

THE FOUNDATION OF THE HUNGARIAN FOLKLORE ASSOCIATION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

In December, 1989, the Central Folklore Specialists of the "Csemadok" Committee held what proved to be its last board meeting. The recent gradual strengthening of Hungarian folklore research in Slovakia, the demand for modern, co-ordinated scientific research methods and the socio-political changes in Czechoslovakia after November, 1989 induced the "Csemadok" to disband the Committee. Following the committee's dissolution, the remaining seventeen qualified folklore researchers voluntarily established the Hungarian Folklore Association in Czechoslovakia, an organization which endeavors to be the successor to a similarly named organization which had been founded in 1969.

The Association held its first statutory meeting on January 27, 1990 in Pozsony (Bratislava) with nearly one hundred visitors present. In attendance on behalf of the Hungarian Folklore Association was the Deputy Director of the Folklore Museum in Budapest, Attila Selmeczi Kovács, as well as Milan Leščák, former president of the Slovak Folklore Association and current director of the Folklore Institute of the Royal Academy of Sciences. The general assembly accepted Acting President József Liszka's submitted long-term goals, as well as the Association's fundamental policy, which the forthcoming meeting of the general assembly will validate. The general assembly passed a resolution allowing the Hungarian Folklore Association in Czechoslovakia to operate provisionally within the framework of "Csemadok" as an independently budgeted organization.

Institutionally, it does not belong to either the Slovak or the Hungarian Folklore Association, but at the same time, it would like to work with both of them in close professional cooperation based on an equal relationship with one another. Additionally, it seeks to establish a productive cooperation with János Kriza Folklore Association. The general assembly elected the board for one year and designated committees. For the time being, folk music, folk dance, folklore, social folklore and folklore musicology subcommittees were established with the understanding that this structure could change according to the needs required of this work.

The primary purpose and task of the Hungarian Folklore Association in Czechoslovakia is to support the professional exploration of the folk culture of Hungarians living either in Czechoslovakia or of expatriots (e.g., those who migrated from Czechoslovakia or were expelled). In addition, the Hungarian Folklore Association in

Czechoslovakia supports research on ethnocultural connections between Hungarians and Slovaks, scholarly publications, as well as the bringing together of individuals interested in this subject.

Given the broad outlines of the Association's long-term program, one can break it down into two basic research areas. The first would provide a scholarly program, as well as a protective program of employee rights. On the one hand, the program would establish appropriate academic channels (e.g. the Central Hungarian Museum, the Institute of Hungarology) for opening up new publication possibilities, etc.; on the other hand, it would also perform administrative tasks. The latter would be realized in three fields: the first would prepare and arrange independent research programs. (A suggested initial project for the Association would be to explore the Zobor region with a follow-up monograph.) The second field would include work with other academic institutes (e.g. museums in the countryside) in order to accomplish joint research programs. The third field would involve the Association's support of individuals or small folklore research teams through an established scholarship fund.

One of the Association's significant tasks is to publish its academic achievements regularly. To fulfill this task, the first issue of *Hírharang* was published during the general assembly in July, 1990. According to plans, this periodical will be issued quarterly with news pertaining to the Association and current events regarding Slovak-Hungarian Folklore issues. It will also provide anecdotal information and folklore descriptions. The Association's annual publication, the *Néprajzi Közlések*, inherited from the Central Folklore Committee of Csemadok, requires restructuring itself. Academic papers regarding folklore and data descriptions will be published in *Néprajzi Közlemények*, along with Slovak (and later Czecho-slovak as well) book reviews, and criticism dealing with Hungarian topics. In addition, the Association would like to publish in the near future independent publications, questionnaires, and methodological guides for collecting data about popular culture.

Since there is no point in making long-term plans without maintaining a staff of qualified researchers, the Czechoslovakian Hungarian Folklore Association takes the issue of recruitment very seriously. A primary goal of this Association is to make certain that it maintains a qualified staff of ethnic Hungarian personnel (preferably educated either entirely or partially in Hungarian universities) in central institutions and in the museums of Southern Slovakia. The movement among non-professional folklore data collecting can be strengthened by means of organizing courses and conducting competitions. Since the general assembly, concrete achievements have been made in the above-mentioned field. The Association organized its first continuation course in Dómica in Gömör County from July 21st through July 28th 1990. More than thirty scholars gave lectures on basic folklore topics. Some of the scholars (Péter Halász, László Kósa, László Lukács) came from Hungary; others (József Faragó, Ferenc Pozsony) from Transylvania; and still others (Ferenc Ambrus, István B. Kovács) from Slovakia. Besides theoretical lectures given during the one-week course, the participants took part in tangible activities as well. Those volunteers who had not much experience in gathering data did field research in Kecso, Hosszúzó and Pelsocardo under

the guidance of professional ethnographers and folklorists. Topics investigated included the ruthless exploitation of the local forests, regional folk costumes, folk medicine, customs related to calendar feasts, and customs of the communities and their life in general. As a result, besides its success in pedagogy, the course also produced various scientific achievements which is attested to by specific data.

The above-mentioned leads us to the second important aspect of this long-range program, namely the sphere of public education. The Czechoslovak Hungarian Folklore Association has important goals in this field as well. In order to build and maintain folklore instruction in the primary schools and prepare instructors for this undertaking, a pedagogical committee was created under the direction of Mária Szanyi. As a result of the work of this committee, at a recent Hungarian session of the Teachers Training College in Nyitra, an optional course on folklore for faculty was offered during the summer semester. It is hoped that this course will continue to be offered. The "Peoples Education Movement" has been revived all over Slovakia, and the Association would like to take advantage of this development to place special emphasis on the subject of Slovak-Hungarian Civilization, and within it, the study of folklore. Besides such formal instruction, the Czechoslovak Folklore Association shall pay special attention to all aspects of general education, where the values of folk culture can be properly disseminated. The popularization of folk culture has already made some inroads (e. g., various local and nationwide folk art festivals, the occasional popular folk publications of the Slovak-Hungarian press, etc.). The task of the Association, then, is to observe whether different forms of mass education convey authentic folk materials of high standard. For example, there is a new undertaking on Radio Pozsony's (Bratislava) Hungarian Program. Last summer a new popular folk series was initiated which will be a regular program on the station as of this autumn. The program entitled, "Folklore for Everyone", is similar to an earlier program on Hungarian Radio entitled, "Little Hungarian Folklore for Everyone". This program acquaints the listeners with various topics in folklore. The texts of the radio broadcasts are published in *Hét* ("Week"), the weekly magazine of CSEMADOK.

József Liszka

THE FOUNDATION OF THE JÁNOS KRIZA FOLKLORE ASSOCIATION

The turn of events in December 1989 initiated changes in Romanian social and political life, which, at the outset, opened up promising, then sobering perspectives in the lives of the Hungarians in Romania.

It is almost natural that the change of power brought in its wake the foundation and reorganization of nationalist groups. As a consequence of this process, in January 1990, an issue was raised that the young folklorists should establish a protective organization; and moreover, that a broader organization would be required to bring together all the folklorists living and working in Romania.

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