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The Origins of Diaspora Consciousness in the Hungarian American Experience

The 20th Century was a time of great trials and tribulations for Hungarians throughout the world. Four historical events had particularly drastic and dramatic consequences for their existence. The First World War witnessed their military defeat with extensive human losses (1914-18). This was followed by the humiliation of the imposed Peace Treaty of Trianon (1920) which led to the loss of three-fourths of their territory and two-thirds of their population, including one-fourth of the ethnic Hungarian population of the Carpathian Basin.[1] The latter paved the way to World War II and the revisionist policies which tied Hungary's fate again to the side of the defeated states. The human losses of this war were staggering (both in terms of the holocaust and battlefield losses) and the occupation of Hungary first by the army of the Third Reich and then the Soviet Red Army, thereby weakened the nation still further.[2] It took the Hungarians another ten years before they were able to challenge the occupiers and their Teheran-Yalta-Potsdam facilitators.

The Revolution of 1956 was glorious but also devastating as it continued to bleed the nation in losses on both the battlefield and in the stream of refugees heading West. Finally the collapse of the Soviet Empire in 1989-91 witnessed the peaceful erosion of national strength as the West's economic exploitation replaced Soviet military occupation and as unemployed young Hungarians became absorbed

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[1] Two very good "outside" perspectives are provided by Macartney, C.A.: *Hungary and Her Successors: The Treaty of Trianon and Its Consequences 1919-1937.* London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press. 1937. Introduction, pp.1-40; and Cartledge, Bryan: *The Will to Survive: A History of Hungary* New York: Columbia University Press, 2011. Ch. 13; and for a decidedly Hungarian perspective see Fűr, Lajos: *Magyar sors a Kárpát-Medencében: Népesedésünk évszázadai 896-2000* (The Fate of Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin: Population Growth from 896 to 2000). Budapest: Kairosz Publishers 2001., pp.279-298. Also see Bárdi, Nándor – Fedinec, Csilla – Szarka, László (eds): *Minority Hungarian Communities in the Twentieth Century* New York: Atlantic Studies on Society in Change, distributed by Columbia University Press 2011. all of Section One.

[2] Cartledge, Brian: *The Will to Survive.* op. cit. Ch. 16; Fűr: *Magyar sors a Kárpát-Medencében*, op. cit. pp.314-326; Also see Fűr, Lajos: *Mennyi a sok sírkereszt? Magyarország embervesztesége a II. világháborúban* (How many Headstones are a Lot? Hungary's Casualties During World War II.) New York: Püski Publishers. 1987., entire study.

by the job markets of the developed European Union and the United States.[3]

Each one of these events contributed to the global dispersal of the Hungarian population. Wave upon wave of Hungarians found their way to Western Europe, Australia, South and North America. The Hungarian migration to the United States was drawn from each of these 20th century national tragedies. As a consequence of the traumatic origins of each wave of migration, the fate of Hungarian settlers, particularly members of their emigré upper elite, were to be advocates for their people in American foreign policy. From the beginning they perceived their role to be unofficial diplomats and lobbyists in support of Hungarian national interests. Of course their differing perceptions of „national interests" did not enable them to present a united front during either the inter-war period or the post-World War II era to the 1956 Revolution. In the inter-war period this role was not seen as a direct factor in the immigrant or emigré self-definition. Only after the Second World War, particularly after 1956, did the diaspora self-perception become a conscious choice among members of the younger generation

The Hungarian American population of the USA in the interwar period was composed mainly of immigrants who left Hungary for a better life in the USA prior to World War I.[4] Only a small sector of this population could be described as emigré, that is people who left Hungary because of a political agenda either before or after World War I. This meant that the vast majority was involved in judging American-Hungarian diplomatic relations only on a general, even superficial level. The emigré population, on the other hand, attempted to influence or form the perspectives of American policy-makers. Aside from the differences in their socio-economic status, other factors also had a strong influence on how recent immigrants and emigrés must be broken into additional subdivisions while the working-class immigrants represented a more coherent but less active audience.

This less active audience can be dismissed for the moment, in the discussion of influencing foreign policy decision-makers. In an organizational context this mass immigrant population had its will reflected in the two great fraternal organizations (today called William Penn and HRFA-Hungarian Reformed Federation of America, although the latter just ended its career in a merger with a German-American

[3] Cartledge, Brian: *The Will to Survive*. op.cit. Ch. 18; Fűr, Lajos: *Magyar sors a Kárpát-Medencében*, op. cit. pp.350-351.

[4] For the immigrants of this period the most detailed general study is that of Puskás, Julianna: *From Hungary to the United States, 1880-1914.* Budapest: Akadémiai Publishers. 1982.

fraternal two years ago.) But HRFA and the predecessors of William Penn (Rákóczi and Verhovay fraternals) were the main base for the American Hungarian Federation established in 1906. These organizations were active, but not very influential in the American foreign policy area. More influential were the church leaders, the newspaper editors and the professionals who composed the upper elite of the Hungarian American communities – and provided the leaders for the fraternals – in places like Cleveland, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Toledo, Dayton, or New York City and New Brunswick, New Jersey.

The American setting in the interwar years was, however, the circumscribing, constraining factor. Who could and who could not exert influence in this setting? What was the relationship that can come into being between Hungary and the USA? What sectors of the emigré population tried to alter or obstruct these relations?

Three major conditions of American foreign policy circumscribed what Hungarian emigrés could or could not influence. First, the neo-isolationism of the post-World War I era. This had at least two spin-off effects. One was the USA rejection of the treaties concluding World War I and the refusal to join the League of Nations. The other was the emergence of a strong nativist movement that led to a dramatic curtailment of immigration to the USA and a strong assimilationist drive in society and education.[5] In one sense, the first result was viewed positively both in Hungary and by most Hungarian emigré leaders, namely that the USA was not a signatory to the Treaty of Trianon, and it did not even mention Hungarian borders in the final normalization of relations documents with Hungary. This at least in theory meant that the USA was open to the question of border revisions in East Central Europe, a major concern of the Hungarian government as well as of many emigré activists. The other result was less positive for Hungarians. American refusal to be part of the League of Nations meant that Hungary would not be able to piggy-back its concerns and interests on the back of a friendly great power. After all the French and the British were unflinchingly committed to the territorial *status quo*, while Germany and Italy became suspect allies after the Mussolini and Hitler power consolidations, and the Soviet option was a domestic impossibility after the Béla Kun fiasco (the proletarian dictatorship in Hungary between March and August 1919).

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[5] Ludányi, Andrew: *„Birmingham: The History of an American Neighborhood and an Ethnic Community,"* unpublished study 2005., pp.7-8; Also see Barden, Thomas E. – Ahern, John (Eds.): *Hungarian American Toledo: Life and Times in Toledo's Birmingham Neighborhood.* The University of Toledo, Urban Affairs Center. 2002., pp.18-20.

Finally, the domestic consequences of the neo-isolationism had negative consequences for Hungarian Americans in two very direct ways. First, it led to stringent immigration standards. As *The United States and Hungary: Paths of Diplomacy 1848-2006* State Department publication points out: "In May 1921, the U.S. Government began to limit immigration from southern and eastern Europe. The Emergency Quota Act restricted… Hungary's quota… [to] 5,747 immigrants … [and to] 869 people [annually after 1927]."[6] This meant that plans for family reunification were next to impossible and the strengthening of the Hungarian sector of the American population also highly unlikely. Furthermore, the Hungarians in cities like Cleveland, Chicago, Pittsburgh and Toledo now came under excessive nativist pressure to assimilate to an American WASP culture that many of them were not yet prepared to become part of.

Already before World War I groups like the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) campaigned to extirpate the "foreign" flavor of the immigrant communities. In my study on *Birmingham*, I point out that "[t]hroughout the United States at this time the 'Americanization Movement' was an important force for redefining the cultural commitments of recent immigrants. Just at the moment when the model of Ango-conformity was being challenged by the new model of the 'melting pot,' the neighborhood was already under pressure to abandon its distinctive Hungarian traits. The major pressure came through the Birmingham (public) School and the citizenship drive that took on a particularly aggressive momentum during World War I […]. The U.S. entrance into this conflict in 1917 put to test the loyalties of the neighborhood. As for German-Americans, this was also a very difficult time for Hungarian Americans. […] their 'old countries' were now at war with the USA […] they had to prove their American patriotism and loyalty. Acquiring citizenship and purchasing Liberty Bonds were two of the easiest ways of doing well on this test. János S. Strick, a business leader from the neighborhood even was given the distinction of being 'the first citizen of Toledo' for buying $20,000 worth of Liberty Bonds during this conflict."[7] On top of these environmental conditions, two others must be considered. The Prohibitionist movement of the greater society contrasted strongly with the Hungarian cultural perspective of enjoying life to the fullest. At the same time the economic depression hit in 1929 and

[6] Office of the Historian (2012), The U.S. Embassy at Budapest Hungary, U.S. Department of State (Ed.:) *The United States and Hungary: Paths of Diplomacy* (Department of State Publications # 11363), pp.27-28.

[7] Barden, Thomas E. – Ahern, John Eds. :*Hungarian American Toledo.* op. cit. p. 20; Ludányi, Andrew: *„Birmingham…,"* op. cit. p.13.

it cut into the livelihood of all the people. The former factor limited the escape valve in the social sphere, the other constricted the promises of the American dream.

On the other side of the Atlantic, the most pressing Hungarian concern was to break out of the ring of isolation that the Little Entente and France imposed on Hungary after Trianon. Hungarian state policy and also non-state actors attempted to overcome this isolation by publicizing the injustice of the territorial *status quo* and by bypassing the physical and geographic barriers imposed by the above coalition of powers. Important in this endeavor were the agreements reached with the USA and Italy and later also Austria and Germany. The Hungarian emigrés in the USA split into two major camps in supporting or opposing these efforts. The larger camp tended to accept the "NO, NO, NEVER" strategy of the Hungarian government, while the more limited camp was represented by the disgruntled exiles of the former Károlyi government and the Oszkár Jászi intellectuals.[8]

For the sake of the present analysis as a simplified short-hand I will focus on three individuals who represented the main streams of emigré thinking. First, I will focus on Monsignor *Elemér Eördögh*, the pastor of St Stephens Church in Toledo, Ohio, second, on Oszkár Jászi of Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio; and finally on Dr. *Géza* Farkas, the editor of the Hungarian language newspaper Toledo, in the Ohio city of the same name. (The reason all three of my examples are from Ohio is due to the fact that I spent a great deal of time researching the Hungarian American Birmingham neighborhood in Toledo and I also spent a great deal of time on the writings of Jászi due to our common interests in ethnic, minority and inter-nationality relations.)

Hungarian relations with the USA had a solid foundation going back to the era of 1848-49 uprising, but even earlier to the time of the American Revolutionary War. It is not accidental that the first ever Louis Kossuth statue was put onto a pedestal in Cleveland, Ohio in 1902 and that George Washington received such recognition in Budapest in 1906. (Both of these efforts of symbolic solidarity were the results of American-Hungarian bridge building of emigrés and immigrants who wanted to strengthen the ties between the "old country" and the "new homeland.")[9] This strong bond was shaken

[8] Ludanyi, Andrew: *American-Hungarian Diplomatic Relations and Interwar Hungarian Emigrés and Immigrants* 2012. p.4. Unpublished study presented at Central European University Symposium on the 90th anniversary of the establishment of the U.S. Legation in Budapest.

[9] Ibid. p.5

by the two world wars which swept Hungary into the enemy camp twice. However, even in this context, even when state to state relations were at a low point, the people to people relations were maintained on a level of friendship.

The Hungarian immigrant and emigré populations deserve a lot of the credit for this. Their efforts in the USA helped Hungary break out of this Little Entente imposed isolation. Diplomatic contacts were the first break-through, but other efforts also deserve attention. Hungarian participation in international events like the world fairs and conferences were opportunities to sell Hungarian products and to familiarize others with Hungarian culture. While they shunned the 1920 Olympics in Antwerp because the pain of Trianon was still too raw, they attended all the other interwar Olympic Games and outshone their Little Entente neighbors in the gold, silver, and bronze medals they accumulated in Paris (1924), Amsterdam (1928), Los Angeles (1932), and Berlin (1936). Also because of Trianon the Hungarian scouts did not send participants to the First Scouting Jamboree in London (1920). However, in all subsequent interwar Scouting Jamborees they were high visibility participants, including in Copenhagen, Denmark (1924), Birkenhead, Great Britian (1929), Gödöllő, Hungary (1933) as the host, and Vogelenzang, Netherlands (1937), and Pax Ting, the first Girl Scout Jamboree, also held in Gödöllő, again as host, in Hungary (1939).[10] This high visibility participation in sports and scouting is also paralleled in other "global" activities. These were viewed as opportunities to open windows to the world through which Hungary could be rehabilitated as a nation. Two other such global organizing efforts were the organization of the Roman Catholic Eucharistic World Congress in Budapest (1938) and the first calling together of the Hungarian World Congress also in Budapest in 1928. The latter conclave also resulted in the sending of a delegation to New York City in 1928 to unveil a second Kossuth statue, now on the West Side in uptown Manhattan. On the diplomatic front Hungary also became one of the first signatories of the Kellogg-Briand Pact in 1929, outlawing first resort to war.[11]

How did emigré Hungarians relate to this activism on the international scene? Here let me return to Monsignor Elemér Eördögh, who was an active organizer for Toledo Hungarian participation both in the New York City Kossuth statue unveiling (1928) and in going to Budapest to be part of the World Eucharistic Congress in 1938. Msgr. Eördögh became an emigré as a direct result of the Trianon treaty.

[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.

He could no longer "go home" to his place of birth, because it had now been incorporated into Czechoslovakia. He used his incredible influence over his flock as St. Stephen's pastor to collect funds for efforts to reverse the negative consequences of the Trianon decision. He was very active both within the context of emigré politics and within the Church as a liaison with political leaders in Hungary. He was one of the major organizers and sponsors of the trans-Atlantic flight of the "Justice for Hungary" airplane piloted by György Endresz and Sándor Magyar in 1931. He was also involved – and recognized for this role in Hungary – as an important host for prominent Hungarian visitors to the USA and as a major Hungarian American leader in the Catholic Church.[12]

Oszkár Jászi was an emigré of a different sort, although he too was no longer able to "go home" because his birthplace was now incorporated into Romania. He also belonged to the outcasts of interwar Hungary. He was, unjustly in my opinion, held responsible for the collapse of historical Hungary because of his role as Minister for Nationalities of the Károlyi government. His early writings in the USA consequently reflected his disillusionment with his homeland. He was probably the most prolific writer and scholar from Hungary and his life at Oberlin College (1925-1957) straddled a large part of the interwar period. However, unlike Msgr. Eördögh, he did not have a community of supporters. Jászi was influential in another way, as a scholar whose writings had long-term influence in the academic world, but almost no influence at all on the foreign policy makers of the period, either American or Hungarian. However, his early writings in publications like *The Nation* were definitely not just critical but extremely negative regarding "Horthy's Hungary."[13] These opinion pieces did not influence USA foreign policy in the interwar period. In the long-run, on the other hand, they may have helped to set the stage for anti-Hungarian writings and scholarship in centers of East European and Slavic studies in the USA.

The third emigré is Dr. Géza Farkas, the editor of the newspaper *Toledo*, which he founded in 1929. *Toledo* became a mirror for the Birmingham neighborhood for the next forty years and provided a vehicle for promoting community solidarity. This newspaper did

[12] Szántho, Miklós: *Magyarok Amerikában* (Hungarians in America) Budapest. 1984. p.76.

[13] Jaszi, Oscar: *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Hungary*. London: P.S. King and Son. 1924., p.86; Bakisian, Nina: „Oscar Jaszi in Exile: Danubian Europe Reconsidered," *Hungarian Studies* (1994) 9 (1-2), 153, 155; Also see Oscar Jaszi's comments in journals of political opinion like *The Nation,* during the 1920's and 1930's.

not provide a critique of either American or Hungarian foreign or domestic policy. It was mainly a reporter of events in the neighborhood and American society. It did not promote or mobilize, it simply recorded developments. In this task it used mainly the Hungarian language, but after World War II more articles and reports began to appear in English. The role of Géza Farkas was to provide a transition from first generation loyalties to second generation integration. Through the pages of his newspaper it is possible to assess the challenges faced by the community from the Great Depression, through World War II and the 1956 anti-Soviet Revolution. However, *Toledo* contains no ideological commitment to ethnic survival or loyalties to the "old country." In the face of the aggressive campaign for fitting in there is not even a faint whimper against too much conformity. This probably was a reflection of the intimidating factor of the Hungarian homeland's enemy status in both world wars. Thus Farkas became an advocate of painless assimilation, he could think of maintaining Hungarian values only for one generation.[14]

These three perspectives were probably present in most Hungarian American communities and neighborhoods during the interwar period. Overall, the immigrant rather than the emigré dominated the scene. This would change dramatically during World War II and also after the 1956 Revolution. During the war the emigré status of Tibor Eckhardt and Rusztem Vámbéry began the splintering. This continued with the arrival of the DPs (Displaced Persons) following World War II and the Freedom Fighters of 1956. But the perspectives and activities of the latter two waves demands a new analysis, a look at the post-1956 scene.

The re-thinking began almost simultaneously in the Brazilian city of Sao Paulo and the American city of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. In both these cities younger generation activists began to question the formulations of their emigré forefathers regarding the role and purpose of "emigráns magyarok" (emigré Hungarians). The émigrés of 1945 and 1947 were escapees or refugees from the Soviet occupied Hungary of the Stalinist Rákosi regime. The 1945-ers were strong anti-communists and mostly conservatives who had been either the civil servants, military officers of the Horthy era, or middle class and upper class elements of that society. The 1947-ers were also anti-communists, but they had hopes for the establishment of democracy after the eviction of the Nazi German occupiers. These emigrés were mostly also middle class in social background, but also included many well-to-do peasants and a rising agrarian middle-class. They were

[14] Ludanyi, Andrew: *„American-Hungarian Diplomatic Relations…,"* op. cit. p.7.

escaping to the West from the newly established Rákosi totalitarianism.[15] Both the 1945-ers and the 1947-ers were emigré Hungarians par excellence, they left Hungary for political reasons. As political expellees, they rejected post-1945, post-1947 Hungary, the Communist dictatorship and its institutions, and hoped that its existence was only temporary and an aberration that had been imposed on Hungary by foreign occupation and the ignorance of the Western democracies. Their hope was that this system would come to an end with global political developments and that eventually they would be able to return „home" to Hungary with the expulsion of the Communists.[16]

From the beginning of their exile these emigrés differentiated themselves from the large number of immigrants who were already present in their new homelands. These "kivándorlók" (immigrants) were the first and second generation labor and agricultural elements of Hungarian society that had settled in Brazil, USA, Canada and Australia from the 1890's to 1914 and during the years of the global depression. For the most part they were economic immigrants who left Hungary or Hungary's immediate neighbors to better their economic and social existence by working overseas for a time and then returning to the region to buy land or build a family house. The First World War and Trianon transformed their planned temporary stay into a permanent one. For both social and political reasons these two waves of emigrés and immigrants did not become a unified Hungarian Brazilian or Hungarian American community. Their distance from one another was also assisted by the tiny, but influential "Béla Kun" and "őszirózsás" left-wing emigrés who left Hungary as exiles of the Horthy era in 1919-20, like Oszkár Jászi. The latter gained control of a number of influential newspapers which perpetuated not just the divisions between left and right, but between social classes as well as between „old" and „new" settlers in the Brazilian, Australian and American settings.

The Revolution of 1956 led to the start of re-thinking the role of Hungarians beyond the borders of Hungary. Although most of the 1956-ers were also emigré Hungarians, the event that forced them into exile also signaled that the Soviet occupation and the Communist order in Hungary was not coming to an end soon. The brutal repression of the Soviet Union and the tepid response of the "West" convinced Hungarians both at home and abroad that they had to

[15] Várdy, Béla: Magyarok az újvilágban: A dipi emigráció. (Hungarians in the New World: The D.P. Emigrés) In: Kovalszki, Péter (ed.): *ITT-OTT Kalendárium* Ann Arbor, MI, 2013. p.146.

[16] Ibid.

prepare for the long-term duration of János Kádár's (1956-1988) political status quo. The emigré organizations broke into two major camps at this time,[17] the larger, more conservative cluster, favored a steadfast opposition, a hard-line rejection of the Kádár regime, while the smaller cluster felt that an incremental erosion of the communist totalitarian system was possible. They favored the *Détente* politics which began to emerge during the last years of the Eisenhower Administration under Secretary of State Herter.

As opposed to these two emigré clusters a small number of activists began to stress that these two options were not the only ones available to displaced Hungarians. This group was composed mainly of the children, or the second generation of the 1945-ers and 1956-ers. They were born in the new homeland or were very young when they became exiles. Consequently, they did not have the firm attachments of their predecessors to the Hungarian homeland. They did not think that "returning" to the "old country" was required once Hungary shook off the Communist shackles and again became a free political system. This group emerged mainly in the early 1960's in a debate that began in the ÉMEFESZ (Északamerikai Magyar Egyetemisták és Főiskolások Egyesületeinek Szövetsége), the emigré university student organization created after the 1956 Revolution. The organization included mainly 1956-ers, but it also recruited Hungarian college students who were the offspring of the immigrants and of the 1945-47 emigré waves. Within this organization the debate centered on the role that this student generation was to serve in the long-run. Since the organizational leadership of ÉMEFESZ was in part dependent on US State Department, i.e. Radio Free Europe (some link it to the CIA) funding,[18] the stance of the organization reflected the foreign policy concerns of the USA. After 1962 this meant mainly a low-key support for *Detente.*

The dissidents within ÉMEFESZ were some of the founders of the new diaspora consciousness of Hungarians in the United States, Canada, Brazil and elsewhere. The split became obvious with the emergence of the newsletter and later periodical called ITT-OTT (Here-There) edited in Baton Rouge, Louisiana by two graduate

[17] Borsody, István: Az Amerikai külpolitika és az emigráció politikája (American Foreign Policy and the Politics of the Emigrés) in *Látóhatár* (Horizon) 1956, no. 5, pp.251-252.

[18] Várallyay, Gyula: *Tévuton—ügynökök az ötvenhatos diák mozgalomban nyugaton és utóélete* (Missed Intersection: Subversive Agents in the 1956 Student Movement in the West and its Aftermath) Budapest: L'Harmatan - ÁBTL 56-os Intézet. 2011. pp.39-42.

students at Louisiana State University.[19] Already in the fifth issue of ITT-OTT (May 1968) one of the editors called on the upcoming ÉMEFESZ conference in Chicago (Summer 1968) to distance itself from emigré politics.[20] This article focused on the emigré weaknesses of ÉMEFESZ which must be replaced by „szétszórtsági" (diaspora) consciousness if ÉMEFESZ does not want to become extinct. In this article the author defined emigré consciousness as capable of maintaining only one generation of Hungarians. It is not capable of sustaining the survival of Hungarians abroad because it tends to define its condition as „temporary." As opposed to this the diaspora Hungarians (szétszortsági magyarok) set out to perpetuate Hungarian existence in future generations. They do not view their existence outside of Hungary either as „unnatural" or as „temporary."[21] The emigrés view their existence as defined by organizations and goals that froze in time at the moment they left Hungary. Thus, the emigré isolated himself from developments in Hungary and became an unrelenting critic of everything that characterized his former homeland. This mentality led the emigré as it had for the intra-war emigrés, to one of two options: either repatriation after the hated regime collapsed, or total absorption into the life and society of the new homeland. Between these alternatives every emigré group disappears after one generation.[22]

As opposed to this result, the diaspora mentality makes it possible to survive for multiple generations. While the emigré can imagine existence only by associating it with the territory of the Hungarian state, the diaspora Hungarian sees the meaning of their existence defined by their association with the language, culture and national values of the Hungarian people. The diaspora Hungarian preserves, or attempts to preserve these throughout the global dispersion. They feel that you can be a „jó magyar" (quality Hungarian) even if you have never been to Hungary, and have never seen the Tisza river, Lake Balaton, or visited a small Székely village in the shadow of the Hargita mountains.[23] This mentality of the diaspora Hungarians demands constant renewal and commitment to community inter-

[19] See *ITT-OTT* (Here-There), vol. 1, no. 1 (Oct. 23, 1967).

[20] Ludányi, András: Szétszórtság vagy emigráció? (Diaspora or emigrés?) In: *ITT-OTT*, vol.1, no. 5 (May 31, 1968). pp.13-14.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Cseh, Tibor: Gondolatok egy templomban (Reflections in a Church). In: *Csernátontól a Reménység taváig: Válogatott írások* (From Csernáton to Lake Hope: Selected Writings) .Budapest: Fekete Sas Publishers, 2014. p. 372, quotes the Australian-Hungarian Ruttkay Tamás' poem (1970) to drive home his point.

ests. It leads to an existence characterized by constant networking. It requires contact with developments in Hungary as well as the world at large. Because it involves keeping contact with Hungarian communities without regard to borders, the diaspora Hungarians do not isolate themselves, nor do they hold onto a frozen moment in time, whether 1945, 1947, 1956 or 1989.

However, the refusal to be time-bound by a particular moment in history is in itself not enough to sustain a diaspora. Its survival depends at least on two other very important factors, the tolerance of the new homeland for diversity and the inner will and cultural cohesion of the people concerned. The tolerance factor is in large part a consequence of how the "new" homeland came into being. Did it become a state as a consequence of the nation-state ambitions of one nationality? For example the French, the Slovak, the Romanian or Austrian states define themselves as nation-states each having a dominant *Staatsvolk* (state forming nation). As opposed to this states like Australia, Canada, the United States or Brazil came into being as states composed of multi-ethnic populations, due to the immigrant origin of their peoples. In both contexts assimilationist processes are a constant part of existence, however, the states based on mass immigration policies have generally been willing to tolerate diversity. (Although the degree of tolerance varies from state to state even among these immigration based states. Thus, on a cultural diversity continuum Brazil and Australia exhibit less, while the USA and Canada exhibit more tolerance for diversity.)

In the United States context, integration and ultimate assimilation has moved from the initial rigid perspective of Anglo-Conformity to the Melting Pot, and then the Cultural Pluralism formulation. Since September 11, 2001, however, the cultural pluralism formula has lost some of its appeal and more recently the assimilationist values of the melting pot seem to have been revived and re-asserted. Still, the diaspora Hungarians have been able to retain their identity even within this context. The reason for this is their commitment to the preservation of cultural values. They have not affiliated with specific political groups or ideologies in the present-day or the recent past. Instead they are motivated by the survival of the Hungarian language and culture wherever it has taken root. Thus, they have been in the forefront in defending the rights of Hungarian minorities in Romania, Slovakia, Carpatho-Ukraine, Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia or the Burgenland region of Austria. In addition they have exerted efforts to sustain their own communities in such widely dispersed centers as Sydney, Australia, Sao Paulo, Brazil, Toronto, Canada and Chicago or Cleveland, USA. While their emigré or immigrant

predecessors had defined themselves by the political symbols of their former homeland in the title of their publications (e.g., *Népszava/People's Voice, Szabadság/Freedom, Nyugati Magyarság/Hungarians in the West, Szittyakürt/Skythian Horn, Munkás/Worker,* or their geographic location as *Pittsburghi Magyarság/Hungarians in Pittsburgh, Clevelandi Népszava/Cleveland's Voice of the People, Chikágó és Környéke/Chicago and Environs),* the diaspora Hungarians have titled their publications to reflect their dispersion and diversity (e.g., *ITT-OTT/ Here-There, Nyolcadik Törzs/Eighth Tribe, Ötágú Síp/Five Vented Flute, Sziget Magyarság/Hungarians of the Archipelago, Szivárvány/Rainbow,* and *Haza a Magasban/Homeland Transcending Borders.)*[24]

For their survival they have learned to depend on themselves. Hungarian governments, excepting the Orbán governments, have paid primarily lip-service to the fate of diaspora Hungarians. However, the diaspora has been able to overcome many of the issues which have divided their immigrant and emigré predecessors. In their organizations and institutions they have de-emphasized social class and religious differences and have also avoided the rigid left-right ideological divisions of the past. This has been in part a consequence of learning from the pragmatic experiences of American society. Thus, most of their involvement has been with some ethnically active churches, the Hungarian exile scouting movement, and cultural and literary societies. They have turned their political involvement mainly toward defending minority rights and human rights. They have avoided the posturing and memorandum politics of their predecessors and have instead become adept at lobbying and charitable work for the Hungarian minority communities in East Central Europe as well as support for the diaspora communal organizations that have enabled them to survive to the present.[25]

The diaspora activists were loosely linked to one another through the exile scouting network and through the human rights struggles of the late 1970`s and after. Those disenchanted with ÉMEFESZ also bolstered the work of the Alumni Association (Bessenyei György Kör) in New Brunswick, New Jersey. But the theoretical foundation of diaspora consciousness was derived mainly from the ITT-OTT periodical of the late 1960's. Besides the founders of the ITT-OTT

[24] Bakó,Elemér: *Magyarok az Amerikai Egyesült Államokban* (Hungarians in the United States of America). Budapest: A Magyarok Világszövetsége Nyugati Régiója, 1998. , pp149-152.

[25] Ludányi, Andrew: Hungarian Lobbying Efforts for the Human Rights of Minorities in Rumania: The CHRR/HHRF as a Case Study. In: *Hungarian Studies* (1990) vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 79-80.

movement (Louis Éltető, George Csomay, Andrew Ludányi), in the early years, particularly the early 1970's, Tibor Cseh (from Midland Park, New Jersey), Laszló Bőjtös (From Cleveland, Ohio), Endre Károly Nagy (from Columbus, Ohio), Márta and Thomas Frecska and Márton and Magdi Sass from Chicago and László and Mária Soltay from Toronto were early supporters of the movement. Most of them had already become part of the inner circle of the movement by the Hereford, Pennsylvania conference of 1972.[26] The Lake Chautauqua, New York meetings in 1974-75, witnessed the addition of József Értavy from Buffalo and Balázs and Csilla Somogyi from Connecticut as well as many younger generation activists like József Megyeri and Erika Bokor from Chicago, who would become the backbone of the movement by the 1990's. In the formulation and active debate surrounding the movement's religious commitments Sándor Szent-Iványi and András Hamza played a significant role besides Louis Éltető.[27] On the critical side Balázs Somogyi and prominent leaders of the former ÉMEFESZ (including Károly Nagy, László Papp, Gyula Várallyay and Béla Lipták) contributed a great deal to the refinement of the movements' goals.

Although diaspora perspectives were gaining ground in the thinking of Hungarian Americans, it is surprising that the most influential emigré thinkers viewed them as a threat to the unity of a strong anti-communist front against the Kádár regime. Tibor Tollas, András Pogány, László Pásztor and the Hungarian Association of Cleveland under János Nádas represented this group. Fearing the reaction of the former to close ties with ITT-OTT, in private, people like Gábor Bodnár (leader of the Scouts Association in Exile), expressed their sympathy toward the objectives of the movement. Also in this category we could include László Hámos, Bulcsu Veress and Jenő Brogyányi (Hungarian Human Rights Foundation) of the younger generation.[28]

Surprising is that the doyen of emigré intellectuals, Gyula Borbándi, failed to deal with the diaspora perspective in a serious way. In his writings in *Uj Látóhatár*, as well as the writings of many of his colleagues the focal point always remained emigré politics and concerns.[29] This is also the case for István Sisa who toys

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[26] Névmutató (Index of Names) in *ITT-OTT Szeminárium* {Here-There Conference} (Hereford, Pennsylvania: 1972. szeptember 2-3) p. 94.

[27] Ibid.; and perusal of *ITT-OTT* index issue for years 1967-1977.

[28] Ludányi, Andrew: *Hungarian Lobbying Efforts…,* op. cit. pp. 81-82.

[29] See for example Borbándi,Gyula: *A magyar emigráció életrajza 1945-1985* (The Hungarian Emigrés from 1945-1985) .Münich: Az Európai Protestáns Magyar Szabad Egyetem, 1985, and Borbándi, Gyula: *Nyugati magyar irodalmi lexikon és*

with the main ideas of diaspora consciousness and then makes the claim that the ITT-OTT periodical took these ideas from his writings in 1990.[30] Others, like Sándor Kiss, János Horváth, and Gyula Gombos accepted many of the group's assumptions, but did not join the debate. However, one of the most prominent members of the emigré elite, Zoltán Szabó, titled one of his books published in 1999 as *Diaszpóranemzet* (Diaspora Nation).

The most interesting reaction or nonreaction, is that of the Hungarian government. In official circles, Hungarians in the West were always viewed as reactionary emigrés. In the publications of the World Federation of Hungarians Miklós Szánthó set the tone, or at least reflected the tone of official Hungary. Thus, for the Communist Party (Magyar Szocialista Munkás Párt) the World Federation of Hungarians remained a mechanism not for the support of Hungarian survival of the diaspora beyond the borders, but as a means of infiltrating and dividing the emigré world.

Only after the collapse of communism in 1989-91 is a real change possible. But initially, only lip-service is paid to support the Hungarians in diaspora. Only three exceptions to this are the activities of the Bethlen Gábor Foundation from 1982 to the present, the World Federation of Hungarians in the period from 1992-1998, and the efforts of the Orbán governments (1998-2002 and 2010 to the present). The Bethlen Gábor Foundation as well as some other civic organizations already began to build bridges to the diaspora in the last decade of the Kádár regime, during the 1980's. Their task was mainly the creation of communication networks with the most active diaspora groups. As a continuation the World Federation of Hungarians already went one step further when the opportunity offered itself after the collapse of the communist power structure. This led to a re-vitalized World Federation that was no longer the control instrument of communist power, but became a forum for the Hungarian communities across the borders via its quality publications and the work of the Mother Tongue Conferences (Anyanyelvi Konferenciák) (under the leadership of Béla Pomogáts) through textbook publishing, language camp organizing, and the organizing of language instructional conferences. This outreach to the diaspora Hungarians was particularly effective

bibliográfia (Hungarian Literary Lexicon and Bibliography in the West). Budapest: Hitel, 1992. This is also the case in the two volume compilation by Gazda, József: *A harmadik ág: Magyarok a szétszórattatásban* (The Third Branch: Hungarians in Dispersion) Budapest: Hétkrajcár Publishers, 2011.

[30] Sisa, István: Szétszórtságban: Az emigráció alkonya (In Dispersion: Sunset for the Emigrés). In: Sisa, István: *Örtállás Nyugaton* (Standing Guard in the West) Morristown: Vista Books, 2004. pp.76-80.

during the 1994-1996 years when Sándor Csoóri and István Bakos were at the helm of the organization. Unfortunatelly, it was short-lived, because the new leadership under Patrubány discredited itself and the work of the organization.[31]

Fortunately the Orbán governments realized that this vacuum had to be filled with new programs that would strengthen the diaspora and its activities. It replaced symbolic posturing and developed plans to ensure diaspora survival. The first real such commitment comes with the establishment of the Balassi Institute to provide scholarships to 10-20 young overseas Hungarians to study for a year in Hungary. This was established by the first Orbán government and involves KMCSSZ (Külföldi Magyar Cserkész Szövetség) – Scouts in Exile and members of the Hungarian Communion of Friends (MBK) in the screening and selection of student participants.[32] Although this program was not abandoned by the Medgyessy-Gyurcsány-Bajnai interlude, nothing was done to expand like programs.

Only when FIDESZ and KDNP regained power with a two-thirds majority in Parliament, did the Orbán government have the opportunity to return to its support for diaspora survival programs. These are most succinctly summarized for us by Péter Kovalszki (President of MBK) on the occasion of the second conference of the Hungarian Diaspora Council (Magyar Diaszpóra Tanács) in October, 2012. Kovalszki became a member of the Hungarian diaspora, and joined the work of MBK/ITT-OTT together with László and Ágnes Fülöp in the early 1990's. (He was part of the exodus that left Romania to escape the minority repression of the Ceaușescu regime.) From this conference onward a whole series of programs were put into place, which at the present time are still ongoing in sustaining the existence of diaspora Hungarians. Probably the most successful such programs have been the Körösi Csoma Sándor Internships which have provided cultural guidance for about one hundred diaspora communities during the past two years. The Julianus Program supplements this by developing an inventory of Hungarian artifacts globally and the Mikes Kelemen Program which attempts to save the library and book collections of diaspora communities. It also includes the „ReConnect

[31] For the background see particularly Bakos, István: *Közszolgálatban (*Servicing the Commonweal) Budapest: Püski, 1994.

[32] See magyarság ismereti képzés a diaszpórában élő magyar származású fiatalok számára and Teleki Pál Alapítvány at www.balassiintézet.hu
Kovalszki, Péter: Diaszpóra nemzet: Bevezetés egy válogatáshoz (Diaspora Nation: An Introduction to a Compilation), pp.171-172; Bakos, István Honismeret (National Awareness), pp.172-182; Csapó, Endre: Mit ér a magyar a nagyvilagban? (What is the Global Worth of Hungarians?), pp.183-189; In: *ITT-OTT Kalendárium* (2013).

Hungary – The Hungarian Birthright Program" and the easing of restrictions for Hungarians to acquire dual citizenship. An explosion of activities has taken place in the past five years that have reached out to diaspora communities in all parts of the world! It would be impossible to do them justice in the context of such a brief overview. Each one of these programs deserves a special study on its own to present its goals, activities and results. However, these programs would not have been possible, without the triumph of the diaspora perspective among the policymakers of the Orbán government.[33]

The statements of Zsolt Semjén at the 2013 Diaspora Council echo the earliest formulations of the diaspora conception.[34] This was reviewed in the presentations of László Bőjtös at both one of the EPMSZ (European Free University of Hungarian Protestants) conferences as well as his latest presentation at Lake Hope State Park (Ohio) in August of 2014. In essence his study collected all the significant statements on the diaspora conception and demonstrated that these led step by step to the formulations and policies of the current Orbán government and its outreach to the Hungarian diaspora. The abandonment of emigré politics and its replacement with the diaspora perspective has transformed the relations between the Hungarian government and Hungarians living beyond the country's borders.

The major challenge now is to integrate the „kiszivárgók" („seepage Hungarians") who have left Hungary since 1989. Kovalszki aptly designated them in this category, because of their gradual drain, or oozing dispersal throughout the world (i.e., seeping/oozing out of the 20th century wounds of the Hungarian nation). However, these „seepage Hungarians" now constitute an important part of the diaspora population. As László Hámos points out in his essay „Gyarapodó nemzetrész" (A Growing Community): According to the U.S. Census Bureau they have increased by 138,481 from 1,398,724 Hungarian ancestry inhabitants of the USA in 2000 to 1,537,205 in 2012.[35] The diaspora activism of the Orbán government addresses this seepage crisis as well, and not one moment too soon!

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[33] Semjén, Zsolt: *Nemzetpolitika*. Talk presented at Pázmány Péter Catholic University, 24 September 2012. Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 2012., pp. 7-30.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Hámos, László: Gyarapodó nemzetrész, In: *ITT-OTT Kalendárium* (2013), p.203.

Education