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## NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND STEREOTYPES IN THE HUNGARIAN-SLOVAKIAN BORDERLAND AREA AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR

In the extremely complex processes of consolidation and change in respect of national consciousness, especially in the expanse of central-eastern Europe, a particular, energizing rôle was played by the First World War, and — following on from this — by the emergence of new state organisms and the demarcation of around six-thousand kilometres of new state borders.<sup>1</sup> Despite the fact that historians and politicians have repeatedly referred to the consequences of these processes, they are known only in general outline and in the macroscale of so-called nation-states.<sup>2</sup> Less known — and less easily cognizable — is the national

<sup>1</sup> In view of the nature of the present work, I have been able to quote examples only from the literature. I have written on the nation-creating processes elsewhere, see for instance, M. Koźmiński, *Narody i mniejszości narodowe (1918-1939)* [*Nations and National Minorities (1918-1939)*], in: *Dziesięć wieków Europy, Warszawa 1984*, pp. 469-490; this includes a more extensive bibliography, and deliberations on development models and on the asynchronous development of nations in the west and east of the continent.

<sup>2</sup> For an up-to-date selection of works on the genesis and rise of the Austro-Hungarian "successor states," see H. Batowski, *Rozpad Austro-Węgier 1914-1918 (Sprawy narodowościowe i działania dyplomatyczne)* [*The Disintegration of Austria-Hungary, 1914-1918 (Nationality Issues and Diplomatic Activity)*], 2nd ed., Kraków 1982, pp. 325-342. See also H. Wereszycki, *Pod berłem Habsburgów. Zagadnienia narodowościowe* [*Under the Rule of the Habsburgs. Nationality Problems*], Kraków 1975; W. Balcerak, *Powstanie państw narodowych w Europie środkowo-wschodniej* [*The Rise of Nation-States in Central-Eastern Europe*], Warszawa 1974; J. Chlebówczyk, *Procesy narodotwórcze we wschodniej Europie środkowej w dobie kapitalizmu* [*The Nation-Creating Processes in Eastern Central Europe in the Capitalist Era*], Warszawa 1975 (cf. the review article, K. Groniowski, M. Koźmiński, *Procesy narodotwórcze w Europie środkowej w dobie kapitalizmu* [*The Nation-Creating Processes in Central Europe in the Capitalist Era*], "Kwartalnik Historyczny," vol. LXXXIV, 1977, No. 2, pp. 433-445). All authors are agreed on the point that the development of nationality issues and

consciousness of inhabitants of the "borderland,"<sup>3</sup> regarded in two senses. Firstly, the borderland in the spatial sense, where, in various forms of settlement and in various ratios, we encounter a population which is distinctly heterogenic in composition, from the point of view of national consciousness. Secondly — where we encounter "borderline" figures of a dynamically variable national consciousness, subject to polarization with each new order.

A look at the formation processes of national consciousness — and not only in this borderland area — appears to be all the more called-for in that in historiography and in various treatments of political, diplomatic and also social history, when authors refer to the national divisions of interest to us, more often than not they formulate judgements which are too categorical and unambiguous, and sometimes in direct contradiction with historical reality, difficult enough to re-create.<sup>4</sup> Such judgements mostly assume the shape of pronouncements that the Hungarians, Slovaks, Czechs, Germans or Jews (to mention here by way of example those national groupings of more immediate interest to us) "wanted," "strove," "acted" and so on, or that the "Hungarian, Czech, Slovakian and so on bourgeoisie," "aiming," "striving," "causes"... Such sentences — often true, used as a necessary mental shorthand — nevertheless give expression willy-

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national aspirations, together with the accompanying conflicts, were a major contributing factor in Austria-Hungary's disintegration. The question of to what degree remains debatable. The authors also differ in their answers to numerous subsidiary questions. But what is of deepest interest to us here is the manner of writing on and the method of approach to the problems under study.

<sup>3</sup> From Polish works on the subject of the "borderland," including methodological aspects of applied research, see J. Chlebowski, *Kształtowanie się świadomości społecznej i narodowej na pograniczu językowym (w warunkach środkowoeuropejskich). Niektóre problemy teoretyczne i metodologiczne [The Shaping of Social and National Consciousness in the Linguistic Borderland (Under Central-European Conditions). Some Theoretical and Methodological Problems]*, "Studia z Dziejów ZSRR i Europy Środkowej", vol. IV, 1968, pp. 5-42; idem, *O niektórych problemach asymilacji narodowej i pogranicza językowo-narodowościowego (na obszarach byłej monarchii austriacko-węgierskiej [Some Problems of National Assimilation and the Linguistic-Nationality Borderland (in the Territories of the Former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy)]*, "Studia Historyczne", vol. XV, 1972, No. 3, pp. 323-363.

<sup>4</sup> The phenomenon in question occurs on such a universal scale in historiography that illustration is not required here.

nilly to simplified judgements. Excessive simplifications often border on unintentional falsification. Therefore the sentences in question require both careful verification and relativization.

The risk of absolutization of judgements relating to the behaviour patterns of national groups is the more serious in that it is linked up with the functioning of deep-rooted stereotypes in popular circulation. In extreme cases these stereotypes are reduced — more often and to a greater degree amongst the readers than the authors of historical works — to absolute generalizations, thoroughly false. They then assume a form which attributes to all subjects of historical events a given — mostly *a priori* — immanent feature. All the more important, it would appear, is the relativizing of relevant judgements occurring both in the sources and in historiography.

One ought to postulate broad and detailed research together. The present text can only indicate one of these research variants. The source foundation of the remarks proffered is made up mostly of the findings of searches over a short period in the two key archives for this subject: the National Archive in Budapest (Országos Levéltár — OL), and the Central Slovakian State Archive (Štátny slovenský ústredný archív — ŠÚA SSR). In view of the mostly low level of political authority of the originators of the document, the spatially and thematically restricted nature of the accounts, and also the mostly accidental arrangement of sources — their serviceability for research on international relations in the traditional sense would appear to be of a secondary nature. They do, however, facilitate the accomplishing of certain magnifications of the image of national consciousness at the close of the war, within the new borders, and in conditions of violent change. Above all, however, they enable greater reflection on the theme of nationalistic behaviour, activity and finally choices, amongst often local communities, subject to the pressure of generally external changes in historical reality. The image — usually simplified more than the exigencies of methodological correctitude and the need for unambiguous terminology dictate — takes on new shades and dimensions when we take a different look at the often trivial information from apparently second-rate sources.

In eastern Europe — with a marked delay in comparison with the European West — a system of states arose at this time which, in the intentions at least of their joint creators, merited the name of nation-states.<sup>5</sup> It seemed that the second element of the maxim *cujus regio, ejus religio* — which had been sinking into oblivion since the turn of the 18th century — would be replaced by the postulate *ejus natio*. The postulate of self-determination received universal proclamation, but the form and scope of its realization depended on numerous factors independent of the aspirations of the population of a given region. Aspirations for one's own nation-state cannot be defined by measurement. They were often expressed by narrow national representation, operating within the country and in exile, whilst affirmation of the declared aims amongst the interested parties remains equally unquantifiable, at least in part. On the other hand there is no doubt that the governments of the newly rising states strove consistently to implement the aforesaid "maxim" — *ejus natio*.<sup>6</sup> This consistency can best be judged by following the fate and circumstances of the national minorities, in particular perhaps when they came from previous "majorities" <sup>7</sup>.

There is no doubt that at least from the time of the European revolutions of 1848-49, the majority of Slovakian inhabitants of the lands of the crown of St. Stephen were sensible of an uncomfortable separateness — varying in form and intensity — in their position. In consequence of Budapest's policy — especially in the area of education, language and culture — as early as

<sup>5</sup> The formula nation-state related to west-European genesis and experiences, where in accordance with the theory of the "civic society" — from the bourgeois revolutions — the citizens created a state of the same name as the nation. In central-eastern Europe after the First World War, where 13 new or radically transformed states arose, although numerous national problems were resolved, others remained, whilst nationality conflicts took on a new aspect, partly in view of the problem of the national minorities, either "classic" minorities as in the case of the Hungarians, or paraminorities as in the case of the Slovaks in Czechoslovakia.

<sup>6</sup> Paraphrase after I. L. Claude, Jr., *National Minorities. An International Problem*, Cambridge 1955, pp. 90-91.

<sup>7</sup> As in fact with the Hungarians, who overnight became the "subtenants of their former subtenants" (in the parlance of the time). See S. Czosnkowski, *Sprawa mniejszości narodowych na gruncie międzyparlamentarym* [The Question of National Minorities in an Inter-Parliamentary Context], "Sprawy Narodowościowe", 1927, No. 2, p. 144.

the first years of the 20th century this discomfort was doubtless sensed as discrimination.<sup>8</sup> In turn, however, it is not easy to suppose that during the years of the First World War the majority of Slovaks, despite the manifest radicalization of attitudes and postulates, could in anticipation accept the contents and scope of the Czech-Slovak compacts: the so-called Cliveland Agreement of 22 Oct., 1915 (signed by representatives of the Slovakian League and the Czech National Association), or the so-called Pittsburg Agreement of 30 May, 1918 (signed by T. G. Masaryk, as president of the Czechoslovakian National Council). Neither is it easy to suppose that this "majority" of Slovaks would accept without reservations and doubts the subsequent Washington (18 Oct., 1918) or Prague (28 Oct., 1918) declarations.<sup>9</sup>

Only on 30 Oct., 1918 did representatives "of all Slovakian political parties" assembled in Turčiansky Svätý Martin (in Hungarian: Turócszentmartin), declare a resolute wish to exercise their due right of self-determination "on a basis of complete independence." The authors of the declaration, in the same way as those of the aforesaid Czech-Slovak agreements, took as their own the theory of one Czechoslovakian state, one part of which would be the "Slovakian branch", although they imagined the form and content of the future union differently.<sup>10</sup> This was

<sup>8</sup> The polemics on this topic show no signs of subsiding. The situation of the Slovaks in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy is compared with that of the Hungarians in the Czechoslovakian Republic. More often than not such comparisons are pointless, in view of the changed historical realities. The more difficult it is, we realize, to compare "feelings," which are subjective when all is said and done.

<sup>9</sup> The subsequent course of events over many years, the development of the Slovak autonomy and separatist movement, bears witness to this, if only indirectly. Whilst it is true that separatism was fomented and exploited from outside, it is difficult to negate its internal foundations. A recent example of too one-dimensional an interpretation of Czech-Slovak relations would seem to be E. Piotrowska-Orlof, *Unia słowacko-czeska w roku 1918 [The Slovakian-Czech Union in 1918]*, in: *Problemy historii Słowian i Europy Środkowej w XIX i XX wieku*, Wrocław 1982, pp. 51-61. Cf. in particular, J. Reychman, *Początki świadomości narodowej Słowaków [The Beginnings of National Consciousness amongst the Slovaks]*, "Sprawy Narodowościowe," 1938, Nos. 4/5, pp. 429-440; Y. Jelinek, *The Parish Republic: Hlinka's Slovak People's Party 1939-1945*, New York, London 1976, pp. 1-16.

<sup>10</sup> For texts of the documents cited (and a valuable analysis of the problem), S. Falt'an, *Slovenská otázka v československu*, Bratislava 1968, (Prilohy — pp. 275-285).

reminiscent of an earlier legislators' theory in respect of a "unified Hungarian political nation" living in a Hungarian state.<sup>11</sup> This time, too, it is difficult to determine the range of support amongst the population of Slovakia for the intrusive, not to say revolutionary changes.

When the population of old — for it was a thousand years of age — "Upper Hungary" had accepted, or at least got used to the new situation, the question remained open of the borders of the new state territory. The *de jure* southern border of the Czechoslovakian state was confirmed along with ratification of the Treaty of Trianon (4 June, 1920).<sup>12</sup> It was formed as a resultant of the play of forces at the Paris Peace Conference (from January, 1919), but also through events in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. It was the upshot of military defeat, but also of opposing territorial aspirations and postulates. To a large degree it hinged on *faits accomplis*, on the crossing of Czech forces (November, 1918 - January, 1919) and Hungarian forces (May - June, 1919) into the Slovakian lands. It hinged on the successes of revolution and the victory of counter-revolution in Hungary, but also on progress in the building of the Czechoslovakian state and "consolidation" in Hungary.<sup>13</sup> It is a fact, for example, that the creation of the new administration in Slovakia — and Carpathian Russia — was only completed with the reform which came into force on 1 Jan., 1923.<sup>14</sup> It is also a fact that public and economic activity, and no less important — everyday life as well, were regulated by contradictory and diverse legal regulations, even after the disintegration of ephemeral political

<sup>11</sup> The formula of a "unified political nation" is quoted universally; it probably occurred for the first time in the Statute of 1868 — XLIV, fundamental for national relations in the country.

<sup>12</sup> Trianon and its consequences have acquired an extensive, but at the same time controversial literature, as for example C. A. MacCarthy *in Hungary and Her Successors. The Treaty of Trianon and Its Consequences 1919-1937*, London, New York, Toronto 1968 (3rd ed.); Zs. L. Nagy *A párizsi békekonzferencia es Magyarország 1918-1919*, Budapest 1955; J. Purgat, *Od Trianonu po Košice*, Bratislava 1970.

<sup>13</sup> It is generally accepted that strengthening of government structure in Czechoslovakia on the one hand, and the "consolidation" associated with the premiership of I. Bethlen in Hungary on the other, embraced a period of close on ten years.

<sup>14</sup> L. Lipscher, *K vývinu politickej správy na Slovensku v rokoch 1918-1938*, Bratislava 1966, pp. 83-142.

organisms — such as the Republic of Upper Hungary, the Independent Republic of Orava, Spiš Independent Republic, the Slovakian People's Republic (proclaimed at Košice on 11 Dec., 1918), the Slovakian Councils' Republic (announced in Prešov on 16 June, 1919), and after the repeal of the regulations of the military dictatorship and the lifting of the emergency state (introduced in turn on the basis of the decision of the National Assembly of 10 Dec., 1918).<sup>15</sup>

The state border cut through ties which were centuries old. The "St.-Stephen" (as it was later called ironically) tradition of a commonwealth of states was replaced by a kind of popularization of the history of the Great Moravian state of the 9th century,<sup>16</sup> and the desire to build a new union on the foundations of the closeness of language and culture, but perhaps more than anything — belief in ethnic identity, something which was emphasized.<sup>17</sup> To the south of a border de facto approaching the temporary demarcation postulated by the Entente as early as December, 1918 (cf. Lt.-Col. F. Vix' note to the Hungarian government of 24th of that month)<sup>18</sup> remained well over a hundred-

<sup>15</sup> A relatively full list of local initiatives is given in F. Boros, *Magyar-csehszlovák kapcsolatok 1918-1921-ben*, Budapest 1970, p. 50. The act of 10 Dec., 1918 (64/1918) was passed after a speech by the premier, K. Kramáf, in which he warned against anarchy in Slovakia when the "Hungarian administration leaves, and out administration has not yet taken up its place there." For many months not even all the district heads could take up office in the municipal centres, inspectors had no means of communication at their disposal, whilst officers possessed insufficient forces. A state of emergency was declared on 25 March, and a military dictatorship on 5 June, 1919; in part of the territory a state of emergency was declared several times more, instructions on the military dictatorship being gradually reduced. Cf. L. Lipscher, *op. cit.*, pp. 25 - 32, 42 - 45.

<sup>16</sup> This state was to stretch as far as the upper reaches of the Elbe, Oder and Vistula in the north, whilst in the south it was to embrace the Pannonian plain. Cf. J. Tibenský, *Dejiny Slovenska slovom i obrazom*, vol. I, Bratislava 1973, p. 72.

<sup>17</sup> It would almost seem that during the inter-war years in the "new" ("historical" or "semi-historical") states, ethnogeny (alongside archeology and medieval studies) became one of the most important political sciences. An analysis of this phenomenon, using in particular the example of Hungarian historical science in the context of polemics with Hungary's neighbours, is contained among other places in J. Szücs, *A nemzet historikumja és a történelemszemlélet nemzeti látószöge (hozzás-olás egy vitához)*, Budapest 1970.

<sup>18</sup> The decision on the borderline was taken by the Supreme Military Council at Versailles on 22 Dec., 1918. This was a less favourable

thousand Slovaks.<sup>19</sup> To the north of it lay towns which had stronger ties historically with Hungary — Bratislava, Košice, Nyitra and dozens of others.<sup>20</sup> Above all there remained here a population which spoke Hungarian, regarded this as their “mother” tongue, and in particular described themselves as Hungarians (though these determinants did not always overlap).<sup>21</sup>

This population inhabited the southern borderland of Slovakia — a by no means insignificant area of around 11,000 sq. km. — in numbers ranging from something less than 600,000 (according to conservative Czechoslovakian data) to over 1,000,000 (according to equally exaggerated Hungarian estimates for the whole of Slovakia).<sup>22</sup> In all the border districts (*okresy*, as defined in the later administrative reform) this population represented from 22% to 95% of the total number of inhabitants

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borderline for Hungary than the demarcation line established on 6 December in direct talks between M. Hodža (the Slovak envoy) and A. Barth (Minister of Defence) in Budapest. (Cf. *Magyrország Története*, vol. 8/1, pp. 104 - 107). The Czechoslovakians subsequently questioned Hodža's powers as plenipotentiary.

<sup>19</sup> According to Hungarian statistics for 1920 (still taking the criterium of native language, as roughly 70% of those in question also used Hungarian), the exact figure was 141,882 people (more than forty thousand in the Budapest area, and more than fifty thousand on the left bank of the Tisza). Cf. *Magyar Statisztikai Évkönyv, Új folyam*, XXVII, XXVIII, XXIX, XXX, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, Budapest 1925, table 10, pp. 12 - 13.

<sup>20</sup> Hungarian publicism drew attention to this fact at the time, including revisionist publicism, but so did contemporary historiography where traditional culture and the economic rôle of the towns were under discussion. Cf. E. Arató, *Political Differentiation in the Hungarian Population of Czechoslovakia in the Post-World War I Years*, “Studia Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae,” vol. 122, 1975, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> Language was taken as an objective criterium, self-description as a subjective criterium. The criteria were fixed by the authorities who carried out the census; to a large degree the decisions hinged on their certitude in expecting “favourable ratios.” Already the presuppositions contributed to a wide divergence in the results. The question of the numbers of Hungarian people in Slovakia will be discussed later. On the question of nationality structure in Czechoslovakia cf. J. Tomaszewski, *Struktura narodowościowa ludności Czechosłowacji 1918 - 1938. Szkic statystyczny* [Nationality Structure of the Population of Czechoslovakia, 1918 - 1938. A Statistical Outline], “Przegląd Historyczny,” vol. LXI, 1970, No. 4, pp. 645 - 670.

<sup>22</sup> There was a high concentration of Hungarian people in the southern borderland area of Slovakia. From my own estimations it emerges that 85 - 86% of the total number of Hungarians in Slovakia lived in a region separated out unanimously as being heterogeneous from the nationality point of view, and which constituted 22 - 23% of the territory of inter-war

(according to Czechoslovakian data for the years 1920-21).<sup>23</sup> From west to east this "frontier belt" stretched across roughly 400 km., whilst it was 10 to 40 km. in width.<sup>24</sup> In the process, the new border mostly divided people of identical (initially) national consciousness; it ran close by (within 20 - 60 km. of) such Hungarian centres as Győr, Miskolc and Budapest.<sup>25</sup> One would think, too, that many thousands of Hungarians and individuals of "borderline" national consciousness lived amongst the Slovakian majority, alongside other minorities (above all Germans, Ruthenians or Ukrainians) to the north of the borderland area in question.

If — as we have mentioned — historians of international relations simplify (often in accordance with the exigencies of the trade) the picture of relations between nationalities, if only by

Slovakia. (Initial data based on J. Purgat, *op. cit.*, tables 1 and 2, p. 301; V. Prucha a kolektív, *Hospodárske dejiny Česko-slovenska v 19. a 20. storočí*, Bratislava 1974, p. 78 and table P 1, p. 573; L. Thirring, "Magyar Statisztikai Szemle," vol. XVII, 1939, No. 1, pp. 1-10). On the other hand, the data relating to the aggregate number and percentage of Hungarians in Slovakia are arguable. The lowest Czechoslovakian and highest Hungarian estimations probably come from the mid-1930s. The former refer to data from the 1930 census, and the latter to linguistic statistics from 1910. According to the Czechoslovakian data, at the most there were meant to be 572,000 Hungarians residing in Slovakia at that time, and according to the Hungarian data, for the whole "of the occupied territories" (and thus together with Carpathian Russia), at least 1,072,000 (cf. the table below), including 870,000 - 880,000 in Slovakian territory, but taking the birth-rate into account — and minimizing other variables — a far greater number. (Cf. in addition L. Th., "Magyar Statisztikai Szemle," vol. XVII, 1939, No. 4, pp. 361-364; from standard revisionist literature: M. Móricz, *Kilka słów o położeniu ludności węgierskiej na obszarze dawnych Górnych Węgier [A Few Words on the Situation of the Hungarian Population in the Territory of Former Upper Hungary]*, in: *Północ-Południe-Wschód i Zachód*, Warszawa 1938 (translation), pp. 5-17). Using the data cited and taking the above-stated proportions in respect of distribution of Hungarian people within Slovakian territory, one would arrive at the statement that towards the end of the inter-war period, living in a relatively high concentration within the territory of Slovakia were something under 490,000 Hungarians (after the Czechoslovakian data), or over 870,000 (from Hungarian data, compiled after the first Vienna settlement). Such a far-ranging divergency (a ratio of almost 1:1.8) bears witness to the significance attached to statistical argumentation, as well as to its absolutization and deceptiveness.

<sup>23</sup> J. Purgat, *op. cit.*, table 2, p. 302 (the data contained in this table suggest that the percentage of Hungarians in the provinces, where they represented more than 20% of the population during the course of just under 10 years, fell by more than 9%: from 63.7% to 54.4%).

<sup>24</sup> E. Arató, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6 (where the figures are given in miles).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*.

succumbing to the language of diplomacy, which treats the citizens and the state which represents them collectively, giving them the same name, then historians dealing with the history of minorities more often than not overestimate the worth of statistical sources. It is true that criticism of statistical data, e.g. of general censuses as regards nationality considerations (irrespective of whether the questions on the form relate directly to sense of national affiliation, or to language or religion), is even over-severe perhaps.<sup>26</sup> Apart from analysis of the circumstances surrounding the census, its organization and technique (e.g. the structure of the census form), the attention of historians is generally occupied by reconstruction of the aims of its initiator and organizer. In the absence of sources bearing direct witness to these aims — and such is most often the case — interpretations spring to mind loaded either with *a priori* judgements, or with judgements resulting from circumstances into which research is conducted decades later.<sup>27</sup> Meanwhile one cannot avoid a question of a different nature: irrespective of the results of this traditional criticism, can one accept census data as the only basis

<sup>26</sup> The authors already quoted — particularly Poles and Czechoslovakians — suggest that the “Magyarization” policy of the Hungarian authorities *eo ipso* implied distortion of general census results. One can only partially agree with this viewpoint, since (1), the censuses of 1900 and 1910 were carried out fairly honestly, and (2), their results reflected rather “natural” economic, social, demographical and national processes, to all intents and purposes independent of the political intentions realized under the conditions of government existing in Austria-Hungary, or of the indubitable assimilation measures taken during the times when the overriding aim was the sustaining of “one political nation,” though not the elimination of individual features of “nationality.” (Besides, this policy was not so much unrealistic as little effective.) I therefore incline towards the viewpoint of the Hungarian scholar L. Katus, *Magyarok, nemzetiségek a népszaporulat tükrében (1850-1918)*, “História”, vol. IV, 1982, No. 4/5, pp. 18-21. However, I feel that the quoting of census data without systematic commentary on the part of the author, but even more so the drawing of direct conclusions about disproportions in respect of nationality — for instance in office staffing — by means of comparison with census ratios, exact to one person and to a fraction of one percent, would seem to be a risky manoeuvre, and one which only superficially clarifies the image of historical reality. Cf. e.g. H. Batowski, *Rozpad Austro-Węgier...*, 1st ed., pp. 14-35 (especially the data after K. G. Hugelmann and R. A. Kann).

<sup>27</sup> These are questions for the history of historiography, chiefly of the political, social and psychological determinants of the historian's work at all stages of the cognitive process, and of publication of his findings. In the area which interests us, these are indicated by, among others, F. Glatz, *Trianon és a magyar történettudomány*, “Történelmi Szemle”, 1978, No. 2, pp. 411-421.

of description and interpretation of the national structure of a given society? For numerous reasons the answer would appear to be negative.

Amongst researchers on the period of more immediate interest to us, the sound view became established that after the Compromise of 1867 the Hungarian government had "Magyarization" plans.<sup>28</sup> In Slovakia, from the first months of the new régime — from the beginning of 1919 — a "re-Slovakization" campaign was initiated in respect of individuals previously "Magyarized" — in fact or as a matter of supposition, which is to say conjecture.<sup>29</sup> In both cases, it would appear, census results were overestimated. Which is to say the effectiveness of political plans and activity realized by the executive apparatus of pre-totalitarian governments was overestimated. Underestimated, on the other hand, were the effects of long-term economic and social processes, the level of national consciousness of those included in the censuses, and the historical circumstances in which nationality choices were recorded. Underestimated, too, was the influence of apparently secondary, or incidental, factors, and the degree of variable and transitional forms of precisely "borderline" national consciousness amongst those included in the censuses.

Let us examine the statistics containing data describing the national affiliation of inhabitants of Slovakia within comparable (post-Trianon) borders for the years 1900 - 1930.<sup>30</sup> In the case

<sup>28</sup> The differences of opinion between the authors quoted above (and many others) relate only to the form and effects of such aims and policy.

<sup>29</sup> Extremely telling in this respect is the expansive (30 pages) paper by the secretary of the National Statistical Office of the Czech Kingdom (Zemská Statistická Kancelář Království Českého — hereafter — ZSKKC Paper), addressed to the Ministry of Internal Affairs on 8 Feb., 1919. This arose as a consequence of consultations of representatives of the office with V. Šrobár, Minister Plenipotentiary for Slovakian Affairs (Minister s plnou mocou pre správu Slovenska — archive files cited below as MPS); ŠÚA SSR, MPS, box č. 277.

<sup>30</sup> I.e. within the borders established *de jure* by the peace treaty signed at Trianon on 4 June, 1920, with minor adjustments in subsequent years, but without any essential change after the Second World War (3 parishes in the so-called bridgehead of Bratislava). Establishing the territorial basis of statistical calculations in eastern Slovakia is more troublesome. It would appear that statisticians of both states take this to be the present state border between the territories of the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia (Slovakia) and the USRR (Carpathian Ukraine), which at any rate approximates the Hungarian-Slovakian demarcation of April, 1939.

of the first two censuses, description of national affiliation (more precisely — of “nationality”) was determined by native language, in subsequent censuses — by declared affiliation. In the Hungarian censuses Jewish nationality was not recorded. The 1919 census, which we shall deal with more closely, is generally overlooked in the literature.<sup>31</sup> In the censuses of 1921 and 1930 a marginal category appears, “foreigners [citizens] and persons of unknown nationality”.<sup>32</sup> This we shall overlook in the name of greater statistical clarity, in the same way as we have abandoned the division into civilian population and “servicemen and women” in reproducing the results of earlier censuses.<sup>33</sup>

Setting aside the well-known criticism of four of the five censuses cited, (See table)<sup>34</sup> which boils down to ascertainment of administrative pressure or manipulation of data, the results of which criticism were abused by politicians on both sides of

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<sup>31</sup> As an example: of the works quoted so far (also devoted to the internal history of Slovakia) only A. Siklóš, author of the relevant section of *Magyarország Története...* [A History of Hungary], bears witness to the fact that this census took place (p. 107). Neither does Batowski — who gives the most thorough treatment of the field in Polish literature — mention this census. See H. Batowski, *Kryzys dyplomatyczny w Europie, jesień 1938 — wiosna 1939* [The Diplomatic Crisis in Europe, Autumn, 1938 — Spring, 1939], 1st ed., Warszawa 1962, pp. 76-79 (data from the censuses of 1921 and 1930, slightly different to those taken by us, but with the area inhabited by Hungarians considerably reduced it would seem).

<sup>32</sup> This applied to 42,000 and 76,000 people respectively. For various reasons it emerges that 30% - 50% of them could be included under the heading “Hungarians”. (See table).

<sup>33</sup> Throughout the entire territory of Hungary (excluding Croatia-Slavonia) there were 117,000 “servicemen and -women” in 1900, and 122,000 in 1910, i.e. 0.69 and 0.67% respectively of the total population. And therefore, for the area of more immediate interest to us — approximately 19,000-20,000. (See table; for the years 1900 and 1910 see *A Magyar Szent Korona Országainak 1910-évi Népszámlálása*, Budapest 1912, vol. XLII, pp. 25<sup>x</sup> - 26<sup>x</sup>).

<sup>34</sup> Detailed comparisons show that deviations (arising for various technical reasons) from the absolute data quoted here are not substantial in nature; the total population figure fluctuates within a margin of error of 4,000 either way, as compared with 2,000 for the number of Hungarians (according to the official data of the census statistics), whilst the number of Slovaks in the table quoted (after a revisionist publication) is 20,000 (for 1921) and 120,000 (for 1930) greater than that according to the Czechoslovakian compilations quoted (this mainly arises from the fact that the 1921 census included Czechs under the joint heading of “Czechoslovakians”). On the other hand A. Siklóš (*op. cit.*, p. 107) gives slightly different proportional coefficients (without quoting the basis for his calculations).

TABLE

Nationality	1900	%	1910	%	1919	%	1921	%	1930	%
Slovaks (or "Czechoslo- vaks")	1,699,542	60.89	1,686,713	57.60	1,962,766	66.57	2,012,538	68.11	2,345,909	72.09
Hungarians	760,035	27.23	896,271	30.60	692,831	23.50	634,827	21.48	571,988	17.58
Germans	214,362	7.68	196,958	6.70	143,589	4.87	139,880	4.73	147,501	4.53
Ruthenians										
(or Ukrainians)	83,735	3.00	97,051	3.30	93,411	3.17	85,628	2.90	91,079	2.80
Jews							70,522	2.39	65,385	2.01
Others	33,494	1.20	49,832	1.80	55,710	1.89	11,466	0.39	32,327	0.99
TOTAL	2,791,168	100.00	2,926,824	100.00	2,948,307	100.00	2,954,861	100.00	32,54,189	100.00

SOURCE of direct data: Memorandum Concerning the Situation of the Hungarian Minority in Czechoslovakia, Budapest 1934, table, pp. 122-123. We have used this publication, since it alone (without giving a primary source) contains data from the 1919 census, and at the same time assures their comparability. We compared data for the remaining census in J. Pur-ga t., op. cit., table 1, p. 301 (primary source: *Ceskoslovenska statistika Sečidni lidu ze dne 1 XII 1930*, vol. XCVIII, pt. I, Praha 1934, pp. 46-47); *A Magyar Szent Korona 1910-évi Népszámlálása...*, pp. 25x-28x, 35x-36x; J. Tomaszewski, op. cit., and also many others. Recently, possibilities for comparison are provided by the appendix to "Historia", vol. IV, 1982, No. 4/5.

the new borders,<sup>35</sup> we can restrict ourselves to a few observations only. Firstly, we can see a correlation between the national profiles of political authority and the census results; the proportion of Hungarians or Slovaks within the total population of the area under survey increases according to who holds political power;<sup>36</sup> what is more important, not only the percentages, but also absolute number of inhabitants belonging to the minority group diminish;<sup>37</sup> it would appear that the correlation in question is stronger in relation to the dozen or so years after the First World War than the dozen or so years before it.<sup>38</sup> Secondly, analysis of other, mainly non-political factors — such as demographic factors, forms of settlement, the exigencies of economic growth, external migration and so on<sup>39</sup> — which analysis we are not concerned with here, indicates that criticism even of correctly read intentions on the part of the authorities does not explain census results if it does not take account of attitude determinants

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<sup>35</sup> Particularly at the time of the sessions of the Paris Peace Conference, and subsequently over the course of many years of revisionist and anti-revisionist policies on the part of the interested parties. (There is too much evidence to quote here). At this point, however, one ought to give credit to contemporary Hungarian historiography, which provides thoroughly documented estimations relating for instance to the scale of "Magyarization": in the period 1880-1910 the latter embraced, among others, 300,000 Slovaks (and 500,000 in a period of over one hundred years). P. HANÁK in *Magyarország Története*, vol. VII/1, Budapest 1978, p. 416.

<sup>36</sup> In the decade 1900-1910 the percentage of Hungarians rose by 3.37, whilst that of Slovaks fell by 3.29; in the eleven years from 1919 to 1930 the percentage of Slovaks rose, in turn, by 5.52, whilst that of the Hungarians fell by 5.92. In the second sub-period under consideration, therefore, the rate of change is nearly 1.8 times more rapid. One cannot explain this simply by the volume of emigration (this was greater prior to the First World War), nor by the level of the birth-rate (before and after the war the differences were smaller). Cf. the explanation in H. BĄTOWSKI, *Kryzys dyplomatyczny...*, p. 78.

<sup>37</sup> In the first sub-period the number of Slovaks decreases by something less than 13,000 (i.e. 0.76% of their total number in 1900), and in the second sub-period the number of Hungarians drops by 121,000 (i.e. by 17.46% of the number for 1919). The range of change is therefore nearly 23 times greater.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. the reductions in notes 36-37.

<sup>39</sup> For the period before the First World War such an analysis is carried out for instance in L. KATUS, *Über die wirtschaftlichen und gesellschaftlichen Grundlagen der Nationalitätenfrage in Ungarn vor dem ersten Weltkrieg*, in: *Die nationale Frage in der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie 1900-1918*, Budapest 1966 (a work hotly debated in 1960s historiography).

other than national ones. Thirdly, the inconsistency between the subjective and objective determinants of census results mentioned here is superficial in nature, since the appropriate proportions are difficult, if not impossible to calculate. Fourthly, and something of particular interest to us, the census returns depend on so many long-term and immediate (at work during the census operation for instance) variables, that they preclude veracity of the results even roughly commensurate with the appropriate numerical values. Thereby, it would appear, the practice accepted in historiography of unambiguous interpretation of data of this kind is unfounded, and the more so the silent homage for the accuracy — apparent, when all is said and done — of such data.

Meanwhile it is difficult to speak even of an approximate representation of historical reality (irrespective of the definition of “approximation,” more straightforward in the statistician’s interpretation than in the terminology accepted in historiography). Little is known of the population census already mentioned, carried out on the territory of Slovakia during the period from February to the beginning of August, 1919.<sup>40</sup> However, from reliable archive accounts, containing the opinions of such competent figures as the Minister Plenipotentiary for Slovakian Affairs, Vavro Šrobár, we discover that the chief motive for carrying out this census consisted of the “informational needs” of the Czechoslovakian delegation to the Paris Peace Conference.<sup>41</sup> Data were necessary on the numbers of Slovaks in the “occupied territory of former Hungary, in order to be able to correct [...] the phoney Hungarian census of 1910 [...]”, and show the extent of “Magyarization”.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, however, the initiators were guided by the need to inform the government on the actual situation in Slovakia, enough at least for it to be able to administer the country rationally.<sup>43</sup> It seems that they did not see the inherent contradiction between these two aims. In practice

<sup>40</sup> In precise terms: the census commenced around 20 February, but was still going on in some places at the beginning of September (sources as below).

<sup>41</sup> ZSKKČ Paper, as in note 29. In the same collection (ŠŤA SSR, MPS, box č. 277) can be found rudimentary results from the census, handwritten summary compilations.

<sup>42</sup> ZSKKČ Paper.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*.

the wish to supply data on the extent of "Magyarization" probably predominated. Many questions were waived in the census form, e.g. questions defining the place and nature of employment of the addressee. On the other hand, as we have mentioned, self-definition of nationality was introduced ("Slovak-Czech," "Ruthenian, Hungarian, German, other — which"); one of the new questions to appear was, "surname before last change of surname, to find out the effect of the campaign aiming at "Magyarization" of non-Magyar surnames".<sup>45</sup> In organizing the census, emphasis was placed on the requirement that the return officials should be "trustworthy" people. Šrobár even ordered that "[they] can only be persons of Slovakian nationality who are completely trustworthy".<sup>46</sup> This postulate could not be fully met.

Although we can find the detailed (in the breakdown of nationality) results of this census in Hungarian revisionist literature,<sup>47</sup> in more recent writings — both Hungarian and Czechoslovakian — it is not even mentioned.<sup>48</sup> Worthy of particular attention, therefore, is a paper of the State Statistical Office in Prague (dated 21 Jan., 1921), passed on by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (on 1 February of that year) to the administration division of the Office of the Minister Plenipotentiary for Slovakian Affairs in Bratislava.<sup>49</sup> In it we find something of a summing-up of the 1919 census experiences, and useful suggestions for the new census operation of 1921. Experiences were collated by means of a questionnaire distributed to former return officials, 625 of whom responded. Unfortunately we do not know what proportion they represent of the total number of officials engaged during the census. Neither do we know the nationality break-

<sup>44</sup> In one of the executive instructions (of 20 Feb., 1919), and in subsequent census forms, the notation "Slovak-Czech" was altered to "Czechoslovak". See "Detailní instrukce pro sčítací komisaře", SÚA SSR, MPS, box č. 277.

<sup>45</sup> ZSKKČ Paper.

<sup>46</sup> Letter from Šrobár to district chiefs (20 Feb., 1919), SÚA SSR, MPS, box č. 277.

<sup>47</sup> Memorandum..., pp. 122 - 123.

<sup>48</sup> The information indicated in note 31 represents an exception.

<sup>49</sup> Paper (9 pages) of the State Statistical Office (Státní úřad statistický — hereafter — SÚS Paper) in Prague, of 21 Jan., 1919 (No. 371/III/21), with letter of instruction from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (6263) (1921), SÚA SSR, MPS, box č. 380 (there is a good deal more material here on the preparations for the census).

down of those who responded to the questionnaire. We know only that there were "very few" Hungarians amongsts them, whilst the overwhelming majority were Slovaks and Czechs.<sup>50</sup> Hence the suggestion that they in fact sketched in their answers a negative picture of the Hungarian in the rôle of return official.

Along with complaints about poor census geography, incomplete lists of immovables and so on, the most frequent grievances are those in respect of inappropriate selection of officials. And through negation, implicite, there emerges the "trustworthy" return official. He is a local Slovak (properly — a "Czechoslovak"), but one who knows Hungarian; practically on the same level as a candidate is the visiting Czech (he does not speak Hungarian); Hungarians should be avoided (though certainly this is not always possible). For Hungarian return officials, and "Magyarites" (which was meant to indicate "Magyarized" Slovaks) committed numerous abuses in 1919. They recorded Slovaks as Hungarians, since they elicited their declarations in Hungarian, and numerous Slovaks themselves came out with Hungarian nationality, "out of fear"; they also took as being Hungarian the "nationally indifferent," who said "*aji Slovák aji Madar*" "neither Slovak, nor Magyar").<sup>51</sup> We are dealing here with typical accusations, there is no way of verifying them; in Hungarian accounts we meet with their reverse.

Most interesting of all, however, is the description in the paper of the "typical" attitudes of the census subjects. The Hungarians were "well prepared" for the census, and coming "from the independent classes [revealed] full consciousness of their nationality"; however, a lack of resolution was revealed by some of the "dependent" state and local officials;<sup>52</sup> during the census operation they behaved suspiciously and critically (demanding completion of the form in *ink* for instance); they denied knowledge of Slovakian (e.g. in Košice); they cultivated or submitted to propaganda (this term finds universal usage in the documents

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<sup>50</sup> From Hungarian recriminations concerning most likely the 1930 census, we learn that out of 14,000 "Census agents" there were only 594 Hungarians, whilst from the overall ratios it emerges that 3,056 Hungarians "should have been employed". Memorandum..., p. 67.

<sup>51</sup> SÚS Paper, p. 5.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 3 - 4.

of the time) that Slovakia (or at least its southern districts) would be restored to Hungary, that there would be war (with the Slovaks taking part); "certainly here and there they seemed to be quite polite and friendly."<sup>53</sup> (But the propaganda had to be prevented by the by, e.g. by closing down Hungarian newspapers.<sup>54</sup>) The Germans, too, "knew about and were prepared for the census." Sometimes, however, they were "stand-offish," or "aggressive", and quite exceptionally "irresolute in respect of nationality" (e.g. in the Nyitra župa, a župa — formerly komitat — being the highest level of administrative unit). Some Germans — like some of the Slovaks — "assuming that a plebiscite was being taken," in fact declared themselves as Hungarians (e.g. in Ružomberok). The Jews on the other hand "revealed their eclecticism [sic! — M.K.] and opportunism in a way which was even comical at times [...];" it would happen, for instance, that the head of the family "declared himself as a Slovak," his wife was a German, and his children — Hungarians.<sup>55</sup> (Children complicated things altogether; we learn that in Bratislava itself, one father of a family regarded himself and his thirteen-year-old son as Slovakian, but also that sons of his who were two or three years older stuck to being Hungarians; there were also cases where better educated children decided for their parents.)<sup>56</sup> Often, however, "so as not to admit their other, true nationality" (in other words Hungarian, regarded with hostility), Jews "stuck to being of Jewish nationality." However, we learn that other circumstances, too, affected their attitude during the census: the withdrawal of liquor licences for instance, or the fact that the poorer Jews in Bratislava did not know anything about the census. The Ruthenians (or Ukrainians) in the eastern župas of Slovakia submitted to the influence of their Uniate priests, and without even speaking "Ukrainian" (the problem of dialects in eastern Slovakia, or so-called Prešov Ruthenia, was very complex), declared themselves as Ruthenians (instead of Slovaks).<sup>57</sup> Religion was often the criterion which decided national-

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 4.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 5.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibidem*.

ity: in circumstances of "immature" national consciousness, it replaced language for example. There were also cases — in circumstances where people had the same religion — in which nationality choice decided (e.g. the Mother Superior of the convent school in Košice "registered" all her wards as Hungarians).<sup>59</sup>

During the "leaflet war" which accompanied the 1921 census, in answer to leaflets of the League of Ruthenians for instance, the Zemplín (Zemplén in eastern Slovakia) district chief explained: "it is not true that every Uniate is a Russian, even less so Ruthenian, since anyone who cannot speak Russian, but who can talk away (*hutori*) in Slovakian almost as well as his Roman Catholic, Calvinist or evangelical neighbour, cannot be Russian [...];" the Hungarian government "contrived" this, so as to cut off from the "central Slovaks" (the inhabitants of central Slovakia) those using the "Zemplín speech of the Slovaks," and thus make it easier to "Magyarize" them; and finally — the "Ruthenians" were Slovaks, though of a different faith, since "they either talk in Slovakian, or wear Slovakian styles (attire), have Slovakian habits, and sing Slovakian songs."<sup>59</sup>

We constantly encounter the fact that language, religion, and feelings of ethnic or state ties alternated with and sometimes operated as a substitute for mature national consciousness. The organizers of both censuses — in 1919 and 1921 — clearly realized this, since they described them as a "battle for dependent, unconscious, undecided minds."<sup>60</sup> In accordance with this assumption the census machine was prepared and a demand made for "improved selection of [census] officials."<sup>61</sup> At the same time there were fears — in the south of Hungarian, and in the north of Polish "machinations." (Which is to say, in the borderland census districts "Polish agents and Jews" tried to convince the population that "the north" would fall to Poland, whilst the Hungarians would irrupt into "the south;" they also forced the "Highlanders" into swearing that they would declare themselves

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>60</sup> Leaflet of district chief (M. Slavik) of 4 Feb., 1921, SÚA SSR, MPS, box č. 37, folio 116 (also box č. 380).

<sup>61</sup> SÚS Paper, p. 4.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 7.

as Poles.)<sup>62</sup> They also realized that census results were affected by such events as the "Bolshevik invasion" and such circumstances as a "not very cheering supply situation."<sup>63</sup> Despite this, every effort was made to secure the desired numerical results, and then, no doubt in accordance with the dictates of appropriately understood reasons of state, they became a *sui generis* fetish.

So that the nationality ratios were weighed with amazing care and accuracy. Even in full consciousness of the fact that a mistake had been made in the measurement. In the transition era — and in the presence of a sense of threat — this was followed by administrative and police action, irrespective of occasional census enterprises. It would appear that nationality divisions widened. They became apparent and irksome in everyday life. They embraced spheres of life in which they had not been visible before the First World War, "in the Hungarian times." Denunciation forms — often completed lay in the police stations: "*hlásenie o mad'arizovani*" — notification of the use of the Hungarian (or German) language in a public place; the form contained a dozen or so sections, whilst point 12 (the surnames of persons with whom X was conversing in Hungarian (German)) was supplied with the note: "A separate declaration

<sup>62</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 6.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 4. The 1921 census commenced on 15 July. Evidence of the situation during July of that year is provided by a ČTK communication, which — after "*Slovenský vychod*" — reported from Košice: "[...] workers' riots broke out this morning at the ironworks at Krompache, in connection with the food situation. It is understood that the workers were particularly dissatisfied with the fact that they were issued with cornflour. [...] led to acts of violence, which entailed the loss of life. A Mr Podhradský, an engineer, and a foreman named Lukács, who attempted to placate the workers, died, two officials and three gendarmes were wounded [...] two workers were killed, whilst seventeen received wounds, seven of them being in a serious condition." Food rations were issued in the factory co-operative store at that time. Among other things, 2 kg. of flour a week. Overnight the ration was reduced and some of the flour replaced by semolina and cornflour. According to witnesses the disturbances began with a march by the women to the works director. As emerges from other data, as well as the contents of the first two sentences of the ČTK bulletin, the authorities were aware of the cause of the incidents. All the same the conclusion of the bulletin read: "[...] the stormy events at Krompache are the result of recent agitation. During today's excesses the workers were mostly stirred up by a certain woman, who spoke Hungarian." Quoted after: L. Novomeský, *Desať rokov krompaškého krviprelievania*, in: *Publicistika*, zväzok I, 1924 - 1932, Bratislava 1969, pp. 190 - 197.

should be made for each person.”<sup>64</sup> “One is not allowed to speak either German or Hungarian in the street, since the legionaries [members of the former Czechoslovakian corps in Russia and elsewhere — *M.K.*] might even kill [...] in public places they organize veritable hunts for Hungarians and Germans,” we learn from a “situation report” of the Hungarian “League for Defence of the Territory.”<sup>65</sup>

From denunciations and reports we also learn that in the places where one could speak Hungarian, one rather had to avoid singing in that language, since a song might contain allusions and all of them were suspect. Police practices from the state of emergency became petrified in the legislation of the Czechoslovakian “island of democracy” in peace-time central-eastern Europe. Those who sang in public, “Beautiful Hungary, most beautiful / More beautiful than all the world [...] So cry the fiddles / A most beautiful [...] Country awaits you” — could be punished for disturbing the peace under section 14, sub-section 1 of Act 50/1923; even when this banal composition and dozens like it were performed without words.<sup>66</sup> However, one should remember that practically from the dawn of the new post-war times the number of less innocent — one might say blood-thirsty — texts multiplied, and this in at least three languages. In Hungarian, then, the praises of the rifle and the “golden bayonet” were sung, describing to what advantage they should be used (e.g. the bayonet should be “soaked in Czech and Wallachian blood”).<sup>67</sup> In Slovakian, one song urged the “taking-up of sabres and muskets,” and “at Father Hlinka’s call” the aiming of the “rifle at the enemy’s brow,” although the enemy was not so clearly defined; the text contained the wishes: “death to the tyrants” and “Let the Slovak be master in his own land!”<sup>68</sup>

<sup>64</sup> ŠŤA SSR, Policajne riaditeľstvo (hereafter — PR), box č. 503. Mat. 228/22.

<sup>65</sup> Report drawn up (before) 27 May 1920, OL Miniszterelnökség (hereafter — ME) — 1920 — XL — 4092, folio 57 - 59.

<sup>66</sup> Information on forbidden “anti-Czech songs”, issued by the Presidium of the National Office in Bratislava on 13 Jan., 1932, ŠŤA SSR, PR, box č. 350, 8.

<sup>67</sup> Documents with the title in German (for unknown reasons) a “Politische Nachricht! In den ungarischen Gebieten der Slovakai” — of 15 Dec., 1921, *ibidem*, 5, 6.

<sup>68</sup> MPS letter (5738/925) of 19 (June) 1925, *ibidem*, 10.

Later in Slovakia there appeared the imported song in German: *Für Konrad Henlein kämpfen wir / Die Heimatfront marschiert / Die Strasse frei [...]*.<sup>69</sup>

From the denunciations one might conclude that the authorities were also interested in re-creating public feeling, even as manifested under the influence of the bottle. Thus even in the years of stabilization the National Headquarters of the Gendarmerie for Slovakia took to court a case against four men (their names in the original spelling and pronunciation: Árpád Weisz, son of Benjamin and Estera; Alexander Kovács, son of Max and Šarlota; Alexander Engel, son of Leopold and Fana; Miksa Grünvald, son of Isidor and Fana; in the case of three of them their nationality was given — Hungarian; in the case of the first additional information was given — “soldier” and “car-owner”). The denunciation which formed the basis of the court action contained the information that the aforesaid persons were playing cards at 5 p.m. in the “Eubeck” café, began to drink slivovitz (“64 × 1/7 decilitre” plus 1 bottle of champagne), and then at 1.15 a.m. they started up a song (this time noted in awful Hungarian) which promised that “there will be another Hungarian summer [...], as soon as the army of crows withdraws from our borders.”<sup>70</sup> The police were also interested in some quatrains written on café lavatory doors; however, we have not found any denunciation to immortalize these.<sup>71</sup> It is therefore not at all surprising that they were also interested in information about how for instance “Dr. Edmund Ladányi, whose former name was Löwy [...] has himself said to the undersigned on a number of occasions [...] As Hungarians we know that we are regarded as politically untrustworthy citizens.”<sup>72</sup>

The presence in Slovakia first of Czech military detachments, then of numerous officials and finally of settlers (who had to be

<sup>69</sup> Letter (from Police Headquarters) from 1936 concerning the record “Sudeten Deutsche Marsch”, *ibidem*, 32.

<sup>70</sup> Letter from National Headquarters of the Gendarmerie of 14 Dec. 1928 (no. 3036 to the District Court (in Komarno)), ŠŪA SSR, PR — box č. 350, 12.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibidem*, 5, 6 (noted after 1921).

<sup>72</sup> Note from the gendarmerie station in the town of Sahy (567/36) of 18 Aug., 1936, ŠŪA SSR, PR — box č. 7, 28.

careful they did not erect buildings "in the Hungarian fashion"<sup>73</sup>) in itself gave birth to new hostility — quite apart even from political campaigns often inspired from Budapest, and from growing opposition from Hlinka's party. Such hostility had its political roots (e.g. the issue of realization of the Pittsburg Agreement),<sup>74</sup> but it also had a religious background (the politically coloured conviction "that Hussitism had condemned Catholicism to death"<sup>75</sup>). However, it had a common, everyday aspect, too. "České Slovo" of 2 March, 1920 relates that numerous Czech officials are at a loss: on the one hand they do not want to abandon this "ill-fated country," which "is being sucked dry by Hungarians and vile Jews," and on the other they can no longer hold out in Slovakia, since the "Magyarites' have more rights here than we do".<sup>76</sup> An example: a Czech woman, an official, was staying at a hotel in the town of Ružomberok, whilst several dozen more Czechs boarded there, yet at the request of a Dr. Lebay (a follower of Hlinka) and a Dr. Varada ("who proudly acknowledges his Hungarianness") the canteen was closed down, to be turned into a totally unnecessary café, a place of entertainment for "Jewish profiteers and gamblers," the poor officials being forced to "pay exorbitant prices" in chop-houses — once again Jewish.<sup>77</sup> So that in a short text we come across both symptoms of isolation in respect of immigrant Czechs, and numerous old and new national neuroses simply, stimulated by circumstances of everyday living interpreted in mistakenly generalized nationalistic terms.

<sup>73</sup> Letter from Agricultural Council for Slovakia to MPS of 1 Dec., 1922, SÚA SSR, MPS — box č. 77.

<sup>74</sup> Complaints that this Agreement was realized neither in form nor in content represented the crowning argument in the political struggle between the "autonomists" and the "separatists," in the practical life of the People's Party (more precisely — Hlinka's Slovakian People's Party). They were raised during disputes on the settling of constitutional issues, but also in the public life of the party, right up to the point where there were demonstrations on the twentieth anniversary of the Agreement.

<sup>75</sup> "Slovenské Ludowe Noviny", 1 Dec., 1922, No. 49; SÚA SSR, MPS — box č. 77. On this point cf. F. Boros, *op. cit.*, p. 157 (including Jehlička's view on the Czechs, who "sprinkle Christian grain with the corn-cockle of Jan Hus."

<sup>76</sup> *Ibidem*, box č. 327 (where there is a good deal more police material on "anti-state" activity and agitation).

<sup>77</sup> *Ibidem*.

The authorities attempted to influence both "daily life" and "consciousness;" more precisely — consciousness through daily living conditions; but also in another way — they attempted to influence isolated consciousness "in itself." At least from October, 1919, the central office for plebiscite affairs regarding Spiš and Orava, in the context of the plebiscite preparations, collected the bills for tobacco and also ready-made cigarettes ("Egyptians"), which were meant to influence the choices of the local population.<sup>78</sup> For it was assumed (in the Propaganda Office of the land of Slovakia) that "relations will improve even more" (in favour of Czechoslovakia of course) when grocery and tobacco items were made available.<sup>79</sup> It would seem that unintentional circumstances had a greater influence on the population's consciousness — well-disposed in respect of the new authorities: so much can be gathered from Hungarian sources this time. For example: violent political changes and changes in competence, which influenced forbearance in the exaction of taxes, and thus permitted unrestricted cultivation of tobacco and distilling of slivovitz.<sup>80</sup>

Attempts were made to directly influence consciousness through observation and inspection. To the areas of observation already mentioned we might add the further one of private life. Thus one of the Italian delegates in the plebiscite area (a certain Longo), a young, good-looking man, embarked on a love-affair with a "Polish beauty" from Zakopane: the appropriate central office had to look into the matter.<sup>81</sup> More significant, however, was the verification function, in other words censorship activity, which embraced not only the press, but also non-periodical publications, film, phonography and so on.<sup>82</sup> Refused distribution

<sup>78</sup> Receipt of 9 Sept., 1919 (for about 5,000 cigarettes and tobacco to the combined value of 1,972 Czech crowns), ŠŪA SSR, MPS — box č. 306 I, III ("Plebiscit").

<sup>79</sup> Letter of 7 Oct., 1919, *ibidem*.

<sup>80</sup> Situation report of the "League for Defence of the Upper Country and Territory" (the name of this organization changed more than once, which did not affect the scope of its activity; hereafter — "Liga Obrony..."), 25 Aug., 1920, OL ME-1920-XL-7039.

<sup>81</sup> For plebiscitary affairs in Spiš and Orava, information from 15 Feb., 1920, ŠŪA SSR, MPS — box č. 305.

<sup>82</sup> The rôle of censorship — likewise in the shaping of stereotypes — does not appear to have been unduly great. After all the essential feature of stereotypes is the a priori quality of their judgements. Of course the relation between censorship practice and popular consciousness

were Hungarian publications containing the words or phrases "Upper Country" ("*Felvidék*" — a term describing Slovakia and firmly established in common parlance), "our heritage" ("*öröksegiük*" — in relation to the Slovakian lands), "There are Czech soldiers there now," "the occupying gang," "Czech meanness," the "Trianon dictate," and "Tót" (an untranslatable description for a Slovak, which, in time and through diminutive forms, took on a contemptible tone<sup>83</sup>). Also censored, for reasons which are difficult to establish today, was the totally apolitical film comedy *Csókol Veronika* (*Veronica Kisses*) — for its Hungarian sub-plot.<sup>84</sup> It is true that as early as April, 1919 the Union of Czech cinematograph owners in Prague offered — not without some secondary thoughts no doubt — their co-operation to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, so as "[...] to acquaint the people with our fables and the beauty of the landscape and the life of our Republic, in order to arouse a sense of common membership and community of interests throughout Slovakia and the neglected lands [...]"<sup>85</sup> It would appear that such suggestions met with a sympathetic response, since the authorities desired to take under their protection the world of the people's imagination — more often than not by means of administrative decisions.

It is exceedingly difficult to gauge the effect of these and similar measures. This is not one of our tasks. However, an analysis of individual political choices — from the first election decisions in April, 1920 up to attitudes during mobilization in May and September, 1938<sup>86</sup> — would no doubt argue in favour

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requires analytical research, likewise in the borderland under view. But see ŠŪA SSR, PR — box č. 333 (including on censorship of information of an economic nature); *ibidem*, box č. 330 (on the granting/refusal of circulation rights for publications issued in Hungary); *ibidem*, box č. 350, 36 (including on the censorship of records); *ibidem*, box č. 455, Mat. 210/19-10, 12 (on the temporary — in 1920 — censorship of service correspondence, and subsequently on obligatory copies of publications, on censorship of films, etc.).

<sup>83</sup> *Ibidem*, box č. 330, Mat. 109/2.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibidem*, box č. 455, Mat. 210/21/22.

<sup>85</sup> Letter of 24 April, 1919. ŠŪA SSR, MPS — box č. 277.

<sup>86</sup> We can find analyses of election results in many works most thoroughly in a national cross-section considering four elections during the years 1920-1935, in tabular form — in C. A. Macartney, *op. cit.*, p. 118. Analyses of attitudes during mobilization have not been carried out; certain evaluations from diplomatic sources for 1938 (testifying rather to the civic loyalty of Hungarian soldiers) are quoted in M. Koźmiń-

of the conclusion that both material incentives and censorship restrictions had a negligible, and sometimes counter-productive, effect on those areas of the population's national consciousness which it was assumed would undergo modification. Meanwhile the political initiators and the police executors of this kind of enterprise shared the illusion that such consciousness — particularly of the national minorities — was sufficiently malleable for it to be freely moulded by the use of pretty primitive methods to suit the requirements of the "nation-state." They did realize, however, that, for example, "[...] clandestine irredentism will only cease with the arrival of new generations."<sup>87</sup>

Meanwhile, to the south of the new Slovakian-Hungarian line of demarcation (and subsequently — state border) the illusion was likewise cherished of influencing the state of the borderland's consciousness, though this time it was doubtless even further removed from the bounds of possibility. In the days of the Frost-flower Revolution and the régime of Count Mihály Károlyi, despite the rather verbal relinquishing of the "principle of territorial integrity" (and in practical terms — of Croatia-Slavonia) in respect of the countries of the crown of St. Stephen, the illusion was entertained that, whilst recognizing the Wilson principles of self-determination, the Romanians, Serbs, Ruthenians and Slovaks could be won over to the idea of preserving historical state ties.<sup>88</sup> During the months of the Hungarian Councils' Republic too, there was hope that — in one form or another — the historical links could be maintained. In talks with representatives of the Entente, Béla Kun, as commissioner for the Republic's foreign affairs, was able — as his biographer

ski, *Mniejszości narodowościowe w basenie Dunaju a węgierski rewizjonizm terytorialny* [National Minorities in the Basin of the Danube and Hungarian Territorial Revisionism], in: *Ład wersalski w Europie środkowej*, Wrocław 1971, p. 157.

<sup>87</sup> Situation report of district chief of the Bratislava župa and the town of Bratislava, 595/Prez, of 29 April, 1922, ŠŪA SSR, MPS — box Č. 90.

<sup>88</sup> This problem is the subject of a good deal of literature, which we shall pass over at this point. The position of contemporary Hungarian historiography is contained in *Magyarország Történte*, vol. VIII/1 (especially pp. 23 - 38, 88 - 124, 177 - 190). And in Polish literature, W. Felczak, *Zerwanie unii realno-personalnej austro-węgierskiej* [The Rupture of the Real and Personal Austro-Hungarian Union], in: *Problemy historii Słowian...*, pp. 7 - 24.

maintains — to use “such ambiguous” expressions as even passed over the “relinquishing of territorial integrity.”<sup>89</sup> When on the other hand it was announced in June, 1919 that the Red Army had occupied Košice... “The houses were decked out with flags, school-children received crescent rolls at school, and women 20 decagrams of white flour in the shops. Whilst two hundred Gipsies played revolutionary anthems [...] in front of the National Assembly [building].”<sup>90</sup> Doctrinally, and no doubt unrealistically, it was assumed at that time that a world-wide proletarian revolution would somehow automatically de-escalate nationalist hostility.<sup>91</sup> The victorious counter-revolution (in fact and from self-definition) in the days of “consolidation” provided the basis for new hopes of changing the post-war *status quo*. Hopes, whose illusory nature was confirmed — by the law of paradox — by the signature placed beneath the conditions of the Treaty of Trianon by the counter-revolution’s eminent representative, the conservative Count Albert Apponyi. During the first dozen or so months of Miklós Horthy’s régime unequivocal responsibility for the “Trianon dictate” — alongside the rapacity of Hungary’s neighbours, of “perfidious nationalities” — was laid on the shoulders of the internal enemy: the “liberal-democrats” of the time of the first revolution, and the “Jewish Bolsheviks” of the second revolution. Acknowledging historicism as the basis of “historical rights,” the independence aspirations of neighbours were ahistorically negated. A solution was to be brought by irredentism and diplomacy.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Gy. Borsányi, *Kun Béla. Politikai életrajz*, Budapest 1979, p. 150.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 174 (7 June, 1919).

<sup>91</sup> There are numerous Hungarian works on this point. The position of the Hungarian communists — and also the evaluations in historiography — have been subject to change. A concise outline of these changes has recently been presented in L. Kővágó, *A Kommunista Part és Trianon*, “História”, vol. III, 1981, No. 2, pp. 7-9. See also: P. Paster, *Hungary Between Wilson and Lenin: The Hungarian Revolution of 1918-1919*, and *The Big Three*, New York 1976, pp. 111-152.

<sup>92</sup> On this point see especially J. Kramer, *Iredenta a separatismus v slovenskej politike (Studia o ich vzťahu)*, Bratislava 1957; *idem*, *Slovenské autonomistické hnutie v rokoch 1918-1929*, Bratislava 1962 (both works somewhat onesided): F. Boros, *op. cit.*, especially pp. 120-131, 218-237; cf. also M. Koźmiński, *Polska i Węgry przed drugą wojną światową [...] Z dziejów dyplomacji i irredenty [Poland and Hungary Before the Second World War [...]. From the History of Diplomacy and Irredentism]*, Wrocław 1970, pp. 15-61 ff.

The "League of the Upper Country" ("Felvidéki Liga") was established as early as Karolyi's term of office (in the winter of 1918-19), under the patronage of Jászi, a minister. Its aim was "[...] the rescue of the Upper Country, suffering from the Czech occupation, and assurance for the local population of the unrestricted right to self-determination on the basis of the Wilson principles."<sup>93</sup> Represented within the league in March, 1919 were: the Council of the Independent Republic of Slovakia, the Slovak-autonomists, the Spiš Germans, "the seven free mining towns and authorized (*legitim*) representatives of the Hungarians of the Upper Country. The local Social Democrats with their powerful workers' organizations could be attached to the League."<sup>94</sup> By Horthy's time, when the appropriate organizations and institutions had grown in strength, it was recognized in internal correspondence that, for instance, the (as at that time) League for Defence of the Upper Country provided shelter chiefly for refugee officials from Slovakia, and it was necessary "to silence their excessive personal ambitions, and also to combat political intrigues."<sup>95</sup>

Alongside the Ministry for National Minorities (which was incorporated within the Presidium of the Council of Ministers after the ratification of the peace treaty), Slovakian affairs were, of course, also dealt with by the appropriate sections of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Internal Affairs and Defence, together with their regional branches.<sup>96</sup> Every step taken by the Czechoslovakian authorities in Slovakia and every personnel change was interpreted in accordance with the mental schemas operative within these offices. When, following the April election in 1920, Šrobár was replaced in the office of Minister Plenipotentiary for Slovakia by the Social Democrat Iván Dérer, "new mass politic-

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<sup>93</sup> Memorandum of the People's Council for the Upper Country (*Felvidéki Néptanács*), submitted at the National Assembly, and accepted on record on 5 March, 1919, OL ME-1919-XXII-1816.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>95</sup> Letter from the Slovakian Department of the Ministry for National Minorities to the Premier, 29 Oct., 1919, OL ME-1919-XXII-5833, fo. 2-4.

<sup>96</sup> Surprisingly we find their representatives in frontier localities. The reports and appraisals of such "regional branches" found their way to the OL almost by chance; in view of the short duration of searches and the way in which they were conducted, it is difficult to evaluate the relevant archive material or the representativeness of particular sources.

al internment" was expected in Budapest, the victims of which of course would be the Hungarians and pro-Hungarian Slovaks still remaining there. This was meant at the same time to represent a source of pressure for the "release of gaoled and interned communist agitators held by us."<sup>97</sup> It is significant that the latter were feared alike in Prague, Bratislava and Budapest, none the less since they had been granted political asylum in Czechoslovakia, the authorities there had the reputation of being practically crypto-Communist. At the same time a proportion of the press in Slovakia considered that "the Pest government is working in the interests of Bolshevism," exploiting for this purpose chiefly Hungarian landowners and Jews.<sup>98</sup> In turn Hungarian leaflets gave the assurance, "Hungarians, don't be afraid — if there is another revolution, we shall cross the border and put things in order."<sup>99</sup> In the view of the authors of a confidential report, even the Hungarian Social Democrats "are by now beginning to recognize [...] that the dissemination of communism in Hungarian districts [of Slovakia — M.K.] is merely a device on the part of the Czechs for inciting animosity against a mutilated Hungary."<sup>100</sup> Representing a mirror reflection of Hungarian government views on the rôle played by the communists in the interstate and nationalist conflict taking place, were the somewhat subsequent fears of the Czechoslovakian authorities, according to which, after the inaugural congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and in consequence of its policy, "belief in the rebirth of Hungary was stirring" in Hungarian socialist circles.<sup>101</sup> (In contemporary political and common parlance the expression "rebirth" signified restoration within the former territorial contours.) In Budapest on the other hand it was believed — or propagated at least — that the Czechs had long since paid homage to Pan-Slavism ("the notion of world domination by the Slavs"), for which "communism is hardly the most suitable vehicle," and

<sup>97</sup> Information from the Slovakian Department of the Ministry for National Minorities, from May, 1920, OL ME-1920-XII-4144.

<sup>98</sup> According to a report of the League... for August, 1920, OL ME-1920-XL-1672, fo. 8.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibidem* (further on).

<sup>101</sup> Situation report of district chief of Bratislava župa and the town... (as in note 87), SÚA SSR, MPS — box č. 90.

were seeking union with Russia.<sup>102</sup> So that under new conditions birth was given to notional clusters — either as a surrogate for stereotype notions, or as ready-made stereotypes — which commenced a life of their own within the consciousness of the persons involved, functioning more often than not as ready-made, standard interpretations of reality, and sometimes even serving politicians whose critical aptitude had petered out, for affirmation of their actions.

A classic example of this kind of stereotype — fairly resistant to the action of time and the criticism of intrinsic logical incohesiveness — is the image of the Jew on both sides of the border. We must leave aside here the particularities of the Jewish question in Hungary. We should recall merely that from the aspect of national consciousness, the overwhelming majority of assimilated people of the Jewish faith at the turn of the century more often than not differed from their fellow-citizens only in a higher degree of affirmation of characteristics and aspirations regarded as being Hungarian.<sup>103</sup> (The Jewish question existed as before of course.) So that in the consciousness of the Slovaks (to take an example) the Jews often appeared as *Magyarizers*. Whereas in the new circumstances — irrespective of their actual behaviour, which when all is said and done was very attentively recorded — in Slovakia they were accused (along with other charges) of representing Hungarian interests, and thereby of disloyalty towards the new Czechoslovakian state, whilst in Hungary (along with other accusations) lack of loyalty towards their former fatherland was attributed to them. If only as having “registered themselves” under “Jewish nationality,” a nationality

<sup>102</sup> Report of the League... (as in note 98), OL ME-1920-XL-1672, fo. 37.

<sup>103</sup> On this wide-ranging topic see especially Gy. Száraz, *Egy elöítélet nyomában*, Budapest 1976; in Polish cf. M. Kozmiński, *Królestwo wielu narodów, Problem żydowski na Węgrzech w latach międzywojennych* — (esej) [A Kingdom of Many Nations, The Jewish Question in Hungary during the Inter-War Years — (An Essay)], “Folks-Sztyme” (Warszawa), 1982, Nos. 10, 12. In the ŠUA SSR material already quoted there appear side by side a “native Jew Pinkes Goldner,” who in July, 1920 “urges civilians to join the Hungarian [volunteer] army” (selling them 2 dl. of vodka — palinka — on the cheap), and “Comrade Emil Horovitz” (a Social Democrat it seems), who in July of the same year served on the border, was kidnapped by “White’ officers” (Hungarians) and murdered. See *ibidem*, ... MPS — box č. 327.

not known in Hungarian political life.<sup>104</sup> When this apparently artificial category — in the view of Hungarian commentators — was created precisely in order to decrease the number of Hungarians. On both sides, then, other than “specifically Jewish” attitude determinants were negated, at the same time subjecting this group of people to particularly rigorous criteria of loyalty. “With few exceptions,” it was written, “the Upper Country Jewry is not generally trustworthy, and is as changeable as the wind.” One exception, it was emphasized, was part of the intelligentsia.<sup>105</sup>

However, in the area which interests us this was not the fundamental antagonism. In both capitals — Prague and Budapest — the most important thing seemed to be to exploit the international situation and win the majority of the Slovaks over to their “own solution.” From this it emerges that in both cases the latter were treated more as the object than the subject of the respective measures.<sup>106</sup> In Prague it was considered that in building up a united state, one should create a “united Czechoslovakian nation,” but Slovakian aspirations for a separate place within such union could be ignored. In Budapest it was believed that the Slovaks, “when they are guaranteed greater territorial autonomy,” and the situation is favourable (here great hopes were placed in cooperation with Poland<sup>107</sup>) — they could be

<sup>104</sup> Which has been mentioned several times already. This principle was maintained during the two inter-war decades, though by that time political organizations of a national nature were already forming amongst the Hungarian Jews.

<sup>105</sup> Report of the League... (as in note 98), OL ME-1920-XL-1672, fo. 42, and several times in other sources, including in the report of the League... for May, 1920: here also on the Jews in Spiš, to whom “the present state of affairs is the most agreeable”, since they know that “the Christian community cannot assure a great future for them, but the very first victims of communism will come from their midst.” OL ME-1920-XL-3428, fo. 3-12. But especially in the appraisal by the Secretary of State, M. Kutakfalvy, of 30 June, 1920, *ibidem*, 3529, fo. 6-24.

<sup>106</sup> This problem is the subject of a vast range of literature, since it involves the entire inter-war history of Slovakia, Czech-Slovakian relations and the “Slovakian question” in international relations. Here we only go as far as the expression of an overall personal opinion.

<sup>107</sup> On this point recently, E. Orłof, *Dyplomacja polska wobec sprawy słowackiej w latach 1938-1939* [Polish Diplomacy in Respect of the Slovakian Question during the Years 1938-1939], Kraków 1980; cf. *inter alia* F. Boros, *op. cit.*, *passim*; M. Koźmiński, *Węgry i Polska...*, *passim*.

induced to return to the bosom of the "historical homeland."<sup>109</sup> The fact that they "are embittered" would make it that much easier. "Practically all of them are followers of Hlinka [...]" — the easy and comforting generalizations multiplied.<sup>109</sup>

Concerning the Czechs, on the other hand, it was mentioned that in their handiwork of "degrading what is Hungarian, they have gone so far that now they are even preparing Hungarian melodies" (with the refrain, "a rope, a rope for Miklós Horthy's neck"<sup>110</sup>). Later the accusation was made that in some new Czechoslovakian text-books a black picture was painted of the Hungarians, by writing that "The folklore of the Hungarian tribes is [was] relatively poor, not too original [...] Whilst Czecho-Slovakia, by divine dispensation, is to be a bridge between the east and the west [...] the whole of Europe recognizes that the Czechs and Slovaks are the best cultivated Slavonic nation".<sup>111</sup> Slovakian children, but also Hungarian children were to learn from their textbooks that "The German chroniclers of the past call the Hungarians a fiendish species, a dog's race, the progeny of Beelzebub, who eat raw meat, drink blood, and cut the hearts out of people who have died in battle, so as to make medicine from them."<sup>112</sup> The antidote to such toxin was to be the Hungarians' own propaganda. It was believed that the effectiveness of this depended chiefly on good organization, and the resources which the state would allocate for the "national nursing" of the Hungarian minorities, or for the writing of "directional [film-]scripts" and the production of films themselves.<sup>113</sup> In extreme, no doubt pathological cases the destruction of the old state was also ascribed to propaganda, on the part of the enemy of course, who "[...] in belles-

<sup>109</sup> Note for the premier of a private conversation with the "leadership of the League of the Upper Country," of 23 April, 1920 (supplied with the remark "private, not in writing"), OL ME-1920-XL-1672, fo. 144 - 147.

<sup>109</sup> Report of the League... (as in note 105), *ibidem*, 3428, fo. 3 - 12.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>111</sup> Memorandum of the "Hung. King. government commissioner for affairs of the Slovakian-speaking [population] in Hungary (102/1922) on the question of school readers and text-books in the Upper Country," of 22 Nov., 1922 ("tot-speaking" in original), OL ME-1922-XXXIX-332, fo. 5 - 15 (the text-books cited are those by J. Husek and A. Stefanek).

<sup>112</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>113</sup> Memorandum to the premier (author — P. Petri?) of 12 Dec., 1920, OL-ME-1920-XLIII/c — sz.n., fo. 48 - 57.

-lettres and in the theatres [...] in the press [...] by other means [...]", such as pornography for instance... aimed to destroy "[...] our attachment [...] to family, nation and faith [...]," by way of which he brought about "[...] putsches of the Károlyi and later the Bolshevik type, described as revolutions [...]"<sup>114</sup> and so on.

In view of the changed circumstances the Hungarian authorities made attempts to come to an understanding with those political representatives of Slovakian society with whom such understanding — chiefly in respect of symptoms of Slovakian-Czech antagonism<sup>115</sup> — seemed possible. It seemed especially possible with such Slovaks as Viktor Dvorcsák, or František Jehlička, whom these same authorities partly set up as leaders.<sup>116</sup> But better value seemed to be promised above all by talks with people enjoying wider and authentic social support, such as the former antagonist of the government in Budapest and creator of the people's party, the Roman Catholic priest Andrej Hlinka (or people in his circle). Such contacts — indirect and often under cover — came about more often than one might think judging by the literature.<sup>117</sup> They did not produce the desired results.

<sup>114</sup> "Pro memoria" of P. Petri of January, 1920, *ibidem*, fo. 14 - 20.

<sup>115</sup> Which has been mentioned several times already. It is characteristic that Czech-Slovakian relations represented an area of reference — and support — in the politics of all of inter-war Czechoslovakia's neighbours.

<sup>116</sup> I do not agree with those authors who, from the beginning of the thread which interests us here, i.e. from the winter of 1918/19, refuse to acknowledge any authenticity in respect of the attitude and activities of the figures mentioned. (And this is the position of the majority of the above-mentioned Polish and Slovakian authors). Although those mentioned received an "allowance" to act "in the interests of self-determination" from January, 1919 at least (see OL ME-1919-XXII-1167), one must assume that before they became "Budapest's tool," after centuries of historical links some pro-Hungarian leanings — even if modest — must have found expression in Slovakia.

<sup>117</sup> Evidence of this is provided by memorials and telegrams — not mentioned in the literature — in OL ME (p. 40) — 1918-VII-562, fo. 14-16, 55-60, 110-119. But especially by (unconfirmed) information on secret contact with Hlinka, and the fact that terms, if only theoretical, for the restoration of Slovakia and guarantees of her autonomy were examined (see note 115 — *ibidem*). And in addition: "Basic principles of the plan for Slovakian autonomy" ("tot autonomy" in original), of January, 1920, examined by the premier (OL ME-1920-XXII-114, fo. 1-4); "Concerning programmes for organizations in the northern komitats [...]" (*ibidem*, 1922-XXXIX-1287, fo. 1-4), considered in January-February, 1922. Especially, however, the information of 28 Aug., 1920, *ibidem*, 7039, fo. 3.

However, significant here are the conditions which the Slovakian negotiators gave first priority to (and of which there could have been no question before 1914). These were chiefly: "unlimited potential" for the cultural development of the Slovakian nation; all issues which "do not directly concern overall state interests" to be left within the competence of the national (Slovakian) authorities; "the frontier komitat's will be rounded off in accordance with the ethnographic boundary;" Slovakian will be the language obligatory in public life and education within the territory of Slovakia, but with certain guarantees for the overall state language, Hungarian.<sup>118</sup> But especially important, it seems to us, was the Slovakian postulate amounting to the request that there should be no more talk about "Tót's with a Hungarian heart," but on the contrary, about the fact that there are three-and-a-half million Slovakian people who from now on want to live with the Hungarians as equal partners."<sup>119</sup> Leaving aside and evaluation of the possibility of such solutions coming to fruition, what seems to be interesting — as in many of the previous quotations given — is the rhetoric of the statement, which it would be worth subjecting to semantic analysis as well.

It is also worth drawing attention to one more aspect of nationalistic relations in the borderland area: their variability (and alternation) over time and in social microspace. After the fall of the Councils' Republic and the success of intervention and counter-revolution in Hungary, the wave of emotion in the borderland area fell away as it were. From the late spring of 1920 — for reasons unconnected with the international situation, including the Polish-Soviet war<sup>120</sup> — the population's

<sup>118</sup> Quoted after "Basic principles of the plan..." and "Concerning programmes...", as above.

<sup>119</sup> "Concerning programmes...", as above.

<sup>120</sup> In propaganda the position of the Czechoslovakian government was none too soundly labelled as "pro-Bolshevik" (which we have mentioned), and the position of the Hungarian government as decidedly "anti-Bolshevik" (entirely soundly). In both cases, however, the real interest went beyond the sphere of ideology. In their attitude towards the Polish-Soviet war, interests of state (as they were understood at the time) came into play: in Budapest the desire to break through international isolation and the attempt to revise the newly-signed treaty, and in Prague — defence of the treaty. On this topic cf. *inter alia* F. Boros, *op. cit.*, pp. 120 - 138. 176 - 182, (especially) 222 - 238; M. Koźmiński, *Polska i Węgry...* especially pp. 31 - 35.

mood was again subject to oscillation, of accelerated tempo and increased amplitude. It was known that despite its agreement to the treaty conditions, the Hungarian government was preparing some sort of action. Later these plans were justifiably described as foolhardy.<sup>121</sup>

In various regions of Slovakia — still the “Upper Country” according to the onomastics dominating in Hungarian — people conjectured, rumours circulated, it was predicted that the Hungarian army would cross the border, sometimes giving the day and hour when this would take place.<sup>122</sup> In a joint report for June, 1920 (the month when the peace treaty was signed) we read: “Bitter disappointment is paralysing the soul [...] that the Hungarian army does not realize the hopes placed in it [...] in the Liptovsky komitat people are jeering that ‘The Hungarians are only sabre-rattling.’”<sup>123</sup> At the same time the authors of reports were gathering arguments, as it were, in favour of the speediest possible action. From the frontier-station at Szob it was reported that “[...] practically the entire army has been taken from the line of demarcation and sent to the Polish front;”<sup>124</sup> from another locality that “[...] on account of the rigorous Czech requisitions the people are very embittered, and one can expect unrest in the near future;”<sup>125</sup> somewhere else still, the same people “are unhappy with the poor food supply under Czech rule;”<sup>126</sup> and so on. Meanwhile appeals were made to the authorities to issue appropriate orders so that the frontier guard (there was still a lot of movement at the frontier crossings) might treat “with leniency” “Hungarian-speaking peasants” who smuggled food out, since in these matters “The Czechs apply rather political tactics.”<sup>127</sup>

<sup>121</sup> For example: to plan to send a 30,000-strong Hungarian legion through Czechoslovakian territory to the Polish-Soviet front, in circumstances where diplomatic, internal political, organizational and military conditions bespoke the utter illusoriness of the enterprise.

<sup>122</sup> As an example, “Report from the Upper Country occupied by the Czechs” for June, 1920, OL ME-1920-XL-6631, fo. 6 - 15.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>124</sup> In the compilation “Report from the Upper Country occupied...,” June, 1920, OL ME-1920-XL-6631, fo. 6 - 15.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>126</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>127</sup> Letter from the “League for Defence of the Territorial Integrity of Hungary” to the premier, of 30 June, 1920, OL ME-1920-XL-4092, fo. 42.

A report from the frontier representatives of the Ministry for National Minorities (from the end of June of that year) contained the information that numerous organizations existed "in the occupied areas," whilst the population, on both sides (still) of the "line of demarcation," "is full of fervour in the matter of retrieving the lost borders;" in an atmosphere of "patriotic fervour" a civic guard is being organized along this line, so as to "[...] carry out a revolution and achieve liberation" together with the aforesaid secret organizations.<sup>128</sup> However, warned the same source, one should not place too much faith in this information, since careful observation of the borderland shows that "The people inhabiting the outer peripheries are completely anti-militarist;" symptoms of discontent only appeared where the "[...] predatory tendencies [...] of the occupying forces" provided direct cause; on the other hand the "people" "Hate their masters. The god here is business, black-market traffic, i.e. wealth [...]" [The people] openly declare that there is no-one to fight with [...] in many places the landlord (of a given parish) is no better either, saying: please leave us out of the entire business, or: let the Jew cough up, he's got eight teams of horses, whereas I've only got six [...]." Making it clear that he is not concerned here with defending the Jews, in the name of "the sad truth of the matter" the author quotes an example where, in a certain borderland village, out of 120 young men capable of carrying arms, at the first summons just "3 (three) Jews and two farmhands" reported. "Now, despite the occupation, these people feel better with our region, where in their view life is easier and more pleasant, than with us,"<sup>129</sup> he concludes.

A report of the "League for Defence..."<sup>130</sup> from the end of August — this time from central-western Slovakia — from areas of the former komitat of Hont — also expressed regret on account of the "purely Hungarian parishes," where public feeling "[...] is unfortunately very much on the side of the Czechs." For a very simple reason: "The Czechs, namely, have not dared to enter

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<sup>128</sup> Sent to the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, 5 July, 1920, OL ME-1920-XL-4092, fo. 17 - 24.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>130</sup> OL ME-1920-XL-7039, fo. 20.

these parishes, and so they have not yet commandeered anything from them, they have not paid any taxes for two years now, and do not supply recruits." The inhabitants of mixed Hungarian-Slovakian parishes also behaved "shamefully:" "[...] in the autumn they were still singing in Hungarian in church, did not exchange a word with the Czech soldiers, did not take part in dances organized by them, and waited for the Hungarians. The mood today is completely different. In the church they sing in (Slovakian), they take part in Czech dances, and the majority of girls have Czech lovers."<sup>131</sup> News of the "'White' terror" in Hungary upset the mood further.<sup>132</sup>

Another report, however, the authors of which synthesized "news from the field" (also from August) in Budapest, contained news more pleasant to the eye of its readers. Public feeling amongst the Slovaks was "[...] hostile towards the Czechs, and more and more friendly towards things Hungarian." Anti-Czech feelings increased owing to the "deplorable" supply situation (flour shortages were reported from Bratislava and Košice).<sup>133</sup> From frontier-station No. 51 one report came in with the exclamation, "It's extraordinary (!) it is not the Hungarians at all who are losing patience in their expectations, but the Tots in fact. Every day they are ready to take up arms against the Czechs — the invaders." (It was added that so far requisitions had only affected the estates, even more trouble was promised when they hit "the man in the street").<sup>134</sup>

The monthly catalogue of Hungarian casualties for September, 1920 was exceptionally extensive.<sup>135</sup> It contained information (ex-

<sup>131</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibidem*. In simplified terms this relates especially to the Hungarians and Slovaks sympathizing with Hungarians. In another report, already quoted ("Report from the Upper Country occupied...," as in note 122, *ibidem*, 6631, fo. 6 - 15), we read that those responsible for the anti-Hungarian attitude of the Social Democrats were Jews, who in turn "excel in this field", ever since the "Hungarian Vienna Gazette" ("Bécsi Magyar Ujság") "[...] lied to the public about the 'White' terror and supposed acts of violence against Jews." (The comment springs to mind that evil is sown in the press.)

<sup>133</sup> "Situation report from the Upper Country," Budapest, 9 Aug., 1920, OL ME-1920-XL-7039, fo. 23. Cf. note 63.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibidem*, fo. 6.

<sup>135</sup> "Discriminatory regulations" — September, 1920, OL ME-1920-XL-4089, fo. 20 - 21.

aggregated rather) on further deportations in respect of the Hungarian intelligentsia; about a strict ban on the hoisting of banners and the wearing of badges and rosettes in the Hungarian national colours (rather true);<sup>136</sup> on the fact that personnel at the "Magyar Csárda" restaurant could not wear Hungarian traditional costumes if they were composed of a forbidden combination of colours; and that use of the Hungarian language in court was prohibited in Košice. There was also some morale-boosting information: in the town of Losoncz (Lučenec), where there was a great deal of embitterment that the hour of liberation from the "Czech yoke" had not yet arrived, at the foot of a monument to Kossuth destroyed by the Czechs (in actual fact), some Hungarian recruits on their way to the army sang the Kossuth march, and the song, "I haven't got any money, but I will have when Losoncz rises up from Lučenec."<sup>137</sup> Since the Czechoslovakian authorities attached such a great deal of weight to symbols — in fact — the Hungarian authorities were glad of every sign of spontaneous resistance, and sometimes interpreted politically indifferent occurrences as an indication of opposition. (When a French general appeared in Košice on 12 Sept., 1920, he was welcomed by a military band and "about 150 - 200 girls in Hungarian costumes, compared with 10 - 20 ladies dressed in Czech costume"<sup>138</sup> it may be that this was a "demonstration," as was thought to be the case in Budapest, but it may simply have been due to the nationality ratios obtaining in this town at the time, or the number of costumes available.) And the basic conclusions of the Hungarian sources quoted are generally similar: "The Hungarians are organizing nationally and can hardly wait to be united with their homeland again."<sup>139</sup> In that year the political calculations were mixed up with the question of the harvests. So that the Hungarians were meant to be coming in after the

<sup>136</sup> *Ibidem*. It emerges from a variety of sources that emblems — and even emblems of emblems — were highly valued by some, but passionately opposed by others. The sides changed.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibidem*. In connection with these events the forces of order were to be strengthened to the tune of 15 policemen.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibidem*.

crops had been gathered in from the fields; "the Czechs are very much afraid of an attack;" "[...] the people do not want to gather in the crops, since they are afraid that when the Hungarian attack comes the Czechs will take the entire crop. In response to this the Czechs are making threats amongst the people that they will not thresh their corn, and that if there is a Hungarian offensive they will set fire to it."<sup>140</sup>

A year or so later — when the power structures had stabilized, and influential officials no longer felt an everyday sense of threat — a description (meant for internal use) of national relations in the district and town of Trnava (Bratislava župa) drew the following picture of the situation.<sup>141</sup> "The district of Trnava is almost purely Slovakian. The number of Germans [and] Hungarians is insignificant. One does come across Jews, but as a nationality their number is small. Numbered amongst the Czechs are the majority of officials, some merchants and the gendarmerie. Amongst the people themselves there is no national antagonism at all. Hatred for the Czechs manifests itself now only as a reflex (voluntary) of the campaign of Hlinka's followers, who are supported by the Hungarians, 'Magyarites' and Jews." In the town of Trnava relations were worse, "as always [and] everywhere, where the intelligentsia is to be found, which, whether openly or secretly, is more or less anti-Czech everywhere." If it were not for this intelligentsia and for "certain indiscretions on the part of the Czechs [themselves]," "the Slovakian people would be peaceful and get along well with the Czechs." It is true that other causes, too, can be found for conflict situations: "[...] the Slovakian farmers hate for instance the Czech workers, because the latter are better qualified and represent a source of strong competition." Whilst officials and gendarmes felt, "how to express it — terrorized."<sup>142</sup> In another district (Šamorín, Hungarian Somorja), which "[...] leaving aside the Czech officials and gendarmes" was "exclusively Hungarian"

<sup>140</sup> "League of the Upper Country" (extract from a report), *ibidem*, fo. 56.

<sup>141</sup> Situation report of district chief of Bratislava župa and the town..., as in note 87.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibidem*.

for a change, mutual relations were "tolerable, there are no controversies." Though — from another source — "the Hungarian workers, especially the communists, hate the Slovakian workers."<sup>143</sup> However, the relations were difficult and complicated. National, political and social attitudes and choices intertwined, whilst historical reality was too complex to be properly re-created and understood by means of exceedingly standardized nationalistic categories (classifications).

It was easier to mark out the boundaries on the ground, and set up frontier signs and stations, than it was to gauge the consequences of delimitation. Judging from the contents of reports from frontier-stations on both sides, these were not yet impermeable borders. "Some border traffic," smuggling and trade continued. In principle there was nothing to hinder travelling more extensively, except that certain travellers, particularly intellectuals suspected of having undesirable political leanings, of "communist tendencies" or activity "in the national spirit" of the other side, were kept under surveillance before and after crossing the border, by their own intelligence services and the neighbouring counter-intelligence services. Sometimes there were sorties across the border by troops in uniform or dressed in "civies."<sup>144</sup>

Throughout the entire twenty-year period between the wars, the endeavours of the Hungarian authorities did not cease, to

<sup>143</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>144</sup> On this topic see among other things, Report of the "League of the Upper Country," OL ME-1920-XL-4089, fo. 43 - 44; report of the National Gendarmerie Headquarters in Bratislava (3117/V. duv. - 33), ŠUA SSR PR — box č. 7, 4; MPS letter (11750/D-22), *ibidem*, box č. 90. Cf. also collections: ŠUA SSR MPS — box č. 613; OL ME (K. 40)-1918-VIII — ... One might add that during the course of stabilization of the new borders similar relations prevailed along the borderlines between Hungary and Romania, Jugoslavia and Austria. And likewise — along the Czechoslovakian-Polish border. On the subject of this borderland in fact there is interesting information in both archives. In OL — for example — the petitions of highlanders, who "whilst they speak the language of that state" (Poland). "their economic interests are at variance [with it]", and since "neither language, economic or other interests unite them [...]" with the so-called Czechoslovakian state," "150,000 - 160,000" of them wanted to belong to Hungary (*ibidem*, ME-1920-XLIII/a-9201, fo. 1 - 9) In ŠUA SSR — among other things — numerous reports entitled "Zbojstvá Poliakov v Orave" (*ibidem*, MPS-box č. 327 XIV 207/a).

secure peacefully (the polemist used inverted commas here), or "by other means" (as the already evident euphemism went), revision of the frontier (setting herself minimal, piecemeal aims, without forgetting the maximalist aim, the pre-war frontiers).<sup>145</sup> Practical expression was thus given to views which were ahistorical, since they ignored, among other things, the historical process of the "subjectivizing" of the nations of central-eastern Europe, and in the process to assumptions which were not based in fact and in the long run devoid of reality. In the same sense, also devoid of reality were those actions of the authorities in Prague which issued from the conviction that the strength of a nation-state depended directly on its nationalistic structure, on which influence could be brought to bear comparatively easily and by relatively primitive means. By ignoring individual features, including individual aspirations, as in the case of the Slovaks, or by taking discriminatory action, as in the case of the Hungarians.<sup>146</sup> These were the results of a schematic and recurrent understanding of complicated nationality problems, and to that extent they are connected with our topic.

For we assumed that an attempt at re-creating the borderland (in a double sense) national consciousness<sup>147</sup> in a period when it was subject to accelerated transformations, even on the basis of apparently secondary and incidental sources, can serve research into national stereotypes and their rôle in the historical process. It can also contribute to the relativization of concepts,

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<sup>145</sup> One would have to consider as two separate issues the persistence of the idea of revision (especially "integral" revision) in the political thought of the era (as opposed to practice), and its deep-rootedness in the popular consciousness (evidence of which is provided by public opinion surveys carried out just after the Second World War).

<sup>146</sup> The concepts used in this sentence of "ignoring individual features" and "discriminatory action" also require relativization, both in time-space and semantically.

<sup>147</sup> It is worth recalling Znaniecki's statement in this context: "However, there is a difference between religious conversion and national assimilation. An individual cannot participate at the same time in two different religions; whereas an individual who participates in the culture of one nationality can also participate in the culture of another, while being loyal to only one of them or partly loyal to both." (F. Znaniecki, *Modern Nationalities*, The University of Illinois Press, Urbana 1952, p. 127).

useful in the cognitive process. It would appear that this kind of survey might be helpful in historical research. It might serve a certain verification of the image of nationality relations in the borderland area in question, in a concrete historical period (the areas there where a not fully crystallized, variable national consciousness pertained were no doubt more far-flung than supposed), but also in research on comparable phenomena in another place at another time.

*(Translated by Phillip G. Smith)*