propaganda throughout the Csángó villages where he served.[48] Furthermore – based on information relayed to the Episcopate in Iași by the parish priest, Albert Weber – the report claimed that László was "looking to win people over to his side, giving them money and saying that the Csángós are Hungarian and that their country is Hungarian."[49] Elsewhere the report mentioned Hungarian actions "led by Budapest agents" – again Hungarian priests – to distribute Hungarian-language, nationalist prayer books, which contained the following language: "Where are the Hungarians?" "Over which people reigned St. Stephen?" "Our ancient fatherland…with eyes crying I look toward the disappeared fatherland."[50]

But what to make of such reports? Were these priests actually agents of the Hungarian government, instruments of national policy? Or was this merely paranoid inference by Romanian authorities, fueled by an anxious Catholic-Church hierarchy in a hotbed of Legionary rhetoric and activity? Bear in mind that the Catholic Episcopate and seminary in Moldavia were (and are to date) seated in Iași. The hierarchy there would have witnessed first-hand the xenophobia, chauvinism, murders, and pogrom inspired by Romania's fascist movement, the Iron Guard, and its many sympathizers. Of course, reports within the Romanian government do not necessarily corroborate the aims of Hungarian policy vis-à-vis the minority populations, though these reports are suggestive. They show that Romanian authorities and Catholic clergy at least

47 Ibid.
48 Ibid., p. 35.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.

perceived these incursions as threats to Romania's internal affairs and security, threats that ought to be countered. Regardless of the sources of the nationalist publications that made their way into Moldavia – and role of the Hungarian government in spreading them – they had an immediate impact, heightening Romanian suspicion and defensiveness.

Documents from Hungarian Prime Ministry and Foreign Ministry do suggest that some of these partisan Hungarian priests may indeed have been in the service of the Hungarian government. A letter from the mother of one of these priests – and the commentary it elicited in a prime-ministry report – is one example. The mother, who was amongst those Székelys of Bukovina being resettled to the Bácska, wrote plaintively to Prime Minister Bárdossy, asking that her son, the same Dénes Elekes (see above), be allowed to rejoin his family in the Bácska. She noted that her son had permission and repatriation papers to go to Hungary, "which in a moment he had to give back at the Hungarian embassy in Bucharest" because, she writes, of "an order form above" – a connotation that was political and not religious.[51] Instead of relocating to Hungary, her son was instructed to return to Moldavia to "fulfill a mission."[52] The mother writes furthermore that another the priest, the same Antal László (above), was "also entrusted with the same mission," but that he and still another priest (both of whom were promoting the relocation efforts) had already been permitted to return to the "home country" (i.e. Hungary).[53] A report from the Office of the Prime Ministry pertaining to the mother's letter, acknowledged that her son was indeed ordered back to Moldavia. After investigating the situation, the author of the report surmised that, "from the previous documents it can be determined that the further staying of [these priests] who are living amongst the Moldavian Csángós is needed"; moreover, the author concluded that those priests who had in fact left Moldavia for Hungary, did so only "because of the attitude of the Romanian authorities."[54]

51 MOL K28, 162 csomó, 270 tétel, Moldvai Csángók ügyei 1940–41, 1943–44, p. 43. The letter itself is not dated, however it is in a Foreign Ministry folder dated 13 Dec. 1941. The mother was Mrs. Lőrincz Elekes from the village of Fogadjisten.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid., p. 44. The report is a *nota bene* dated 26 March 1942. The "previous documents" mentioned in the report were not located in this MOL K28 file. The priests who remained in Moldavia up to this point were Dénes Elekes and Jakab

The implication here is that these priests were also needed in Moldavia, but were only repatriated to Hungary after their expulsion by the Romanians.

We also have the details of another priest, Dr. Kálmán Németh, who had a parish in Bukovina and, later, helped spread the *hazatelepítés* propaganda within Csángó communities in Moldavia. Németh, like Bálint, was an early and persistent supporter of population resettlements, raising the idea with Teleki and others shortly after the retrocession of northern Transylvania to Hungary. According to Vincze, this "fanatical priest" Németh met with Teleki in Transylvania in the summer of 1940. Németh was given a verbal commitment from Teleki, but was told to wait until a more propitious moment to begin the resettlements.[55] Nevertheless, Németh returned to these villages in order to report that the decision was official, and that the villagers should make preparations to pack what belongings they could take and to sell what they could not.[56] No doubt to the dismay of some of these villagers, their resettlement into Hungary was not arranged as promised by Németh. The Romanian authorities put Németh on trial Cernăuți for some of his activities.[57] Németh played a key role in relaying information to Bonczos and others, and in persuading the Hungarian government – as well as those who were to be resettled – of the efficacy of the operation.[58] It was Németh, moreover, who suggested that the Hungarian government commission the ethnographer (and *hazatelepítés* advocate) Pál Péter Domokos to conduct a study in Moldavia to determine the feasibility of resettling the Csángós into Hungary.[59]

Ferenc, while Antal László and Péter Demsa had already been expelled from Romania for spreading Hungarian propaganda within the Csángó communities and agitating for their relocation to Hungary.

55 Vinzce, "A bukovinai székelyek és kisebb moldvai Csángó-magyar áttelepedése Magyarországra (1940–1944)," p. 147. For additional insight into the role of Németh, see Sajti, ibid., pp. 253-8, and 267, and footnote 118.

56 Vincze, Ibid.

57 Ibid., p. 163.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid., p. 164.

The Unintended Consequences: The Romanian Reaction

These foreign, discursive intrusions into Moldavia were a source of consternation for the hierarchy of the Catholic Church there. The clerical elite perceived this, as well as the talks on resettlements, as existential threats that had to be repelled. Soon the diocese in Iași would counter these Hungarian efforts with their own set of historicist claims. Enter the priests-cum-historians Iosif Petru Pal and Ioan Mărtinaș.[60] In the case of Pal, we have a Csángó intellectual (Pal also held a doctorate) who ventured into the realm of professional history writing and biopolitics – citing the latest scientific studies on eugenics and serology – purporting to represent the Catholic communities of Moldavia. As head of the Franciscan Order in Romania he was one of the most influential members in the Moldavian hierarchy.

In an appeal to Andrea Cassulo, the Apostolic Nuncio in Bucharest, Pal states indubitably: "We are Romanian, not only of citizenship but also of origin and blood."[61] Moreover, Pal attacks the Hungarian historical narrative of the Csángós – as he had done in his earlier monographs and articles – asserting that the "truth" about the Romanian origins of the Csángós "has been denied by the Hungarian writers and some Romanian writers or put in doubt, simply, without solid arguments."[62] He invokes his own research as well as Vatican archives to support this claim. In 1942, Pal published a monograph entitled *Origins of the Catholics from Moldova and their Franciscan priests over the centuries* [*Originea Catolicilor din Moldova și Franciscanii păstorii lor de veacuri*] as well as a widely circulated essay, "The Voice of Blood" ["*Glasul sângelui"*]. In this article, written in March of 1943, he employed the work of Romanian biologist and eugenicist, Petru Râmneanțu, a committed nationalist who worked for the Institute of Eugenics and Hygiene in Cluj (which moved to Sibiu after Hungary regained northern Transylvania in August 1940). In an effort to determine the ethnic and racial origins of the Csángós (on behalf of the Antonescu government it seems), Râmneanțu sought

60 Ioan Mărtinaș wrote a monograph entitled, *Cine sunt catolicii moldoveni?* (Iași, 1942). For a brief discussion of Mărtinaș, see Marius Diaconescu, pp. 16, 18.
61 PCM, SSI f. 63/1942, p. 72.
62 Ibid.

to establish a definitive Romanian racial identity of the Csángós based on blood type.[63]

In the only two such works on the Csángós, Râmneanțu transferred the highly specialist and authoritative language of the burgeoning new sciences of eugenics and serology into the Csángó narrative.[64] Râmneanțu also proposed a scientific method to discuss the origin of the Csángós. He states, "*(a) priori* I reject the equality between the notion of Csángós and that of Catholics."[65] Considering the history of the Csángós and the recent demographic evolution reflected in the census taken in Moldavia in 1941 – the data of which purported the vast majority of Csángós chose "Romanian" as their ethnicity – Râmneanțu claimed that the tendency of their *ethnic consciousness* was to declare themselves Romanian rather than Hungarian. The ethnic consciousness of the Csángós was, therefore, a natural consequence and manifestation of their biological reality.

In response to Hungarian incursions into Moldavia – and to both the real and perceived anti-Catholicism within Moldavia – the likes of Pal, Mărtinaș, and Râmneanțu began to construct a Romanian national-historical narrative of the Csángós in lieu of the established Hungarian one. This counter-narrative attempted to secure a place for the Csángós within the Romanian nation by asserting that the historical experience and identity of the Csángós were quintessentially Romanian rather than Hungarian. In doing so, it challenged over a century of Romanian and Hungarian historiography that described the Csángós as, in essence, an isolated contingent of Magyars, long-detached from the modern Hungarian nation.

Conclusion

That a number of Catholic priests loyal to Hungary were active in persuading the Magyars in Bukovina and Moldavia to relocate to Hungary is not in dispute.[66] Perhaps this is stating the obvious. If, however,

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63 See Turda, "The Nation as Object: Race, Blood, and Biopolitics in Interwar Romania," pp. 432–6.

64 "Grupele de sânge la Ciangăii din Moldova," in *Buletin eugenic și biopolitic* 14, nrs. 1–2 (1943), pp. 51–65; and *Die Abstammung der Tschangos* (Sibiu, 1944).

65 "Grupele de sânge la Ciangăii din Moldova," p. 54.

66 See Vincze, "An Overview of the Modern History of the Moldavian Csángó-Hungarians," pp. 59–60; "A bukovinai székelyek és kisebb moldvai

partisan priests were used as agents of national policy to relocate foreign Magyars with the aim of restocking the Hungarian homeland, then we have a more complex historical picture of the events and personalities in Bukovina and Moldavia during this period. While the documentary evidence remains incomplete – and much of it circumstantial – it does dispel any lingering notions that, based on some timely awakening of their Hungarian national consciousness and a desire to reconnect with a Hungarian homeland, these Csángó villagers themselves initiated or pushed for the resettlement schemes. Rather, the "desire to go home" had to be engineered and projected from the outside-in – *and then projected back out* – using partisan clergy and secular Hungarian nationals to speak on behalf of the community.

Without doubt there are some very real and tragic instances of displaced ethnic Hungarians in Romanian and Soviet territory, entire communities that were forced from their homes and sought earnestly to repatriate to Hungary. But the mobilization for emigration *en masse* to Hungary was not primarily a local initiative, springing from the desire to "heed the calling voice" to "return home" on the part of would-be emigrants, in fortuitous accord with the policy aims in Hungary. Rather, the *hazatelepítés* schemes and the ethnic mobilization were effected primarily by a number nationalist ideologues and institutional agendas, prompted less by humanitarian concerns for the ethnic brethren across the Carpathians than by the overriding pursuit to reconstitute the Hungarian nation within a clearly defined ethnic state. To acknowledge this is not to pass judgment on the individuals or institutions who sought simply to solve the dilemmas of national belonging based on new understandings of race, ethnicity, and homeland. All of this took place against the background of modernization and nationalization – and in the foreground of irredentism, revisionism, and war in East Central Europe. Exploring the "*hazatelepítés"* schemes and the affected communities in this context offers a fresh look at the period. More important, it offers new insights into our understanding of the impact of ideologically-informed policy prescriptions on the ethnic and national identities within dislocated minority communities.

Csángó-magyar áttelepedése Magyarországra (1940–1944)" pp. 149–64; and in *Asszimiláció vagy kivándorlás?,* e.g. document 42, pp. 253–4.