

„45ERS”

HISTORY OF THE EMIGRATION LIVING IN GERMAN AND AUSTRIAN TERRITORIES

1945–1956

Theses of PhD Dissertation

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I. Topic of research, raising of problems

During the last phase of WW II, in 27 August 1944 the Red Army of the Soviet Union crossed the border of Hungary declared in the second Vienna Award, thus Hungary became a military frontier. Simultaneously, the mass emigration of people to the west began. Ferenc Szálasi having risen to power organised deportation started as well.

When in 8 May 1945 in Europe, WW II ended, approximately 800.000–1.000.000 Hungarian citizens were outside the western border of the country, mostly in the territory of the Third Reich. There were those, who fled from the soviet soldiers, those, who escaped from judgement, those, who were deported by the Arrow Cross Party and soldiers stayed abroad during their military services.

In my dissertation, I would like to show the history of these great numbers of Hungarians, the so called 45ers or westerners, from the end of WW II to their integration in their new homes, until approximately the Revolution of 1956 when the new wave of emigration started.

The conditions of soldiers and citizens are specifically analysed: their organising work of social, political and clerical institutions, establishment of education in Hungarian language, the work of intellectuals and their supervision conducted by the state authorities.

II. Methods of research, structure of dissertation

In the first part of the dissertation, the faith of prisoners of war is shown. The former soldiers and novices spread over the largest territory and could go back home in organised circumstances. About them, there are the most precise sources. This is followed by the presentation of the history of refugee civilians. Forming coherent view on the faith of civilians in the first years is more difficult, but after a time there are more numerous and precise sources. Separate chapters deal with emigration, historical churches, political and intellectual life, media, radio organisation of education and supervision conducted by state authorities.

Compared to the importance of the topic, there is a small number of secondary sources. First, the leading intellectuals of the Hungarian emigration living in Western-Europe dealt with their own history. In every respect, the works of Gyula Borbándi are paramount.¹ Besides, memoirs of refugees,² journals of emigration,³

¹ The most important monographs: *Borbándi Gyula: A magyar emigráció életrajza, 1945–1985.* Mikes, Budapest – Hága, 2006.; *Borbándi Gyula: Magyarok az Angol Kertben.* Mundus, Budapest, 2004.; *Borbándi Gyula: Emigránsok.* Magyar Nyelv és Kultúra Nemzetközi Társasága, Budapest, 2002.; *Borbándi Gyula: Nyugati magyar irodalmi lexikon és bibliográfia.* Mikes – OSZK, Hága – Budapest, 2006. The most important books edited by Borbándi: *Nyugati magyar esszéírók antológiája, 1986.* Ed.: *Borbándi Gyula.* Európai Magyar Protestáns Szabadegyetem – Mikes, Bern – Hága, 2005.; *Nyugati magyar tanulmányírók antológiája, 1987.* Ed.: *Borbándi Gyula.* Európai Magyar Protestáns Szabadegyetem – Mikes, Bern – Hága, 2005.

and those newspapers⁴ (especially in Bavaria) which regularly published articles on the situation of Hungarian refugees are important.

In the period of the current research, unfortunately there were only a few living members of the emigration of 1944–1945. But, oral history interviews made during the years gave important additions. Some of the interviewees passed away after the interview therefore these items used were their last, sometimes their only utterances on this topic.

The foundations of the dissertation are the archives of the “Magyar Caritas Szolgálat” (MCSZ), of catholic missions,⁵ of German and Hungarian churches⁶ and of official organisations of émigrés.⁷ Fonds of Hungarian archives are different in their quality

² Some important ones: *Farkas Ferenc: Az altöttingi országgyűlés.* Mikes, München, 1969.; *Hennyey Gusztáv: Magyarország sorsa Kelet és Nyugat között. Egy volt magyar királyi külügyminiszter visszaemlékezései.* Európa – História, Budapest, 1992.; *Máday Béla: Beszámoló a Magyar Vöröskereszt ausztriai és németországi kirendeltségének tevékenységéről.* Salzburger Druckerei und Verlag, Salzburg, 1947.; *Ólvedi János: Levelek a számkivetésből.* Faragó Miklós, München, 1947.; *Ponori Thewrewk Aurél: Nyugatosok. Hadifogoly-emlékezések.* Mundus, Budapest, 2004.

³ Some important ones: Hungária; Új Hungária; Hadak Útján; Látóhatár; Új Látóhatár.

⁴ Some important ones: Passauer Neue Presse; Mittelbayerische Zeitung.

⁵ Münchener Magyar Katolikus Misszió Irattára. Magyar Caritas Szolgálat rendezetlen iratai.

⁶ Politisches Archiv Berlin; Prímási Levéltár Esztergom.

⁷ United Nations Archives and Records Management Section, United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration – UNRRA (1943–1948); United Nations Archives

and in amount, the records of the Hungarian Red Cross are fragmented,⁸ the documents of “Hazahozatali Kormánybiztosság” are partly not organised,⁹ although useful sources appeared from other governmental bodies.¹⁰ The “Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára” (Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security) keeps records referring to emigration in numerous fonds,¹¹ but due to the intentions of the writers, they can be used in relations of special cases.

III. Results of the research

Analysing new primary, and secondary sources, number of emigration of 1945 was proclaimed in total and specifically per territories and per strata considering changes, between 1945 and 1947, 700.000–725.000 persons came back, 100.000–120.000

and Records Management Section, International Refugee Organisation – IRO (1947–1952)

⁸ Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára, P 1362 Egyesületek, Magyar Vöröskereszt. Magyar Vöröskereszt Ausztriai Kirendeltségei.

⁹ Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára, XIX-A-87 Az államigazgatás felsőbb szervei, Központi (nem miniszteriális) kormányzati szervek. Hazahozatali Kormánybiztosság.

¹⁰ Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára, XIX-J-1-k NSZK Admin, 1945–1964. 4. doboz. (Thanks to Kristóf Erdős who raised my attention to this source.)

¹¹ Some examples: Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára, A-1144 Emigráns ellenséges szervezetek anyagai II.; ÁBTL, A-1145 Emigráns ellenséges szervezetek anyagai /MHBK/; ÁBTL, A-2127/18 Magyar Szabadság Mozgalom; ÁBTL, A-2127/20/1 A magyar emigráció és a nyugati titkosszolgálatok I. kötet.

persons emigrated to another European country first, later to other continent and 160.00 persons stayed in German territories. They lived in inhumane circumstances, in barracks where they had to fight for food. The majority of persons choosing emigration followed conservative political ideas of the Horthy-era. They did not accept changes happened in Hungary as they were supervised and directed from the USSR. They hoped that world policy would turn to a new course and they could return to their independent country. They were let down.

Stages of integration are also analysed highlighting specific turning points of 1946, 1948–1949 and 1953–1956. At the end of 1946 those Hungarians were in German language speaking territories (mostly in Bavaria and Austria) who, for different reasons, did not want to go back to their homeland and started to lay down the foundations of a new life. In 1948, when the ex-enemy status of Hungary ceased to exist, emigration started. In 1949, the German Federal Republic was born. Further 120.000–140.000 Hungarians settled in another Western-European state, in the American continent or in Australia in the hope of a better life. After the end of the emigration, only 7.000 remained in Western-Germany and 20.000 in Austria, whose majority had stabile livelihood. Those, who stayed abroad got out of the lagers, their problems of living seemed to end and the establishment of social structure started. By 1956, Hungarians successfully integrated in the society of the Federal Republic of Germany and Austria, but kept their language, culture and created their organisations and education.

In the history of the emigration of 1945, this is the first time when the Hungarian organisations like “Magyar Szabadság Mozgalom”, “Magyar Harcosok Bajtársi Közössége” and “Müncheni Magyar Iroda”, and their connections with the countries’ institutions and with Hungarian organisations of the USA are analysed. As a result of this research it can be claimed that these organisations, apart from former accusations, were not fascist groups but organisations having national, Christian and conservative ideas of the Horthy-era. The diet and pilgrimage at Altötting on 20 August in 1947 and the intelligence activity of the “Magyar Harcosok Bajtársi Közössége” together with US organisations are of paramount importance.

In the meantime, as new refugees, the 47ers appeared who stood on republican ground of 1945 and they had participated in the creation of the republic but they were chased by the steps of the communist takeover. Then, there weren’t masses of people but those who actively participated in politics. They only travelled across German speaking territories, their final destination was the USA. Among the 45ers and 47ers there was an antagonistic opposition. The conservatives considered the democrats communists, the democrats considered the conservatives fascists. The numbers of 47ers were less but got such amount of political support which was not given to the 45ers westerners. This way, the majority of refugee Hungarians supported the conservative “Magyar Szabadság Mozgalom” or “Magyar Harcosok Bajtársi Közössége” but the US supported “Magyar Nemzeti Bizottmány” could gain limited international influence.

The political life can be criticised as leaders of specific organisations continuously disputed and made an attempt to blemish each other therefore there was not any chance for unity.

During the analysed 12 years, the refugee Hungarians sparing no time and effort established their relief organisations supported by historical churches, created a high level organisation of education and cultivated Hungarian language and culture.

IV. Publications of the author

Egy elfeledett országgyűlés. Altötting, 1947. augusztus 20. *Honismeret*, 43. évf. (2015) 4. sz. pp. 43–46.

Iskolák a határon túl. Keresztény-konzervatív szellemiségű magyar oktatás német és osztrák területeken a második világháború után. In: *5. Báthory-Brassai Konferencia Tanulmánykötet*. II. kötet. Ed.: Rajnai Zoltán – Fregan Beatrix. Óbudai Egyetem, Budapest, 2015. pp. 393–401.

Nyári Gábor: Hadifogság, mindennapok. Életképek a „nyugatos” magyar hadifoglyok történetéből. *Studiolo*, 1. évf. (2014) 2. sz. pp. 9–33.

Menekültek az új hazában – A német és osztrák területeken élő magyar emigráció története, 1945–1953. In: *A történelem határán. Irodalom-, nemzetiség- és politikatörténeti tanulmányok*. Ed.: Strausz Péter – Zachar Péter Krisztián. Heraldika, Budapest, 2014. pp. 50–150.

Az altöttingi országgyűlés és zarándoklat eseményei és hatása a magyar emigrációra. In: *Történelem és politika – Régen és ma*. Ed.: Strausz Péter – Zachar Péter Krisztián. Heraldika Kiadó, Budapest, 2013. pp. 101–120.

A Magyar Szabadság Mozgalom és az 1947-es altöttingi események története. *Acta Historica Hungarica Turiciensia*, 28. évf. (2013) 1. sz. pp. 30–48.