

# Historical Journal

**An academic journal on the history of Slovakia and Central Europe**  
ISSN 0018-2575

Volume 60 \* 2012 \* Supplement

## CONTENTS

### Articles

D v o ř á k o v á, Daniela: Nicholas of Szécsény and Salgó – an exceptional man at the court of Sigismund of Luxembourg (A contribution to the court culture and functioning of the court of the King of Hungary at the beginning of the 15th century) .....	3
D u c h o ň o v á, Diana: “We are pleased to expect you on this joyful day...”. Weddings as an important part of family festivities of the Esterházy in the first half of the 17th century .....	19
J a n u r a, Tomáš: Nepotism in the administration of the County of Liptov in the 18th century .....	43
H u d e k, Adam: The Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts in the years 1945 – 1952 .....	67
P e š e k, Jan: The Communist Party of Slovakia 1945 – 1948. Membership, organization, leadership, party apparatus, relationship to the Communist Party of Czecho-slovakia .....	97

### Reviews

T e i c h, Mikuláš – K o v á č, Dušan – B r o w n, Martin D.: Slovakia in History (Adam Hudek) .....	121
D u d e k o v á, Gabriela et al.: On the Road to the Modern Woman. Chapters from the History of Gender Relations in Slovakia (Ivan Kamenec) ...	124
P e t r u f, Pavol: The Foreign Policy of the Slovak Republic 1939 – 1945 (Dagmar Čierna-Lantayová) .....	127
T i s o, Jozef. Speeches and Articles. Vol. I (1913 – 1938), Vol. II (1938 – 1944), Vol. III (1944 – 1947). Editors: Miroslav Fabricius, Katarína Hradská, Ladislav Suško (Milan Zemko).....	131

## ARTICLES

### NICHOLAS OF SZÉCSÉNY AND SALGÓ – AN EXCEPTIONAL MAN AT THE COURT OF SIGISMUND OF LUXEMBOURG (A CONTRIBUTION TO THE COURT CULTURE AND FUNCTIONING OF THE COURT OF THE KING OF HUNGARY AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)

DANIELA DVOŘÁKOVÁ

DVOŘÁKOVÁ, Daniela. Nicholas of Szécsény and Salgó – an exceptional man at the court of Sigismund of Luxembourg (A contribution to the court culture and functioning of the court of the King of Hungary at the beginning of the 15th century). *Historický časopis*, 2012, 60, Supplement, pp. 3-18, Bratislava.

The study is a reconstruction of the life of a Hungarian magnate active at the Hungarian court of Sigismund of Luxembourg, Nicholas of Szécsény and Salgó. It is also a sounding into life at the court of the King of Hungary. As a result of his eccentric and exceptional character Nicholas of Salgó became a victim of the hatred of some of Sigismund's courtiers. This led to a plot, due to which he was condemned and exiled from Hungary. He spent the last years of his life in Venice. The documents in the Venetian archives concerning Nicholas' possessions, which were not studied up to now, provide substantial additional evidence on the Venetian exile of this Hungarian baron, his eccentric way of life and exceptional education. Hungarian nobility. Royal court. Sigismund of Luxembourg. Medieval aristocratic libraries. Lifestyle of a medieval nobleman. Slaves in the Middle Ages. Lovers and concubines.

The remarkable life story of a member of one of the richest magnate families in the Kingdom of Hungary, Nicholas of Szécsény, also called of Salgó, a courtier and baron in the service of King Sigismund, who ended his life in Venice as an exile without property living on occasional deals, is more than the story of an interesting man. It also provides a possibility to look into the situation at the court of the King of Hungary, and not into the official, proclaimed and publicly displayed, but into behind the scenes, hidden relations. The microcosm of court life also included struggles between individual court cliques, competition for property and position, slander, envy and intrigue. The fate of Nicholas, which we can trace in relative detail thanks to fortunate circumstances, also enables us to get an idea of this otherwise hidden aspect of life at the Hungarian court and the cultural world in which the Hungarian courtiers moved.

The exceptional character of Nicholas of Salgó is shown among other things by the fact that he was one of the few Hungarian noblemen to receive considerable attention from Sigismund's biographer and contemporary Eberhard Windecke.<sup>1</sup> The Hungarian

---

1 The chronicle, or to put it better memoirs of Eberhard Windecke, a citizen of Mainz, who was a courtier of King Sigismund and for some time also a citizen of Bratislava, was most recently published in Hungarian translation: SKORKA, Renata. *Eberhard Windecke emlékirata Zsigmond királyól és koráról. (Memoirs*

historian Pál Engel<sup>2</sup> has devoted attention in an outstanding way to the life of Nicholas of Salgó. However, Engel did not have the complete documents on Nicholas' property at the time of his death, found in the state archives of Venice. These documents substantially supplement and widen our knowledge of this remarkable figure from medieval Hungarian history.<sup>3</sup> Thanks to them we can trace Salgó's destiny during his exile in Venice, his connections to his Hungarian relations, as well as character traits and eccentric life style, which could have caused his problems in Hungary, as Pál Engel already thought. However, we will begin with the facts known to us about Nicholas and his origin.

The members of the Szécsény family were descendants of Falkos' branch of the Kačič family, or of Falkos' grandson Duke Thomas (1299-1354), who accumulated immense properties during the reign of Charles Robert. His grandsons, sons of the Bán Kónya, Frank and Simon played a very important role during the reign of Sigismund. Frank was court judge (1397 – 1408), while his brother Simon held various dignities including a short time as court judge and Duke of Transylvania. With a brief interruption from 1403 to 1409, he was a janitor to the king and one of the founding members of the Order of the Dragon. As a result of their functions, both brothers were barons and members of the royal council.

Thanks to a skilful marriage policy, they were tied by family relationships not only to the most important magnate families, but also to members of the royal family. Simon was married to Elizabeth, sister of the Palatine of Hungary Nicholas of Gara, and as is well known, the Palatine Nicholas was husband of Anna, sister of the Queen of Hungary Barbara of Celje. Simon's daughter Dorothy was married to a member of the important family from Lučenec (Losonci). Frank's daughter, another Dorothy, married the son of the Duke of Transylvania Stibor of Stiborice, Sigismund's close adviser and favourite.

The lords of Szécsény not only possessed considerable power political influence, but also immense wealth. The main part of their property was located in the County of Novohrad. Apart from the small town of Szécsény in present-day Hungary and its dependencies, they held half the villages of Almás and Sztracsin, and the two castle lordships of Hollókő and Šomoška. They also held four other castles: Hajnáčka (County of Gemer), Bene (County of Heveš), Salgó (County of Hont) and Topoľčany (County of Nitra), as well as a whole series of other properties in different parts of Hungary.<sup>4</sup>

Both the brothers, Simon and Frank, left sons. Simon and his wife Elizabeth of Gara had two sons, Thomas and Nicholas, but Thomas soon died, leaving Nicholas as their

---

*of Eberhard Windecke on King Sigismund and his times.*) Budapest : História Alapítvány – MTA Történettudományi intézete, 2008.

- 2 ENGEL, Pál. Salgai Miklós. In ENGEL, Pál. *Honor, vár, ispanság. Válogatott tanulmányok. Válogatta, szerkesztette, a jegyzetek gondozta Csukovits Enikő. (Honour, Castle, County. Selected studies. Editor: Enikő Csukovits.)* Budapest : Osiris Kiadó, 2003, p. 409-425.
- 3 I am deeply indebted to my colleague Martin Štefánik for finding these sources in the Venetian archives (Archivio di Stato, Venezia, hereinafter ASV) and providing them for study, as well as for translating the parts written in the medieval Venetian dialect. From this collection, Pál Engel knew or used only Nicholas Salgó's will and one other document, using a copy by Öváry deposited in the manuscript collection of the MTA. More see ENGEL, Salgai, ref. 2, p. 425.
- 4 On the properties of the lords of Szécsény: see ENGEL, Pál. *Magyarország világi archontológiája. (Secular archontology of Hungary.)* I.-II. Budapest 1996.

only heir. Frank had one son, who was named Ladislav. Relations between the two brothers and later between their sons were always free of problems. They often appear in the sources, and no record of any disputes between them has survived. The first to die was Frank in 1409, while Simon died three years later in 1412. Taking over of inherited properties happened without problems, because a short time before the death of Simon in December 1411, both sides confirmed the existing division of the joint properties.<sup>5</sup> On the basis of this agreement, Ladislav gained the castles of Hollókő and Topolčany, Nicholas got the castles of Hajnáčka and Salgó, while the castles of Šomoška and Bene remained jointly owned with each maintaining his own castelan in his half of the castle. From this period, Nicholas of Szécsény began to use the additional name of Salgó.

The two cousins, Ladislav and Nicholas stood on roughly the same starting lines for their future careers. However, fate soon eliminated Ladislav from the game. At the beginning of 1413, he was seriously ill and had to write his will, by which he left all his property to the only living male member of the family, Nicholas of Salgó, to whom he also entrusted care for his wife and their only daughter Dorothy.<sup>6</sup> Ladislav of Szécsény died soon after writing his will, without knowing that he actually would have a male heir. His wife was pregnant and gave birth to a son, who was named Ladislav after his father.

In the following years, not much was recorded about Nicholas of Salgó. Perhaps only his dispute with his sister Dorothy, widow of Sigismund of Lučenec. Nicholas refused to hand over her share of the inherited properties, especially of Salgó, which went to her as the girl's quarter. Dorothy died in 1421 and the dispute was continued by the representatives of her underage son.<sup>7</sup> Nicholas progressed up the social ladder as was pre-determined by his name and wealth. He maintained a position at the royal court and probably accompanied Sigismund to the Council of Konstanz and on journeys around Europe. He went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1418.<sup>8</sup> At the beginning of the 1420s, he participated in expeditions against the Hussites. The king granted him a coat of arms for this.<sup>9</sup> In March 1423, he accompanied Sigismund at a meeting with King Vladislav of Poland in Spiš. He was one of 16 spiritual and temporal lords, who issued a safe conduct document for the King of Poland.<sup>10</sup> Sometime after this date, a catastrophe happened, which changed Nicholas' life and caused his fall.

We have limited knowledge of the facts. First we will give the testimony of Eberhard Windecke, who obtained his information directly from the royal court. According to him, Nicholas of Salgó (Schallaga) was a powerful Hungarian lord, nephew of the Palatine, *“who had eight powerful castles. His great power gave him the obligation to serve His Majesty with 2000 horsemen”*. Windecke claims that by “advice and actions” Nicholas contributed to the assassination of his cousin Frank's son Ladislav. However, he alle-

---

5 ZsO III, no. 1 331, DL 9 845.

6 ZsO IV, no. 49.

7 ZsO VI, no. 1 766, 1 767; ZsO VIII, no. 925, 1 112, 1122.

8 On participation in the Council of Konstanz see ENGEL, Salgai, ref. 2, p. 413, on the pilgrimage: ZsO VI, no. 1 647.

9 ZsO III, no. 425.

10 ZsO X, no. 295.

gedly regretted this and did penance, but later he gave himself up to robbery and killing, committing many crimes against the laws of Hungary. The offences were so great that he was arrested, convicted and condemned according to the laws of Hungary to loss of his head and property. Then the king intervened and changed the sentence to banishment from Hungary and loss of all his property. The king even “*demolished one castle built with imperial pomp and having 16 rooms on top of each other*”. Part of his property was given to the Church.<sup>11</sup>

Windecke’s information is confirmed by some other surviving sources. We learn from later documents, written only after Nicholas’ death, that he was convicted at an assembly of the counties of Novohrad and Hont, where he was proscribed for striking and using false coins.<sup>12</sup> Other documents mention his criminal offences<sup>13</sup> or only simple *infidelitas*.<sup>14</sup>

If Nicholas was really proscribed at an assembly of the counties of Novohrad and Hont, it must have been at the assembly held in November 1423, because before that date he appears in the sources with a blameless record, and after it as a criminal. Unfortunately, the proscription document has not survived, but we know from other documents produced at this assembly that the properties of Nicholas of Salgó had already been confiscated by order of the king.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, it is noteworthy that one of the two men entrusted with the task of confiscating the Lord of Salgó’s property was actually his brother in law Sigismund of Lučenec, husband of his sister Dorothy and father of the boy Ladislav of Lučenec, who carried on legal disputes with such persistence against Nicholas for a share of the family property!<sup>16</sup>

The whole conviction of Nicholas of Salgó is very strange. The fact that a magnate of such importance and standing was convicted and proscribed at the assembly of the counties of Novohrad and Hont is surprising. The speed of events and the personal interest of the monarch also confirmed by Windecke’s testimony are also interesting. The fact that the king had Nicholas’ castle demolished was not only a gesture intended to publicly demonstrate the king’s power, but also a deterrent for all, who wanted to commit similar offences. It is probably that the monarch personally supervised the fulfilment of his orders.<sup>17</sup>

11 SKORKA, ref. 1, p. 139, ch. 200 and 201.

12 In a document of Albert from 1439, DL 13 405: “*nomine cusoris et delatoris falsarum monetarum*”. The same appears in document DL 13 401. The report of counterfeit coins continued for many years. In 1456 the state judge Ladislav of Pavlovce (Paloci) granted some property to his familiaris with the note that the property had belonged to Salgó, who lost it because he struck false coins. DL 50 299, ENGEL, Salgai, ref. 2, p. 414.

13 A document from 1424: “*exigentibus facinorosis excessibus et criminosis demeritis notoriisque et digne damnandis proscriptionibus eiusdem*”. ENGEL, Salgai, ref. 2, p. 413, 423.

14 DL 13 175.

15 The documents ZsO X, no. 1 412 and 1 413 mention Sigismund of Lučenec and Paul Besenyő of Turna (Tornai).

16 ZsO X, no. 1 412: “*occupatores iurium ipsius Nicolai ex domini nostri regis mandato constituti, videlicet familiares dominorum Pauli bani de Torna et Sigismundi de Losonch.*”

17 ENGEL, Salgai, ref. 2, p. 417.

What could have provoked such great anger from King Sigismund? What was Nicholas of Salgó's real offence? With great probability, we can exclude the murder of Ladislav of Szécsény. There is no evidence that Ladislav died as a result of poison. He wrote his will on his death bed at the beginning of 1413, when fully conscious although tormented by serious illness. He left all his property to Nicholas, to whose care he entrusted his widow and daughter.<sup>18</sup> Ladislav's son Ladislav, who was not known to his dying father, when he wrote his will, later had good relations with Nicholas when he grew up.

Windecke's reports of robbery are also improbable. Nicholas had several legal disputes, but they were insignificant and ordinary apart from the one with his sister. They were mostly minor arguments about boundaries and so on.

Counterfeiting of coins remains. Only this could really have provoked great anger from the king. The mystery is, what would have led one of the richest men to undertake such risky activity. We will leave this question open for now.

The fate of Nicholas in the following decades is shrouded in mystery. The only concrete information we have about him dates from 1435, and again in a verdict. It is unbelievable that Nicholas was again accused of participation in murder, and condemned to banishment for the second time in his life. The verdict against him was produced on 13 March 1435 in Bratislava by King Sigismund himself, several months after his return from the Council of Basel.<sup>19</sup> It did not concern only Nicholas himself, but also his alleged lover Hedviga, widow of Nicholas' uncle John of Gara.

The verdict document records that after the first conviction, Nicholas received hospitality at the court of his mother's brother John of Gara. After John's death in 1428, Nicholas lived at the court of John's widow, the Mazovian princess Hedviga. According to the testimony of "relations and familiars" Hedviga became the lover of Nicholas while her husband was still alive, so according to canon law she committed the crime of adultery. When the lovers were threatened with betrayal and Hedviga feared for her life, she simply poisoned her husband.

Hedviga and Nicholas appear from the accusations for which they were convicted to have been especially unprincipled people. If it really happened, the murder of John of Gara, who was actually Nicholas' benefactor, would have been an especially despicable act. However, everything suggests that both the accused were innocent. The above-mentioned historian Pál Engel was the first to express doubts about the truthfulness of the accusations. In his view, the two lovers outraged the people around them with their open relationship, and Nicholas also irritated the Hungarian magnates with his education and "non-conformity". It is certainly possible to agree with this view, but in my view, the main reason for the conviction of both accused was much more prosaic: money and property. The unpopularity of Nicholas of Salgó only facilitated the effort of enemies to definitively eliminate him, and remove the threat that he would seek a way to regain his formerly immense properties.

The verdict itself suggests who could have been the main enemies of Hedviga and Nicholas. The initiator of the trial of the two protagonists, as stated in the verdict, was

---

18 ZsO IV, no. 49, 416. The widow Anna had it confirmed again in 1422, ZsO IX, no. 134.

19 DL 12 678, CDP VII, p. 455.

another of Sigismund's courtiers, a member of the Bubek family, Nicholas son of the exchequer officer (tavernicus) John the Great of Plešivec. Nicholas of Plešivec was engaged to Hedviga's daughter Catherine, but her mother "*in spite of this union, without the agreement and against the will of this Nicholas of Plešivec, godlessly married in an illegal way like a prostitute to a certain German to the great indignation and ruin of this marital union*". In Nicholas of Plešivec, Nicholas of Salgó and Hedviga found a very unpleasant and powerful enemy. The Bubeks of Plešivec were among the most aggressive magnates of the reign of Sigismund. Members of this family constantly faced accusations of violence and injustice, and they did not stop short of murder. For example, when Nicholas' father John the Great got into a dispute with another magnate Simon Cudar, John simply had Simon killed.<sup>20</sup> However, the important information is that Nicholas of Plešivec was exchequer officer to the queen and she was one of the people, who profited from Salgó's confiscated properties. She already gained the castle lordship of Hajnáčka in 1424.<sup>21</sup>

Other complainants were the not precisely named "*lords, noblemen and other persons with a different position among the relations and familiares of the late John*". The text of the actual verdict also shows who these relations were. The implementation of the verdict against Hedviga was entrusted to John's nephew, Ladislav of Gara.

The accused princess did not find enough courage to stand before the court to face her enemies. Apparently she realized the futility of any defence, and she only sent a representative. However, according to the verdict, he did not give a satisfactory answer to the accusation, and so she was convicted of three crimes: incestuous relationship with Nicholas, murder of her husband and handing over of her daughter, a noble girl for "sexual intercourse". The punishment of Hedviga was harsh: confiscation of all property and life imprisonment in one of the Gara family castles. The convicted woman was handed over into the hands of Ladislav of Gara, son of the Palatine Nicholas. Precisely the identity of this man confirms that the liquidation of the Lord of Salgó and the widow of John of Gara was probably the result of a plot by some of the Hungarian magnates from the circle of the king or queen. Ladislav of Gara had reasons to be hostile to Hedviga. His father, the Palatine Nicholas had pursued a dispute over property with his brother, Hedviga's husband John.

After John's death, his widow Hedviga continued the legal dispute with her brother in law.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, Nicholas of Gara and his son Ladislav had enough reasons to want to deal once and for all with John's widow, especially because she and her husband had no male heir, and John's considerable property was in play. In the property dispute, Hedviga naturally had the support of her lover Nicholas of Salgó, who was also Ladislav's cousin, as is indicated by the fact that Nicholas of Salgó took some documents concerning the properties of Nicholas of Gara or his son Ladislav, with him when he went into exile, and he was willing to return them only for money.<sup>23</sup> Later he will also talk about money, with

---

20 DL 12 956.

21 ENGEL, *Magyarország világi archontológiája*. I, ref. 4, p. 265.

22 DL 8 286.

23 ASV, Proc. Di San marco, de Citra, B 118 (comm, Pietro Tomasi), fol 9r.



Ladislav of Gara in debt to Nicholas of Salgó for some un-named houses and property.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, elimination of a creditor could also have been an advantage for Ladislav of Gara, as was later proved by the fact that the debts were never settled. Nicholas of Salgó also began to make some Hungarian magnates nervous, because he was endeavouring to rebuild his property base, which would enable him to change his position as a propertyless exile and perhaps in future claim confiscated properties, which already had new owners or at least users. Through his nephew Ladislav, Nicholas of Salgó wanted to gain Hegyesd Castle, which belonged to Ladislav as an inheritance from his mother, but which was held by the Bishop of Veszprém Simon of Rozhanovce (Rozgon) as a security. However, he immediately struck against opposition from the lords of Rozhanovce, who immediately informed the king during his journey to be crowned in Rome. On 25 September 1433 in Mantua, King Sigismund dated a mandate, which prohibited Ladislav of Szécsény from redeeming the castle from Simon of Rozhanovce and giving it as a security to Nicholas of Salgó. A note in the text stating that after being read, the document had to be returned to the proposer, leaves us in no doubt about who proposed it.<sup>25</sup> The lords of Lučenec also profited from the definitive removal of Nicholas of Salgó. They could finally achieve their claim to a share of Salgó Castle. As we already stated, Queen Barbara already acquired Hajnáčka Castle after the first conviction of Nicholas of Salgó, and with this, we again come to the Gara family, because the mother of the Ladislav who appears in the verdict against Hedviga and Nicholas was the sister of Queen Barbara.

Therefore, the conviction and complete elimination of Nicholas and Hedviga did not only have a “moral background”. Although it is certain that their relationship must have been incredibly irritating to those around them, the real cause was certainly the interests of court cliques, especially concerning property. That the conviction of Hedviga, a member of the Piast royal dynasty of Poland, was not entirely “clean” and its initiators feared that sometime they would be held responsible for it, is confirmed by the fact that they had the verdict confirmed by new monarchs. In 1439, John of Plešivec explicitly asked Sigismund’s daughter Queen Elizabeth to confirm the original verdict.<sup>26</sup> It was also confirmed by King Albert, successor of Sigismund and husband of Elizabeth.<sup>27</sup> In 1440, when the Hungarian lords offered the crown to King Vladislav of Poland in the electoral capitulation at Kraków, he committed himself to observe the laws and customs of Hungary, defend the country against the Turks and accept a whole series of other power-political obligations. Entirely surprisingly, the conclusion of the electoral capitulation includes a promise never to cast doubt on the verdict against the widow of John of Gara by the Emperor Sigismund and confirmed by Albert, which condemned her for “*certain*

---

24 Pál Engel thought that Ladislav of Gara had friendly relations with Nicholas of Salgó, and supported him with money during his exile in Venice. However, he started from one of the letters in Nicholas’ papers, which speaks of money brought to Salgó by a familiaris from Ladislav of Gara in Hungary. P. ENGEL, *Salgai*, ref. 2, p. 421. In reality, Garai was in debt to Nicholas of Salgó, and as further documents in the collection show, he was reluctant to pay. The idea that Ladislav of Gara had friendly relations with Nicholas of Salgó or even supported him, has no support in the sources.

25 CDH X/7, 465.

26 DL 12 678.

27 This is mentioned in the electoral capitulation of Vladislav Jagiello from 8 march 1440, DF 288 388, published by Katona VI, p. 23.

*infamous offences*” to loss of her head and property. As a result she was still held in prison. Vladislav committed himself to fully respecting the verdict and never prosecuting or punishing anybody because of it.<sup>28</sup>

However, let us return to Nicholas. As we had the possibility to trace, it is more than clear that the whole accusation was fabricated, and its initiators lived for years in fear that they would bear responsibility for it. Nothing more can be proved against the Lord of Salgó than a romantic adventure with Hedviga, which there is no reason to doubt. It is probable that Hedviga had done no more than this in reality. She had given her love, and probably enabled this for her daughter. The accusations that she poisoned her husband are very unconvincing, and even more so because they did not appear until seven years after her husband’s death! In addition, at the time of the death of John of Gara, Sigismund was in the country, and no doubts appeared over whether John had died a natural death. The accusation appeared only later during the absence of the king and queen (1430 – 1434), and the monarch received it from his barons.<sup>29</sup>

A serious question emerges in connection with the whole story of Nicholas of Salgó: Why was it that this particular man provoked so much hatred from his contemporaries? Many other Hungarian aristocrats of the reign of Sigismund committed much worse offences and remained unpunished, while infidelity and adultery were not unknown even in the marriage of the royal couple. A partial answer to this question is provided by the archive sources preserved in the Venetian State Archive among the papers of Pietro Tomasi, who was the executor of Nicholas’ will. They show that Nicholas differed considerably from the “normal” Hungarian baron. He appears as an extraordinarily educated, but frivolous and pleasure-seeking man, who was more like a Renaissance cavalier and adventurer, such as we find in Italian literature of the time, rather than a medieval Christian knight. His nature and apparently also his actions must have very distant from those of the closed and conservative mentality of the Hungarian nobility.

The documents concerning the possessions of Nicholas of Salgó are divided into two parts. The first consists of documents written in Latin, including Nicholas’ will. Apart from the will itself, there are various documents prepared by a notary, in which various actors in the will confirm the implementation of various provisions of the will: most frequently the handing over of sums of money or objects.<sup>30</sup> The second group of documents are written in Italian dialect, and comprise records by the executors of the will about the course of the implementation and an accounts part, recording items of income and expenditure incurred while implementing the will.<sup>31</sup>

The above mentioned sources show that Nicholas of Salgó settled in Venice after his conviction and banishment from Hungary. He did not go there alone, but accompanied by some of his familiares. If there were more of them, they gradually disappeared, and it appears that at the time of his death, Nicholas had only two Hungarian servants: old

---

28 Ref. 27. The verdict incorrectly names the widow of John of Gara as Margaret.

29 ENGEL, Salgai, ref. 2, p. 421.

30 ASV, Proc. di San Marco, de Citra, B. 120 (Comm. Pietro Tomasi), Fascicolo Commissaria privata, Barone d’Ungheria Niccolo di Salgo. Hereinafter only ASV B. 120.

31 ASV, Proc. di San Marco, de Citra, B. 118 (Comm. Pitro Tomasi), Quaderno, A. Carte Antiche corse in vita di Pietro de Tomasi P. VI, Nr. 5, f. 8r-20v. Hereinafter only ASV B. 118.

Michael and a rather unspecified Vincent, both of whom were designated: *Hungarus*. In Venice, Nicholas lived with his familiares and some slaves in a rented house in the parish of Holy Trinity. When his will was written, he was in the second year of living in the parish of St. Simon and he died there.<sup>32</sup>

In spite of the fact that Nicholas was condemned in Hungary to lose all his properties, his will clearly shows that he still considered himself to be their owner and the legal heir to the appropriate part of his family's property. However, the reality was different. Nicholas did not own any property, either *de iure*, *de facto* or hereditary, not even property he had bought or gained as security in Hungary. He did not even receive money for property he had pignored or sold. As we already said, one of his debtors was also the Palatine's son Ladislav of Gara. Nicholas explicitly stated in his will that the executors of the will (*commissarii*) should obtain from Ladislav of Gara all the money and property he owed to Nicholas. At another point of the will, he expressed the wish that all the privilege documents he had in his possession, which did not apply to his family, should be returned to their original owners with the exception of documents of Ladislav of Gara. The commissioners should hand these over only when Ladislav returned all the pignored and purchased houses, he had formerly given for his use. Even during his life, Nicholas of Salgó strove with greater or lesser success to enforce his claims against Ladislav of Gara, as a document issued on 19 November 1436 in Padua testifies. We learn from it that Nicholas' *familiaris*, who lived with him in Venice, a certain John of Plešivec (*de Pelseccz*) had to bring him 100 gold ducats from Ladislav of Gara in Hungary. However, the *familiaris* returned with only half the money, claiming that it was stolen during the journey. His master did not believe the story about a robbery, and was convinced that he had kept the money for himself. Therefore, he had the *familiaris* put in the prison at Padua as a debtor. However, intercession by mutual friends finally persuaded Nicholas to make an agreement with his former *familiaris*. John had to pay the missing 50 ducats and a further 25, because Nicholas had to travel repeatedly from Venice to Padua, to pay court and travelling expenses, as well as the cost of accommodation for himself and his retinue, because as a result of his dignity and status (*secundum suam dignitatem et statum*) he had to travel with servants. Nicholas proved to be generous in relation to the *familiaris*. He agreed to accept part of the debt from John in the form of clothing, because John did not have the required sum of money. However, the relevant clothing had already been deposited as security, so Nicholas had to redeem it for 7 gulden by which he conceded things with the substantially higher value of 22 gulden, and deducted this from the debt of the *familiaris*. The debtor could pay the rest of the money in monthly instalments of two gulden.<sup>33</sup>

If Nicholas of Salgó had no properties and so no income from them, the question arises: What did he actually live on in Venice? As was proved after his death, the money that various people in Hungary owed to him, was almost entirely unenforceable. Nicho-

---

32 Medieval Venice was divided into six parts (*sestiere*), each of which was divided into parishes. We learn directly from his will that Nicholas lived in the parish of Holy Trinity first, because it states that he left 4 ducats to the chapter and a further 8 ducats for the reconstruction of his former parish church of Holy Trinity. ASV B. 120. On the length of residence in the parish of St. Simon see ASV B. 118, fol. 20v.

33 ASV B. 120.

las had some valuables, which he had succeeded in keeping and taking out of Hungary, but he gradually deposited them as security or gave them away. From his former treasures, only a few remained at the time of his death. These things certainly could not have paid his living expenses. The most probable solution is that this baron, formerly one of the richest men in the Kingdom of Hungary, lived on trade. This is also indicated by the circumstance of his death: one of his trading journeys cost him his life. As we learn from the inheritance proceeding, Nicholas of Salgó travelled on business to Constantinople, leaving only his old familiaris Michael Hungarus at home. Vincent, the other familiaris, went with Nicholas. We know that on the journey back, he brought various types of cloth from Constantinople and Nigroponte,<sup>34</sup> as well as other things, which were later sold. When Nicholas returned on a galley from Constantinople to Venice at the beginning of 1438,<sup>35</sup> he was already seriously ill. On the ship he suffered from pestilential fever (*de febre pestientiale*), which probably infected the whole galley. His state was very serious, so he sent for his close friends, the physicians John Caldiera and Pietro Tomasini. Both doctors did what they could, but they were not able to help their sick friend, so they at least dealt with his final anointing, and they promised him, although very unwillingly, to concern themselves with the implementation of his last will.<sup>36</sup> The third executor, who had to secure implementation of the will, was Alexander Bono, together with his son Moses who was not in Venice at the time. Alexander was also a very close friend of Nicholas of Salgó, who entrusted him with implementation of an intimate part of the will, namely destruction of love letters or burning of prohibited books. Nicholas' privileges and other documents were also entrusted to him.<sup>37</sup> Alexander could not complete his mission, because he died several months after Nicholas of Salgó.

Nicholas' illness progressed very rapidly. He used his last strength to dictate his last will, which was written down by the invited notary John Rizo on 18 January 1483. As a result of the medical condition of the dying Nicholas, the will was brief, as stated later by the executors and it did not include everything.<sup>38</sup> According to a note below the text, Nicholas died on the next day, 19 January 1438.

Nicholas' will, in which he described himself as "*Nicholas of Salgó from the Kačič family, Hungarian baron and knight*", provides various interesting pieces of information about his personality, his life style in Venice, and his relationship with his closest relation: his nephew Ladislav of Szécsény for whose up-bringing he may have been responsible. The message that nobody should be blamed for his death was directed precisely to Ladislav, who should not think that Nicholas might have been poisoned. Nicholas stated that he was convinced that the illness had been sent by God.

Nicholas bequeathed to his nephew all his "*villages, castles, small towns and all other immoveable property*", which belonged to him as a co-dividing brother (*frater condivisionalis*) according to Hungarian law. He also bequeathed to him 10% of all the

---

34 The island of Euboea in Greece, an important port on the maritime commercial route to Venice.

35 The text says 1437, because in Venice the new year began only in March.

36 ASV B. 118, fol. 8r.

37 On the deposition of the privileges in two boxes in Alexander Bono's house: ASV B. 118, fol. 9r.

38 ASV B. 118, fol. 8v.

money, which the executors had to obtain from his debtors: Ladislav of Gara, Thomas son of Louis of Senja<sup>39</sup> and Nicholas of Trogir. However, he also gave Ladislav some duties and obligations as executor of his will in Hungary. The comment that if Ladislav could not implement the required matters by “legal will”, he had to seek the best possible alternative route, shows that Nicholas was aware of the legal limitations of his will, which resulted from his position as a fugitive. The executors had to deliver to Ladislav all the documents concerning the properties of the lords of Szécsény in the Kingdom of Hungary with the exception of those specifically named, which Nicholas had assigned to the Church. Surprisingly, however, Ladislav was not to receive them free, but only after payment of 1,100 ducats, from which 1000 had to be distributed by the executors of the will as charity, while 100 would go to the above mentioned Alexander Bono. Ladislav also had to take care of Nicholas’ familiares and friends. Nicholas thought much more about the salvation of his soul than about anything else in his will. He strove to correct not only his own faults, but also those of his ancestors and relations. First of all, he wanted to re-establish the Benedictine monastery in the village of Szokol (now Nógrádszakál). He ordered the return of this village to the monastery, to which it had belonged in the time of his ancestors. Nicholas not only assigned his part of the village to the monastery, he also appealed to Ladislav to do the same with his half.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, he expressed the requirement that a poor abbot should be established in the monastery to pray for the salvation of the soul of Nicholas and his ancestors. Five named villages in the counties of Hont and Novohrad, to which Ladislav had no rights apparently because Nicholas had bought them, were bequeathed to the church of St. Ladislav in Szécsény. At the same time, the nephew received the task of recovering the money, for which King Sigismund had mortgaged some properties to Nicholas of Salgó, and giving all this money to the same church. It is surprising that Nicholas did not leave to Ladislav even one of his houses in Buda. It seems that Nicholas wanted to settle his old debt to his already deceased sister Dorothy, to whom he had denied a share of their father’s properties. He bequeathed to her son Ladislav of Lučenec the most valuable of the Buda houses, situated directly opposite the royal palace (Friss palota) in Buda Castle. According to Nicholas’ words, the house was supposed to be equally shared, but only Nicholas held it, so he now gave the whole of it to Ladislav of Lučenec. A similar effort to right old wrongs appears in the sentence of the will in which Nicholas of Salgó stated that Ladislav should return all the property illegally held by their ancestors, even if the original owners could not or dared not present their justified claims. All the other houses in Budapest: in the castle, below the castle by the Danube, at the foot of the hill and on the Pest side, were bequeathed to the church of St. Mary Magdalene in Buda Castle.

Let us add, that it is probable that nothing was implemented from this part of the will. Above all, the enforcement of debts proved to be an unfulfillable task, in spite of the

---

39 Probably Frangepan. Nicholas was also related to this family through his mother Elizabeth, whose sister Dorothy was married to Nicholas Frangépani.

40 The Benedictine abbey of Szakálmonostora existed from the time of the Arpád dynasty and probably disappeared in the course of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Nicholas already knew only of the existence of the monastery, he was not even sure whether it was Benedictine. ROMHÁNYI, Beatrix. *Kolostorok és társáskáptalanok a középkori Magyarországon*. Pytheas 2000, p. 59.

participation of the government of the Doge and the courts. The executors sent Ladislav of Gara various letters and personal messages requesting payment of his debt and so care for the soul of his relation, but all these attempts remained without any response. Ladislav never replied, and the executors did not even succeed in finding out the size of the debt, because they could not find a document stating it as in the case of other debts.<sup>41</sup> The executors did no better with other debts. Even if they found out the size of the debts and had the authority of the highest Venetian courts, which gave them authorization documents, and the mediation efforts of the Morosinis, they obtained nothing but a few ducats, which did not even cover the expense of the messengers.<sup>42</sup> Even Nicholas' closest relation, Ladislav of Szécsény ignored his uncle's will. When special messengers travelled from Venice to inform him about Nicholas' will, he promised to do everything according to the will. He sent a Franciscan friar to Venice as his messenger to request a copy of the will and promise to send the requested thousand of ducats in exchange for the privilege documents. The executors of the will granted the request but they never saw the thousand ducats. After receiving the copy of the will, Ladislav found that he gained nothing from it. Nicholas of Salgó had bequeathed to him properties he no longer owned. No valuables or money were offered and Ladislav had to pay for the privileges. Therefore, he invested only in the messenger, who informed the executors that he was not interested in the privileges and could get them for a better price.<sup>43</sup> Thus, the executors of the will could state that all the dangerous journeys brought nothing other than effort and empty words.<sup>44</sup>

Nicholas' two Hungarian familiares, who he considered to be faithful, did not behave honourably, although they had been richly rewarded by bequests of money, cloths, armour and other things even including slaves, but they also failed to behave well to their master. Both robbed him after his death. Vincent took only a small number of ducats, which they found on him and deducted from the sum he had to receive. He left Venice and no more is known of his fate. Michael stole substantially more, but this brought him only misfortune, because his companions, who had assisted his theft, finally killed him after they left Venice and were going through a forest towards the Portoguardo district.<sup>45</sup>

The executors of Nicholas of Salgó's will were faced with a difficult task because the money, on which Nicholas counted, proved to be fiction. It was similar with the items supposed to be deposited as security or for sale with Venetian Jews or other people, especially the rich Morosini family. The sum mentioned by Nicholas as receivable was always higher than that, which could really be obtained. The data recorded by the executors show that before going to Constantinople, Nicholas of Salgó pignored the

---

41 ASV, B. 118. fol. 9r.

42 Nicholas of Trogir was owed 1 100 ducats and Thomas Lodovici of Senje 1 500 ducats. The prosecutors describe in detail the unsuccessful efforts to enforce the debts and the excuses of the debtors. ASV, B. 118, fol. 9v.

43 ASV, B. 118, fol. 10r.

44 ASV, B. 118, fol. 11r.

45 ASV, B. 118 fol 9r. On the theft also fol. 8v. The barber James Hungarus helped to discover the theft and was later rewarded for this. On the theft by Vincent: fol 10r. Michael was challenged to return the money, but he did not return to Venice, so he was convicted. ASV, B. fol 120.

best things he had at home: jewellery, belts and clothing, which would confirm that he travelled there for trade in goods. That the baron reached to the end of his possibilities is indicated by the fact that the deposited items included a broken and repaired crystal goblet, which could not be sold.<sup>46</sup>

The executors finally stated with surprise that at the time of his return from Constantinople, Nicholas actually had no money in cash, that the money owed to him was really much less than he claimed, and that he was really “*extremely careless with money*”.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, the executors had to obtain the money to pay bequests by selling Nicholas’ possessions, including those he brought by ship from Constantinople, and slaves. Nicholas was extravagant in his will, as was appropriate to a true baron.

First of all, in the hope of saving his soul, he ordered permanent celebration of precisely stated Masses at precisely determined times in the church where he was buried. For this, he assigned 350 gold ducats for a priest “of virtuous life”, who would celebrate the Masses. He chose the church of St. Peter in the Castello quarter as his final resting place. His wish was probably fulfilled, because a payment to the Bishop of Castello for the funeral appears in the later accounts. Apart from this, it was also necessary to pay for other clergy, as well as sailors, who came to pay their last respects to the deceased, for candles, the Mass, boat transport for the funeral, construction and removal of a wooden catafalque in the church, digging of the grave and so on.<sup>48</sup> The executors had to pay the most varied debts for Nicholas: for medicine during his illness, for moving his property from the galley to the customs house, for its transportation and presentation, guarding his house after his death, the voyage in the galley and other expenses on the ship, court fees, payments for making clothes during his life, rent for the house and so on.<sup>49</sup> It was also necessary to pay all the churches and clergy to whom Nicholas had bequeathed money in his will. They included the priest Francis, who had also travelled in the galley from Constantinople and had heard Nicholas’ confession. Nicholas thought that after payment of all the bequests, money would still remain from the repayment of debts and the sale of movable and immovable property. The executors would be able to distribute this money among the poor, widows, freed slaves, orphans and other charitable purposes. It is more than clear that the poor did not receive much from Nicholas’ property.

The part of the will concerning Nicholas’ library is extraordinarily interesting. He wished that books and documents opposed to right and the soul should be burnt. It is noteworthy information, as is the statement that the library of the lord of Salgó included an amazing 138 manuscript volumes. Alexandro Bono had a catalogue made, and it is possible that if the “forbidden” books were excluded, the original number was even larger. If we realize that the Hungarian centres of learning, such as the chapters of important churches, had about the same number of books, we will recognize Nicholas’ exceptional achievement.<sup>50</sup> In connection with the forbidden literature, the question immediately ari-

---

46 ASV, B. 118, fol 11r and 11v.

47 ASV, B. 118, fol 10r.

48 ASV, B. 118, fol. 18r.

49 ASV, B. 118, fol. 18r-20v.

50 According to an inventory from 1425, the Chapter of Bratislava had 83 manuscript books, the Chapter of Zagreb had 227 books in 1421 and the Chapter of Veszprém had 171 books in 1430. P. HLAVAČKOVÁ,

ses of whether his library included alchemical tracts, from which it is only a short step to the production of imitations of gold and silver, and so to the counterfeiting of coins, as Nicholas of Salgó had been accused of doing. It appears more probable to us, than to regard him as a collector of ancient coins, an enthusiasm which led to misfortune.<sup>51</sup> In the end, it would not be so exceptional. When Queen Barbara was driven out of the Kingdom of Hungary after the death of Sigismund of Luxembourg, she devoted her attention to alchemy and according to an eye-witness, the alchemist John of Láz, she made imitations of silver and gold, with which she deceived many people, especially tradesmen.

Nicholas' will also confirms the justification for the accusations about his uncommitted sex life, which was in conflict with the existing moral norms and social conventions. The part about the female slaves concerns this question. Before, we consider it, it is necessary to note that Nicholas had substantially more slaves than familiares. This apparently derived from the fact that use of slave labour was more financially advantageous than the employment of free Christian servants. Slavery was probably only a marginal or even unacceptable social phenomenon in Hungary hardly mentioned in the sources from this period, but in Venice and other cities of Italy and Spain, it was part of good social presentation, giving lustre to upper class life. It appeared at the end of the Middle Ages and the number of slaves imported into Southern Europe was so large that historians even describe it as a genocide of some nations.<sup>52</sup> Berber, Turkish, Caucasian, Tatar and Greek slaves were popular. Nicholas had both men and women among his slaves as mentioned in his will. Nicholas' faithful old familiaris Michael Hungarus was to receive one male slave according to his choice. Another was bequeathed to Nicholas' friend Augustine Mauroceno with the condition that the slave would become free after 12 years. Nicholas mentioned the female slaves more extensively. One of them, named Julia, had been given to Michael Hungarus long before, and the will only confirmed this. According to Nicholas' instructions, another, Armellina, had to be sold to a well-situated person, and the money used for religious purposes according to the decision of the executors. Three young Greek slaves: Novella, Pollixena and Adriana, had an entirely special position. Nicholas of Salgó gave them their freedom and bequeathed 50 ducats to each of them as dowries, so that they could get married. Apart from this, they received from their master a whole series of the most varied things, especially clothing, but also, for example, precious fabric from Constantinople and Nigroponte (the island of Euboea) brought back by Nicholas on the unfortunate galley, or a bed with a straw mattress. The dying baron did not forget to dictate into his will that they should buy for Pollixena the same sort of shoes as Novella.

The will only suggests that these female slaves were not used for hard work, but to provide their master with services of an entirely different type, but later records by the executors directly confirm it. The executors were shocked with the girls. According

---

Miriam. *Kapitula pri Dóme sv. Martina – intelektuálne centrum Bratislavy v 15. storočí. (The Chapter of St. Martin's Collegiate Church – intellectual centre of Bratislava in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.)*. Bratislava : Pro Historia, 2008, p. 148.

51 ENGEL, Salgai, ref. 2, p. 422.

52 BONNASSIE, Pierre. Svoboda a otroctví. (Freedom and slavery). In LE GOGG, Jacques – SCHMITT, Jean-Claude. *Encyklopedie středověku*. Prague : Vyšehrad, p. 766-776.



to them, the Greek girls were un-baptized, of doubtful morals and could not speak, by which they certainly meant that they did not have a good knowledge of Italian. They could do nothing because they were Nicholas' concubines. Therefore, the executors decided that before the girls could be married off in accordance with Nicholas' wishes, they would be baptized and sent to a good convent, so that would learn to behave well, speak, work, sew and bake bread in the presence of virtuous women.<sup>53</sup> The whole affair of the female slaves dragged on, and the costs grew to more than the 50 ducats their late master had bequeathed to them.<sup>54</sup> The worst was Adriana, who developed a similar illness to her late master. The executors sent her to the island of Nazareth, where victims of plague and leprosy were isolated. She recovered from the illness, but according to the prior of the Nazareth monastery, she greatly declined in ethics (*in ethico*) and so ended up in the poorhouse.<sup>55</sup> We know that Novella and Polixenna were baptized. Novella became Anna and Polixenna became Helena or Lena. In the end they got married, although the executors had to make a lot of effort to find husbands for them.<sup>56</sup>

Nicholas' three young concubines, with whom he probably spoke in Greek, mentions of forbidden literature in his huge library, his romantic correspondence, the carelessness with which he spent or gave away money so that he balanced on the edge of complete insolvency, interesting friends, mostly with the university degrees of Doctor of Medicine or Master of Liberal Arts, all suggest that Nicholas had escaped from the controls of his time and environment, at least as far as he lived in the Kingdom of Hungary. His turbulent life deprived him of his position and immense properties. It is difficult to say whether his life was happier than it would have been if he had submitted to social conventions and lived as pre-ordained by his origin. In any case, thanks to the surviving written sources connected with his property at the time of his death, we can at least partially create a full-blooded picture of this Hungarian magnate. If we judge him only on the basis of the testimony of Eberhard Windecke or of Sigismund's verdict, we would get a rather distorted picture.

NIKOLAUS (MIKULÁŠ) AUS SZÉCSÉNY UND SALGÓ – EIN BESONDERER MANN AM HOF VON SIGISMUND VON LUXEMBURG  
(BEITRAG ZUR HOFKULTUR UND LEBEN AM UNGARISCHEN KÖNIGSHOF AM ANFANG DES 15. JAHRHUNDERTS)

DANIELA DVOŘÁKOVÁ

Die Studie ist eine Rekonstruktion des Lebens vom ungarischen Magnat, Nikolaus (Mikuláš) aus Szécsény und Salgó, der am Hof von Sigismund von Luxemburg tätig war. Gleichzeitig ist sie eine Sonde ins Leben am ungarischen Königshof, sie ermöglicht hinter die Kulissen des Hoflebens zu

---

53 ASV, B. 118, fol 15v.

54 ASV, B. 118, fol 14r.

55 ASV, B. 118, fol 15 r.

56 Both confirmed the receipt of money and items from the Salgó's estate, ASV, B. 120. Anna also gave her age as 18 years.

schauen: die Machtkämpfe unter den einzelnen Hofcliquen, die Intrigen und Wetteifern um das Vermögen und um die Posten zu beobachten. Nikolaus aus Salgó fiel auf Grund seiner Exzentrizität und Außergewöhnlichkeit zum Opfer vom Hass mancher Hofherren von Sigismund, was schließlich zu seiner Verurteilung und Verbannung aus Ungarn und seiner Flucht nach Venedig, wo er die letzten Jahre seines Lebens verbrachte, führte. Dokumente aus dem Archiv in Venedig, die den Nachlass von Nikolaus betreffen und die bis heute nicht bearbeitet sind, ermöglichen im Wesentlichen die Kenntnisse über diese besondere Gestalt der mittelalterlichen ungarischen Geschichte zu ergänzen und zu erweitern. Dank dieser Schriftstücke können wir das Schicksal von Salgó während seines Exils in Venedig, seine Bindungen an die ungarischen Verwandten, seine materielle Lage, aber auch seine Charakterzüge und seinen exzentrischen Lebensstil, der die Ursache für seine Probleme in Ungarn gewesen sein könnte, verfolgen. Sie belegen nämlich, dass Nikolaus sich von den „üblichen“ ungarischen Baronen deutlich unterschied; er scheint außergewöhnlich gebildet zu sein, aber sehr leichtsinnig und genießerisch, er war eher ein Renaissancekavalier und Abenteurer, wie sie aus der italienischen Literatur bekannt sind, als ein mittelalterlicher christlicher Ritter. Sein Naturell und offensichtlich auch seine Taten waren der geschlossenen und konservativen Mentalität des ungarischen Adels meilenweit entfernt. In Venedig lebte er zusammen mit seinen jungen griechischen Sklavinnen, die seine Konkubinen waren, und sein Lebensunterhalt durch das Handel bestrich. Die Erwähnungen verbotener Literatur in seiner riesigen Bibliothek (vergleichbar mit den Kapitelbibliotheken in Ungarn), oder seiner Liebeskorrespondenz, Leichtsinn, mit dem er sein Geld ausgab, Balance an der Grenze völliger Insolvenz, interessante Freunde – die meisten mit einem Universitätstitel Doktor der Medizin oder Meister der freien Künste, das alles lässt erahnen, dass Nikolaus sich seiner Zeit und seinem Umfeld, mindestens als er noch in ungarischen Königreich lebte, entzog.

Hauptgrund des Komplotts gegen Nikolaus war nicht seine Lebensweise, obwohl sie um Aufsehen sorgte, sondern die Bemühungen der Hofcliquen sich seines Vermögens zu bemächtigen, was sie schließlich dank der hasserfüllten Atmosphäre gegenüber dieser Person erfolgreich erreichten.

PhDr. Daniela Dvořáková, CSc.

Historický ústav SAV, Klemensova 19, 813 64 Bratislava, histdvor@savba.sk

“WE ARE PLEASED TO EXPECT YOU ON THIS JOYFUL DAY...”.  
WEDDINGS AS AN IMPORTANT PART OF FAMILY FESTIVITIES  
OF THE ESTERHÁZYS IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

DIANA DUCHOŇOVÁ

DUCHOŇOVÁ, Diana. “We are pleased to expect you on this joyful day...”. Weddings as an important part of family festivities of the Esterházy family in the first half of the 17th century. *Historický časopis*, 2012, 60, Supplement, pp. 19-42, Bratislava.

The study is a sounding into the family festivities of one of the most important families in Early Modern Hungary, the Esterházy family. The picture of the wedding ritual is supplemented with examples from other aristocratic families. Aristocratic weddings were one of the important instruments of family policy and a potential source of increased power. The Palatine Nicholas Esterházy was a great strategist in the field of marriage in the first half of the 17th century. It is difficult to imagine that he would have gained the office of Palatine without his two advantageous marriages. Nicholas Esterházy conceived a family policy, in the context of which he planned the marriages of his descendants. He also organized and supported marriages at his court. Thanks to these marriages, he created a whole web of relationships at his court and in the counties where his properties were situated. Apart from marital politics, the study also examines the actual practices connected with weddings in this period, from engagement and banns to the actual ceremony.

Esterházy. Hungarian aristocracy. Family policy. Wedding. Wedding ceremony. Early Modern period.

*“I already wrote to you last summer from the spa at Piešťany about my intention to gain the widow of Emmerich Thurzo, Christina Nyáry as a wife for my brother in law Francis Listius. I asked you to discuss this matter with the widow of Paul Nyáry, Catherine Várday, on whom everything depends. You expressed your support to me then, and I still do not doubt your favour. Now, I have again written a letter to Catherine Várday, and I ask you to discuss this matter with her, I will do my best to reward you for your effort in every period. I have also taken the matter to the monarch and to the Duke of Transylvania...”*

This was written by the Palatine Stanislav Thurzo in a letter to Stephen Nyáry brother of Christina Nyáry.<sup>1</sup> He was clearly using his connections and contacts to bring about a very advantageous marriage, by means of which the Thurzo inheritance would not come into foreign hands. Thurzo did not achieve his aim. Already in April of the same year, Christina informed her mother in law Elizabeth Czobor of her engagement to Nicholas Esterházy.<sup>2</sup>

---

1 Magyar Országos Levéltár (hereinafter: MOL), Zichy család levéltára, P 707, Missilis, microfilm co. 4561, letters addressed to Stephen Nyáry, letter from Stanislav Thurzo to Stephen Nyáry, 29 February 1624, Vienna.

2 Országos Széchényi Könyvtár (hereinafter: OSZK), Kézirattár, Fol. Hung. 2638, 3. kötet, fol. 78, letter

In the past, just as today, a wedding was one of the most important events in the life of a family. It legalized the cohabitation of a man and woman and represented the first step towards securing offspring and so continuing the family line. From the social point of view, the identities of the bridegroom and bride and the way the wedding occurred was significant, because it was an important element in the representation and demonstration of the position of the family. It was not a private act by two people, but a social event with a definite economic background. From the point of view of family or dynastic politics, material questions and the no less important elements of social prestige came into the foreground, and thanks to this, the impressive festivity was an extremely expensive ritual.<sup>3</sup> The importance of the choice of bride was expressed in the many compilations of

---

from Christina Nyáry to Elizabeth Czobor, 20 April 1624, Kráľovský Chlmec.

- 3 BASTL, Beatrix. *Tugend, Liebe, Ehre. Die adelige Frau in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Wien : Böhlau, 2000, p. 152 and 160 and DÜLMEN, Richard. *Kultura a každodenný život v raném novověku (16. – 18. století) (Culture and everyday life in Early Modern times (16th – 18th centuries))*. Vol. 1. Prague : Argo, 1999, p. 137. We will only mention here a selection of the great quantity of literature on this problem: LÉNGYÉLOVÁ, Tünde. Rodinná politika v aristokratických a panovníckých dvoroch v období novoveku. (Family policy in aristocratic and royal courts in Early Modern times.). In *Súčasný populačný vývoj na Slovensku v európskom kontexte*. Zborník príspevkov z 8. Demografickej konferencie. Bratislava : Slovenská štatistická a demografická spoločnosť, 2000, p. 103-107; LÉNGYÉLOVÁ, Tünde – VÁRKONYI, Gábor. *Báthory – Život a smrť. (Báthory – life and death)*. Prague : Ottovo nakladateľstvo, 2009; LÉNGYÉLOVÁ, Tünde. Rodinné sviatky Thurzovcov. (Family celebrations of the Thurzos). In *Zborník Oravského múzea XIII.*, 1996, p. 37-44; FUNDÁRKOVÁ, Anna. Zápas o prvenstvo? Rodinná politika a stratégia Pálffyovcov v prvej polovici 17. storočia. (A struggle for primacy? Family policy and strategy of the Pálffys in the first half of the 17th century). In *Forum Historiae*, 2010, year 4, no. 2, p. 1-13; FEDERMAYER, Frederik. Svadobné a úmrtné oznámenia z pálfyovskej korešpondencie (zo 16. – 17. storočia). (Wedding and death announcements in the Pálffy correspondence (16th – 17th century)). In *Genealogicko-heraldický hlas*, year 13, no. 2 (2003), p. 34-47; SZABÓ, András Péter. Menyegzőtől menyegzőig. Gondolatok a házasságkötési szokásrend magyarországi fejlődéséről. (From wedding to wedding. Ideas on the development of wedding customs in Hungary.). In *Századok*, 2010, 5. szám, 144. évfolyam, p. 1027-1084; PÉTER, Katalin. *Házasság a régi Magyarországon*. (Weddings in old Hungary.). Budapest : L'Harmattan, 2008; FEJES, Judit. Az Esterházyak házassági politikája 1645 után. (The marriage policy of the Esterházy after 1645.). In PÉTER, Katalin (Szerk.) *Gyermek a kora újkori Magyarországon*. Budapest 1996, p. 115-166; RADVÁNSZKY, Béla. *Magyarország családélet és háztartás a XVI. és XVII. században I.* (Family life and the household in 16th and 17th century Hungary.). Budapest 1896; MAŤA, Petr. *Svět české aristokracie 1500-1700. (The world of the Czech aristocracy 1500-1700)*. Prague : Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny, 2004, p. 605-640; KRÁL, Pavel. Křtiny, svatby a pohřby. K vzájemné reflexi panovníckých a šlechtických přechodových rituálů ve druhé polovině 16. a první polovině 17. století. (Weddings and funerals. On mutual reflection in royal and aristocratic rites of passage in the second half of the 16th and first half of the 17th centuries.). In BŮŽEK, Václav – KRÁL, Pavel (edd.) *Šlechta v habsburské monarchii a císařský dvůr (The nobility in the Habsburg Monarchy and Imperial Court) (1526-1740)*. České Budějovice 2003 (Opera historica 10), p. 439-456; SMÍŠEK, Rostislav. Šlechtic a sňatek ve druhé polovině 17. století. Sňatkové strategie Jana Adolfa a Ferdinanda ze Schwarzenberku. (Aristocrats and marriage in the second half of the 17th century. The marriage strategy of John Adolf and Ferdinand of Schwarzenberg.). In *Folia Historica Bohemica* 24, 2009, no. 1, p. 167-198; BOLOGNE, Jean-Claude. *Svatby. Dějiny svatebních obřadů na Západě. (History of wedding ceremonies in the West)*. Prague : Volvox Globator, 1997; WETTLAUFER, Jörg. *Das Herrenrecht der ersten Nacht. Hochzeit, Herrschaft und Heiratszins im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit*. Frankfurt a. M. : Campus Verlag, 1999; LUTZ, Alexandra. *Ehepaare vor Gericht. Konflikte und Lebenswelten in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Frankfurt : Campus, 2006; ADAIR, Richard. *Courtship, illegitimacy and marriage in early modern England*. Manchester : Manchester University Press, 1996, p. 129-148; CRAWFORD, Katherine. *European Sexualities, 1400-1800. New Approaches to European History series*. Cambridge :

advice, which aristocrats produced for their maturing sons.<sup>4</sup> The space created by weddings for the new social contacts necessary for further career growth were not the least important factor. Aristocratic children did not have the possibility of freedom in choosing their marriage partners. Their parents usually decided their future partners when they were very young or even before they were born, on the basis of planned dynastic policy. Especially the first born were at a disadvantage, younger children were less bound by family dynastic politics.<sup>5</sup>

Aristocratic marriages had a place among the instruments of dynastic politics and could be springboards for gaining more power. In the Early Modern period, a marriage between members of the highest ranks of the aristocracy had several functions, including property, reproduction, symbolism and socialization. When choosing a bride, the most important arguments included finance, title and the probability of the bride giving birth to healthy children and so securing the continuation of the dynasty.<sup>6</sup> A rich dowry was also one of the attributes of a future bride.<sup>7</sup> With this intention Andrew Révay asked Elizabeth Czobor to pray that when he came back from the war, he would find a nice girl or rich widow. Although the choice of future partner was usually not voluntary, sympathy could arise between the future partners with regard to the subjective perception of physical attractiveness. George Thurzo also defended his marriage with Elizabeth Czobor with the statement that “*he had not found a more beautiful woman than her either in Bratislava or anywhere else*”.<sup>8</sup>

Hungarian aristocrats followed their own family marriage strategies when choosing partners. When Nicholas Esterházy was striving to strengthen his position as a “*novus homo*” among the most important magnate families, he emphasized especially that his descendants should marry women from the Kingdom of Hungary. On the other hand, aristocrats, who were striving to become attached to the Vienna Court, chose wives from among the Vienna court ladies from the Austrian and Czech environment. The marriage

---

Cambridge University Press, 2007; ZEMON, Davis Natalie. *Displacing and Displeasing: writing about Women in the Early Modern Period*. In D. AMUSSEN, Susan – SEEFF, Adele (Eds.) *Attending to Early Modern Women*. Cranbury; London : Associated University Presses, 1998, p. 25-37; COWAN, Alexander. *Marriage, Manners and Mobility in Early Modern Venice* (Historical Urban Studies), Aldershot; Ashgate, 2007, p. 151-168.

- 4 For the advice of the Palatine Nicholas Esterházy to his eldest son Stephen see: MOL, Esterházy család hercegi ágának levéltára, P 108, Repositorium (hereinafter: R), R 60, Gazdasági és ügyviteli utasítások, microfilm no. 16 152, Fasc. A, No. 1-9. Some instructions on choice of partners were also outlined in wills, as we will mention in the study.
- 5 Barbara Ország promised her daughter to Francis Nádasdy even before she was born. Barbara’s husband Francis Török without her knowledge promised their daughter to Christopher Nádasdy. Neither parent’s plan was fulfilled. Other marriages were similarly planned. LENGYELOVÁ – VÁRKONYI, ref. 3, p. 81 and FUNDÁRKOVÁ, ref. 3, p. 1.
- 6 MAŤA, ref. 3, p. 605-606.
- 7 According to Ludvík of Perštejn, the chosen one did not have to be especially rich or beautiful, but pious and honourable. BŮZEK, Václav – HRDLIČKA, Josef – KRÁL, Pavel – VYBÍRAL, Zdeněk. *Věk urozených. Šlechta v českých zemích na prahu novověku. (Age of the noble. The nobility in the Czech Lands on the threshold of modern times)*. Prague; Litomyšl : Paseka, 2002, p. 307.
- 8 SCHUSTLER, Emilia. *Magyar társadalmi és családi élet 1570-1600-ig. (Social and family life in Hungary in the period 1570 - 1600.)*. Budapest : “Pátria” Irodalmi Vállalat és Nyomdai Résztvénytársaság, 1912, p. 34-35.

strategy of the aristocracy entirely changed after the Turks were driven out, and the Hungarian aristocrats began to spend more time in their Viennese palaces. The Hungarian and court aristocracies merged, and “foreign brides” became usual.<sup>9</sup>

The selection of a future bride began already in childhood. Even at christenings, the guests carefully observed the children, and the first suggestions for possible marriage agreements arose here. They became more real only when a girl had survived the first years of her life. The day before the christening of Erdődy's daughter, Ladislav Csáky described the child as follows: “*She also has a large black cataract in her eye. She looks like her father, she is his first work, it is not necessary to be surprised...*”<sup>10</sup>

The importance of appearance, especially for girls, is confirmed by a letter from Peter Révay, who clearly wanted to praise the appearance of his daughter to the community. He urged his wife Maria Forgách to let him know whether she is pretty or ugly. “*Indeed, it is a miracle to have a nice pretty girl and in spite of the fact that I still have not seen her, I have chosen Lazar Henkel as her godfather.*”<sup>11</sup> Although according to the general opinion, beauty played only a small role in the choice of a bride, parents and men noticed the outward appearance of future brides.<sup>12</sup>

A wedding consisted of a collection of ceremonies and customs connected with entry into marriage. The correspondence between aristocrats used various terms for it, including: Hungarian *menyegző*, *lakodalom*, *esküvő*, Latin *nuptiae* and German *Brautlauf* or *Hochzeit*. It is necessary to distinguish between them. The word *menyegző* appears in the 14th century, its Latin equivalent is *nuptiae*, and it mainly concerned the civil ceremony. At the end of the 16th century, this term was largely replaced by *lakodalom*, which originally meant ceremonial feasting.<sup>13</sup> In Early Modern times, it already designated a wedding combined with a church ceremony, which was usually preceded by a betrothal. The term *esküvő*, more frequently used in the 17th century, derived from the vows (*eskü*) taken by the bride and groom to confirm their marital commitment. The term *Hochzeit* originally meant a great festival, its older equivalent before the 15th – 16th century was *Brautlauf*. The wedding was also called by the terms *kézfogás*<sup>14</sup> (Lat. *desponsatio*,

9 KOLTAI, András. Cudzinky v úlohe manželiek uhorských veľmožov v 16. - 17. storočí. (Foreign women as wives of Hungarian aristocrats in the 16th – 17th century.) In LENGYELOVÁ, Tünde (ed.) *Žena a právo. Právne a spoločenské postavenie žien v minulosti*. Bratislava : AEP, 2004, p. 189 and KELLER, Katrin. *Hofdamen. Amtsträgerinnen im Wiener Hofstaat des 17. Jahrhunderts*. Wien : Böhlau Verlag, 2005, p. 57. For the demand for a bride from the domestic environment see the will of N. Esterházy: MOL, P 108, R 4, Végrendeletek és a végrehajtásukkal kapcsolatos iratok, mikrofilm č. 13988, Fasc. F., No. 50, Testament of Nicholas Esterházy, 14th August 1641, Šintava. On the marriage policies of the Pálffy's see: FUNDÁRKOVÁ, ref. 3, p. 1-13.

10 Slovak National Archive (hereinafter: SNA), Central archive of the Erdődy family, correspondence, carton 119 (hereinafter: c.), letter from Ladislav Csáky to Gabriel Erdődy, 26 February 1639. The context did not make clear exactly which Erdődy he is.

11 SNA, Joint archive of the Révay family, Correspondence, Various 1601-1642, c. 92, letter from Peter Révay to Maria Forgách, 5 September 1610, Holíč.

12 DÜLMEN, ref. 3, p. 140.

13 For example, SNA, Joint archive of the Révay family, letters addressed to Francis Révay, c. 78, letter from Elizabeth Czobor to Francis Révay, 24 September 1624, Bytča.

14 SNA, Joint archive of the Révay family, letters addressed to Francis Révay, c. 78, letter from George Révay to Francis Révay, 20 December 1622.

sponsalia) in today's meaning betrothal, *hazaadás* (Lat. *elocatio*) meaning the handing over of the bride by her parents, or *gyűrűváltás*<sup>15</sup> meaning exchange of rings.<sup>16</sup>

The Council of Trent and various Protestant synods increased church control over marriage ceremonies. Thanks to the reform, marriages could no longer be concluded secretly. To conclude a marriage, it was necessary to read out banns three times, and for the engaged couple to express their consent to the marriage in front of a parish priest in the presence of two or three witnesses. We have the first evidence from the Kingdom of Hungary of the new way of concluding marriage as prescribed by the Council of Trent only from the beginning of the 17th century.<sup>17</sup>

In the aristocratic environment we most frequently encounter wedding ceremonies, which integrated a church ceremony and a preceding betrothal. The betrothal and wedding were held on the same day at some aristocratic weddings. As an example, we can mention the wedding of Judith, daughter of the Palatine George Thurzo, with Andrew Jakussich in 1607. The church ceremony provided different variations, especially in terms of combinations of its parts: *copulatio* – joining, vows, exchange of rings and blessing of the marriage. For example, the betrothal of Peter Zrínsky in 1641 included only exchange of rings and vows. The church blessing happened only during the wedding.<sup>18</sup>

Marriage to a propertied aristocratic woman was one of the few ways many noblemen could improve their political and social position, but an unsuccessful marriage could weaken social positions. Therefore, aristocratic marriages were a key instrument in creating social contacts, not only within the Kingdom of Hungary, but also in relation to the Vienna Court.<sup>19</sup>

Nicholas Esterházy was an early 17th century aristocrat, who followed a real strategy in marriage policy. It is difficult to imagine that he would have gained the position of Palatine without his two advantageous marriages. His position and property in the Kingdom of Hungary did not make him a desirable match. His father Francis Esterházy was deputy sheriff of the County of Bratislava and he owned property in the same county, but it was not a very large property, and if it was divided between 13 children, it would be broken up into small fragments.<sup>20</sup> Apart from this, his father allegedly disinherited

---

15 SNA, Joint archive of the Révay family, letters addressed to Francis Révay, c. 78, letter from Elizabeth Czobor to Francis Révay, 7 May 1623, Šaštín.

16 SZABÓ, ref. 3, p. 1052-1055, 1075.

17 MÚCSKA, Vincent. Vývoj manželského práva na území Slovenska od najstarších čias do konca 20. storočia. (The development of marriage law in the territory of Slovakia from earliest times until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.). In ŠIŠMIŠ, Milan (ed.). *Príručka ku genealogickému výskumu na Slovensku a v slovakickálnom zahraničí*. Martin : Slovenská genealogicko-heraldická spoločnosť, 2004, p. 31.

18 SZABÓ, ref. 3, p. 1074-1076.

19 For more details on marriage strategies of the Czech nobility see: MAŤA, ref. 3, p. 605-640.

20 On the careers of Francis and Nicholas Esterházy, and the rise of their family see the most recent works: PÁLFFY, Géza. Pozsony megyéből a Magyar Királyság élére. Karrierlehetőségek a magyar arisztokráciában a 16-17. század fordulóján. Az Esterházy, a Pálffy és az Illésházy család felemelkedése. From the County of Bratislava to the head of the Kingdom of Hungary. The career possibilities for Hungarian aristocrats around 1600.). In *Századok*, 2009, 143. évfolyam, 4. szám, konkrétne p. 866-882 and PÁLFFY, Géza. Der Aufstieg der Familiae Esterházy in die ungarische Aristokratie. In GÜNTER, Wolfgang – KROPF, Rudolf (Hrsg.) *Die Familie Esterházy im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*. Wissenschaftliche Arbeiten aus dem Burgenland Band 128, 28. Schlinginger Gespräche. Eisenstadt, 2009, p. 13-46.

Nicholas after he converted to the Catholic faith. Nicholas did not have much chance to enrich himself, and could rely only on the contacts he had established during his service at the courts of Stephen Illésházy or Francis Magóchy, and on marrying well. He had the opportunity of an advantageous marriage only when he was aged 29. After the death of his first wife, he had to wait five years before he married for a second time. Neither of his marriages avoided scandal and slander from the side of the malicious or of political opponents, who pointed to the rapid rise of the fortune, which he gained by marriage.

The first wife of Nicholas Esterházy was Ursula Dersffy, widow of Francis Magóchy Captain of Upper Hungary, at whose court he had served as a familiaris.<sup>21</sup> He served Magóchy from 1608, but he may have come to his court much sooner.<sup>22</sup> Activity at Mukačevo in 1599 is recorded, but we do not know whether he was there on the authorization of Stephen Illésházy, or was already in Magóchy's service.<sup>23</sup>

News of Nicholas Esterházy's betrothal was considered scandalous at the time because Ursula's recently deceased husband was still not buried.<sup>24</sup> Apart from this, they allegedly shared a bed before their marriage.<sup>25</sup> The prefect of Magóchy's Transdanubian properties John Dankovich secretly informed the Palatine George Thurzo about the planned marriage at the beginning of February 1612. He wrote that the widow wanted to marry her servant Nicholas Esterházy, which, in his view, was unthinkable, because it would bring shame on the whole family. Therefore, Dankovich begged Thurzo to intervene by reprimanding the widow and threatening her. Allegedly, the monarch himself should prevent the marriage.<sup>26</sup>

Dankovich even proposed to the Palatine that Nicholas should be completely removed from proximity to Ursula, and not only because of the prepared marriage, but especially because of his behaviour at Mukačevo Castle. He stated very "inconspicuously" at the end of the letter, that Nicholas wanted to put his own man in the position of captain of the castle, and remove the existing captain Francis Dóczi.<sup>27</sup> A few days later, George

21 "...ad mensem November 18 Nuptia celebrabuntur Nicolai Eszterház, cum vidua quondam Francisci Magóchy..." Štátný archív v Bytči (hereinafter ŠABY), Orava composesorat, Diary of George Thurzo inv. no. 225/5 and OSZK, Kézirattár, Fol. Hung. 405, *Praenotationes ejusdem Comitís in Calendario Anni 1612*, fol. 22.

22 PÁLFFY, ref. 20, Pozsony megyéből, p. 873.

23 OSZK, Kézirattár, Fol. Hung. 2638, Levélmásolat gyűjtemény, A magyar asszonyok könyvtárának levélmásolat gyűjteménye. I. (1538-1599), fol. 454, Letter from Ursula Thurzo to Elizabeth Czobor, 29 April 1599.

24 Francis Magóchy died in November 1611. As a young childless widow with huge property, Ursula probably wanted to marry again as soon as possible. She may have feared property claims from the side of George Thurzo, who had already tried to obtain the lordship of Landsee from her mother Ursula Császár, or from Catharine Pálffy, who would have liked to see her wealth in the hands of the Pálffys. BERÉNYI, László. Három évtized nagytótüveg alatt. Esterházy Miklós fiatalsága. (Three centuries under the magnifying glass. The youth of Nicholas Esterházy.). In *Turul* 72, 1999, 1.-2. füzet, p.28. Catharine Pálffy was the daughter of Sophia Dersffy and Peter Pálffy, and so the cousin of Francis Dersffy, husband of Ursula Császár.

25 PÉTER, Katalin, *Esterházy Miklós. (Nicholas Esterházy)*. Budapest : GONDOLAT, 1985, p. 14.

26 MOL, P 108, R 12, Lánzsér várbirtokra vonatkozó iratok, microfilm no. 9378, Fasc. R, No. 700, 4 March 1612, Mukačevo.

27 MOL, P 123, Miklós nádor iratai (1622-1645), IV. Családi levelezés, microfilm no. 4695, letter from John



Thurzo wrote a letter to the widow observing that her husband was not even buried, and she already wanted to get married again to “*I don't know who*”. He asked her to reconsider this step and not bring shame and humiliation on herself and her late husband. At the same time, he added that if she was determined to get married, she had to come before him and defend her honour, otherwise she would “*feel the monarch's displeasure*”.<sup>28</sup> On the other side, Catharine Pálffy, widow of Stephen Illésházy, strove to persuade Nicholas to give up the marriage. She pointed mainly to the humiliation and shame such behaviour would bring to the family.<sup>29</sup>

The marriage of Nicholas and Ursula also provoked opposition in the ranks of the leading Protestant noblemen of the country, especially the Prince of Transylvania Gabriel Bethlen and Emmerich Thurzo, who later informed Nicholas that his son was illegitimate.<sup>30</sup> The state of the relationship between Ursula and Nicholas in December 1611 is not entirely clear. Perhaps to throw off the shadow of suspicion, Ursula complained in a letter addressed precisely to George Thurzo, about her position after the death of her husband, describing herself as a “*mourning and pitiful widow*”.<sup>31</sup>

Nicholas had three children with Ursula: the first-born son Stephen, a daughter Christina and a son, who died with his mother, when he was born on 15 March 1619 in Zvolen Castle.<sup>32</sup> Her funeral was prolonged, partly because of Bethlen's uprising, which was happening at the time. Her body had to be “*exhibited*” in Zvolen Castle for several months, and Nicholas complained several times in letters about having to delay the funeral of his wife again.<sup>33</sup> She was eventually buried at Trnava.<sup>34</sup>

After several years as a widower, Nicholas chose twenty year old Christina Nyáry, widow of Emmerich Thurzo, as his second wife.<sup>35</sup> This marriage was a well thought

---

Dankovich to George Thurzo, 6 February 1612, Mukačevo.

28 MOL, P 123, IV., microfilm no. 4695, Letter from George Thurzo to Ursula Dersffy, 13 February 1612, Bratislava.

29 ESTERHÁZY, János. *Az Esterházy család oldalágainak leírásához tartozó oklevéltár. (Archive documents from branches of the Esterházy family.)*. I. – IV. Budapest 1901, p. 250.

30 Bethlen accused him mainly of “*betraying the bed of his former lord*” by marrying Ursula and forcing her to convert to the Catholic faith. Instead of punishing him, the monarch made him court master, advisor and sheriff of the counties of Zvolen and Bereg, but this was connected with Nicholas' political orientation to Vienna. SZAKÁLY, Ferenc (Szerk.). *Szalárdi János Siralmas magyar krónikája. (The lamentable Hungarian Chronicle of János Szalárdi.)*. Budapest : Magyar Helikon, 1980, p. 108-109.

31 OSZK, Kézirattár, Fol. Hung. 2638. Levélmásolat gyűjtemény, A magyar asszonyok könyvtárának levélmásolat gyűjtemény II. (1600 – 1621), fol. 146, Letter from Ursula Dersffy to George Thurzo, 5 December 1611, Mukačevo.

32 Christina was born in 1617, but died soon after birth. SZALAY, Ferenc – SALAMON, Ferenc. *Gr. Esterházy Miklós nádor. (The Palatine Nicholas Esterházy.)*. I. Budapest 1863, p. 86-87 and BERÉNYI, ref. 18, p. 31.

33 MOL, Batthyány család körmendi levéltára, Missiles, microfilm no. 4808, letter from Nicholas Esterházy to Francis Batthyány, 21 November 1619, Lackenbach.

34 Esterházy Dániel családi feljegyzései 1653-ig. In ESTERHÁZY, ref. 29, p. 178.

35 On her first marriage see: HORVÁTH, Ágnes. Főnemesi özvegyasszonyok a 16. – 17. századi Magyarországon. In FÁBRI, Anna – VÁRKONYI, Gábor (Szerk.). *A nők világa: Művelődés-és társadalomtörténeti tanulmányok. (Aristocratic widows in 16th - 17th century Hungary.)*. Budapest : Argumentum, 2007, p. 261-263.

out move, with the help of which he could obtain parts of the Thurzo inheritance.<sup>36</sup> This second marriage of Nicholas did not occur entirely without scandals. The greatest opponent of the marriage was Christina's former mother-in-law Elizabeth Czobor.<sup>37</sup> Christina announced her betrothal to Nicholas on 20 April 1624.<sup>38</sup> According to Czobor, she had sworn several times, that she would not marry Esterházy. She had allegedly even accused him of forcible intrusion into her favour because of property.<sup>39</sup> News of the betrothal spread rapidly. A certain Eva Rajky wrote a shocked letter to Barbara Thurzo about the future wedding: *"I heard the very bad news, the marriage of Christina Nyáry and Nicholas Esterházy is spoken of with great certainty. He already sent her a gold chain, ring and bracelet as engagement presents"*.<sup>40</sup> For a long time, it was not known where the ceremony would be held, with three places mentioned as possibilities: Zvolen Castle, Sučany and according to Gabriel Esterházy Štubnianske Kúpeľe.<sup>41</sup>

Elizabeth Czobor had her objective reasons for opposing the marriage. On one side, she feared for the fate of her grand-daughters Elizabeth and Christina for whom she was caring. They were the only heirs to the Thurzo properties and the only children of her son Emmerich. After her husband's death, Christina entrusted them to the care of her mother-in-law, and officially renounced their upbringing, but her future marriage and the bridegroom's contacts with the Vienna Court, might threaten the position of Elizabeth Czobor.<sup>42</sup> Czobor also regarded the fact that Nicholas was a Catholic as a "negative" characteristic of the bridegroom. In an effort to advise the dissatisfied Elizabeth Czobor, Francis Perényi even recommended that she should turn to King Ferdinand II, and prevent Christina getting married until then.<sup>43</sup>

Elizabeth Czobor had her informers and knew about every step of the future married couple. The Palatine Stanislav Thurzo carefully watched the steps of Nicholas Esterházy, and informed Elizabeth about everything in detail. A certain Andrew Keczer in Vienna allegedly saw with his own eyes how Nicholas asked the monarch for tutorship of Christina's two children. Stanislav comforted Elizabeth with the view that this step

---

36 On the marriage see: SILÁGYI, Sándor. Az Esterházyak családi naplója. (Family diary of the Esterházy family.). In *Történelmi Tár* 1888, p. 210.

37 For further information on Elizabeth Czobor see: LENGYEL, Tünde. Az irástudatlantól a főispánig. Thurzo Györgyné, czoborszentmihályi Czobor Erzsébet. (From illiteracy to Chief Sheriff. Elizabeth Czobor, wife of George Thurzo.). In FÁBRI, Anna – VÁRKONYI, Gábor (Szerk.). *A nők világa...*, ref. 35, p. 139-159.

38 OSZK, Kézirattár, Fol. Hung. 2 638, 3. kötet, fol. 78, Letter from Christina Nyáry to Elizabeth Czobor, 20 April 1624, Kráľovský Chlmec.

39 OSZK, Kézirattár, Fol. Hung. 2 638, 3. kötet, fol. 79, Letter from Elizabeth Czobor to Francis Perényi, 30 May 1624, Lietava.

40 OSZK, Kézirattár, Fol. Hung. 2 638, 3. kötet, fol. 80, Letter from Eva Rajky to Barbara Thurzo, 22 April 1624, Kopčany.

41 Today Turčianske Teplice. OSZK, Kézirattár, Fol. Hung. 2 638, 3. kötet, fol. 94

42 Štátny archív v Bytči (State Archive in Bytča, hereinafter ŠA BY), Oravský komposesorát, Thurzo correspondence, c. 23, inv. no.738, Letter from Elizabeth Czobor to King Ferdinand II, 10 November 1624, Smolenice.

43 ŠABY, Oravský komposesorát, Thurzo correspondence, c. 26/2, inv. no. 821, Letter from Francis Perényi to Elizabeth Czobor, 4 May 1624, Sučany.

would not threaten her tutorship, but he stated that the marriage would not be delayed for long and would happen after Pentecost, around St. John's day (24 June).<sup>44</sup>

A few days later, Elizabeth Czobor informed the Palatine about a visit by Martin Révay and Michal Nedeczký, who came to her in the name of Nicholas Esterházy. Through his representatives, Nicholas asked Elizabeth to state her view on the marriage. According to Thurzo, she had to reply that she would respond after agreement with the tutors, but he also informed her that he could not give up organizing the wedding of her former daughter-in-law.<sup>45</sup>

Nicholas Esterházy came to Sučany in the night from 17 to 18 July 1624. Elizabeth Czobor informed the deputy sheriff of the County of Trenčín Andrew Justh about this: *"This afternoon they left for Trebostov, where they are waiting for the archbishop. Soon after your servant came to me, I received the letter from the Lord General [Nicholas Esterházy]. I have produced an exact copy for you and send it in a second letter."* The sender of the letter was probably the Emperor, who recalled Nicholas, so the wedding could not be delayed any longer. Nicholas wrote in his letter, that because of service to the country and obligations to the monarch he could not stay here any longer, and he had decided that there would have to be an ordinary wedding in Sučany on the next Sunday.<sup>46</sup>

The bride came to Sučany on 17 July at six o'clock in the evening, that is four days before the planned wedding. Nicholas was waiting for her there. He sent a retinue of 60 foot-soldiers and his chief familiares towards Ružomberok to meet her. Immediately after breakfast, the retinue set off from Ružomberok to go to Sučany, where the future bridegroom was impatiently awaiting them at the bridge with more men on foot and horses.<sup>47</sup> The wedding was held in the manorhouse at Sučany on 21 July 1624. The fears of Elizabeth Czobor regarding the future actions of Nicholas Esterházy eventually turned out to be justified. Thanks to his connections and use of the powers of the Palatine, he succeeded in forcing Elizabeth to hand the children over to their mother. In this way, he not only gained a share of the Thurzo inheritance, but was also able to include them in his marriage policies.<sup>48</sup>

Nicholas Esterházy planned the marriages of his descendants in accordance with his dynastic policy. Thanks to the rapid rise of the family in the aristocracy, they had a much

---

44 ŠABY, Oravský komposesorát, Thurzo correspondence, c. 31, inv. no. 899, Letter from Stanislav Thurzo to Elizabeth Czobor, 20 May 1624, Piešťanské kúpele.

45 According to Stanislav, it had to be held in Sučany, at Strečno Castle or in Žilina. However, he added that it was not possible to organize it immediately, because the castle had no wheat or barley. Since the hot weather would spoil the food, he proposed that it should be held in autumn, two weeks after St. Michael's day (29 September), when new bread, oats, hay and wine would be available. She proposed to Stanislav Thurzo that it should be held at Bytča, but he recommended Rajec. ŠABY, Oravský komposesorát, Thurzo correspondence, c. 31, inv. no. 899, Letter from Stanislav Thurzo to Elizabeth Czobor, 23 May 1624, Piešťanské kúpele.

46 ŠABY, Oravský komposesorát, Thurzo correspondence, c. 26/1, inv. no. 819, Letter from Christina Nyáry to Elizabeth Czobor, 18 July 1624, Sučany.

47 ŠABY, Oravský komposesorát, Thurzo correspondence, c. 27, inv. no. 874, Letter from Melichar Szentiványi to Elizabeth Czobor, 17 July 1624, Rozhanovce.

48 ŠABY, Oravský komposesorát, c. 23, inv. no. 738, Letters from Nicholas Esterházy to Elizabeth Czobor.

better starting point for their marriages than their father. He had nine children with Christina Nyáry: the sons: Ladislav, Michael, Paul and Francis, and daughters: Magdalena, Catharine, Anna Julia, Maria Christina and Maria.<sup>49</sup> Nicholas lived to see the weddings of only two of his children: his first-born Stephen with Christina's daughter from her first marriage Elizabeth Thurzo, and his daughter Anna Julia with Francis Nádasdy. His sons Ladislav, Paul, Francis and daughter Maria married only after their father died.

Nicholas knew that he might not live to see the weddings of all his children. Indeed, at the time of the birth of his youngest son Francis, Nicholas was already aged 58. In his will, he directed his sons with regard to the choice of their future brides. For example, he stated that if Ladislav so wanted, he could marry after the 22nd year of his life, naturally with the agreement of the family, but the bride had to originate from the Kingdom of Hungary.<sup>50</sup> Apart from this, he strove to select for his children, partners, who would help to strengthen the family's political and social position, and widen its contacts. He wanted to join them with the descendants of such important aristocrats as Adam Batthyány and Paul Nádasdy. By means of marriages, he strove to increase the ranks of members of the so-called Esterházyists – able young aristocrats, who later formed part of the political spectrum of the Hungarian elite.<sup>51</sup> Naturally, property matters also played an important role in the selection. Nicholas gave his son Stephen advice before his wedding on how to live a happy married life. He pointed especially to the difficulties of this state. The recipe for a good marriage had to be regular prayer, tolerance, but also the necessary pretence and honour only to the degree that it does not cause problems. According to Nicholas, it was not good to be *“either a servant or an unlimited master”* in marriage, and he considered a very dangerous stereotype, not only in feelings, but also in the excessive exercise of “bodily” love.<sup>52</sup>

As we mentioned above, the Palatine lived to see the weddings of two of his children: Stephen and Anna Julia. The year after he married Christina Nyáry, he wrote a will, in which he stated his wish for the future marriage of his nine-year-old son Stephen. He wanted Christina to “reserve” one of the daughters from her first marriage for him.<sup>53</sup> By this step, he wanted to ensure that the Thurzo inheritance would remain in the hands of the Esterházyists. The marriage of Stephen with Christina's daughter Elizabeth, was held on the afternoon of Sunday 26 September 1638 in Eisenstadt. *“Our son Stephen, with the permission of God and the Church, and according to our proposal and consent, and*

49 SZILÁGYI, ref. 36, p. 211-212.

50 MOL, P 108, R 4, Végrendeletek és a végrehajtásukkal kapcsolatos iratok, microfilm no. 13 988, Fasc. F., No. 50, Testament of Nicholas Esterházy, 14 August 1641, Šintava.

51 See also FEJES, Judit. Az Esterházyak házassági politikája 1645 után. (Marriage policy of the Esterházyists after 1645.). In PÉTER, Katalin (Szerk.). *Gyermek a kora újkori Magyarországon*. Budapest 1996, p. 123-124. Among them, we can mention, for example, Adam Batthyány or Nicholas Zrínsky, who called themselves “Esterházyists” as continuers of Nicholas' policy. Esterházy concentrated them as his families at his court in Eisenstadt, which can be regarded as the political centre of the Kingdom of Hungary in the periods between meetings of parliament. For more information on the Esterházyists see: PÉTER, ref. 25, p. 154-184.

52 MOL, R 60, microfilm no. 16 152, No. 4, Instructions from 1639, p. 5.

53 MOL, P 108, R 4, Végrendeletek, microfilm no. 13 988, E., No. 35, Testament from 14 March 1625, Nové Zámky. See also: FEJES, ref. 44, p. 125.

*the consent of the family became engaged to Elizabeth Thurzo..”* as Nicholas wrote on 4 August before the wedding in letters to Adam Batthyány and George Majthény. Not only representatives of important families, but also of counties and towns were invited to the wedding.<sup>54</sup>

Anna Julia had various suitors before her wedding, including Nicholas Zrínsky, Francis Nádasdy and even the Polish Prince Kazimír, who succeeded to the Polish throne after the death of his brother, as John II Kazimír Vasa. Francis Nádasdy was finally chosen as the bridegroom. The wedding was held at Eisenstadt in 1644.<sup>55</sup>

After the death of the Palatine, his children lived in different places. His sons and grand-daughter Ursula lived mainly in Forchtenstein Castle with Stephen Kolozsváry as their guardian. Ursula, whose dowry amounted to 300,000 Gulden, was constantly watched. The family could not afford to allow her to marry anybody other than a member of the family. As in the case of Stephen and Elizabeth Thurzo, it was a matter of keeping immense properties in the hands of the Esterházy.<sup>56</sup> Another daughter, Maria spent most of her time at the court of the Nádasdys, where she was taken by her sister Anna Julia. According to the will of her parents, she was supposed to become a nun. However, at the Nádasdy court, she became extraordinarily fond of dance and entertainment, so she refused to enter the Clarist Convent in Bratislava. Maria Magdalena Esterházy complained in a letter to her cousin Ladislav, that Maria was fonder of dance than of monastic life.<sup>57</sup> She had various suitors: Nicholas Zrínsky, George Drugeth and the Italian Prince Pallavicini sought her favour. Pallavicini had the support of the chief captain of Komárno Johann Christoph Puchheim. Paul Pálffy officially requested Maria’s hand for George Drugeth.<sup>58</sup> Nádasdy, who unambiguously supported Drugeth, urged the setting of a date for the wed-

---

54 MOL, P 1314, Battyány család körmendi levéltára, Missiles, microfilm no. 4808, letter no. 12503, Letter from Nicholas Esterházy to Adam Batthyány, 4 August 1638, Eisenstadt; SZERÉMI, György. Monumenta, emlékek a majthényi, kesselleőkeői és berencsi Majthényi bárók és urak családi levéltárából 1451-1728. (Memoirs from the family archive of the Majthényi Barons and Lords of Podhradie and Branč.). In *Történelmi Tár*, 1897, Letter from Nicholas Esterházy to George Majthényi, 4 August 1638, Eisenstadt, p. 134-135, and KINCSES, Katalin (ed.). *“Im küttem én orvosságot”*. *Lobkowitz Poppel Éva levelezése 1622 – 1640*. Budapest 1993, p. 192, Letter from George Erdődy to Eva Poppel, 4 October 1638, Monyorókerék a SNA, ÚA Erdődy, Correspondence, c. 120, Letter from Nicholas Esterházy to Gabriel Erdődy, 14 1638, Eisenstadt. RÁTH, Károly. Gróf Esterházy Miklós nádor levelei. In *Magyar Történelmi Tár*, VIII., 1859, p. 135.

55 FEJES, ref. 51, p. 124.

56 See also: FEJES, ref. 51, p. 137.

57 MOL, P 124, László gróf iratai, a) Családtagok hozzá intézett levelei, microfilm no. 4674, 1. csomó, Letter from Maria Magdalena to Ladislav Esterházy, 23 April 1651, Bratislava. Also FEJES, ref. 51, p. 142.

58 FEJES, ref. 51, p. 142-144. A bride was usually requested by a well-known personality, who was asked to do this by the bridegroom or his family. Thus Thomas Erdődy asked Peter Révay to ask if Barbara, elder daughter of the Palatine George Thurzo, could marry his son Christopher Erdődy. SNA, Joint archive of the Révay family, Correspondence, letters addressed to Peter Révay, c. 80, Letter from Thomas Erdődy to Peter Révay, 15 August 1611. Similarly, the Archbishop Peter Pázmány praised Ladislav Csáky to Eva Poppel and proposed him as a bridegroom for her daughter Magdaléna Batthány. IVÁNYI, Béla – FAZEKAS, István – KOLTAI, András. *Pázmány Peter és a Batthyányak. (Peter Pázmány and the Batthyánys.)*. Budapest : Szent István Társulat, 2008, p. 34-35, Letter from Peter Pázmány to Eva Poppel, 1 August 1628, Šafa. Their wedding was eventually held on 5 February 1629 in Rechnitz.

ding with constant visits to Eisenstadt, as Ladislav stated to Batthyány, “*they give her no peace, the way they fly around her*”.<sup>59</sup> Ladislav finally promised the hand of his sister to George Drugeth in 1651.<sup>60</sup> He wanted to keep the engagement secret for understandable reasons, even telling his brother not to mention it to the Archbishop of Esztergom.<sup>61</sup> The wedding was held at Šintava in summer 1652.

Ladislav’s marriage was planned by Nicholas Esterházy and Adam Batthyány around 1640. According to these plans, the sons of the Palatine would marry the Batthyány daughters.<sup>62</sup> After agreement between the two families, the future partner visited accompanied by family members. Ladislav went courting at Rechnitz in October 1649, accompanied by his brother Paul, to ask Adam Batthyány for the hand of his daughter Eleonora. At Rechnitz, the future partners immediately became engaged by holding hands and exchanging rings. After the agreement, the Esterházy retinue went with the Batthyáns to Schlaining, where they celebrated and danced for several days. Ladislav received a Turkish stallion from his future father-in-law, and so did his brother Paul. They clearly celebrated enthusiastically at Rechnitz, because when returning to Lackenbach in an intoxicated state, Ladislav fell off his horse and had to be taken in a carriage.<sup>63</sup>

During this courting visit to the Batthyáns, they attempted to bring Nicholas’ younger son Paul close to Barbara Batthyány. According to Paul’s memories, he rejected her with the justification that he preferred to devote himself to a career in the Church. According to Paul, the marriage of Paul Esterházy with his niece Ursula Esterházy was first proposed by Uncle Wolfgang with the justification that it was for the benefit of the whole family. He finally agreed to the marriage only after three weeks of constant persuasion and urging, but he literally stated that “*therefore he finally perpetrated the marriage*”.<sup>64</sup>

Nicholas not only directed the marriages in his own family. He also organized and supported the marriages of members of his court. Thanks to marriages, he created a whole spider’s web of relationships within his court and among the noble families of the counties, where his estates were situated. For example, several of his most faithful familiars married his nieces. Maria Salome and Elizabeth, daughters of Nicholas’ sister Sophia,

59 MOL, P 1314, Missiles, microfilm no. 4 807, Letters from Ladislav Esterházy to Adam Batthyány, letter no. 12 264, 16 February 1652, Pápa.

60 MOL, P 108, R 3, Fasc. B, year 1651, Fassio inter Comitem Ladislaum Esterházy et Comitem Georgium Drugeth de Homonna.

61 MOL, P 124, a), microfilm no. 4 674, 1. csomó, Letter from Daniel Esterházy to Ladislav Esterházy, 30 December 1641, Galanta. According to Paul it was a pompous wedding. MOL, P 125 Esterházy Pál iratai, IV. Vegyes iratok, microfilm no. 4 752, 701. csomó, családi krónikák, Pál nádor naplója, pag. 54. Also ESTERHÁZY, Pál. *Mars Hungaricus*. Zrínyi Könyvtár III, IVÁNYI, Emma (prepared for publication and translation), Budapest : Zrínyi Kiadó, 1989, p. 315.

62 MOL, P 1315, Batthyány család levéltára, Missiles, letter no. 12 551, Letter from Nicholas Esterházy to Adam Batthyány, 1 January 1641.

63 MOL, P 125 Esterházy Pál iratai, IV. Vegyes iratok, microfilm no. 4 752, 701. csomó, családi krónikák, Pál nádor naplója, pag. 49-51. Also: ESTERHÁZY, ref. 61, p. 313.

64 Mol, P 125 Esterházy Pál iratai, IV. Vegyes iratok, microfilm no. 4 752, 701. csomó, családi krónikák, Pál nádor naplója, pag. 60. Also: ESTERHÁZY, ref. 61, p. 313 and 315-316. When courting Anna Czobor, Stanislav Thurzo went with his parents, the Palatine Stanislav Thurzo and Anna Rozina Listhius. SNA, Combined archive of the Révay family, Letters addressed to Francis Révay, c. 78, Letter from Elizabeth Czobor to Francis Révay, 7 May 1623, Šaštín.

married Sigismund Eörsi and Daniel Pongrácz.<sup>65</sup> The wedding of Maria with Nicholas' court captain Eörsi was allegedly held on the same day as the wedding of Ladislav Révay with Elizabeth, namely 4 February 1630, although without the presence of Ladislav's father Martin Révay, who did not agree with the marriage, because the bridegroom was a Catholic.<sup>66</sup> Another niece named Elizabeth, who took over the upbringing of Ladislav after the death of her mother, became engaged in the same year to the chamberlain Daniel Pongrácz. The wedding was held on 9 November at Beckov.<sup>67</sup>

Nicholas also took care of the marriage of yet another niece named Elizabeth, the daughter of his brother Paul, to Stephen Héderváry.<sup>68</sup> He even decided to arrange the wedding celebrations himself, at his manorhouse in Lackenbach. According to Paul, the reason the wedding was organized by Nicholas and not by the father of the bride was the fact that she had largely grown up at the court of the palatine.<sup>69</sup>

He chose a really good match for his nephew Ladislav Révay, namely the daughter of the deceased state judge George Drugeth. It was clearly a step thought out in advance, because after Drugeth's death, his daughter Elizabeth was taken to the Esterházy court for up bringing. Esterházy was one of her chief guardians, together with Archbishop Peter Pázmány and immediately after the monarch. Gabriel Bethlen also claimed guardianship, but without success.<sup>70</sup> Already in 1628, Archbishop Pázmány complained to the monarch, that Nicholas Esterházy had already kept the child at his court for three years, and was determined to marry her to one of his relations. Therefore, he asked the monarch, as the chief guardian of orphans, to take the girl to the Imperial court, because of the merits of her father. However, the archbishop's protest achieved nothing, and Elizabeth Drugeth married Révay in 1630.<sup>71</sup>

Conclusion of an agreement between the bridegroom and "head of the family" about payment of the dowry was an important part of the preparations for a wedding. Its size varied between the individual daughters of Nicholas Esterházy. On the basis of his will, Maria had to receive a sum of 50,000 Gulden, which had to be paid in annual instalments over four years from the day of the wedding out of the revenue from the Lordship of Regéc. At the wedding, she had to receive 15 thousand Gulden, wedding clothes and

---

65 NAGY, Iván. *Magyarország nemes családai: (Noble families of Hungary): CD – R publication*. Budapest : Arcanum kft. without year, key-word "Révay". Maria Révay appears in 1652 as Sigismund's widow. BALOGH, Gyula – SZLUHA, Márton. *Vas vármegye nemes családjai*. Budapest : Heraldika kiadó, 1999, p. 53.

66 OSZK, Kézirattár, Fol. Hung. 950, Révay László (Revisnyeji Reviczky Alfréd ösének) naplója, fol. 31.

67 NAGY, ref. 65, key-word "Révay".

68 MOL, P 1314, microfilm no. 4 809, Missiles 1527 – 1700, 40. cím, Letter from Paul Esterházy to Adam Batthyány, 20 December 1632, Vienna.

69 MOL, P 1314, microfilm no. 4 809, Missiles 1527 – 1700, 40. cím, Letter from Paul Esterházy to Adam Batthyány, 20 December 1632, Vienna.

70 HANUY, Ferenc. *Pázmány Peter. Bibornok esztergomi érsek, Magyarország hercegprímása összegyűjtött levelei. (Peter Pázmány. Collected letters of the Cardinal and Primate of Hungary.)*. Vol. I (1601 – 1628). Budapest : Budapesti Kir. Magyar tudomány-egyetem tanácsa, 1910, p. 336, 22 April 1623 Trnava.

71 HANUY, ref. 70, p. 683, year 1628, 10 March, Bratislava, Letter from Peter Pázmány to King Ferdinand II.

jewellery. On her wedding day, Maria would gain control of property from her mother.<sup>72</sup> The marriage contract also included provisions for the bride or later wife in the event of the death of her husband. For example, George Drugeth made the commitment that if he died without children, Maria would have 50 thousand Gulden to provide her with housing and a carefree life. If they had children, the 50 thousand Gulden would also belong to her, but only until she remarried.<sup>73</sup> Anna Julia was granted a dowry of 60 thousand Gulden, as well as gold, silver and a sixth of her mother's property.<sup>74</sup> An inventory of gold and jewels belonging to Anna Julia was already produced in 1642, and a further complete catalogue of her valuables was produced shortly before her wedding in 1644. The inventories begin with various items of gold jewellery such as chains, rings and hats decorated with white pearls. These are followed by a catalogue of textile items including sheets, scarves, tablecloths, silk shirts, covers for pillows or cushions, coats and skirts. The last part comprises silver tableware such as plates, dishes, cups, cutlery, washbasin, saltcellar and finally first-aid kit with silver instruments.<sup>75</sup> The grand-daughter Ursula received an incomparably larger dowry reaching the astronomical sum of 300 thousand Gulden and other property.<sup>76</sup> The inventories of parts of her possessions include various items of clothing, jewellery and silverware.<sup>77</sup>

The father of the bride thought carefully about who to accept if his daughter had more than one suitor. Strengthening of social and political position was important as well as the property aspect. For example, in the case of the Esterházy family, this appeared in the case of Nicholas' youngest son Francis. Apart from him, Helena, daughter of Gabriel Illésházy, had other suitors, including Paul Batthyány and Paul Csáky. Although Gabriel stated that he would rather have Francis as his son-in-law, he set the condition that Paul Esterházy would have to give up in favour of his brother, the castle and lordship of Šintava, to which he was heir according to his father's will.<sup>78</sup> The brothers eventually reached agreement in the interest of achieving the marriage, and the wedding was held on 7 February 1661.<sup>79</sup> Future in-laws regarded some degree of effort by the bridegroom as a good move. Such tactics were applied by Adam Batthány, who used especially the bad state of health of his daughter Eleonora to delay her marriage with Ladislav Esterházy.<sup>80</sup>

Even after engagement, it was not always certain that the wedding would finally happen. After a year of engagement, Christina, daughter of Adam Czobor, deserted Adam son of Stephen Zichy. Stephen complained to Emmerich Erdődy that the girl and her

72 MOL, P 108, R 4, Végrendeletek és a végrehajtásukkal kapcsolatos iratok, microfilm no. 13 988, Fasc. F., No. 50, Testament of Nicholas Esterházy, 14 August 1641, Šintava.

73 MOL, R 7, microfilm no. 14 004, Fasc. D, No. 50, Contractus inter Com. Ladislav Esterházy et Georgius Homonnai.

74 MOL, R 7, microfilm no. 14 004, Fasc. C, No. 35.

75 MOL, R 7, microfilm no. 14 004, 35. cs., 3. cím, Fasc. C, No. 27 and No. 28.

76 MOL, P 124, microfilm no. 4 674, 2. köteg, No. 156, Letter from Wolfgang Esterházy to Ladislav Esterházy, 13 December 1647, Bratislava.

77 SHUSTLER, ref. 8, p. 41.

78 MOL, P 125, I. Levelezés, No. 702, Letter from Wolfgang Esterházy to Paul Esterházy, 17 March 1659, Domanisz.

79 For further details see: FEJES, ref. 51, p. 157-160.

80 For more details see: Fejes, ref. 51, p. 157-160.



parents freely agreed to the marriage, his son courted her for a year and sent presents, which Christina accepted. He visited her in Holíč, and she wrote letters repeatedly stating her love for him. However, since the Papal dispensation from Rome was delayed and the wedding had to be postponed, Christina from her brother's wedding in Vienna, allegedly wanted to escape from this obligation. Adam naturally did not want to allow this.<sup>81</sup> The wedding did not happen in the end. Christina married Adam Kolonich, while Adam Zichy married Susana Forgách.<sup>82</sup>

The consent of both the bridegroom and the bride was necessary for the conclusion of a marriage. As we already mentioned, Ursula Esterházy was guarded in Forchtenstein and was watched almost constantly. Paul had to court her “*with nice words, flattery and presents*” to gain her agreement to the marriage. The marriage could be threatened by other interests, of which there was certainly no shortage because of the size of the dowry. Therefore, all the preparations happened in the greatest secrecy. As a result of their close family relationship, the future partners needed permission from the Pope, but they lacked the consent of the monarch Ferdinand III, who was not even asked. Ursula did not have the necessary age for getting married, since she was only 11. Francis Nádasdy attacked the legitimacy of the marriage in 1655, but by then the couple already had the monarch's consent.<sup>83</sup>

After agreement was reached between the heads of families, they decided the date of the wedding and the list of people to invite. Wedding invitations were usually sent by the “head of the family”, most frequently the bridegroom's father, and on the bride's side by her guardians – father, widowed mother, siblings, male relations. Weddings lasted several days. The celebrations always began at the bride's home, where they usually stayed for three days. Then the guests moved to the bridegroom's home. The two sides wrote their invitations separately, each inviting people to their own celebrations. Generally about 100-120 invitations were sent.<sup>84</sup> About a month before the wedding, announcements of the wedding were sent to other important people, town and county authorities and so on. Familiares distributed these to their recipients.<sup>85</sup> However, in unsettled times, they

---

81 SNA, Central archive of the Erdődy family, c. 119, Letter from Stephen Zichy to Emmerich Erdődy, 7 September 1687, Kopčany (Kittsee).

82 NAGY, ref. 65, key-words: “Nagy”, “Zichy” and “Erdődy”.

83 MOL, P 124, Letter from Francis Esterházy to Ladislav Esterházy, 1651, Forchtenstein, letter no. 187, microfilm no. 4 674. FEJES, ref. 44, p. 156. As a result of the young age of the bride, the marriage was consummated only after three years.

84 SZABÓ, ref. 3, p. 1033.

85 For example, Paul Esterházy sent such a letter to invite Adam Batthány to the wedding of his daughter Elizabeth with Stephen Hederváry. The wedding was planned for 30 January, and the invitation was sent on 20 December. Wolfgang Esterházy invited Adam Batthány to the wedding of his sister Judith with John Amade nephew of Nicholas Esterházy. The invitation was sent on 16 January 1642 and the wedding was held on 16 February in the lower manorhouse at Galanta. Eva Viczay widow of Paul Esterházy similarly invited Adam Batthány to the wedding of her daughter Sophia Esterházy with George Berényi. The invitations were also sent about a month in advance for the wedding of Gabriel Erdődy and Maria Pálffy. Ladislav Csáky received an invitation on 13 January and the wedding was held on 14 February 1636. After the death of Maria Pálffy, Gabriel Erdődy got married again to Judith Amade. This happened sometime after 1645, since in February 1645, Ladislav Csáky offered his daughter to Gabriel. It happened at a time when Gabriel's sister Elizabeth got married for a second time to Stephen Bánfi. MOL, P 1314, Batthyány

were reluctant to carry post to problematic or excessively distant regions. This naturally complicated the further preparation. Care over the delivery of invitations fell to relations and friends, who dealt with their further distribution. Thus, aristocrats sometimes learnt about a wedding immediately before the date or even later. Sometimes, announcements were sent only later.<sup>86</sup> For example, they had only a few days to prepare for the wedding of Elizabeth Révay and Martin Petróczi. According to Martin Révay, the Petróczi family insisted that the ceremony had to happen as soon as possible. The wedding was held on 23 February 1610. Martin Révay invited Peter Révay and family by letter only on 20 February 1610.<sup>87</sup> John Pálffy also invited Stephen Pálffy only 2-3 days before the wedding, but in this case, the short distance between their seats may have played a role.<sup>88</sup>

An invitation had a precisely determined composition: salutation and greetings, which usually states that the couple are getting married according to the law and the will of God, the name of the bridegroom and bride (if she was a widow then also the name of her late husband), the place and time of the wedding, invitation to the wedding, explanation of the invitation, promise to return favours in the future, good wishes, date and signature.<sup>89</sup> The justification for the invitation often stated that the host regarded the invited person as a close relation or friend of the family.<sup>90</sup> An invitation also included a supplement, according to which guests had to bring their own musicians. Some guests were really only invited because they had renown musicians at their courts.<sup>91</sup> Music and the associated dances were an important attraction for guests. Before a wedding, many aristocrats went to spas, so that they could treat any problems with their limbs and then be able to fully indulge in the celebrations. The Ban of Croatia and Slavonia Francis Batthá-

---

család körmendi levéltára, Missiles, microfilm no. 4 809, Missiles 1527 – 1700, 40. cím, Letter from Paul Esterházy to Adam Batthány, 20 December 1632, Vienna, and, Letter from Eva Viczay to Adam Batthány, 12 October 1650, Galanta; microfilm no. 4 806, Letter from Wolfgang Esterházy to Adam Batthány, 16 January 1642, Galanta; SNA, Central archive of the Erdődy family, Correspondence, c. 119, Letter from Ladislav Csáky to Gabriel Erdődy, 14 January 1636, St. Gotthard, SNA, Central archive of the Erdődy family, Correspondence, c. 119, Letter from Ladislav Csáky to Gabriel Erdődy, 6 February 1645, St. Gotthard.

- 86 The invitations to the wedding of Stanislav Thurzo and Anna Czobor were sent about 20 days before the wedding on 28 May 1623. Elizabeth Czobor invited Francis Révay to the wedding only on 7 May. SNA, Joint archive of the Révay family, letters addressed to Francis Révay, c. 78, Letter from Elizabeth Czobor to Francis Révay, 7 May 1623, Šaštín. The wedding was held in the manorhouse at Šaštín and Francis was invited to it already in the morning.
- 87 SNA, Joint archive of the Révay family, Correspondence, letters addressed to Peter Révay, c. 80, Letter from Martin Révay to Peter Révay, 20 February, Trebostovo.
- 88 He sent the invitation on 12 January and the wedding was held on Sunday 14 January. JEDLICSKA, Pál. *Eredeti részletek gróf Pálffy család okmánytárához 1401 – 1653, a gróf Pálffyak életrajzi adatai. (Original parts of the Pálffy family archive, 1401 - 1653, biographical data on the Pálffys.)*. Budapest : Stephaneum Nyomda R.T., 1910, p. 94, Letter from John Pálffy to Stephen Pálffy, 12 January 1632, Suchá nad Parnou.
- 89 SZABÓ, ref. 3, p. 1041.
- 90 SNA, Joint archive of the Révay family, letters addressed to Francis Révay, c. 78, Letter from Elizabeth Czobor to Francis Révay, 24 September 1624, Bytča.
- 91 Hárích, János. Az Esterházak udvari és tábori trombitásai. (The court and military trumpeters of the Esterházys.). In *Muzsika*, 1929, 4. sz. p. 59; TAKÁTS, Sándor. *Régi magyarország jókedve. (Merrymaking in old Hungary.)*. Budapest : Osiris Kiadó, 2002, 118-119.

ny was confined to bed in 1562 because of health complications, but he still went to the wedding of a daughter from the Mérey family.<sup>92</sup> He complained that he would have given 200 Gulden to be able to dance with the bride.<sup>93</sup> At the wedding of Nicholas Esterházy's son Ladislav and Eleonora Batthány at Rechnitz, Ladislav Csáky did not dance, but for other reasons: Allegedly "*his legs did not want to dance*" because of grief.<sup>94</sup>

Invitations to a wedding had an important representative role. The presence of the highest ranks of society contributed to the honour and seriousness of a marriage.<sup>95</sup> Invitation to a wedding often had a strongly political aspect, and participation was definitely expected. Aristocrats, who could not attend, usually sent letters of apology, stating that for serious reasons, they could not attend the wedding. This was also why the conclusion of letters contained requests from the organizers of weddings that participation should be confirmed. For example, Elizabeth Czobor asked Francis Révay to do this.<sup>96</sup>

As a result of the duties connected with the post of Palatine, Nicholas Esterházy often had to excuse himself from these pleasant duties. He wrote the following to apologize for not attending the wedding of Maria Drugeth: "*I very much wish that this country [Hungary] was in such a state, that I could leave my duties for a few days and come to your daughter's wedding, but, at least, I will send my familiaris John Kéri to represent me at the wedding*".<sup>97</sup> Failure to participate without an apology was regarded as a personal insult.

The Palatine George Thurzo became angry with the Archbishop of Esztergom Francis Forgách, probably because the archbishop had not attended the wedding of Thurzo's daughter Judith with Andrew Jakusich. The archbishop replied to the palatine: "*I received your letter with great pain in my heart. I see from it that you still want to persecute me*".<sup>98</sup> Immediately after the wedding, he wrote a letter to the palatine, in which he stated that he did not consider it important to explain in detail why he did not come to the wedding of Thurzo's daughter.<sup>99</sup> Forgách probably realized the results of his unconsidered behaviour only later.

---

92 Probably of the Vice-Palatine and Royal Governor Michael Mérey.

93 TAKÁTS, Sándor. *Művelődéstörténeti tanulmányok a XVI. – XVII. századból. (Cultural historical studies from the 16th - 17th centuries.)*. Budapest : Gondolat Kiadó, 1961, p. 321.

94 SNA, Central archive of the Erdődy family, Correspondence, c. 119, Letter from Ladislav Csáky to Gabriel Erdődy, 31 January 1650, "... *mindniáltan az Rohonci lakodalomban hirdetődtünk össze...*".

95 SZABÓ, ref. 3, p. 1035.

96 Elizabeth Czobor was arranging the marriage of her daughter Anna Thurzo to John Szunyogh. The wedding was going to be held on 23 October 1624 in Bytča Castle. SNA, Joint archive of the Révay family, letters addressed to Francis Révay, c. 78, Letter from Elizabeth Czobor to Francis Révay, 24 September 1624, Bytča.

97 MOL, E 200, 13. tétel, Drugeth család iratai, Missiles, Letter from Nicholas Esterházy to Maria Drugeth, 25 May 1627, Eisenstadt.

98 MOL, E 196 Archivum familiae Thurzó, 17 d., 81 fasc., Correspondence of George Thurzo with the archbishops of Vienna, Esztergom and Kalocsa, Letter from Francis Forgách to George Thurzo, 13 February 1608, Bratislava.

99 MOL, E 196 Archivum familiae Thurzó, 17 d., Correspondence of George Thurzo with the archbishops of Vienna, Esztergom and Kalocsa, Letter from Francis Forgách to George Thurzo, 18 November 1607, Skalica.

Guests were usually invited directly to a wedding for which the time period changed. Sometimes they celebrated from the morning, or they might start the day before the wedding.<sup>100</sup> For example, in the case of the wedding of Ladislav Csáky and Magdaléna Batthány, held at Rechnitz on 5 February 1629, Stephen Pálffy was invited to the village of Bozsok in the County of Vas on 4 February. The whole wedding assembly was going to travel from there to Rechnitz Castle.<sup>101</sup> The wedding of John Pálffy and Judith Amade had a similar course. Stephen Pálffy and his wife Susana Puchheim had to go to Suchá nad Parnou on Saturday 13 January for the evening, and on the Sunday, everybody would go together to Cífer.<sup>102</sup> A day later, Stephen Pálffy was already invited to another wedding, that of Adam Batthány with Aurora Formentini, which was held on 3 February 1632 in Vienna. He also had to be there a day early.<sup>103</sup> Sometimes weddings really accumulated.

After engagement, the future bridegroom had to address the bride in writing as "*mátka*" or "*édes húgom asszony*".<sup>104</sup> Men began to court their fiancés only after engagement, with various small presents and compliments in letters. Nicholas Esterházy himself often presented his chosen Christina mostly with gold and silver jewellery. He also prepared for her a splendid garden, in which he planted her favourite flowers and fruit trees.<sup>105</sup> His son Paul sent a diamond ring as the first present to his future bride Ursula Esterházy, and she sent a similar one to him. When visiting her at Forchtenstein, he gave her diamond earrings, a diamond ring, a red-gold coloured skirt, gilded ribbons and golden silk stockings.<sup>106</sup> Presents usually included sweets. Andrew Révay sent cane sugar to his fiancé Catharine Pálffy as a present.<sup>107</sup>

The period between betrothal and marriage varied, depending on the age of the couple, the size of the wedding and the time necessary to prepare it. In the first half of the 17th century, Esterházy weddings were almost always held on Sunday at 14.00, either in Eisenstadt or Lackenbach.<sup>108</sup> An exception was the marriage of Paul Esterházy with Ur-

100 For example, Francis Révay was invited to the wedding of George Fánčzy and Maria Dóczy already at 6.00 in the morning, then for lunch and only then for the ceremony and further celebrations. SNA, SA Révay, letters addressed to Francis Révay, c. 78, Letter from George Fánčzy to Francis Révay, 20 December 1622, Rohov.

101 JEDLICKSKA, ref. 88, p. 60, Letter from Ladislav Csáky to Stephen Pálffy, 28 November 1628, Adorján.

102 JEDLICKSKA, ref. 88, p. 94, Letter from John Pálffy to Stephen Pálffy, 12 January 1632, Suchá nad Parnou.

103 JEDLICKSKA, ref. 88, p. 94, Letter from Adam Batthány to Stephen Pálffy, 13 January 1632, Németujvár.

104 MOL, 4751. microfilm, P 125, 115, köteg, 11 703. szám, *Mihályfiam matkájának...* and MOL, P 123, IV. Letter from Nicholas Esterházy to Christina Nyáry, 29 May 1624, Eisenstadt.

105 "... although I did not know then who I was doing it for, I had a very nice garden made, in which superb roses and other flowers bloom..." Merényi, Lajos. Esterházy Miklós levelei Nyári Krisztinához 1624-1639. In *Történelmi Tár*, Első közlemény, 1900, p. 18, Letter from Nicholas Esterházy to Christina Nyáry, 29 May 1624, Eisenstadt

106 MOL, P 125, IV. Vegyes iratok, microfilm no. 4 752, 701. csomó, családi krónikák, Pál nádor naplója, pag. 60-61 and pag. 86. See also: ESTERHÁZY, ref. 61, p. 315 and 319.

107 JEDLICKSKA, ref. 88, p. 3, Letter from Andrew Révay to Catharine Pálffy, 10 July 1594.

108 For example, this applied in the cases of Nicholas' son Ladislav and Eleonora Batthány, Daniel Esterházy's daughter Maria Magdalena and Andrew Serényi, and Paul's daughter Elizabeth and Stephen Hederváry.

sula, which was held on 21 October 1652 between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, in the presence of three witnesses: Stephen Kolozsváry, George Kürtösy and Wolfgang Esterházy.<sup>109</sup> The custom of getting married on Sunday had its origins in the Middle Ages, but from the 15th century, we also find weddings happening on other days of the week.<sup>110</sup> Weddings, apart from so-called quiet weddings, were forbidden in Hungary on precisely determined days. A Church council at Trnava in 1611 prohibited the holding of weddings in the sacred periods from the first Sunday of Advent to the Epiphany and from Ash Wednesday to the first Sunday after Easter.<sup>111</sup> Weddings usually happened in the period of Carnival (from Epiphany to Shrove Tuesday), or in late autumn.<sup>112</sup> The Esterházy weddings followed these customs, and were most frequently held in February, June or November. Apart from this, according to Canon Law in Early Modern times, a marriage could not be concluded if the girl was younger than 12 or the boy was younger than 14.<sup>113</sup>

Organizing a wedding was not simple, but required demanding “logistics” and preparations. When preparing the wedding of his 14 year old sister Maria, Ladislav Esterházy regularly complained to Adam Batthány about how much work he had to do on the preparation and what “*wrangles, troubles and worries*” he had to deal with. Already less than two weeks remained before the wedding.<sup>114</sup> Mass purchasing of supplies, mostly done in Vienna, writing the guest list, distributing announcements and invitations, securing food, musicians and premises for the wedding required an increased effort. The preparations continued up to the last minute, and sometimes families were threatened with being shamed and humiliated before the guests because of absent or badly organized things.

“*I’m afraid you’re going to be ashamed*” wrote Wolfgang to his brother Ladislav on the occasion of his wedding. They were having problems with securing enough food for the large number of invited guests. There was a problem with finding horses for the

MOL, P 124, a), microfilm no. 4 674, 1. csomó, 181. szám, Letter from Daniel Esterházy to Ladislav Esterházy, 26 May 1652, Galanta and MOL, P 1 314, Batthány család körmendi levéltára, Missiles, microfilm no. 4 809, 40. cím, letter no. 12 693, Letter from Paul Esterházy to Adam Batthány, 20 December 1632.

109 MOL, P 124, a), microfilm no. 4 674, 1. csomó, Letter from Daniel Esterházy to Ladislav Esterházy, 30 December 1651, Galanta and FEJES, ref. 51, p. 155-156. Other aristocratic weddings were also held on Sundays, including those of Gabriel Illésházy and Eva Széchy (10 February 1641 at 10.00), Andrew Balassa and Helena Szunyoghová (19 February 1634) and Francis Keglevith and Elizabeth Erdódy (6 march 1639). JEDLICKSKA, ref. 88, p. 267-168, Letter from Maria Drugeth to Stephen Pálffy, 6 January 1641, Murán, p. 131, Letter from Barbara Ostrosith to Stephen Pálffy, Budatín, p. 218, Letter from John Draskovith to Stephen Pálffy, 4 February 1639, Klenovnik.

110 SZABÓ, ref. 3, p. 1045.

111 LUBY, Stephen. *Dejiny súkromného práva na Slovensku. (The history of private law in Slovakia)*. Bratislava : Iura Edition, 2002, p. 317.

112 KOHÚTOVÁ, Maria – ŠIŠMIŠ, Milan. Slovenské rodiny od 16. do začiatku 20. storočia. In ŠIŠMIŠ Milan (ed.). *Príručka ku genealogickému výskumu na Slovensku a v slovackákálnom zahraničí*. Martin : Slovenská genealogicko-heraldická spoločnosť, 2004, p. 47.

113 PÉTER, ref. 3, p. 57 and KOHÚTOVÁ – ŠIŠMIŠ, ref. 112, p. 46.

114 MOL, P 1314 Batthány család körmendi levéltára, Missiles, microfilm no. 4 807, Letters from Ladislav Esterházy to Adam Batthány, letter no 12 272, 16 April 1652, Eisenstadt.

bride's coach, which was an obligation of the bridegroom. They were even considering economizing and buying black horses, which Wolfgang did not like. The coachmen, equerries and armour-bearers did not have proper clothes, and they were short of dishes for the kitchen and the table. The banners, flags and coats of arms were not painted. They lacked ribbons to decorate the horses.<sup>115</sup> In the case of the wedding of Maria Esterházy and George Drugeth, many things were still lacking a few days before the wedding, and the question of cooks was unsolved. Ladislav did not want to get cooks from Vienna. Allegedly it was enough to have the butcher Francis, who had been the chief cook to the Archbishop of Esztergom, and had been trained at the Imperial court.<sup>116</sup> The condition of Šintava Castle as the location for the celebrations caused problems. The castle warden wrote that the interior of the castle lacked a window, a door, tables and chairs.<sup>117</sup> To decorate the rooms intended for the Emperor's representative, they had to use red and yellow carpets from Forchtenstein, but they had still not arrived.<sup>118</sup> The wedding was held on 28 April, and only on 17 April they succeeded in buying for 200 Gulden, six horses and new harnesses, but they were still looking for coachmen, since their own were not enough. They also had to be provided with appropriate clothes. The list of invited guests was also checked at the last minute. Even a few days before the wedding, they lacked mattresses and quilts for the guests to sleep on.<sup>119</sup>

The shopping for the wedding of Anna Julia was done in Vienna under the supervision of the Palatine's secretary John Korbelius.<sup>120</sup> George Illésházy was best-man at the wedding. The Archbishop of Esztergom George Lippay and the Ambassador of the King of Poland Adam Kazanowski were also present. After the wedding, Nádasdy took the bride to Keresztúr, where the entertainment continued in the presence of other aristocrats.<sup>121</sup>

Apart from fine music, a wedding also included hospitality. For a great number of guests, it was necessary to obtain help in the kitchen. For the wedding of Anna Julia with Francis Nádasdy, Nicholas Esterházy hired the chief cook of the Archbishop of Esztergom, and various cooks from Trnava and other towns.<sup>122</sup> Nicholas' court did not have enough cooks to satisfy a large number of people.<sup>123</sup>

---

115 MOL, P 124, a), microfilm no. 4 674, 161. szám, Letter from Wolfgang Esterházy to Ladislav Esterházy, 9 January 1650, Forchtenstein.

116 MOL, P 124, a), microfilm no. 4 674, 174. szám, Letter from Wolfgang Esterházy to Ladislav Esterházy, 28 February 1652, Eisenstadt.

117 MOL, P 124, a), microfilm no. 4 674, 178. szám, Letter from Wolfgang Esterházy to Ladislav Esterházy, 8 March 1652, Eisenstadt.

118 MOL, P 124, a), microfilm no. 4 674, 180. szám, Letter from Wolfgang Esterházy to Ladislav Esterházy, 9 April 1652, Šintava.

119 MOL, P 124, a), microfilm no. 4 674, 181. szám, Letter from Wolfgang Esterházy to Ladislav Esterházy, 13 April 1652, Šintava.

120 MOL, P 123, III., microfilm no. 4 692, g) Csejte, Lietava, Extractus super erogatis fl. 1210, d.n.

121 MOL, P 125, IV. Végyes iratok, microfilm no. 4 752, 701. csomó, családi krónikák, Pál nádor naplója, pag. 30. See also ESTERHÁZY, ref. 61, p. 309-310.

122 MOL, P 123, III., microfilm no. 4 692, year 1643, no page numbers.

123 For more on the cooks at the court of N. Esterházy see DUCHOŇOVÁ, Diana. *Dvor palatína Mikuláša Esterháziho v prvej polovici 17. storočia. (The court of the Palatine Nicholas Esterházy in the first half of*

Purchase of clothes for the participants was also an important task. The bridegroom usually wore a white coat, one tailored in the Hungarian style and the other in the German way, a Hungarian scarlet mentieka (coat), trousers and dolomán. Naturally, various clothes were always prepared for the wedding ceremony. Even the servants received new clothes, intended to demonstrate the importance of the moment. They had two white coats, one of Hungarian and the other of German design.<sup>124</sup>

A wedding required changes to the buildings where it was going to be held. For example Šintava Castle was too small for such purposes. Both the guests and the lord of the castle had to adapt to the situation. Ladislav was forced to give up his rooms in a bastion to the Emperor's representatives. To prepare a wedding celebration on the appropriate level, they had to remove several walls and join rooms together.<sup>125</sup>

A wedding ceremony included celebratory salvos from guns and mortars. At Šintava Castle, they were afraid to fire canons because of the weak walls of the castle bastion, so they had to rearrange them. Firing in such confined spaces often had consequences and guests did not escape some small unspecified injuries.<sup>126</sup>

Various aspects of the organization of the wedding of Ladislav Esterházy and Eleonóra Batthány are discussed in the correspondence between Ladislav and his future father-in-law.<sup>127</sup> The letters mention people responsible for securing all the things connected with the wedding, service and carrying of food, pouring of wine. They state what food should be offered at individual tables. Selected Spanish and Italian wines were also prepared. According to the proposal, the ceremonial table had to bear various types of fish, marine delicacies such as octopus and oysters, as well as pheasant.<sup>128</sup> The celebrations would start at Rechnitz and after three days they would move to Eisenstadt. Ladislav was afraid that the guests would not stay for three days, so he suggested to Adam that on the Monday, a wedding should be organized for two marriageable court ladies, in the hope that it would keep the guests present.<sup>129</sup> *“The wedding was splendid. The celebrations at Rechnitz lasted three days, from there we moved to Lackenbach, where the entertainment continued for another three days in the presence of many representatives of the leading Estates. I was the best-man and my sister Maria was the bridesmaid. On the second day*

---

*the 17th century.*) Bratislava 2010 (dissertation), p. 146-147.

124 MOL, P 125, III. Pénzügyi és gazdasági iratok, Leltárak és összeírások Pál nádor levéltáráról, képtáráról, ékszereiről, berendezési tárgyairól s idegenek ingóságairól (1652 – 1705), microfilm no. 4 751, 115. köteg, 11704. szám.

125 MOL, P 124, a), microfilm no. 4 674, 1. csomó, 181. szám, Letter from Wolfgang Esterházy to Ladislav Esterházy, 13 April 1652, Šintava.

126 MOL, P 124, a), microfilm no. 4 674, 1. csomó, 181. szám, Letter from Wolfgang Esterházy to Ladislav Esterházy, 13 April 1652, Šintava.

127 KOLTAI, András. Egy főúri lakodalom előkészületei (Esterházy László és Batthány Eleonóra menyegzője Rohoncon 1650-ben). (Preparations for an aristocratic wedding (The marriage of Ladislav Esterházy and Eleonóra Batthány in 1650 at Rechnitz)). In *Lymbus: Magyarságtudományi Forrásközlemények*, 2003, p. 117-135.

128 KOLTAI, ref. 127, p. 119-120, proposals for wedding food, December 1649; p. 121-122, proposals for a wedding banquet, January 1650; p. 123-128, proposals for assigning duties to familiares and servants, January 1650, p. 123-128.

129 KOLTAI, ref. 127, p. 131-132, Letter from Ladislav Esterházy to Adam Batthány, 1 February 1650, Eisenstadt, p. 131-132.

*they welcomed us at Sopron by firing cannons. At Eisenstadt, the celebrations continued for another three days*", as Paul wrote in his diary concerning this wedding.<sup>130</sup>

**Data on the Esterházy marriages mentioned in the study**

Names	Dates of weddings	Ages of bridegrooms and brides	
Mikuláš Esterházy (1583 – 1645)	22.11.1612	29	24
1. Uršula Dersffy (?1588 – 1619)	21.07.1624	41	20
2. Kristína Nyáry (1604 – 1621)			
Štefan Esterházy (1616 – 1641)	26.09.1638	22	17
Alžbeta Thurzová (1621 – 1642)			
Ladislav Esterházy (1626 – 1652)	06.02.1650	24	17
Eleonóra Batthyány (1633 – 1654)			
Pavol Esterházy (1635 – 1713)	07.02.1652	17	11
1. Uršula Esterházy (1641 – 1682)	09.08.1682	47	23
2. Eva Thököly (1659 – 1716)			
František Esterházy (1641 – 1683)	07.02.1661	20	15
1. Helena Illésházy (1646 – 1669)	15.11.1670	29	15
2. Katarína Thököly (1655 – 1701)			
Anna Júlia Esterházy (1630 – 1669)	06.02.1644	22	14
František Nádasdy (1622 – 1671)			
Mária Esterházy (1638 – 1684)	28.04.1652	19	14
Juraj Drugeth de Homonna (1633 – 1661)			
Alžbeta Esterházy (1616 – 1668)	30.01.1634	?	18
Štefan Hederváry (?)			
Judita Esterházy (1620 – ?)	16.02.1643	33	23
Ján Amade (1610 – 1656)			
Žofia Esterházy (1633 – 1688)	08.12.1650	49	17
Juraj Berényi (1601 – 1677)			
Mária Magdaléna Esterházy (1633 – 1672)	30.06.1652	?	19
Andrej Serényi (? – 1679)			

A wedding was not cheap even in the past. This applied even more for members of the aristocracy, who were among the most important people in the Kingdom of Hungary.

130 MOL, P 125, IV. Vegyes iratok, microfilm no. 4 752, 701. csomó, családi krónikák, Pál nádor naplója, pag. 54-55. See also: ESTERHÁZY, ref. 61, p. 314. The best-man (družba) was usually a single young man. In the wedding procession, he sat in the bridegroom's coach. He took the bridegroom's gift to the bride on a horse. His roles included delivery of the bridegroom's present. On the second day of the wedding, he cut the garland with a sword, by which he symbolically handed over the bride to the bridegroom. Bridesmaids (družičky) were chosen from the bride's relations. Radvánsky, ref. 3, p. 359 and LENGYÉLOVÁ – VÁRKONYI, ref. 3, p. 97.



In the case of the marriage of Paul and Ursula, the expense was even larger, since it was necessary to get permission from the Pope because they were close relations. As a result, the accounts include 300 Gulden spent on a journey to Rome, and 1 500 Gulden for wine as a bribe for the Papal Curia.<sup>131</sup>

The Palatine Paul Esterházy spent 84 thousand Gulden on the joint wedding of his two sons Michael and Gabriel on 24 May 1694 in Vienna.<sup>132</sup> However, these expenses were unavoidable from the point of view of representation and demonstration of the status of a Prince and Palatine of the Kingdom of Hungary.

The Esterházy succeeded in maintaining their economic and political position through the whole of the 17th century, in spite of the unfavourable events after the death of Palatine Nicholas Esterházy in 1645 and the death of four young members of the family in the Battle of Vozokany. By marrying Ursula Dersffy, Nicholas Esterházy rose very rapidly in the political élite of Hungary, and his second marriage further increased his property. He did not have an easy position as a "homo novus", but his marriage policy succeeded in securing and maintaining the wealth his family had acquired. On one side, there is a clear effort to keep the Thurzo inheritance by means of the marriage between his son Stephen and his step-daughter Elizabeth Thurzo, while on the other, the Esterházy defended their position as a leading aristocratic family with marriages between Nicholas' other children and members of other important aristocratic families. Their success was confirmed by the choice of Nicholas' son Paul as Palatine in 1681.

\* The article originated in the framework of the grant VEGA no. 2/0048/09 with the title *Intellectual elites on the transition between the Medieval and Modern periods*.

„WIR ERWARTEN SIE MIT FREUDE AN DIESEM FESTLICHEN TAG...“  
HOCHZEIT ALS WICHTIGER BESTANDTEIL DER FAMILIÄREN FESTIVITÄTEN  
ESTERHÁZY-GESCHLECHTS IN DER ERSTEN HÄLFTE DES 17. JAHRHUNDERTS

DIANA DUCHOŇOVÁ

Die Studie befasst sich mit den familiären Festivitäten eines der bedeutendsten Geschlechter der frühen Neuzeit in Ungarn, des Esterházy-Geschlechts, wobei das Ritual des Hochzeitsverlaufs auch mit Hilfe von Beispielen aus anderen aristokratischen Familien rekonstruiert wurde. Aristokratische Hochzeiten gehörten zu den wichtigsten Instrumenten der Geschlechterpolitik und wurden zum Potential eines eventuellen Machtanstiegs. Der große Hochzeitsstrategie der ersten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts war der Palatin Nikolaus Esterházy. Durch seine Heirat mit Ursula Dersffy fing sein rascher Aufstieg zur politischen Elite Ungarns und durch seine zweite Heirat vergrößerten sich seine Besitzungen. Als „homo novus“ hatte er unter der Aristokratie keine einfache

---

131 MOL, P 108, R 3, 19. csomó, 1. cím, Fasc. A, No. 13.

132 MOL, P 125, IV. Vegyes iratok, microfilm no. 4 751, 52. csomó, Inventories and lists of valuables, furniture, pictures and archives, 115. köteg, 11 703. szám, list from 23 May 1694.

Position, er sicherte für sein Geschlecht den erworbenen Reichtum durch seine Heiratspolitik. Sein Bemühen, die Thurzo-Erbschaft durch die Heirat seines Sohnes Stephan mit der Stieftochter Elisabeth Thurzo zu erhalten, war erkennbar; auch durch die Vermählung anderer Kinder mit den Nachkommen wichtiger Aristokraten, behielten Esterházy, trotz ungünstiger Umstände, ihre wirtschaftliche und politische Position während des gesamten 17. Jahrhunderts, was auch die Wahl des Sohnes von Nikolaus Paul zum Palatin im Jahr 1681 bestätigte.

Mgr. Diana Duchoňová, PhD.

Historický ústav SAV, Klemensova 19, 813 64 Bratislava, [histdidi@savba.sk](mailto:histdidi@savba.sk)

## NEPOTISM IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE COUNTY OF LIPTOV IN THE 18TH CENTURY

TOMÁŠ JANURA

JANURA, Tomáš. Nepotism in the administration of the County of Liptov in the 18th century. *Historický časopis*, 2012, 60, Supplement, pp. 43-66, Bratislava.

The study presents the results of a new form of research on the official elites in the counties at the time of great changes in the role of county administrations in the 18th century. Evidence of the process of building nepotism comes from uncovering the family backgrounds of members of the Liptov official elite on the basis of registers and genealogical tables. Thus, the study adds a new dimension to the, at first sight, uninteresting lists of members of the county administration. There was a dense network of blood and “spiritual” kinship ties in the background of the selection of elected officials. They started with the richest and most influential Liptov families: Okolicsány and Szent-Ivány, members of which were elected to the position of deputy sheriff. Both families relied on help from the sheriff from the Illésházy family, who appointed officials if one died or suddenly resigned from his position.

County. 18th century. Relations. Deputy sheriff. Sheriff. Nobility.

Previous expert works by archivists and historians, who mapped the field of the history of county administration, gave hardly any attention to questions connected with the family relationships of officials. In such texts, the human dimension of the running of public affairs is entirely lost. When researching an extensive network of inter-connections, it is not only necessary to investigate blood relationships, but also “spiritual” connections created by Church actions, including witnesses at weddings and godparents. “Spiritual” relationships had more importance than today. Godparents had the obligation to care for godchildren if their parents died. Office-holding families chose a deputy sheriff or a member of his family as a godparent for their children. Influential godfathers ensured that once a godson reached an appropriate age, he got a position in the county offices. He also did not forget the nearest male relations of his godsons. The basic condition for such research was the existence of detailed genealogical tables and the preservation of church registers, supplementing genealogical research with previously overlooked data about “spiritual” relationships.

Slovak experts generally consider that even in the 18th century, Hungarian counties were administrative bodies, which only defended the interests of the local nobility. Therefore, it is surprising that up to now none of them have attempted to demonstrate this view by studying the composition of their authorities. This would show a slightly different situation influenced by various factors. Influence on the selection and election of officials was exercised not only by the noble county families, but also by the chief sheriff, who had to follow and apply state interests. Religious confession, wealth of noble families and the size of the county were further factors.

The best conditions for the gradual formation of a network of related officials existed in smaller counties with few middle-level noblemen. In such counties, families and their branches had more chance of influencing the results of elections. Even in the case of the election of an unrelated official, they could widen their network of blood relationships by means of marriage. The network of these relationships was deliberately developed by means of regular deputy sheriffs, who relied on support from the chief sheriff. The latter significantly assisted the strengthening of nepotism because of his right to appoint officials. The ideal conditions for building a successful “family” official network existed in counties where the highest representatives were a hereditary chief sheriff and long-term regular deputy sheriffs.

The filling of magistracies in the counties of Hungary occurred within force-fields influenced by various family and property interests. Each county followed the unwritten rule that only a fraction of the families living in the county could gain posts in the public administration. This honour went only to family branches with a place among the middle nobility and the associated richer yeomanry. The proportion of administratively active families was around a third of all the families in the given county. For example, in the County of Baranya, 28 families got into the administration from a total of 108.<sup>1</sup>

In the Trans-Danubian counties, which had the largest property complexes in Hungary, the aristocratic owners of these complexes had the decisive influence on the composition of administrative bodies, already in the 16th and 17th centuries, although they did not participate themselves. They strove to assert their influence by means of their people in the election of regular deputy sheriffs, who could secure the successful course of the elections for the positions subordinate to them. In pursuit of their interests, aristocrats did not hesitate to place in counties members of families, which did not live or own property there. Such influence on the composition of the official apparatus could also be applied in counties that were wholly or partly in the hands of the Ottomans, and after their expulsion it was possible to create an entirely new structure of noble families on a green field.<sup>2</sup>

After fulfilling all these conditions, dignitaries with blood or “spiritual” relationships could gradually assert themselves among the magistrates. The generally recognized perception of the merits of ancestors and the heritability of their abilities opened better possibilities to the sons of previous officials. They strove to not only maintain the position of their fathers, but to gain more important positions if possible, and they often succeeded. This created space for family careers, which could end only with achievement of the post of deputy sheriff. After gaining this highest official post, some deputy sheriffs gained places in state institutions, and in exceptional cases, they penetrated into the ranks of the aristocracy.<sup>3</sup>

---

1 ODÓR, Imre. A “hivatali elit” Baranya vármegyében 1711 – 1813. (The „official elite“ in the County of Baranya 1711 - 1813). In *Levéltári szemle*, 1988, without year, no. 3, p. 25.

2 ODÓR, ref. 1, p. 24-29. TURBULY, Éva. Adatok a megyei közigazgatás és tisztikar történetéhez a Nyugat-Dunántúlon a 16. század második felében és 17. század elsőévtizedeiben. (Data on the history of the county administration and officials in Western Transdanubia in the second half of the 16th century and first decades of the 17th century). In *Levéltári szemle*, 1994, without year, no. 4, p. 28.

3 ODÓR, ref. 1, p. 27.

Public life in the counties gradually fell into the hands of narrow, exclusive groups of noble families. Official posts came to be monopolized by a group of people, who lived in the county town or its surroundings. The centres of local power contained their residences, which had to correspond in appearance to the rank of their owners. The closedness of the decisive political circles and the strength of the family interest groups were sealed by inter-marriage. New people in the administration were often people whose official entry into the Christian community was associated with a godparent from one of the local official elite families.<sup>4</sup>

In the County of Liptov, nepotism was consolidated under six regular deputy sheriffs, who had the clear advantage that the hereditary chief sheriff from the Illésházy family no longer held a lordship in the territory of the county. Therefore, when magistrates were elected, they did not have to confront competition from employees of the Illésházys. The formation of family relationships began in the period after the Peace of Szatmár, when new people gained important positions in almost all the counties of Hungary. These people were Catholic in religion and loyal supporters of the King. Re-Catholicization helped to strengthen the clientelist network in the counties with large numbers of Protestant noblemen, as was undoubtedly the situation in Liptov. The inter-connection between individual officials reached its peak in the reign of Maria Theresa. However, political and demographic development finally eliminated the clientelist “spider’s web” created over many years. Under Joseph II, members of the formerly influential Protestant official families began to return to the ranks of the magistrates. The declining interest of the middle nobility in the bureaucratized and professionalized post of regular deputy sheriff, which appeared in the 1790 elections, contributed to the break up of the network of relationships. The proportion of related officials returned to the level at the beginning of the 18th century.

As was already said, the central person with elected power was the regular deputy sheriff, who stood at the head of the local social pyramid. In each county, the families producing deputy sheriffs formed a very narrow group belonging to the richer part of the middle nobility. For all members of the noble community, a blood or “spiritual” relationship to a serving or former regular deputy sheriff became a question of prestige and possible social advancement. In some counties, including Pressburg (Bratislava) and Zala, the regional nobility could expect greater advantages for themselves and their descendents after the raising of deputy sheriffs into the ranks of the aristocracy or the holders of important state offices.<sup>5</sup>

The deputy sheriff’s place in the middle level of the Hungarian nobility became important political capital in the 18th century. The representatives of the richest part of the county nobility were the most important orienters of public opinion, not only among the local nobility, but also among the burghers. These noblemen had a place among the political leaders. They were the holders of elected county posts, decision makers and leaders in culture and life style. Each deputy sheriff was the chief political representative of his

---

4 ODÓR, ref. 1, p. 21.

5 TURBULY, Éva. Zala megye közigazgatása a XVIII. század első felében. (The administration of the County of Zala in the first half of the 18th century). In *Levéltári közlemények*, 1986, year 57, no. 2, p. 274.

district, in which he had great influence. He could protect other lower placed members of his network of clients from the local privileged group.<sup>6</sup>

On the basis of research into the officials of the County of Liptov, it is possible to widen the traditional definition of the family to a sort of “official county family”. In connection with some members of local government authorities, it is possible to speak of them as “family officials” of a regular deputy sheriff. These two terms relate precisely to the relationship between the regular deputy sheriff and his subordinates.

There was a large choice of noblemen to fill the county offices. In 1744, 2104 of them from 114 families lived in the County of Liptov, but only a fraction of them, from the ranks of the richer yeomanry and middle nobility, actually became county officials. In the period 1709 – 1786, 30 families or 26% of the total participated in the administration. Narrowing of choice assisted the gradual emergence of a hierarchy of a few families, which began to establish closer relations with the most influential: the Okolicsány and Szent-Ivány families. They strengthened multi-generational marriage bonds, created since the Middle Ages by members of individual families, which often had a common medieval ancestor.

The two dominant deputy sheriff branches of the Okolicsány and Szent-Ivány families were only part of these families. Both were original medieval Liptov families, which gained noble status in the 13th century, but in spite of this, during the 16th and 17th centuries, they did not have places among the Liptov elite, namely the Kubiny, Pallugyay and Pongrácz families. Up to the beginning of the 18th century, the Szent-Iványs were undoubtedly more important. In the course of the 17th century, they held the post of deputy sheriff three times, while the Okolicsánys only held it once. In the course of the 18th century, the Szent-Iványs were more important on the Liptov level, but the Okolicsánys achieved more on the level of the whole country. The power of these two family branches in the 18th century was not founded by two noblemen, one from each family as we would expect, but by one person: Ladislav Okolicsány.

### **The period of the regular deputy sheriff Ladislav Okolicsány (1712 – 1725)**

Ladislav Okolicsány actually became a regular deputy sheriff a year before the official elections in January 1712. This was when the aging deputy sheriff Wolfgang Szent-Ivány became seriously ill and could no longer effectively lead the magistrates. The list of four candidates produced by the chief sheriff in 1712 respected old customs. The ailing Szent-Ivány was given first place to show respect for this meritorious nobleman.

The other candidates proposed by the sheriff were selected so that the noble community would unanimously vote for Ladislav Okolicsány. To explain his success, it is not necessary only to look at his activity in the previous year, but also at his family back-ground. The assembled members of the Estates knew that his father was director of the Orava Compossessorat Lordship, one of the co-owners of which was the serving chief sheriff Nicholas Illésházy. He also counted on the sympathy of the Lutheran part of the noble community, because the wife of his favourite candidate Anna Maria Horváth-

---

6 PÁL MÁNY, Béla. Nógrad vármegye nemességének átrétegződése (1542 – 1848). (Stratification of the nobility in the County of Novohrad). In *Századok*, 1985, year 119, no. 1, p. 5.

Stansith came from an influential Lutheran family in Spiš. The other candidates were proposed so that if Okolicsány failed, the post would remain in the immediate family. The two other candidates were his brothers in law, the owner of the Lordship of Lednica in the County of Trenčín George Mattyassovszky and Andrew Pongrácz.<sup>7</sup>

A custom from the previous century of holding elections at intervals of one to three years was an obstacle to the rapid and effective creation of a network of related dignitaries. In the course of Ladislav Okolicsány's career as a deputy sheriff, up to seven elections were held. His three sons and five daughters represented important potential for planning advantageous marriages. The appointment of "family officials" was strongly facilitated by the relationships of his father and of his wife Anna Maria Horváth-Stansith, whose aunt Anna Horváth-Stansith was the mother, grand-mother, aunt, sister in law or mother in law of many men and women from various Liptov families. In the elections in January and December 1712, he gained 7 posts from a total of 17, that is 41%. More successful results reaching 50% were achieved in the next four elections up to 1718. In January 1718 and January 1719, he gained 10 posts from 18, that is 56%. The best result was achieved in January 1721, when he had 11 posts from 18, which meant 61%.<sup>8</sup>

After gaining office, Ladislav Okolicsány began to think about the question of his future successor, until his sons reached an appropriate age. At the same time, he wanted to strengthen his own and his family's position with the right choice. The most advantageous solution proved to be establishment of marital ties with the descendents of the deputy sheriff line of the Szent-Ivány family. The post of deputy sheriff had been passed down through four generations of this family since the 16th century. The former regular deputy sheriff Wolfgang Szent-Ivány represented the fifth generation. Therefore, Francis son of Wolfgang Szent-Ivány became Okolicsány's greatest protégé. The new deputy sheriff calculated that he could rely on the noble mentality, clinging to tradition. Noblemen started from the traditional conviction that sons of notable ancestors inherited their abilities.

The young Francis Szent-Ivány was probably already married, so he could not marry a daughter of the regular deputy sheriff. In spite of this, he developed his county career by getting himself elected to two functions – general treasurer and deputy notary – in January 1718. He served as treasurer for one year and as deputy notary until January 1721, when he was elected as acting deputy sheriff. With this election, he deprived the Lutherans of their traditional right to elect an acting deputy sheriff from the ranks of the Lutheran noblemen. A further defeat for the Lutherans occurred in the election of county representatives for the parliament summoned in 1722. Okolicsány used the dissatisfacti-

7 The Ministerstvo vnútra Slovenskej republiky (Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic, hereinafter MV SR), Štátny archív Bytča (State Archive at Bytča, hereinafter ŠABY), fund (hereinafter f.) Liptovská župa I. (County of Liptov I, hereinafter LŽ I), kongregačný protokol (assembly records, hereinafter KP) from 1710 – 1717, i. no. 21, p. 85. SZLUHA, Márton. *Liptó vármegye nemes családjai. (Noble families of the County of Liptov)*. Budapest : Heraldika Könyvkiadó, 2000, p. 403, 440, 591, 673.

8 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from the years 1710 – 1717, i. no. 21, p. 85-87, 223, 349-352, 433; KP from 1718 – 1726, i. no. 22, p. 6, 60, 141, 142; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 442, 634; NAGY, Iván. *Magyarország családjai Czimerekkel és nemzékrendi táblákkal V. (Hungarian families with coats of arms and geneological tables)*. [CD-ROM]. Budapest : Arcanum Adatbázis, 1993, Horváth család. (Gradeczi, Stansith †), table I.

on of the Catholic clergy with the fact that only one of the representatives was a Catholic. After protests from the clergy and the Lutherans, he decided that the second representative should come from a confessionally divided family. From various proposed candidates, he selected Szent-Ivány, who fulfilled the required conditions.<sup>9</sup>

In January 1721, Francis Szent-Ivány was replaced in the post of deputy notary of the county by his younger brother Michael, who served as deputy notary until September 1725. He was single, and this enabled the first family link between him and Clara Okolicsány in 1723. Her sister Maria Okolicsány married John Rakovszký junior, who became the reeve of the western district for the brief period of four months. The circle of “family officials” of the deputy sheriff was joined by Alexander Csemiczky, who married Theresa Szent-Ivány, sister of both sons in law of Ladislav Okolicsány. After the next elections in January 1721, he was elected reeve of the southern district and kept this position until September 1725.<sup>10</sup>

The beginning of the formation of a nepotistic official network was shown by the fact that Ladislav Okolicsány was the only regular deputy sheriff from the period up to 1786, who succeeded in controlling only six official posts through his relations during the whole of his period in office. The acting deputy sheriffs were: Stephen son of Adam Jóob, brother in law of Maria Luby, who was the sister of Magda Luby, whose brother in law Matthew Kiszely was brother in law of the father of the regular deputy sheriff; Michael Okolicsány, husband of Sophia Pongrácz, sister in law of Catherine Okolicsány, who was sister of the regular deputy sheriff; Gaspar Kubiny, son of Susana Zmesskal, sister in law of Eva Horváth-Stansith, who was cousin of the wife of the regular deputy sheriff; and Francis Szent-Ivány. The notary for the whole period was Stephen Andaházy, son in law of Susana Okolicsány, aunt of Ladislav Okolicsány. The position of deputy notary was held by the following relations of the regular deputy sheriff: Balthazar Pallugyay – cousin of the wife of John Thuranszky grand-son of Anna Horváth-Stansith, who was aunt of the deputy sheriff’s wife; Matthew Potthornyay – husband of the daughter of George Horváth-Stansith, who was brother of the deputy sheriff’s father in law; and finally the brothers Francis and Michael Szent-Ivány.<sup>11</sup>

The deputy sheriff had his position secured in three of the four districts. In the southern district, the reeve was his “spiritual” relation Andrew Rády, whose sons were his god-

- 
- 9 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1718 – 1726, i. no. 22, p. 6, 60, 141, 226-239; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 442, 443, 673. The published genealogical tables show that Francis Szent-Ivány married Rosalia Okolicsány. Their first child was born only in 1740, when Francis was aged 47. It is very probable that Francis Szent-Ivány had an earlier wife. This assumption starts from the view that Ladislav Okolicsány would certainly not have given his daughter Clara in marriage to Michael younger brother of Francis Szent-Ivány, if Francis himself had been unmarried.
- 10 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1718 – 1726, i. no. 22, p. 127, 141, 653; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, 442, 443, 673
- 11 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1710 – 1717, i. no. 21, p. 86, 223, 349, 350; KP from 1718 – 1726, i. no. 22, p. 5, 6, 141, 653; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 19, 234, 235, 260, 261, 440, 441, 448, 508, 510, 588, 634; KUBÍNYI, Ferenc – KUBÍNYI, Miklós. *A felső-kubinyi család története és lezár-mazása II. (History and description of the Výchýň Kubín family)*. Budapest : Franklin-társulat nyomdája, 1906, p. 375; NAGY, ref. 8, Horváth család. (Gradeczi, Stansith †), table I; SZLUHA, Márton. *Felvidéki nemes családok I. Árva megye*. (Noble families of Upper Hungary. I The County of Orava) [CD-ROM]. Budapest : Heraldika Könyvkiadó, 2007, Zmeskál, Domanoveczi és Lestinei nemes, table I.



sons. Later he was replaced by the above mentioned Alexander Csemiczky. The northern district was directed by Matthew Jóob, whose wife Eva Okolicsány was sister in law of Gabriel Thuranszky, grandson of Anna Horváth-Stansith. The eastern district was the responsibility of Alexander Andreánszky, step-son of Julia Báan, grand-daughter of Magda Thuranszky, who was aunt of Ladislav Thuranszky, the deputy sheriff's uncle. He was followed by Francis Pongrácz, whose grandmother was sister in law of Anna Pongrácz, sister in law of Anna Horváth-Stansith.<sup>12</sup>

The end of the county career of Ladislav Okolicsány in 1725 was caused by his appointment as an adviser to the Hungarian Chamber. This honour was not unexpected, and was influenced by his brother John Okolicsány Bishop of Oradea and *septemvir* and his brother in law George Mattyassovszky, adviser to the Hungarian Chamber. The new function forced the deputy sheriff to remain in Pressburg (Bratislava), so that he could participate in the activities of the Chamber. The chief sheriff placed him among the candidates for regular deputy sheriff in the September 1725 elections, but he gave up his candidacy. This meant a temporary stop to the career of Francis Szent-Ivány, who could not be elected to the post of regular deputy sheriff, because he was already serving as acting deputy sheriff.<sup>13</sup>

### **The period of the regular deputy sheriff Nicholas Dvornikovics (1725 – 1728)**

When Ladislav Okolicsány was appointed adviser, Nicholas Dvornikovics was deputy sheriff of the County of Hont, where he had lived for a long time in his properties at Lontov. He had never before engaged in the administration of the County of Liptov. He had participated in assemblies of the local nobility only during the elections of 1716 – 1721, which he chaired as the representative of the chief sheriff Nicholas Illésházy.

The importance of the September elections of 1725 was underlined by the personal participation of the new chief sheriff Joseph Illésházy. He wanted to support with his presence the candidate Nicholas Dvornikovics, who had served his father Nicholas Illésházy. The direct participation of the chief sheriff would help Dvornikovics to gain the post, to which he could not be elected according to the law, because he had not given up his existing position in the County of Hont. Acceptance of Dvornikovics by the privileged voters appeared to be more than probable, because his wife was Clara Szent-Ivány, daughter of the late regular deputy sheriff Wolfgang Szent-Ivány, and sister of two sons in law of the outgoing deputy sheriff Okolicsány. The other candidates were only there to make up the right number. The first candidate was Ladislav Okolicsány, although the sheriff knew that he would give up his candidacy because of his appointment as an adviser to the Chamber. The other two candidates were “only” rich yeomen – the fiscal Köröskeny and the reeve of the western district Andrew Rády.<sup>14</sup>

12 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1710 – 1717, i. no. 86; KP from 1718 – 1726, i. no. 22, p. 60, 142, 654; f. Zbierka cirkevných matrik (Collection of Church Registers, hereinafter ZCM), matrika farnosti (parish register, hereinafter MF) of Liptovský Michal, i. no. 524, p. 13, 15; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 50, 64, 240, 440, 441, 478, 588, 590-592, 634, 635, 767, 778, 779.

13 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1718 – 1726, i. no. 22, p. 653; KP from 1740 – 1742, i. no. 28, p. 56; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 440.

14 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1710 – 1717, i. no. 21, p. 349, 351; KP from 1718 – 1726, i. no. 22,

For various reasons, Nicholas Dvornikovics could not gain places for his closest relations among the county magistrates by means of elections. Firstly, he belonged to a family, which settled in the county only at the end of the 17th century, and still had not formed enough connections with the old local families. At the time of the elections, he had only one daughter of marriageable age. The Lutheran members of the Estates remembered well the zeal of his father, the deputy sheriff John Dvornikovics in the military occupation of the article churches. Finally, during his period in office, elections were held only in 1725. In spite of these circumstances, he had more success than his predecessor thanks to noblemen related by marriage. They gained 11 out of 15 functions, which represents 73%.<sup>15</sup>

During his brief period in office, he succeeded in controlling nine of the county offices. Among the central posts, these were the acting deputy sheriff, the notary and deputy notary, the general treasurer and fiscal. He could also rely on the reeves in all the districts. The father of the acting deputy sheriff Balthazar Potthornyay was the brother in law of Clara Mariássy, grand-mother of Clara Okolicsány, whose husband was brother in law of the regular deputy sheriff. The notary was Francis Pongrácz, whose son Matthew was a godson of Ladislav Okolicsány. Okolicsány was father in law of the brother in law of the regular deputy sheriff. Nicholas' younger brother Michael Dvornikovics was elected deputy notary. The general treasurer was Alexander Andreánszky. His step-son was the husband of Susana Andaházy, grand-daughter of Susana Okolicsány, aunt of Ladislav Okolicsány. Clara Mariássy was mother in law of the fiscal Stephen Okolicsány.<sup>16</sup>

The deputy sheriff's brother in law Michael Szent-Ivány was reeve of the eastern district. Matthew Jóob pursued his career in the northern district. He was the husband of Eva Okolicsány, sister in law of Gabriel Thuranszky, who was grand-son of Anna Horváth-Stansith, aunt of the wife of Ladislav Okolicsány. The reeve of the southern district was Gabriel Pallugyay, brother in law of John Thuranszky, grand-son of Anna Horváth-Stansith. In the western district, the reeve Andrew Rády was father of two godsons of Ladislav Okolicsány.<sup>17</sup> In spite of resolutions of parliament that no county official could hold two or more functions in different counties at the same time, Nicholas Dvornikovics did not give up the position of deputy sheriff of Hont. Therefore, in October 1727 he resigned from the post of deputy sheriff of Liptov at the request of the chief sheriff and the Royal Governor's Council. Otherwise he risked being dismissed from both posts, and having to ingloriously abandon a promising official career. In February 1728, the chief sheriff decided that the acting deputy sheriff Balthazar Potthornyay would be the temporary administrator of the post of regular deputy sheriff until the next elections.<sup>18</sup>

---

p. 6, 60, 141, 653. SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 442, 443, 672, 673.

15 REZIK, Ján. *Prešovská jatka z roku 1687. Theatrum eperiense seu laniena*. Eds. Ján Gömöry and Gustáv Pogány. Liptovský Svätý Mikuláš : Transcius, 1931, p. 99; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 156.

16 MV SR, ŠABY, f. ZCM, MF, Liptovský Mikuláš, i. no. 526, p. 26; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 18, 19, 50, 156, 440-442, 448, 624, 625, 672, 673, 727.

17 MV SR, ŠABY, f. ZCM, MF Liptovský Michal, i. no. 524, p. 13, 15; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 156, 240, 440, 478, 510, 588, 672, 673, 767. NAGY, ref. 8, Horváth család. (Gradeczi, Stansith †), table I.

18 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1726 – 1729, i. no. 23, p. 296, 352.

### **The period of the regular deputy sheriff Francis Pongrácz (1730 – 1740)**

In contrast to the two preceding regular deputy sheriffs from the ranks of the middle nobility, Francis Pongrácz, as a yeoman, had years of experience of official work. Before his election, he had eleven years of experience of the functioning of local government. He started his county career in January 1719 as reeve of the eastern district, and in September 1725, he was elected to the post of regular notary. After the death of Balthazar Potthornay in July 1728, the chief sheriff appointed Pongrácz to the post of acting deputy sheriff, while leaving him in the position of regular notary. As a result of appointment without election, he held the position of de facto regular deputy sheriff for two years, and in this way gained a larger number of possible votes.

The next elections, held in July 1730, had to end the two year vacancy by electing a new regular deputy sheriff. The chief sheriff submitted to the assembled noblemen an untraditional list of three candidates. For the first time, the chances of two candidates were evenly balanced. His two years of work and to some extent also his “spiritual” relationship with a former regular deputy sheriff spoke for Francis Pongrácz. His son Matthew was a godson of Ladislav Okolicsány. The second, equally strong candidate was the former acting deputy sheriff Francis Szent-Ivány, who was about the same age and equally ambitious. He was the son or brother in law of three previous regular deputy sheriffs. The reeve of the western district Andrew Rády had no real chance to be elected. Although Szent-Ivány as a nobleman with a middle level of property, had the best pre-conditions for getting elected, victory went to the prosperous yeoman Pongrácz. It is possible to suppose that the Lutheran part of the nobility expected the maintenance of a tolerant attitude to their religion at a time of increasing re-Catholicization, since Pongrácz’s wife Elizabeth Szent-Ivány was a Lutheran.<sup>19</sup>

In spite of the antiquity of his family, Francis Pongrácz could not expect to achieve much in the area of getting his relations positions among the magistrates. The absolute absence of his family members from the ranks of the magistrates in the period 1709 – 1730 did not prepare the ground for the conclusion of marriages with county officials. Pongrácz was “only” a rich yeoman and only a sort of transitional regular deputy sheriff until the time that the above mentioned Francis Szent-Ivány would be elected. The officially active members of families, therefore, had no interest in establishing relationships with the temporary deputy sheriff Pongrácz. He could expect the strongest support only from the Lutheran part of the Estates, but he could not establish family ties with them because his two sons were too young. He had only a “spiritual” relationship thanks to his son Matthew Pongrácz, who was a godson of Ladislav Okolicsány. The problem was these “spiritual” relationships had only distant blood ties. In spite of this, 13 relations were elected from a total of 16 officials in July 1730, that is 81%. The number reached 14 or 88% in July 1735.<sup>20</sup>

---

19 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1718 – 1726, i. no. 22, p. 61, 653; KP from 1726 – 1729, i. no. 23, p. 353, 396; KP from 1729 – 1735, i. no. 24, p. 69; f. ZCM, MF Liptovský Mikuláš, i. no. 527, p. 26; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 592, 710.

20 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1729 – 1732, i. no. 24, p. 69; KP from 1735 – 1738, i. no. 26, p. 72; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 592, 710.

Through his “spiritual” relationships, Francis Pongrácz achieved significant influence over ten official posts during his period of office. Among the central offices, these were the acting deputy sheriff, notary, deputy notary, military and domestic treasurer and fiscal. He had “his” person in each of the districts administered by reeves. The decisive factor was the blood relationship to god-father Ladislav Okolicsány and Anna Horváth-Stansith, sister in law of Anna Pongrácz, who was sister in law of Sophia Pottornyay grand-mother of Francis Pongrácz.<sup>21</sup>

The first acting deputy sheriff was Michael Dvornikovics, who was brother in law of Clara Szent-Ivány sister in law of the daughter of Ladislav Okolicsány. Dvornikovics was followed by Andrew Rády, whose two children were godsons of Ladislav Okolicsány. The notary’s office was headed at first by Alexander Andreánszky, whose grandson Andrew Szent-Ivány was godson of Francis Szent-Ivány, brother of the son in law of Ladislav Okolicsány. The second notary was George Mattyassovszky, son of Eva Zmeskal, sister in law of Eva Horváth-Stansith, who was the niece of Anna Horváth-Stansith. The deputy notary’s office was headed at first by George Mattyassovszky and then by Michael Rády, brother of the godsons of Ladislav Okolicsány. The military treasury was administered by Matthew Jóob, husband of Eva Okolicsány, who was sister in law of Gabriel Thuranszky, grand-son of Anna Horváth-Stansith. The domestic treasurer for the whole ten years was Melichar Szent-Ivány, father of Andrew Szent-Ivány. The post of fiscal was held by Martin Okolicsány, son of Sophia Pongrácz, who was sister in law of another Sophia Pongrácz, who was sister in law of the sister of Ladislav Okolicsány.<sup>22</sup>

The administration of the eastern district was headed by Michael Szent-Ivány, son in law of Ladislav Okolicsány. Ladislav Lehoczky, grandson of Anna Horváth-Stansith, was active in the northern district. In the southern district, Gabriel Pallugyay retained the position he already held. He was the brother in law of John Thuranszky, another grandson of Anna Horváth-Stansith. The reeve of the western district was the above mentioned Andrew Rády, who was replaced by Paul Thuranszky, uncle of Ladislav Okolicsány.<sup>23</sup>

Francis Pongrácz had only a pre-determined few years until the election of his successor Francis Szent-Ivány. The latter had not held any office since 1725, but up to his victorious return to the head of the magistrates in August 1740, he gained 13 from a total of 16 official positions for his blood relations, representing 81%. He owed this success not only to his origin, but also the influence of his father in law, the adviser to the Chamber Ladislav Okolicsány. His closest blood relations included the two acting deputy sheriffs Michael Dvornikovics, Szent-Ivány’s brother in law; and Andrew Rády, father of the second wife of Michael Dvornikovics. Another was Szent-Ivány’s brother Michael Szent-Ivány, reeve of the eastern district. The other officials were more distant

21 SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 588, 590-592, 634, 635; NAGY, ref. 8, Horváth család. (Gradeczi, Stansith †), table I.

22 MV SR, ŠABY, f. ZCM, MF Bobrovec, i. no. 25, p. 24; MF Liptovský Michal, i. no. 524, 13, 15; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 156, 240, 385, 440, 441, 448-450, 478, 588, 672, 673, 684, 685, 767; NAGY, ref. 8, Horváth család. (Gradeczi, Stansith †), table I.; SZLUHA, Felvidéki nemes I, ref. 11, Zmeskál, Domanoveczi és Lestinei nemes, table I.

23 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1718 – 1726, i. no. 22, p. 653; KP from 1729 – 1732, i. no. 24, p. 69; KP from 1735 – 1738, i. no. 26, p. 71; KP from 1740 – 1742 i. no. 28, p. 56; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 348, 349, 440, 441, 510, 672, 673, 767, 778, 779.

blood relations connected through the above-mentioned relationship with Ladislav Okolicsány.<sup>24</sup>

Francis Pongrácz was confirmed in his function by elections in September 1735. In the next elections in August 1740, the chief sheriff followed the custom of leaving him among the candidates for regular deputy sheriff, but he was definitively defeated by Francis Szent-Ivány. Departure from the post of deputy sheriff was the end of the county career of the Lutheran and military treasurer Melichar Szent-Ivány.<sup>25</sup>

### **The period of the regular deputy sheriff Francis Szent-Ivány (1740 – 1758)**

Francis Szent-Ivány had a strong probability of finally overcoming his rival in the elections of August 1740. During the previous ten years, he had built up a camp of supporters among the officials and he could rely on their favour. He also had behind him nine years of practical experience in the posts of general treasurer, deputy notary and acting deputy sheriff, although 15 years had passed since his departure from active participation in public administration. The county expressed great confidence in his ability, when it twice entrusted him with the task of representing its interests in the Hungarian Parliament in 1722/3 and 1728/9.

On the day of the elections in 1740, the chief sheriff Joseph Illésházy appeared before the assembled noblemen to read the names of the four candidates. According to tradition, the first of them was the former regular deputy sheriff Francis Pongrácz, who already had little chance of being re-elected. The second in order was the former acting deputy sheriff Michael Dvornikovics. The third was the serving acting deputy sheriff Andrew Rády, who was also the father in law of Dvornikovics. Another former acting deputy sheriff Francis Szent-Ivány was placed last in the list of candidates,<sup>26</sup> although he was the suitable candidate for the post of regular deputy sheriff. His strong family background spoke for him. His father in law Ladislav Okolicsány was an adviser to the Hungarian Chamber and a former deputy sheriff of Liptov; his father in law's brothers were deputy sheriffs of the counties of Zemplín and Orava; his father in law's brother in law was deputy sheriff of the County of Abov; and finally, his late uncle Wolfgang Szent-Ivány had been deputy sheriff of Liptov.

The strong family background of the newly elected deputy sheriff Francis Szent-Ivány could not leave the observer in any doubt that the new head of the county would do all he could to secure his position. To achieve this, Szent-Ivány used the marriages of his closest relations: his own three children, the children of his six siblings and his father in law's seven children. At elections in August 1740, 14 (88%) of the 16 county functions were filled by members of his family, blood and "spiritual" relations. A similar result was achieved at the elections in August 1744 and July 1755. The "worst" results occurred in

---

24 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1718 – 1726, i. no. 22, p. 653; KP from 1729 – 1732, i. no. 24, p. 69; KP from 1735 – 1738, i. no. 26, p. 71; KP from 1740 – 1742 i. no. 28, p. 56; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 51, 156, 647, 673, 685.

25 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1735 – 1738, i. no. 26, p. 71; KP from 1740 – 1742 i. no. 28, p. 56.

26 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1718 – 1726, i. no. 22, p. 6, 141, 229, 653; KP from 1726 – 1729, i. no. 23, p. 386; KP from 1740 – 1742 i. no. 28, p. 55; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 156, 647.

the elections of September 1750 with 12 officials or 75% and September 1747 with 13 or 81%.<sup>27</sup>

The influence of his father in law on Francis Szent-Ivány's career was already undeniable 22 years earlier, when Szent-Ivány first entered County Hall. He had to pay his father in law's sons and his brother in law Anthony Okolicsány for their help and their hidden support. Anthony became the greatest protégé of the regular deputy sheriff, from former favourite, he became protector. Okolicsány did not receive a post in the 1740 distribution of offices, but he did not have to wait for the next elections. The death of the military treasurer Matthew Jóob, a Lutheran, helped him to gain his first county position. The county decided that Jóob should be replaced by his son Michael Jóob. The chief sheriff, as a Catholic and supporter of Maria Theresa, could not agree to this change, and he used his legal power to appoint officials in event of deaths or resignations. Appointment by the sheriff gave Okolicsány a place in a more important office. The serving domestic treasurer Michael Szent-Ivány, brother in law of Okolicsány and brother of the regular deputy sheriff Michael Szent-Ivány became the new military treasurer in August 1741. He was replaced by Okolicsány.

Thus, Anthony Okolicsány entered the elections of August 1744 as the appointed domestic treasurer, so the Estates refused to continue his term of office. On the other hand, they knew that they could not leave the deputy sheriff's protégé without a post, so they made him head of the southern district. Okolicsány could expect to gain a more important position sooner or later. After six years of waiting, he became regular notary in September 1750. The death of the acting deputy sheriff Gabriel Pallugyay opened an opportunity for Okolicsány to become more conspicuous. The chief sheriff appointed him as the deputy sheriff's brother in law to the empty post, while also leaving him in the post of notary. He continued to hold both positions until the death of his patron.<sup>28</sup>

Gabriel Pallugyay, reeve of the southern district from 1725 to 1744, achieved a successful career without the help of influential relations. Pallugyay had the favour of the local nobility, who elected him to his function four times. His good official reputation had certainly not escaped the notice of the new regular deputy sheriff. Gabriel's second cousin Leonard Pallugyay worked successfully as regular notary of the County of Pressburg (Bratislava) and was honoured by the monarch who made him a knight of the Golden Spur. After leaving his function in 1742, he entered the service of the Palatine and Count John Pálffy, who appointed him as his secretary.<sup>29</sup>

The favourable family background immediately turned round the development of the career of Gabriel Pallugyay and his children. Otherwise, he would probably only have remained reeve until his death, and his children would not have become part of the nepo-

27 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1740 – 1742, i. no. 28, p. 55-58; KP from 1742 – 1746, i. no. 29, p. 361-363; KP from 1746 – 1749 i. no. 30, p. 327-330; KP from 1749 – 1751, i. no. 31, p. 374-376; KP from 1754 – 1755, i. no. 34, 426-429; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 440, 441, 673.

28 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1740 – 1742, i. no. 28, p. 55-58, 298; KP from 1742 – 1746, i. no. 29, p. 362; KP from 1749 – 1751 i. no. 31, p. 374; KP from 1755 – 1756, i. no. 35; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 385, 442, 510, 650, 673.

29 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1746 – 1749, i. no. 30, p. 387; MVSR Štátny archív Bratislava, f. Bratislavská župa, summary to KP from 1665 – 1757, i. no. 124, p. 544; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 506-510.

tistic plans of Francis Szent-Ivány. The new situation led him to the idea of arranging a future marriage between Pallugyay's son and a daughter of Szent-Ivány's brother in law. Szent-Ivány also informed the chief sheriff about his plan, so that the next time death or dismissal made a vacancy in one of the important offices, he would remember the deputy sheriff's potential relation. In November 1745, after the dismissal of the domestic treasurer Joseph Andaházy, the sheriff appointed Pallugyay to succeed him. After the elections in September 1747, he became military treasurer. He reached the formerly unthinkable peak of his career in November 1751, after the death of the acting deputy sheriff Michael Dvornikovics. Count Joseph Illésházy freed Pallugyay from the post of military treasurer and appointed him to the position formerly held by Dvornikovics. He held his highest possible post until he died in August 1755.<sup>30</sup>

The above mentioned marriage agreed between Michael Pallugyay and Susana daughter of Anthony Okolicsány bore fruit even before its conclusion not only for the father, but also for the son. The 24 year old started his long and impressive career during the September 1750 elections in the position of deputy notary. His further progress was assisted by the resignation in June 1752 of the reeve of the southern district Wolfgang Szent-Ivány, whose post he gained. The chief sheriff again replaced an outgoing magistrate according to the principle of family relationship. Szent-Ivány was brother in law of the future father in law of the younger Pallugyay. He served as the reeve until the elections in October 1758, by which time he had already been married for five years.<sup>31</sup>

Francis Szent-Ivány strove to secure a career for his only living son and heir: John Szent-Ivány. The problem was that his son was born very late, when he was aged 48, and he wanted to live to see him gain a place among the officials or magistrates. In spite of his low age of 14, the Estates elected John to a position in 1755. They could not give the boy an office, where he would have to perform tasks by himself, but one where he would be under the supervision of a higher official, who could train and assist him. The most appropriate position was county deputy notary, where the notary Michael Pallugyay, a member of the "official family" could supervise his work. The boy remained deputy notary until his father died in 1758.<sup>32</sup>

The regular deputy sheriff succeeded in gaining complete control over 11 official posts. These were continuously occupied on the basis of family connections, not only between the regular deputy sheriff and specific officials, but also between successive officials. In the central county institutions, he gained control of the posts of acting deputy sheriff, regular notary, deputy notary and fiscal. The first acting deputy sheriff was Andrew Rády father of Anna wife of Michael Dvornikovics. Their wedding witness was the regular deputy sheriff, who was also the god-father of Andrew's grandson Ladislav Rády. Andrew Rády was followed by Michael Dvornikovics, brother in law of the sister of the

30 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1718 – 1726, i. no. 22, p. 654; KP from 1742 – 1746, i. no. 23, p. 363; KP from 1746 – 1749 i. no. 30, p. 328; KP from 1751 – 1752, i. no. 32, p. 213; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 442, 443, 510.

31 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1749 – 1751, i. no. 31, p. 375; KP from 1751 – 1752, i. no. 32, p. 313; KP from 1757 – 1758 i. no. 36, p. 583-585; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 442, 443.

32 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1754 – 1755, i. no. 34, p. 428; KP from 1757 – 1758, i. no. 36, p. 584; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 672.

regular deputy sheriff. After the death of Dvornikovics, the chief sheriff gave his post to Gabriel Pallugyay. After Pallugyay died, the position went to Anthony Okolicsány.

The notaries were George Mattyassovszky and Anthony Okolicsány. Mattyassovszky was the grandson of Helena Rakovszky, sister in law of Maria Okolicsány, sister in law of the regular deputy sheriff. The father in law of Mattyassovszky's son George was the regular deputy sheriff. The first deputy notaries were: Michael Rády brother of Anna Rády; Michael Pallugyay son in law of the brother in law of the regular deputy sheriff; Alex Rakovszky son of the sister in law of the regular deputy sheriff; and finally the young John Szent-Ivány. The office of fiscal came into the hands of four noblemen: Martin Szent-Ivány was brother in law of Martin Okolicsány, brother in law of Maria Okolicsány, who was a great-grand-daughter of Anna Horváth-Stansith, aunt of the wife of the deputy sheriff's father in law. George Andaházy was son in law of George Luby, nephew of the sister in law of Matthew Kiszely, who was brother in law of the father of the deputy sheriff's father in law. Nicholas Okolicsány was brother in law of Magda Potthornyay, daughter of the father in law of the deputy sheriff's father in law. Finally, John Okolicsány was son of the above mentioned Martin Okolicsány.<sup>33</sup>

The deputy sheriff was successful in all the four districts of Liptov. The Okolicsány and Szent-Ivány families and the related Rády and Rakovszky families had ancestral seats in these districts. In the election of assessors success was achieved in the eastern, northern and western districts. There were four successive reeves in the western district. Paul Thuranszky was the husband of Anna Maria Andaházy, who was the sister of Julia Andaházy. Her children were the god-children of the above mentioned Michael Dvornikovics. Thuranszky's successor was Joseph Andaházy, brother of Anna Maria Andaházy. Andaházy was followed by the above mentioned Michael Rády and Alex Rakovszky. The northern district was headed by Ladislav Lehoczky, grand-son of the above mentioned Anna Horváth-Stansith. The southern district was administered by Gabriel Pallugyay, Anthony Okolicsány and Joseph Andaházy. The fourth reeve in succession was Anthony Pongrácz, god-son of Anna Horváth-Stansith. In the eastern district, the reeves were Wolfgang Szent-Ivány brother of the regular deputy sheriff, and Michael Pallugyay.<sup>34</sup>

Three assessors followed each other in the eastern district: Ladislav Andreánszky, brother in law of Melichar Szent-Ivány, whose son Andrew Szent-Ivány was a god-son of the deputy sheriff. Christopher Szmrecsány was a son of Gaspar Szmrecsány, who was a step-brother of Ladislav Andreánszky. The third councillor was Andrew Szent-Ivány. Three noblemen were also active in the northern district. The mother in law of Philip Báan, Helena Rakovszky was the sister in law of the sister of the deputy sheriff's wife. The second was Anthony Pongrácz. The last was John Ghillány senior, nephew of the

33 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1735 – 1738, i. no. 26, p. 69, 71; KP from 1740 – 1742, i. no. 28, p. 55-58; KP from 1742 – 1746, i. no. 29, p. 361; KP from 1749 – 1751, i. no. 31, p. 374-376; KP from 1751 – 1752, i. no. 32, p. 313; KP from 1757 – 1758, i. no. 36, 582-585; f. ZCM, MF Liptovské Matiašovce, i. no. 501, p. 6; MF Liptovský Michal, i. no. 524, p. 25, 79; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 18, 156, 360-361, 385, 440, 442, 443, 448, 450, 451, 510, 588, 647, 624, 625, 650, 706, 767; NAGY, ref. 8, Horváth család. (Gradecezi, Stansith †), table I.

34 MV SR, ŠABY, f. ZCM, MF Liptovský Križ, i. no. 521, p. 7; MF Liptovský Mikuláš, i. no. 527, p. 51; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 19, 156, 348, 349, 384, 588, 673.



wife of Daniel Madocsány, whose grand-mother was the sister in law of Catherine Pongrácz, daughter of Anna Horváth-Stansith. The western district was entrusted to the hands of Matthew son of Andrew Rády; John Ghillány senior; and John Rakovszky junior, cousin of John Rakovszky senior, whose wife was sister of the deputy sheriff's wife.<sup>35</sup>

Only a sudden serious illness or death could end the career of Francis Szent-Ivány. He departed to eternity in July 1758, when he completed the 65th year of his journey through life.<sup>36</sup> During his life, he succeeded in creating a sufficiently large network of "spiritual" and family connections that his passing did not mean as it had previously, the end of the county careers of his relations. The accumulated potential of multiple marriages between the two richest families, the Szent-Iványs and the Okolicsánys, enabled the easy transfer of power to another member of the established line of nepotism. The faithful old officials did not have to fear for the positions they had acquired, and would have to defend against noblemen, who wanted to promote people close to them.

### **The period of the regular deputy sheriff Anthony Okolicsány (1758 – 1775)**

After the sudden death of the official head of the local noble community, the chief sheriff took care of the immediate appointment of the current acting deputy sheriff Anthony Okolicsány as regular deputy sheriff. With such an important change in an elected post, Illésházy respected the need to call elections as soon as possible, something he never did when other officials died. Okolicsány hoped that the coming electoral assembly of the nobility would be only a formality, and he would be the only successful candidate. Therefore, the sheriff himself stated his recommendation to the Estates, so that they would respect his decision.

According to the familiar rules, the sheriff offered to the Estates assembled in October 1758, the names of four noblemen, from which he wanted to see the right one in the leading position. The order of the noblemen corresponded to the sheriff's ideas. The meritorious Anthony Okolicsány was put in first place. He was followed by his brother in law Michael Szent-Ivány, brother of the deceased deputy sheriff. His chance was minimal, because he did not belong to the direct line of eldest sons of the Szent-Ivány deputy sheriffs, and did not have influential relations standing behind him. Joseph Andaházy was in third place and Adam Báan in last place, but they had no chance of being elected on such a list of candidates.<sup>37</sup>

The elections fulfilled the ambitions of Anthony Okolicsány thanks to several determining factors. Wealth and family connections paved the way to success. He accumulated in his hands, the second largest noble property in Liptov and his family was the second wealthiest. His brother John Okolicsány was deputy sheriff of Zemplín and adviser to the monarch. His cousin Michael Okolicsány was parish priest of Trnava and canon

35 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1742 – 1746, i. no. 29, p. 363; KP from 1746 – 1749, i. no. 30, p. 330; KP from 1749 – 1751, i. no. 31, p. 376; KP from 1754 – 1755, i. no. 34, p. 428, 429; f ZCM, MF Bobrovec i. no. 25, p. 24; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 51, 62, 181, 375, 588, 647, 650, 651, 672, 673, 684, 685, 727, 766, 767.

36 SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 673.

37 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1757 – 1758, i. no. 36, p. 529, 583; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 442.

of Esztergom. Another cousin Joseph Okolicsány was court councillor and head of the Chamber of Spiš. Anthony himself was son of the late adviser to the Hungarian Chamber and former deputy sheriff Ladislav Okolicsány. The numerous family relationships were further widened by marriages to include further members. The proportion of elected blood and “spiritual” relations among sixteen officials was 15 or 94% in October 1758. In August 1763, 11 relations were elected from a total of 17 officials, which meant 65%. A further five elected officials were “spiritual” relations, which brought the total to 94%. In July 1767, 8 from 17 officials were family members, that is 47%. Another 8 were “spiritual” relations, again making a total of 94%.<sup>38</sup>

The situation from a few years earlier was repeated with a former protégé becoming an important patron, who selected already at the beginning of his career, his successor from the other family. Anthony Okolicsány remained faithful to this tradition by taking his orphaned nephew John Szent-Ivány under his protective wing. John was elected as reeve of the eastern district in 1758, at the age of 17. The chief sheriff also assisted his rapid progress, which did not correspond to his age. The acting deputy sheriff Michael Szent-Ivány resigned in September 1766 because of his age. The chief sheriff immediately appointed Michael’s nephew John Szent-Ivány as his temporary successor. John was then aged only 25, but in spite of this, the Estates confirmed him in July 1767, and he kept his position until his patron and superior Okolicsány retired.<sup>39</sup>

Anthony Okolicsány also placed more of his closest relations: sons, sons in law and brothers in law, in prominent functions. However, his sons did not bring him much satisfaction, and so he could not count on their participation in the administration. In the period 1759 – 1767, the elder son Ladislav Okolicsány worked first as deputy notary and then as reeve of the northern district, but after getting married, he decided to leave Liptov for his mother’s properties in the County of Hont. The second son, Anthony Okolicsány junior could not continue his father’s career, because in the period 1767 – 1778 he was only the deputy notary. In addition, his reputation was harmed by verbal insults against the wife of the domestic treasurer Andrew Szent-Ivány in the manor-house at Svätý Ján.<sup>40</sup>

His relations by marriage proved to be more promising successors in administrative careers. The deputy sheriff placed great hope on his son in law Michael Pallugyay, whose reliability, expertise and popularity were shown in the period 1758 – 1775, when he was notary. As a result, he eventually became the acting deputy sheriff to the next regular deputy sheriff. Three brothers in law of Anthony Okolicsány had the disadvantage of being about the same age as him, and for them this period was the end of their careers. Among them, only Michael Szent-Ivány did not give up his official activities because of

38 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1757 – 1758, i. no. 36, p. 583-585; KP from 1762 – 1763, i. no. 39, p. 516, 518; KP from 1766 – 1767, i. no. 42, 329-332. ŠPIESZ, Anton. Liptovské zemanstvo v čase urbárskej regulácie Márie Terézie. (The Liptov yeomanry at the time of the urban regulation of Maria Theresa.). In KUFČÁK, Emil – POVAŽANOVÁ, Valéria – PETRÁŠ, Milan (eds.). *Liptov 9: Vlastivedný zborník*. Martin : Osveta 1987, p. 152, 153; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 440-442.

39 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1757 – 1758, i. no. 36, p. 584; KP from 1744 – 1767, i. no. 42, p. 92, 330; KP from 1774 – 1775, i. no. 47, 605; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 442, 443, 672, 673.

40 Now Liptovský Ján.

his age. He was acting deputy sheriff in the period 1758 – 1766, and resigned only when aged 65.<sup>41</sup>

The deputy sheriff's relations included Stephen Rakovszky senior, son of his sister Maria Okolicsány. In spite of this, Rakovszky remained in the background for a long time and could not count on an impressive career. He established himself among the officials thanks to his expert ability, which he deepened by studying the books in his library.<sup>42</sup> He started by gaining a place as a deputy notary in 1758, but he left this position as soon as May 1759. The reeve of the southern district Anthony Pongrácz resigned, and the chief sheriff appointed Rakovszky to succeed him. In March 1761, the military treasurer died and the chief sheriff made extensive personnel changes, which included making Rakovszky reeve of the western district. He held the office of reeve until the end of the deputy sheriff's period in office. Over a period of 17 years, Rakovszky gained much experience and popularity among the nobility of the district.<sup>43</sup>

Anthony Okolicsány achieved the greatest success among all the regular deputy sheriffs, because during his whole period in office, his blood or "spiritual" relations held 14 offices. The above mentioned Michael Szent-Ivány and John Szent-Ivány became acting deputy sheriffs. All the positions in the most important independent county office, that of the notary, remained under the scrutiny of the regular deputy sheriff. The notary was the above mentioned Michael Pallugyay, while the position of deputy notary was held successively by Stephen Rakovszky senior, Ladislav Okolicsány, Ladislav Rakovszky and Anthony Okolicsány junior. Among them, the previously unmentioned Ladislav Rakovszky was a nephew of the regular deputy sheriff. The office of fiscal was held continuously from 1755 to 1783 by John Okolicsány, a fourth cousin of the regular deputy sheriff, who was also god-father of the fiscal's three sons. Paul Tholt and Andrew Andaházy followed each other in the post of deputy fiscal. Tholt's niece was god-daughter of the deputy sheriff's sister. Andaházy was son of the below mentioned Joseph Andaházy. The former Reeves Christopher Szmrecsány and Andrew Szent-Ivány were also domestic treasurers.<sup>44</sup>

41 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, inquisitiones, c. 777, i. no. 1259; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 442, 443, 673.

42 His library in the family manor-house at Liptovský Štiavica was one of the largest libraries in the County of Liptov. MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, inventaria, c. 232, i. no. 271.

43 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1757 – 1758, i. no. 36, p. 529, 584; KP from 1758 – 1760, i. no. 37, p. 202; KP from 1760 – 1762, i. no. 38, p. 111; KP from 1774 – 1775, i. no. 47, p. 606; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 442, 443, 650, 651. M. Szluha completely omits Stephen Rakovszky from his genealogical table. He has been identified on the basis of a protest from 1780 recorded in the KP from 1780. This states that his brother was the reeve Ladislav Rakovszky. On the basis of already known data, it is known that Ladislav was the son of John Rakovszky junior and Maria Okolicsány. The parish register from Ludrová records the date of the death of Stephen Rakovszky senior. The information in the parish register makes clear that Stephen Rakovszky junior is the Stephen found in M. Szluha's genealogical table. MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1780, i. no. p. 38; f. ZCM, MF Ludrová, i. no. 581, p. 40, 116.

44 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1735 – 1738, i. no. 26, p. 69, 71; KP from 1740 – 1742, i. no. 28, p. 55-58; KP from 1742 – 1746, i. no. 29, p. 361; KP from 1749 – 1751, i. no. 31, p. 374-376; KP from 1751 – 1752, i. no. 32, p. 313; KP from 1754 – 1755, i. no. 34, p. 426-429; KP from 1755 – 1756, i. no. 35, p. 36; KP from 1757 – 1758, i. no. 36, p. 582-585; f. ZCM MF Ludrová, i. no. 580, p. 125; MF Paludza, i. no. 746, p. 50, 59; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 19, 442, 443, 450, 650, 750.

From the district posts, the regular deputy sheriff had “his” reeves in all the districts. In the eastern district there was the above mentioned John Szent-Ivány, who was followed by Christopher Szmrecsány. His mother Susana Andaházy was aunt of Alex Matyassovszky, whose god-mother was the deputy sheriff’s wife. Andrew Szent-Ivány was son of the step-sister of Szmrecsány’s father, and god-son of the deputy sheriff’s sister in law. Szmrecsány’s successor was the deputy sheriff’s nephew Wolfgang Szent-Ivány junior. In the northern district, the reeves were Joseph Andaházy, brother of the above mentioned Susana Andaházy; the deputy sheriff’s son Ladislav Okolicsány; and John Andaházy son of Joseph Andaházy. Six reeves followed each other in the southern district. Among them, the family connections of Stephen Rakovszky senior, Andrew Szent-Ivány, John Andaházy and Ladislav Rakovszky have already been mentioned. The brother of Anthony Pongrácz was god-son of the deputy sheriff’s father. The brother in law of Michael Detrich was the cousin of the deputy sheriff’s father. In the western district, Matthew Rády, god-son of the deputy sheriff’s father, was followed by Stephen Rakovszky senior.<sup>45</sup>

Absolute control of the districts was also secured by gaining the assessors. In the eastern district, the later reeve Andrew Szent-Ivány and John Andaházy followed each other. Other so far unmentioned noblemen Ladislav Andreánszky and Martin Matyassovszky belonged to the family of the deputy sheriff by origin. Andreánszky was the step brother of Gaspar Szmrecsány, who was the father of Christopher Szmrecsány. Matyassovszky’s children had as their god-father Michael Rády, brother of a god-son of the deputy sheriff’s father. In the northern district, John Ghillány senior and Stephen Rakovszky junior, son of a cousin of Stephen Rakovszky senior, were active. Ghillány’s aunt was the wife of the grand-son of Helena Thuranszka, sister in law of the daughter of Anna Horváth-Stansith. She was the aunt of the deputy sheriff’s mother. In the southern district, John Rakovszky junior, Stephen Rakovszky junior and Ladislav Rády fulfilled their duties. John Rakovszky junior’s cousin was husband of the deputy sheriff’s sister, who was also the god-mother of Ladislav Rády.<sup>46</sup>

However, the end of the “golden age” of nepotism was irresistibly approaching. Anthony Okolicsány could not stop the passing of time, which limited his journey through life. The decision to depart for his well-earned retirement after 34 years of work, had to come. Although his name appeared on the list of candidates for regular deputy sheriff in the July 1775 elections, he definitively decided to resign at the age of about 70. This ended the chapter of the building of relationships connected with the sons of the two former deputy sheriffs Wolfgang Szent-Ivány and Ladislav Okolicsány. This resignation

---

45 MV SR, ŠABY, f. ZCM, MF Bobrovec, i. no. 25, p. 24; MF Liptovský Križ, i. no. 521, p. 7; MF Liptovský Michal, i. no. 524, p. 13; MF Liptovský Mikuláš, i. no. 527, p. 26; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegeye, ref. 7, p. 18, 19, 51, 134, 135, 156, 261, 384, 440-442, 443, 592, 673, 684, 727.

46 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1757 – 1758, i. no. 36, p. 584, 585; KP from 1760 – 1762, i. no. 38, p. 112; KP from 1762 – 1763, i. no. 39, p. 518; KP from 1763 – 1765, i. no. 40, p. 368; KP from 1765 – 1766, i. no. 41, p. 391; f. ZVM, MF Liptovský Michal, i. no. 524, p. 11, 13, 25, 43, 46; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegeye, ref. 7, p. 51, 181, 375, 408, 440, 588, 650, 651, 727, 766, 767; NAGY, ref. 8, Horváth család. (Gradeczi, Stansith †), table I.

did not threaten the new official generation, and the older county officials remained in their positions.<sup>47</sup>

### **The period of the regular deputy sheriff John Szent-Ivány (1775 – 1786)**

It was more than clear to all the noblemen participating in the July elections of 1775 that the preferred nobleman would be John Szent-Ivány. The protégé of the old regular deputy sheriff entered the election as a member of one of the two most influential families. In spite of his age of 34, he already had behind him a 20 year career, during which he had reached the post of acting deputy sheriff. Therefore, the closest colleague of Anthony Okolicsány had a real idea of what awaited him.

During these July elections, the chief sheriff John Baptist Illésházy produced a list of up to six privileged persons. According to the unchanged tradition, he placed Anthony Okolicsány first, although he knew that a younger man was going to take his place. The second in order was the acting deputy sheriff John Szent-Ivány. The other men honoured by being named were anchored in the web of relationships of the former regular deputy sheriffs. The third was Michael Pallugyay the serving regular notary and son in law of Okolicsány; the fourth was Stephen Rakovszky senior the reeve and nephew of Okolicsány's sister; the fifth was Paul Szent-Ivány senior the brother in law of the late cousin of Okolicsány's wife; the sixth was Anthony Pongrácz prefect of the chamber lordships of Likava and Hrádok and son of the former regular deputy sheriff Francis Pongrácz.<sup>48</sup>

John Szent-Ivány clearly dominated among the five real candidates. At the time of the election, he was the brother in law of the son and the son of the sister in law of Anthony Okolicsány. At the same time, he could boast of the fact that his father and grand-father had held the post of regular deputy sheriff many years before. He was also related by marriage to other deceased deputy sheriffs: Ladislav Okolicsány and Nicholas Dvornikovics. Through his god-parents, he was “spiritually” related to the late deputy sheriff Francis Pongrácz. In the eyes of the conservative and traditionalist nobility, he was the man, who must have inherited the abilities of all these deputy sheriffs. Apart from his election, 10 (43%) of the 23 officials elected in 1775 were his blood relations, and a further 8 were “spiritual” relations, making a total of 78%. The July elections of 1783 brought a weaker result, with blood relations gaining 11 or 44% from 25 posts. Eight other officials were members of wider family or related through god-parents, making a total of 76%.<sup>49</sup>

The former protégé John Szent-Ivány became a new patron, who had various disadvantages compared to his predecessors, and this ruptured the network of the “official family”. Maintenance of the established order of succession, by which a deputy sheriff was followed by his protégé from the other family, could not be taken into account because of the problematic behaviour of his brother in law Anthony Okolicsány junior. As

---

47 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1774 – 1775, i. no. 47, p. 605, 606; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 442, 443, 672.

48 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1774 – 1775, i. no. 47, p. 31, 605; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 156, 442, 443, 592, 651, 672, 673, 679. See note 43.

49 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1774 – 1775, i. no. 47, p. 605-609; KP from 1783, i. no. 55, p. 325-329; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 685.

a result of insulting the wife of the domestic treasurer, he remained an insignificant first deputy notary for a long time. Only the death of the same domestic treasurer in July 1778 induced the chief sheriff to solve this unfortunate situation by appointing Okolicsány to this function. The opposition of the local nobility against a violator of domestic freedom accompanied him during the elections of 1783, when he was left in his previous position. The monarch's abolition of this function two years later was met with some degree of malicious delight.

John Szent-Ivány could not select his successor from his wife's family because he was still unmarried in 1775 and had no children, who could become part of his plans.<sup>50</sup> This showed the foresight of his ancestors in not neglecting the strengthening of ties with other, originally unrelated, but neighbouring noble families with notable officials. He turned all his attention to the members of his wider family: Michael Pallugyay and Stephen Rakovszky senior. He placed greater hope in Pallugyay, the richest member of his family, which was the tenth most propertied family in Liptov. Pallugyay's activity as acting deputy sheriff indicated his future destiny. His possible substitute Stephen Rakovszky senior was only regular notary at this time.<sup>51</sup>

John Szent-Ivány could not forget the members of his own family, from which he had to select one central person. The choice was facilitated by the marriage of his father's god-son Paul Szent-Ivány junior with the daughter of the retired Anthony Okolicsány, Judith Okolicsány. At the same time, Paul junior became the new brother in law of the John Szent-Ivány's sister Judith Szent-Ivány. Szent-Ivány's foresight in the choice of Paul Szent-Ivány junior lay in the fact that he belonged to the Lutherans, who were now returning after the issuing of the Patent of Toleration to the positions they lost in the 17th century. Paul junior started his career in July 1775 as a second deputy notary, when he was directly appointed by the sheriff. He was also promoted to the position of first deputy notary by the sheriff in July 1778. In June 1785, the deputy sheriff's cousin Wolfgang Szent-Ivány junior gave up the function of reeve of the eastern district, and the administrative representative of the chief sheriff appointed Paul junior to replace him. He devoted himself to the duties of reeve for a year, until the formation of the County of Liptov and Orava.<sup>52</sup>

The regular deputy sheriff secured control of the same number of offices as his predecessor, namely 14, but the increased number of magistrates made this a smaller proportion in reality. Only the acting deputy sheriff Michael Pallugyay and notary Stephen Rakovszky senior worked for the whole 11 years. The two second deputy notaries were Paul Szent-Ivány junior and Anthony Szmrecsány, whose brother in law was son of the uncle of the deputy sheriff's grand-father. The fiscal was John Okolicsány, god-father of the deputy sheriff's uncle. He was followed by Andrew Andaházy, brother of the be-

50 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1766 – 1767, i. no. 42, p. 330; KP from 1778, i. no. 50, p. 505; KP from 1785, i. no. 57, 605; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 672.

51 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1774 – 1775, i. no. 47, p. 606; KP from 1783, i. no. 55, p. 325; ŠPIESZ, ref. 38, p. 153, 154.

52 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1774 – 1775, i. no. 47, p. 609; KP from 1778, i. no. 50, p. 505; KP from 1785, i. no. 57, p. 340. MV SR, ŠABY, f. ZCM, MF Liptovský Ján, i. no. 510, p. 11; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 672, 673, 689.

low-mentioned reeve John Andaházy. Both were great-grand-sons of Susana Okolicsány, aunt of the deputy sheriff's father. The first domestic treasurer was Andrew Szent-Ivány, god-son of the deceased father of the regular deputy sheriff. The second was Anthony Okolicsány junior.

The gaining of the position of reeve in all four districts was a significant success for control of the individual districts. The reeves of the eastern district were Wolfgang Szent-Ivány junior, cousin of the regular deputy sheriff; and Paul Szent-Ivány junior. The reeve of the southern district was Stephen Rakovszky junior, whose wife was niece of the deputy sheriff's mother. The reeves of the northern district were John Andaházy, whose wife was god-daughter of the deputy sheriff's aunt; and George Mattyassovszky, god-son of the deputy sheriff's father. The reeves of the western district were Ladislav Rakovszky, son of Maria Okolicsány, sister in law of the deputy sheriff's father; and John Andaházy.<sup>53</sup>

Partial success in individual districts was achieved among the deputy reeves, assessors and commissioners. John Ghillány senior, nephew of the wife of Daniel Madocsány, whose grand-mother was sister in law of the daughter of Anna Horváth-Stansith, aunt of the deputy sheriff's grand-mother, became deputy reeve in the western and southern districts. After the number of deputy reeves was increased, Ladislav Záborszky and Ignatius Detrich gained this position in the southern district. Záborszky's wife was a great-grand-daughter of Anna Horváth-Stansith, who was also the great-grand-mother of the wife of Detrich's uncle. John Szent-Ivány was the only deputy sheriff to control one of the commissioner's officers. Záborszky was also an assessor in the southern district. He was replaced by Anthony Rády, god-son of the deputy sheriff's grand-mother. The assessor in the eastern district were Matthew Andaházy brother of the above mentioned John Andaházy, and John Nepomuk Szent-Ivány. The latter was the brother of Andrew Szent-Ivány, a god-son of the deputy sheriff's father. At first, the mountain commissioner was Andrew Andreánszky, whose daughter was a god-daughter of Josephine Mattyassovszky, grand-daughter of a sister of the late deputy sheriff Ladislav Okolicsány, who was grand-father of the serving deputy sheriff. Andrew Andreánszky was followed by his younger brother John.<sup>54</sup>

Joseph II's religious measures caused the first serious injury to the system of nepotism, as is confirmed by the first elections after the granting of freedom of religion. The definitive blow and proverbial last nail in the coffin was the reform of the public administration, which brought the merging of the counties of Liptov and Orava. John Szent-Ivány's official career in Liptov ended prematurely, when Joseph II appointed his loyal supporter and adviser Joseph Charles Reviczky as the new first deputy sheriff. One

53 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1766 – 1767, i. no. 42, p. 330; KP from 1774 - 1775, i. no. 47, p. 608; KP from 1785, i. no. 57, 340; f. ZCM, MF Bobrovec, i. no. 25, p. 24; MF Liptovské Matiašovce, i. no. 501, p. 6; MF Liptovský Michal, i. no. 524, p. 27; MF Ludrová, i. no. 580, p. 116; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 19, 156, 385, 442, 443, 650, 672, 673, 729, 778, 779. NAGY, ref. 8, Horváth család. (Gradecki, Stansith †), table I. See note 43.

54 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1774 – 1775, i. no. 47, p. 607; KP from 1777, i. no. 49, p. 620; f. ZCM, MF Bobrovec i. no. 25, p. 24; MF Liptovská Teplá, i. no. 483, p. 28; MF Liptovský Michal, i. no. 524, p. 25; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 19, 38, 39, 134, 135, 181, 375, 403, 684, 685, 766, 767.

of the tasks of the reformed Josephine administration was to break up the existing family ties between county officials. The former regular deputy sheriff moved to the County of Tekov, from which he no longer intended to return to his native region. His dismissal did not inevitably mean the end of the careers of his subordinates. Some entered the service of the new first deputy sheriff, and others returned after the renewal of a separate County of Liptov.<sup>55</sup>

### **Weakening of the importance of nepotism after the re-establishment of a separate County of Liptov**

The County of Liptov and Orava established by the Josephine reforms broke up in 1790, and elections for officials to administer the restored County of Liptov were held in April of the same year. In spite of the apparent return to the old order, the reign of Joseph II left deep marks on the administration. It was found that the growing bureaucratization meant that it was no longer possible to fill posts with new functionaries, who lacked higher education. The old officials, with their practical experience, were left in their posts, but Lutherans came into the foreground, while old Catholic official families began to lose interest in the administrative profession.

During the April elections, the chief sheriff John Baptist Illésházy produced a list of four candidates for the post of regular deputy sheriff. The first candidate was the last deputy sheriff of Liptov John Szent-Ivány. Michael Pallugyay was placed second and Stephen Rakovszky senior the favourite and intended successor of Szent-Ivány came third. Paul Szent-Ivány senior was placed last. John Szent-Ivány, now living in the County of Tekov, decided to give up the offered function, and his official resignation, he advised the noblemen to elect either Pallugyay or Rakovszky. In the end, Rakovszky won the election.<sup>56</sup>

Like Francis Pongrácz, Stephen Rakovszky senior was “only” a rich yeoman. In the new circumstances, he was not a transitional regular deputy sheriff, because John Szent-Ivány had no children and the descendants of Anthony Okolicsány had little interest in a career in the County of Liptov. This situation led to a serious weakening of the weight of family relationships among the magistrates. Rakovszky could not maintain them on an appropriate level because he did not belong to their active creators. The richer officials from the ranks of the middle nobility did not regard the deputy sheriff from the ranks of the yeomanry as an equal partner. It was not surprising that in the 1790 elections, only 12 “family officials” were elected from a total of 25, that is only 44%.<sup>57</sup>

The newly elected county officials were related to the new regular deputy sheriff mainly thanks to the late Anthony Okolicsány, who was brother of the mother of Stephen Rakovszky senior. In these first elections of his term of office, Rakovszky succeeded in gaining 11 posts. In the central offices, he had his more distant relations only in the posts of acting deputy sheriff, notary, military treasurer and auditor (exactor rationum). Imrich Pongrácz became the acting deputy sheriff. His great-grand-mother, Anna Horváth-Stan-

55 SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 672.

56 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1790, i. no. 60, p. 8.

57 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1790, i. no. 60, p. 8-14; SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 442, 672.



sith was aunt of the deputy sheriff's grand-mother. The notary Paul Szent-Ivány junior was husband of the daughter of Anthony Okolicsány. The military treasurer Anthony Okolicsány intermediate was a grand-son of Anthony Okolicsány, and the auditor Anthony Pongrácz was a god-son of the deputy sheriff's grand-mother.<sup>58</sup>

#### Titles of officials

English	Latin	Slovak
Chief sheriff	supremus comes	hlavný župan
Regular deputy sheriff	ordinarius vicecomes	riadny podžupan
Acting deputy sheriff	substitutus vicecomes	zastupujúci podžupan
Regular notary	ordinarius notarius	riadny notár
Deputy notary	vicenotarius	podnotár
First deputy notary	primarius vicenotarius	prvý podnotár
Second deputy notary	secundarius vicenotarius	druhý podnotár
General treasurer	generalis perceptor	všeobecný pokladník
Military treasurer	cassae contributionalis perceptor	vojenský pokladník
Domestic treasurer	cassae domesticae perceptor	domáci pokladník
Auditor	exactor rationum	účtovný dozorca
Fiscal	fiscal	fiškál
Deputy fiscal	vicefiscal	podfiškál
Reeve	iudex nobilium (iudlius)	slúžny
Deputy reeve	viceiudlius	podslúžny
Assessor	iuratus assessor, iurassor	prísazný prisediaci
Mountain commissioner	superior commissarius	horný komisár

Among the district posts, he filled some of the posts of reeve, deputy reeve and assessor. Anthony Szmrecsány was elected reeve of the eastern district. He was brother in law of Balthazar Thuranszky, who was uncle of the deputy sheriff's grand-father. In the northern district, they chose George Mattyassovszky, grand-son of an aunt of Stephen Rakovszky senior. John Pallugyay, a grand-son of Anthony Okolicsány, became deputy reeve of the southern district. Anthony Thuranszky started his career in the northern district. He was brother of a god-daughter of Michael Rády, whose daughter was the god-daughter of the deputy sheriff's grand-mother. Matthew Kiszely was active in the eastern district. His father was a step-son of Paul Thuranszky. "Family" assessors were placed in two districts. In the eastern district the Estates chose Matthew Andaházy, nephew of Anna Maria Andaházy, who married Paul Thuranszky. In the southern district,

58 MV SR, ŠABY, f. ZCM, MF Liptovský Mikuláš, i. no. 526, 120. SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 440, 442, 443, 588, 592, 650, 689. NAGY, ref. 8, Horváth család. (Gradeczi, Stansith †), table I. See note 43.

the responsibility went to Emmerich Lehoczky, great-grand-son of Catherine Pongrácz, who was daughter of Anna Horváth-Stansith.<sup>59</sup>

\* This study forms the third chapter of the author's dissertation: *Liptovské šľachtické stoličné úradníctvo v 18. storočí* (*The noble administrators of the County of Liptov in the 18th century*).

## NEPOTISMUS IN DER VERWALTUNG DES KOMITATS LIPTAU IM 18. JAHRHUNDERT

TOMÁŠ JANURA

Die Studie befasst sich mit der allmählichen Entstehung des Nepotismus unter der Beamtenelite im Komitat Liptau in den Jahren 1712 – 1786. Die Anstifter der Entstehung eines regelechten Netzwerks von „geistlichen“ und blutsverwandten Beamten waren die regulären Vizegespane, die die Unterstützung des Hauptgespans genossen. Ideale Voraussetzungen gab es in derartigen Komitaten, wo die höchstrangigen Vertreter die Erbhauptgespane und die langjährigen Vizegespane waren. Bei der Amtsbesetzung gab es zwar reiche Auswahl an Adeligen - im Jahr 1744 lebten in Liptau 2104 Adeligen und sie stammten aus 114 Geschlechtern – aber nur ein Bruchteil gehörte zu den Komitatsbeamten. In den Jahren 1709 – 1786 beteiligten sich an der Machtausübung 30 Geschlechter (also 26%). Diese fingen an, sich näher verwandtschaftlich an die zwei einflussreichsten Geschlechter Okolicsány und Szent-Ivány zu binden.

Grundlegend war die Amtszeit des Vizegespans Ladislav Okolicsány (1712 – 1725). In zwei Wahlen 1712 erreichte er 41-prozentigen Anteil an „Familienbeamten“. In vier Wahlen bis zum Jahr 1718 bekam er 50%. In den Jahren 1718 und 1719 waren es 56%. Das beste Ergebnis erreichte er im Jahr 1721, als er 61% bekam. Nach der Zwischenzeit der Vizegespane Mikuláš Dvornikovics und František Pongrácz in den Jahren 1725 – 1740 begann die höchste Etappe des Nepotismus. Zur Zeit des Vizegespans František Szent-Ivány (1740 – 1758) wurde bei den Wahlen in den Jahren 1740, 1744 und 1755 ein Anteil von 88% erzielt. Die schlechtesten Ergebnisse brachte die Wahl im Jahr 1747 mit 81% und im Jahr 1767 mit 75%. Die goldene Ära kam mit dem Vizegespan Anton Okolicsány (1758 – 1775). Der Anteil gewählten blutsverwandten und „geistlichen“ Verwandten blieb in den Jahren 1758, 1763 und 1767 bei 94%. Endgültigen Niedergang erlebte die Vetternwirtschaft beim Vizegespan Ján Szent-Ivány (1775 – 1786). Im Jahr 1775 wurden 78% gewählt und im Jahr 1783 etwas weniger als 76%. Nach der Erneuerung des selbstständigen Komitats Liptau betrug der Anteil der „Familienbeamten“ vom Vizegespan Štefan Rakovszký nur 44%.

Mgr. Tomáš Janura, PhD.

Historický ústav SAV, Klemensova 19, 813 64 Bratislava, [histjanu@savba.sk](mailto:histjanu@savba.sk)

---

59 MV SR, ŠABY, f. LŽ I, KP from 1790, i. no. 60, p. 8-14; f. ZCM, MF Liptovská Teplá, i. no. 483, p. 35; MF Liptovský Michal, i. no. 524, p. 25. SZLUHA, Liptó vármegye, ref. 7, p. 18, 19, 263, 348, 349, 385, 440-442, 510, 650, 651, 689, 729, 774, 778, 779.

## THE SLOVAK ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS IN THE YEARS 1945 – 1952

ADAM HUDEK

HUDEK, Adam. The Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts in the years 1945 – 1952. *Historický časopis*, 2012, 60, Supplement, pp. 67-96, Bratislava.

The development of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts in the turbulent period 1945 – 1952 documents the illusory nature of ideas about the possibility of the autonomous development of science and research in a society experiencing great political shocks. The article analyses the political and ideological influences that inevitably directed the functioning of the academy. The institution was formally apolitical, but, in reality, it was largely dependent on the current government, so it inevitably became an object of political struggles in the state. The aim of the article is also to point out how the academy attempted to make pragmatic use of the current political situation to achieve the status of the leading institution in Slovak science and research.

The Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts. Organization of scientific research. Communist Party. Ideologization. Marxist science.

A combination of great breaks with surprising continuity of development is characteristic of the 65 years of existence of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS, in Slovak: Slovenská akadémia vied – SAV) and its predecessor, the Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA, in Slovak: Slovenská akadémia vied a umení – SAVU). The majority of the changes to the Academy were directly connected with political and constitutional upheavals, which affected the whole of Slovak society. At first sight, the turbulent period of existence of the SASA (1943 – 1953) looks like an illustrative example, but in spite of this, it significantly contributed to Slovakia maintaining its independent scientific research institution in the form of the SAS.

At the end of the Second World in 1945, the Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts was less than three years old. It was a very young institution and so its existence was not legitimized by a tradition of many years. Therefore, it was natural that immediately after the war, when state and other institutions, established in the period of the Slovak state, were dissolved, the SASA was also threatened with dissolution. The fact that it survived can be attributed to the skill and influence of its defenders, as well as to the favourable circumstances, which secured the support of the new Slovak political elites.

The academy existed only formally at the end of the Second World War. Its real functioning was already stopped in 1944, when military events directly affected the territory of Slovakia.<sup>1</sup> The new era for the SASA began only after partial consolidation of the situation in the renewed Czechoslovakia. Although the scientific achievement of the academy in the period of the Slovak state was not and could not be significant, the idea of its existence had penetrated into the consciousness of society to such an extent that

---

1 Evacuation of the SASA from Bratislava was considered from 1 May 1944. See: Central Archives of the SAS (hereinafter CA SAS), fond (hereinafter f.) SAVU, carton (hereinafter c.) 51.

its usefulness for the post-war development of Slovakia was not doubted in principle. The new Slovak political leaders did not consider its dissolution. On the contrary, they accepted a program for its gradual reorganization and further development. The question of preserving the academy also had considerable political value. It enabled politicians to present its existence as one of the results of Slovak national emancipation. As the historian František Bokes accurately stated: *“In the new conditions, arising after the renewal of the Czechoslovak Republic, especially when the Košice government recognized the separate existence of the Slovak nation as an equal partner with the Czech nation and so enabled it to determine the degree of its rights to decide on its cultural needs, essential for securing an independent position in the framework of Czechoslovakia by means of its own institutions, the renewed Commission for Schools and National Education as the national authority in the field of education and culture respected the existence of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts, and with the agreement of the Slovak National Council provided it with a further grant of the original size from the resources of the budget for education and culture.”*<sup>2</sup>

From the political point of view, therefore, the existence of the Slovak Academy became part of the idea of the equal position of the Czech and Slovak nations in the revived republic. This obviously meant a substantial increase in the SASA's chance to survive, in spite of the fact that it originated under an authoritarian regime, which collaborated with Nazi Germany. However, several facts spoke in favour of the academy. The first of them was its relatively weak connection to the Ludák regime of the time of the Slovak state. As František Bokes emphasized: *“In spite of the fact that the SASA was founded as the representative body of Slovak science and art by representatives of Slovak statehood, who assisted German fascism and its war aims, it did not become a mere instrument of the Slovak government, which showed only minimal interest in its existence from either the material or the ideological points of view.”*<sup>3</sup> The Communist member of parliament Fraňo Kráľ expressed a very pragmatic point of view on the existence of the SASA to the Slovak National Council (SNC) in November 1945: *“As is well-known, the academy was established by the old regime, which tried to strengthen its position in this highest field of culture by giving its establishment the corresponding anti-democratic fascist tendencies. Although things were so, it is not necessary to explain more fully to this council that our nation needs this institution, because great tasks await it today.”*<sup>4</sup> A significant degree of pragmatism and lack of prejudice was also shown by the temporary administrator of the SASA Mikuláš Bakoš: *“In spite of wartime and post-war difficulties, which do not create an atmosphere favourable for scientific work, and seriously obstruct organizational work in the field of culture, the Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts has done decent*

2 BOKES, František. *Snahy o organizovanie slovenskej vedy od konca 18. storočia do vzniku SAV. (Efforts to organize Slovak science from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the establishment of the SAS).* Bratislava : Vydavateľstvo SAV, 1967, p. 98.

3 BOKES, ref. 2.

4 Spoločná česko-slovenská parlamentná knižnica, SNR 1945 – 1946 – stenoprotokoly, 14. schôdza (The joint Czech and Slovak Digital parliamentary library), Slovak National Council 1945 – 1946 - stenographic record, 14<sup>th</sup> meeting) 26 November 1945, <http://www.psp.cz/eknih/1945snr/stenprot/014schuz/s014006.htm>

*cultural and publishing work in the three years of its existence.*”<sup>5</sup> A further fact that helped the academy in the post-war period was the “cadre profile” of its staff. The SASA in the period 1943 – 1945 was not an ideological institution. People with an indifferent or even hostile attitude to the regime could become its employees. The presidium of the academy did not attempt to ideologically intervene in the work of scientific researchers. Therefore, after 1945, it was not easy to accuse the SASA of being an institutional support for the Lúďák regime.

The smooth transition of the SASA to the new political reality was also assisted by the fact that its old presidium did not attempt to continue its activities.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the new regime could easily control the academy almost immediately after the liberation. On 9 May 1945, the Commission for Education and Culture (CEC – in Slovak: Poverenictvo školstva a osvety – PŠO) formally dismissed the old presidium and appointed the director of the Institute of Literature Mikuláš Bakoš as the temporary administrator. Bakoš quickly succeeded in persuading the newly formed CEC and SNC to temporarily accept the continued existence of the SASA in the form defined by the act from 1942. Other original members of the academy, who had significant positions, but were not compromised by participation in its highest authorities, also worked in favour of this solution. Apart from Mikuláš Bakoš, they included the former director of the Institute of Geography and later also of History, František Bokes.<sup>7</sup> Both were directly interested in discussions about the necessary organizational and personnel changes at the academy. Other people from the academy started political careers after the war, but they still devoted attention to the problem of the SASA and defended its interests. The most active in this direction were the members of the SNC, Ondrej Pavlík<sup>8</sup> and Michal Chorváth.<sup>9</sup>

The functioning of the academy according to the 1942 act could be only temporary. The SASA could not establish itself in the new political and social conditions without undergoing change. An institution functioning on the basis of legislation adopted by the “fascist regime” of the Slovak state could not exist in post-war Czechoslovakia for ideological reasons. As Michal Chorváth proclaimed: “*It is unworthy of the dignity of*

---

5 Spoločná česko-slovenská parlamentná knižnica, SNR 1945 – 1946 – stenoprotokoly, 15. shôdza 26. November 1945, <http://www.psp.cz/eknih/1945snr/stenprot/014schuz/s014008.htm>

6 The majority continued to work in higher education, which appeared to offer greater financial and career security after 1945. Some returned to the academy after a time as external researchers. However, after the communist coup of 1948 most of them suffered persecution. For example, the former general secretary Ludovít Novák was able to return to academic work only in 1968.

7 In 1945, he worked at the CEC, where he was concerned with recreating the SASA in the new conditions. Until the middle of 1946 he was also employed in the Foreign Ministry, and in 1948 – 1950 at the Commission for Information. He was also active as a journalist and editor.

8 Member of the Temporary National Assembly and the SNC. He was a member of the Communist Party, and in the first half of the 1950s, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia (CC CPS). In the period 1950 – 1951, he was first deputy minister of education, science and art. As a scientific researcher, he specialized in educational methodology.

9 Michal Chorváth was a literary scientist and translator. From April to September 1945 he was commissioner of the SNC for information. From 1 November 1945 to the end of 1947 he was head of the culture section of the CEC. From May 1948 to September 1949 he worked in the CC CPS. In 1949 – 1950, he was chairman of the Slovak section of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers. He was concerned with the functioning and organizational changes at the SASA.

*the Slovak nation that the origin of its highest representative cultural institution should be connected with the names of representatives of a hated regime, against which our whole nation spontaneously rose up in arms and decisively rejected in principle and in practice.*"<sup>10</sup> A Reorganization Commission was already established at the CEC in 1945, to examine the old act on the SASA and propose a new one "in a people's democratic spirit". The commission was composed of members of the SNC and scientific workers, who had the confidence of the new regime.

At the same time, a Screening Commission headed by Mikuláš Bakoš was formed to check the activity of academy staff members during the war years and ensure their loyalty to the post-war regime.<sup>11</sup> Although the participants in the so-called first congress of artistic and scientific workers decided in August 1945, that scientific and artistic life should be decided by expert criteria, the ruling politicians decided otherwise. On 23 August 1945, the SNC unanimously approved a decree on the conditions of service of state and scientific employees, ordering the dismissal from state service, not only of collaborators, but also of persons of German or Hungarian nationality.<sup>12</sup>

The commission screened all the employees of the SASA for three days (10-13 August 1945), and stated that none of them had held radical positions during the period 1939 – 1945. This had also been recognized immediately after the war by the CEC, which emphasized in a report on the state of the academy that no employee of the academy had participated in Aryanzation or in opposition to the Slovak National Uprising, Slovak National Council or Czechoslovak Republic.<sup>13</sup>

In spite of this, four employees<sup>14</sup> were summoned for questioning by the commission. It was characteristic of the anti-Hungarian resentment in Slovakia at the time, that the people of Slovak nationality accused of sympathy with the former regime were freed, but two scientists of Hungarian nationality did not pass the screening. In the end, only František Zagiba, director of the Institute of Music, was dismissed. However, the course of the screening process showed the dilemma, which Slovak scientific institutions also had to face later. The great shortage of high quality scientific workers meant that if an adequate level of research was going to be maintained, employees could not be carelessly dismissed because of their political views. Therefore, the regular ideological pur-

10 Spoločná česko-slovenská parlamentná knižnica, SNR 1945 – 1946 – stenoprotokoly, 15. shôdza 8 Februáru 1946, <http://www.psp.cz/eknih/1945snr/stenprot/015schuz/s015007.htm>

11 Screening began on 13 August 1945, although the decree of the Slovak National Council amending the service conditions for state employees was issued only on 23 August 1945.

12 Spoločná česko-slovenská parlamentná knižnica, SNR 1945 – 1946 – stenoprotokoly, 11. shôdza 21 Augustu 1945, <http://www.psp.cz/eknih/1945snr/stenprot/011schuz/s014003.htm>

13 The report was worked out on 18 May 1945 by František Bokes, who was director of an institute in the period 1943 – 1945, so there is some reason to doubt his impartiality. CA SAS, f. SAVU, c. 51, Správa o stave SAVU 18. 5. 1945. (Report on the state of the SASA on 18 May 1945.)

14 All state employees had to fill in a questionnaire *O osobných pomeroch a k zisteniu štátoobčianskej a národnej spoľahlivosti štátneho a verejného zamestnanca*, (*On personal positions and ascertaining state-citizenship and national reliability of state and public employees*), which ascertained mainly nationality, cooperation with Hlinka's Slovak People's Party and the Hungarian parties, or with Hungarians and Germans in general. Apart from this, the documentation of individual employees of the SASA also included questionnaires required by the CEC, curricula vitae and if appropriate accusation documents.

ges at the academy led to disputes between the representatives of the scientific institutions and the government.

The screening was repeated in March 1946 already after the adoption of a new act on the SASA. However, first it was necessary to screen the commission itself, because as was proved, “*some of its members had views that were incompatible with the people’s democratic system*”.<sup>15</sup> This time, Ondrej Pavlik was responsible for the screening, with a clear order to strictly apply the decree of the SNC, which meant in practice immediate dismissal of all persons with Hungarian nationality.<sup>16</sup> One of the reasons why the screenings occurred so quickly was the fact that immediately after the war there were not many people to screen. The majority of staff of the academy were evacuated from Bratislava before the end of the war, and many had not returned or did not even want to. The property of the SASA had been transported to various places in Slovakia.<sup>17</sup> The situation began to stabilize only when the Commission for Education and Culture secured the academy’s financial and organizational position.

The approval of the new Act on the SASA in 1946 was a more substantial turning point. The Commission for Reorganization of the Academy worked out the proposal for the new statute in November 1945 and submitted it for consideration by the CEC. According to the official explanation: “*As a result of the change in the constitutional situation, the legal regulation of the SASA, established according to Act 135/1942, is not appropriate. Therefore, it is necessary to construct the SASA on a people’s democratic basis.*”<sup>18</sup> The new Act on the SASA was approved by the SNC on 8 February 1946. The approval had the form of a ceremonial acclamation. To give an understanding of the ideas of the politicians on the tasks and position of the new SASA, it is useful to quote several statements by the supporters of the new act. Member of the SNC Pavol Haljan presented the establishment of the academy as the culmination of a long-term national effort: “*Today we are fulfilling the dream of the groups of Bernolák and Štúr, and of those who enthusiastically founded the Matica Slovenská cultural organization in the last century. Today we are fulfilling the call of our national bards, today we are giving a firm form to our national tradition, shaped by the genius of the nation from Cyril and Methodius through Bernolák, Kollár, Šafárik and Štúr, Vajanský, Hviezdoslav, Masaryk and Štefanik to the Slovak National Uprising. Today we are also fulfilling the testament of our great member and recently departed national artist Janko Jesenský.*”<sup>19</sup> According to Michal Chorváth this process was possible only because the Slovak nation as a whole was currently experiencing its brightest period: “*It is no accident that the establishment of the*

---

15 CA SAS, f. SAVU, c. 52, Preverovanie zamestnancov zápisnice zo zasadnutia preverovacej komisie zo dňa 9.3.1946, (Record of screening of employees from the session of the screening commission on 9 March 1946.).

16 CA SAS, f. SAVU, c. 52.

17 The library was transported to Eubochňa. Some furniture was in Skalica. Equipment of the Institute of Linguistics was at Stráže nad Myjavou, and the editorial office of the SASA was in Martin. CA SAS, f. SAVU, c. 51, Správa o stave SAVU 18.5.1945.

18 CA SAS, f. SAVU, c. 52, Osobné a vecné pomery v SAVU Stav k 1.3.1946. (The personal and material situation in the SASA up to 1 March 1946.).

19 Spoločná česko-slovenská parlamentná knižnica, SNR 1945 – 1946 – stenoprotokoly, 15. schôdza 8 February 1946, <http://www.psp.cz/eknih/1945snr/stenprot/015schuz/s015007.htm>

*Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts is happening right now, when the Slovak nation as a whole has become aware of its historic mission, and with its struggle for the freedom of itself, the Czechoslovak Republic and world democracy to some degree fulfilled, when it knows the historic context of its efforts, gains recognition of its political rights and stands on the threshold of full development of its life.*"<sup>20</sup> The historical justification emphasized Slovak specifics of the establishment of the academy, appealing to the traditional ideas about the poverty and plebeian nature of the Slovaks: *"It is characteristic for the Slovak nation that its Academy was not founded by a generous noble patron from his rich resources, but by the national political body, which regards culture as a vital necessity for our society. This has some disadvantages, but they are outweighed by the fact that the representatives of the Slovak people have spontaneously recognized that without lively and pulsating culture, all our achievements are uncertain and cannot reach fulfilment.*"<sup>21</sup> Using precisely the relative poverty of the national community, Michal Chorváth elegantly justified the relatively strong control of the SASA by the state authorities, which should limit wasteful and "unproductive research": *"Starting from the given situation, that considering the general poverty of our nation, the Academy cannot be provided with unlimited financial resources, but it will be maintained in its own interest by the whole nation through its political representatives, the proposal defines substantial controlling power over the financing of the Academy to superior administrative bodies..."*<sup>22</sup>

The ideas about the precise tasks of the academy were still not very clearly defined. Michal Chorváth clearly saw the academy as a cultural and social-science institution based on the traditions of the past: *"Our culture can develop only from natural foundations, only from what we already have. We will not build scientific institutes, which have no connection with our reality."*<sup>23</sup> In contrast to Chorváth, Mikuláš Bakoš already appealed in 1945 for the academy to direct its attention to areas previously lacking in Slovakia: *"In our cultural-policy planning, it is also important to re-orient our cultural and mental atmosphere. Our cultural tradition and cultural life has so far been rather one-sidedly oriented towards the humanities. Literature, language and history are almost the exclusive subjects of our cultural creativity, with nature, natural sciences and technology receiving minimal attention."*<sup>24</sup> Thus, Mikuláš Bakoš was the first to publicly outline the idea that had to become the official program for the further development of the academy. The members of the SNC were also concerned that the academy should represent Slovakia to the outside world, *"so that it slips off the narrow boots of prejudice and separatism, so that it brings honour to the wider world cultural public, its own nation and the Czechoslovak Republic."*<sup>25</sup>

The authors of the proposed Act on the SASA also felt obliged to express themselves on two basic arguments that cast doubt on the justification for its existence. The first of them was the claim that the establishment of another scientific institution, in addition to

---

20 Ref. 19.

21 Ref. 19.

22 Ref. 19.

23 Ref. 19.

24 Ref. 19.

25 Ref. 19.



the universities and the Matica Slovenská (MS) cultural organization meant a fragmentation of the limited scientific strength of Slovakia. A similar, although more extensive and harsher discussion had occurred in 1942. In 1946, Michal Chorváth rejected this argument with only a simple phrase: *“Yes, we also need the universities, including a technical university, and we need Matica Slovenská. Each of these institutions fulfils its role, without which our life would be lost. This is exactly why we need the Academy, because it will fulfil its specific role, which cannot be taken by any other institution.”*<sup>26</sup> It appears that at this time, nobody in Slovakia had serious doubts about the justification for the existence of the SASA. However, it was different on the level of the whole state. Discussion had begun on the government level about the central organization of scientific research. The question resounded about whether the Slovak academy had any real scientific justification apart from the “national” argument. However, the Slovak government bodies insisted on its existence, and in 1946 they had enough legal power to assert their interests. Therefore, dissenting views were vigorously rejected. In an entirely clear reference to the past, Michal Chorváth described fulfilment of the political rights of the Slovaks as a factor for the stability of Czechoslovakia: *“Voices are asking whether the Academy is only an expression of our Slovak separatism, whether it is a hidden attack on the unity of the state. It is impossible to avoid laughing. Doesn’t securing the political rights of our nation mean strengthening of the Republic? Doesn’t it mean healthier, more sincere relations between the Czechs and Slovaks? Isn’t the Slovak National Council itself a guarantee of the strength and indivisibility of the Czechoslovak Republic? In the same way, the Academy will also be a true bridge bringing Czech and Slovak culture together. And I believe that just as the political application of our nation has been a powerful new source of strength for the whole state, the development of our culture in the newly established Academy will be a powerful stimulus for the common cultural development of the fraternal and permanently united nations.”*<sup>27</sup> However, the question of Slovak “scientific separatism” was only beginning to gain importance at this time. With the decline in the power of the Slovak political institutions and the new centralizing tendency, especially after 1948, pressure for reduction of the autonomy of the Slovak Academy also strengthened. On the other hand, it is necessary to emphasize that the politicians and academic functionaries were aware that the development of science in Slovakia would clearly be dependent on Czech cooperation and they certainly did not reject it.

The majority of speakers also stressed that the new academy had to be free and non-political: *“However, if the Academy of Sciences and Arts is going to fulfil the lofty aim set by our assembly, its freedom of convictions, scientific research and thought must be guaranteed. However, we consider any politicization of the Academy would bring dishonour on the nation.”*<sup>28</sup> According to the thinking of its political (re)-founders, the SASA had to fulfil a very ambitious aim. It had to be an autonomous, apolitical and free institution, which carried out scientific and artistic activity on a European level. It had to organize this activity within Slovakia and present it at home and abroad. Unfortunately,

---

26 Ref. 19.

27 Ref. 19.

28 Ref. 19. From the speech by Pavol Haljan, a member of the SNC for the Democratic Party.

after passing of the act, the regime did hardly anything to ensure that the SASA had a real chance to fulfil the aims set for it. The politicians were more interested in political control of the academy, than in support for science and research. As a result, the academy became the object of a struggle between the Communist and Democratic parties to dominate Slovak public life.

In spite of the calls for a new beginning and rejection of links to the preceding period of the Slovak state, the new act did not bring radical changes. The new legislation preserved the original character of the SASA from the point of view of organization, activity and aims.<sup>29</sup> The new SASA had three basic “classes”:

1. Culture-science, divided into sections for philosophy, history and linguistics, social science and law;
2. Natural science and technology with sections for maths and physics, natural-science, medicine and technology;
3. Art with sections for literature, music and theatre with film.

The new act, counting on the independent and non-political nature of the whole institution, also set the rules for electing the administrative bodies: the President of the Republic had to appoint the first academics on the basis of proposals from the Board of Commissioners. These academics would then elect the Presidium of the Academy. Until then, it would be headed by an administrator appointed by the Commission for Education. Mikuláš Bakoš continued to hold this position. The property, institutes and staff of the former academy automatically passed into the hands of the new SASA. On 1 March 1946, the following institutes of the academy were functioning at least formally: Philosophy (chairman Igor Hrušovský), History (chairman Branislav Varsík), Geography (chairman Ján Hromádka), Social-Science (chairman Anton Štefánek), Slavonic Studies (chairman Ján Stanislav), Ethnography (nominated chairman Peter Bogatyrev, but he never took up the position and was later replaced by Andrew Melicherčík), Educational Methodology (chairman Ondrej Pavlík), Literary Studies (chairman Milan Pišút) and Linguistics (chairman Eugen Pavlín).<sup>30</sup> Thus research was occurring exclusively in the field of the social sciences, and the academy was concerned mainly with homeland studies themes. In this way, its orientation was very similar to that of the Matica Slovenská cultural organization. The technical, natural science and medical institutes that were going to make the main contribution to the general development of Slovakia, existed only on the level of plans for the future. The main problem of the SASA was shortage of experts.<sup>31</sup> Even the existing institutes had not been successfully staffed. Several were only functioning formally and actually had no staff.<sup>32</sup> The institutes could not offer scientists comparable conditions to other scientific institutions, and so it was very difficult to find new staff. Apart from this, the majority of the staff only worked externally for the academy.<sup>33</sup>

29 BOKES, ref. 2, p. 100.

30 CA SAS, f. SAVU, c. 52, Osobné a vecné pomery v SAVU.

31 In 1946, the SASA had a scientific staff of about 60. However, even at the time of its establishment in 1942, it was expected to have more than 100 employees.

32 The Institute of History was in this position in 1946. The Institute of Educational Methodology disappeared relatively quickly. Nobody worked there apart from Ondrej Pavlík.

33 All the chairmen of the institutes were external, in the majority of cases, university professors.

In this period, the SASA functioned mainly as a coordinating institution, and the most important result of its activity was publishing and the production of periodicals.<sup>34</sup> In the following years, it remained difficult for it to operate as the highest institution of Slovak science, although this was how the law defined it.

The quickest possible appointment of its first members was of key importance for the functioning of the academy. The commissioner for education and culture Ladislav Novomeský<sup>35</sup> asked the leadership of the SASA for the professional qualifications of the proposed candidates in July 1946.<sup>36</sup> They had to be submitted to President Edvard Beneš for approval. To achieve the highest level of objectivity and to give the best impression, the recommendations were worked out by significant figures from Czech cultural and scientific life.<sup>37</sup> However, the appointments did not happen, and this had fatal consequences for the functioning of the academy. The SASA functioned according to a provisional regime until its transformation into the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS) in 1953. In spite of its official status, in reality it resembled a departmental academy of the Commission for Education. Although the commission did not produce the plan for the academy's research, it could control the academy from the point of view of organization and personnel. The causes of this situation were highly political.

In spite of the fact that when approving the Act on the Academy, the majority of members of the SNC enthused about independence, separation from politics and scientific freedom, in reality, there was, from the beginning, a struggle to control this institution between the Communists and the "Democrats", that is the representatives of the Democratic Party. It was difficult for the leadership of the SASA to defend itself against such pressures. In contrast to the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts (CASA),<sup>38</sup> the SASA was founded as an organization absolutely dependent on the state authorities in terms of both finance and personnel. The only way to escape from this pressure was appointment of the members and commencement of the process of self-government. Until then, the academy was run by an administrator and later by three administrative committees, to a large extent dependent on the commissioner for education.

The parliamentary elections of May 1946 took place in Slovakia in a tense and confrontational atmosphere of struggle between the Communists and their opponents. In such a situation, it was complicated for the Board of Commissioners, rocked by quar-

---

34 The periodicals *Linguistica Slovaca*, *Historica Slovaca*, *Carpatica Slovaca*, *Physiografica Slovaca*, *Philosophica Slovaca*. Apart from this, the SASA exchanged its publications with the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts, Charles University and Masaryk University. See: KAMENCOVÁ, Lydia. Vznik a činnost SAVU. (The origin and activity of the SASA). In PÖSS, Ondrej (ed.). *Z dejín vied a techniky na Slovensku XVI. Slovenská akadémia vied a umení*. Bratislava : HÚ SAV, 1994.

35 Novomeský was nominated by the Communist Party.

36 The proposed candidates: philosopher Igor Hrušovský, Orientalist Ján Bakoš, Slavist Ján Stanislav, sociologist Anton Štefánek, lawyers Karol Kizlink and Adolf Záturecký, mathematician Jur Hronec, geologist Dimitri Andrusov, geographer Ján Hromádka, doctor of medicine Ladislav Dérer, water economist Štefan Bella, poet Ivan Krasko, writer Božena Slančíková-Timrava, composers of music Alexander Moyzes and Eugen Suchoň, actor and director Andrej Bagar and painter Koloman Sokol.

37 For example, Bedřich Hrozný worked out the assessment of the Orientalist Ján Bakoš.

38 The CASA (Česká akadémia vied a umení – ČAVU) was established at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by a private benefactor, and it kept its independence for a long time.

rels, to concern itself seriously with the proposed nominations for the first academics.<sup>39</sup> Apart from this, the academy could be controlled more easily, if its organization was in a provisional state. The scientific staff was aware of this, and they strove to speed up the appointment of the proposed academics, unfortunately in vain.<sup>40</sup> The support of the Commissioner for Education Ladislav Novomeský, one of the few politicians, who really engaged in favour of the SASA, was not enough. The Arts and Sciences Council (ASC – in Slovak: Umelecká a vedecká rada, UVR), which associated the majority of important scientists and artists in Slovakia, began to work in favour of the SASA.<sup>41</sup> Its role was to mediate contacts between its members and the public offices. It also had an expert advisory role for the government bodies.<sup>42</sup> The mathematician Jur Hronec became the first chairman of this organization. Mikuláš Bakoš was elected to the decisive position of general secretary in 1946. As a leading person in both the SASA and ASC, he used his considerable influence on the development of scientific life in Slovakia to support the organizational growth of the academy.

The efforts of the scientific community and some Slovak politicians to achieve the earliest possible appointment of regular members of the academy were finally unsuccessful. However, in the context of ideas about scientific policy on the level of the whole state, it is necessary to consider it a success that the Slovak Academy of Sciences continued to exist as an independent organization.<sup>43</sup> The construction program of the government from July 1946 gave the Ministry of Education and Culture the task of preparing the proposal for an Act on establishing the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (CSAS – in Slovak: Československá akadémia vied, ČSAV) as the central state institution for scientific work. This plan was part of the general centralizing effort of the Czechoslovak government, in which the Communists were dominant after the 1946 elections. On 8 June 1946, the Prime Minister Klement Gottwald outlined to the National Assembly a clear idea of the organization of scientific work: *“to complete the task of building up the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences as the central state institution for scientific work.”*<sup>44</sup> The state interest in centralization and “statization” of science was formulated by Zdeněk Nejedlý, one of the most influential ideologues in the Communist Part of Czechoslovakia. He proclaimed that the new academy must become a scientific instrument and organic part of building the state and its role would be to carry out tasks required by the state. On the basis of this plan, the Ministry of Education and Culture, at that time headed by Jaroslav Stránský,<sup>45</sup> was given the task of proposing a solution in this direction.<sup>46</sup>

---

39 KAMENCOVÁ, ref. 34, p. 32.

40 KAMENCOVÁ, ref. 34, p. 32.

41 It was officially established at the First Congress of Artistic and Scientific Workers on 28 August 1945. It was formally established by law on 14 May 1946. The ASC gained considerable influence. Scientists and artists could not legally carry on their activities without being members of it.

42 BOKES, ref. 2, p. 108-109.

43 Within the scientific community this was mainly thanks to the activity of Mikuláš Bakoš.

44 CA SAS, f. SAVU, c. 8, Ministerský prípis o ČSAV. (Ministerial memorandum on the CSAS.).

45 Stránský was a member of the Czechoslovak National Social Party (Československá strana národně sociální).

46 The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was not especially interested in questions connected with scien-

As was already stated, the existence of the SASA was seen as an expression of “*pointless Slovak separatism*” by various representatives of the central institutions. A similar view was evidently held by President Edvard Beneš, the only person, who could appoint new academics. However, the President constantly delayed this process. It was known that he had certain, unspecified reservations to some proposals.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, unofficial requests for revision of the list of candidates appeared. However, the Slovak scientific community realized that a search for new compromises would be unbearably slow, so they strove to avoid such attempts.<sup>48</sup>

The historian František Bokes accused Beneš of deliberately delaying the appointment process. The main reason had to be his centralist and Czechoslovakist views: “*Delaying the appointment of the first members of the SASA before 1948 is explainable by the attitude of the President of the Republic to Slovak cultural problems.*”<sup>49</sup> However, this attitude also clearly suited the Czechoslovak government, which was planning to centralize scientific research in the CSAS. The non-functioning SASA was undoubtedly regarded as a good argument supporting the formation of a central institution.

In November 1946, the Ministry of Education and Science presented four variants for the formation of the CSAS, and sent them to the scientific societies, universities and scientific institutes with the request that they express their views as soon as possible. The list of basic alternative solutions was as follows:<sup>50</sup>

1. The CSAS will be established as an entirely new institution with a new statute. Other similar institutions will be dissolved and re-established as organic components of the CSAS. The academy would be a single scientific organization of mammoth proportions.
2. The CSAS should be created from already existing institutions. It should be organizationally superior to the other institutions, which should be incorporated into it.
3. The CSAS should be created by merging large institutions, and incorporating the smaller ones in some way.
4. The CSAS should be formed as an organizational super-structure, which would link existing institutions in their original form. The aim of the academy should be coordination and bringing together of work plans.<sup>51</sup>

---

ce and education at this time. In the first post-war government, a Communist Zdeněk Nejedlý held the post of minister of education and information, but after the 1946 elections, the Communists exchanged this post for the Ministry of Internal Trade, and left it to the National Socials until after the 1948 coup. See: CONNELLY, John. *Captive University: The Sovietization of East German, Czech, and Polish Higher Education, 1945-1956*. University of North Carolina Press : 2000. In this case the Czech translation of the book was used: *Zotročená univerzita : Sovětizace vysokého školství ve východním Německu, v českých zemích a v Polsku v letech 1945-1956*. Prague : Karolinum, 2008, p. 62.

47 CA SAS, f. UVR, c. 18, Vymenovanie prvých členov SAVU – žiadosť o intervenciu (Appointment of the first members of the SASA – request for intervention) (1948).

48 In the given situation, a candidate had to suit both major political forces in Slovakia, the representatives of the central government and the president.

49 BOKES, ref. 2, p. 101.

50 CA SAS, f. SAVU, c. 8, Rozbor teoretických možností, jež se naskytají pro řešení otázky zřízení ČSAV. (Analysis of the theoretical possibilities for solution of the question of organization of the CSAS.).

51 This possibility was described as the simplest and most probable, so it was worked out in more detail.

The proposal was not directly concerned with Slovak institutions, but every proposed variant had to concern the Slovak Academy. However, the initiative was left to the Slovak institutions, which had to submit the plans to the representatives of the SASA and other scientific institutions. The Ministry of Education proposed two possible ways of working the Slovak Academy into the central organization. In the first case, the national question would play no role. There would be no difference between Slovak and Czech institutions. The question of national parity had to be a matter of agreement between scientific workers. The second possibility counted on administrative creation of Czech, Slovak and perhaps also Moravian sections in the framework of the CSAS. The new academy for the whole state was defined as a state scientific institute, administratively falling under the Ministry of Education and Culture.

As in the case of the approval of the Act on the SASA, state control over the plans and direction of research, together with the question of the effective use of finance, were what most resounded in the plans for the foundation of the CSAS. The basic idea was state control of scientific research, which had been “uncoordinated” from the point of view of the government.<sup>52</sup> However, the proposal broke down on the sharp disagreement of almost all the affected organizations, to which the ministry’s plan was submitted. The Council of Professors of the Faculty of Philosophy of Masaryk University in Brno justified its rejection of the ministry’s proposals with the argument that creation of the CSAS would establish an inflexible unit of mammoth proportions, which would function only as a new administrative centre.<sup>53</sup> The sharpest views came from the artistic section of the CASA. It informed the minister that their organization had originated from a private gift, and the state had no right to change or abolish something to which it had not contributed.<sup>54</sup> The CASA as a whole rejected the idea of state intervention in science and so also any form of state take-over, with the purely expedient argument, that such a situation did not exist even in the USSR.<sup>55</sup>

On the Slovak side, a discussion of the minister’s proposals was held in February 1946,<sup>56</sup> paradoxically only a few days before the approval of the Act on the SASA. Representatives of the Slovak Technical University (STU, in Slovak: Slovenská vysoká škola technická – SVŠT), Slovak University,<sup>57</sup> ASC, SASA, Matica Slovenská and Commission for Education and Information. The universities unambiguously rejected the formation of the CSAS. Their view was expressed by Jur Hronec from the STU. The formation of the CSAS was unnecessary because the coordinating function was already performed by the State Research Council, in which the Slovaks had propor-

---

52 In the case of the origin of the CSAS, the plan directly counted on establishment of state control over the most important scientific research institutions before their incorporation into the academy.

53 CA SAS, f. SAVU c. 8, Vyjádření profesorského sboru filosofické fakulty Masarykovy university v Brně k otázce Československé akademie věd. (Statement by the Council of Professors of the Faculty of Philosophy of Masaryk University in Brno on the question of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences.)

54 CA SAS, f. SAVU c. 8, Vyjadrenie všetkých tried Českej akademie věd a umění k návrhu MŠ 26. 4. 1947. (Statement by all classes of the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts on the proposal of the Ministry of Education from 26 April 1947.)

55 Ref. 54. This shows what a strong argument appeal to the Soviet model was at the time.

56 Earlier than in most Czech institutions.

57 This was the official name of Komenius University in the period 1939 – 1954.

tional representation. The functioning of the CSAS would be ineffective and clumsy. The money would be better spent on improvement of the existing institutions. According to Hronec: *“First of all, it is necessary to organize at home”*.<sup>58</sup> Opposition to the possibility that representation of Slovak science abroad would be coordinated by the CSAS, also resounded at the discussion. The representative of the Slovak University Karol Kizlink expressed the fear that the new institution *“would have the right to forcefully intervene in the creative process of Slovak science”*.<sup>59</sup>

The SASA, ASC<sup>60</sup> and Matica Slovenská surprisingly agreed to the formation of the CSAS as a coordinating agency. Mikuláš Bakoš, who presented the official position of the SASA and ASC, justified their agreement with the formation of the CSAS by the need for scientific planning and exchange of information about on-going research.<sup>61</sup> He agreed with the establishment of an academy for the whole state with the condition that it would have separate Czech and Slovak sections, and Slovakia would have equal representation in the presidium. Although the turbulent discussion that followed did not reach a final position for the Slovak scientific community, the supporters of the CSAS also demanded an organizational structure, in which Slovak institutions would not have a feeling of *“inferiority and being ignored”*.<sup>62</sup>

In the end, the centralizing plan was not implemented because of strong opposition from the scientific community. However, this attempt had many similarities to the future organization of science and research in Czechoslovakia. In 1947, in contrast to the 1950s, we still find relatively open expression by the institutions affected. This sort of thing was not possible in the period of the Communist regime. It was entirely logical for the institutions that were going to lose their autonomy to reject the formation of the CSAS. In the Slovak case, fear of Czech hegemonism, which did not pay attention to “Slovak interests”, was added to these fears.<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, control of science for the purpose of pursuing its own research priorities was also entirely logical from the point of view of the state.

The only fact that did not entirely fall into this schema is the attitude of the SASA, the only one of the addressed institutions to support the creation of the CSAS as a coordinating institution according to variant number 4. This was the first sign of some degree of ambiguity over the functioning of the Slovak Academy. Its leadership was trying to establish the leading position of the academy in Slovak scientific research, but if the SASA wanted to achieve scientific progress and widen its range into the technical and natural sciences, help and support from the much more developed Czech scientific community was essential. The leadership of the SASA perceived the problem of weak relations with

---

58 CA SAS, f. SAVU c. 8, Zápisnica o porade konanej dňa 4. 2. 1947 vo veci zriadenia ČSAV. (Minutes of the discussion held on 4 February 1947 on the establishment of the CSAS.).

59 Ref. 58.

60 The agreement of the SASA and ASC was logical because Mikuláš Bakoš headed both.

61 The representative of Matica Slovenská also used a similar argument.

62 CA SAS, f. SAVU c. 8, Zápisnica o porade konanej dňa 4. 2. 1947 vo veci zriadenia ČSAV.

63 The above mentioned question of the representation of Slovak science abroad and coordination of foreign cooperation in future would become one of the sources of problems in relations between the CSAS and SAS.

the Czech scientific institutions. Therefore, the creation of the CSAS in the form of a co-ordinating centre could significantly help the SASA. The academy would not lose much in comparison with the existing situation. Its organizational status fully corresponded to the idea of the future functioning of the CSAS. It was established, fully financed and to some degree also directed by the state.<sup>64</sup> The establishment of the CSAS would connect the SASA with the Czech organizations, so it could appear to be a rational step for the leadership of the SASA. After rejection of the plan to establish the CSAS, the government did not develop any further activity in this direction for several years, but the plan to create a central institution for scientific research was not forgotten.

The Communist coup in 1948 meant substantial change for the history of science in Czechoslovakia in many directions. This historic turning point influenced the future of the Slovak Academy much more substantially than the end of the war. After taking over government power, the Communist regime made it clear that it had no interest in free and independent scientific research. Science had to assist the propagandist and ideological aims of the new regime. The Communists clearly declared that “*today our society needs only highly ideological science*” contributing to the development of socialist society.<sup>65</sup> Clinging to autonomy and scientific freedom was regarded as a hostile and “reactionary” attitude. Research had to be an integral part of the detailed planning process. As the Communist ideologues liked to say, academic institutions had to function in the same way as factories.<sup>66</sup> In scientific research there should only be room for workers, who were willing to entirely subordinate themselves to the ideological demands of the new regime, which in practice meant adoption of the Marxist-Leninist ideology. At the same time, strengthening of the Communist regime meant the end of the period of discussion and the possibility to openly disagree with decisions of the “party and government”. The future of the Slovak Academy, like that of all other scientific institutions, was closely linked to the ideological and power struggles in the Communist Party.

The Communist member of the SNC Michal Chorváth in a speech during 1948 already divided science into socialist – progressive and capitalist – reactionary. This was a clear appeal for the academy to adapt to the new situation: “*Apart from its scientific functions, the Academy fulfils an educational role by changing our existing type of scientific worker into the socialist scientist. Therefore, it will be necessary for the competent authorities to devote increased attention to the Academy, and ensure that the Academy will now at last operate in the period of the transition to socialism, entirely in accordance with the regulations with which it was established.*”<sup>67</sup> According to Chorváth, the academy had already been an institution of socialist type in 1946: “*I emphasize that the Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts is the first of this type in our state, and in this respect,*

---

64 In this way, it differed from the Czech academic institutions, which had a much more autonomous status.

65 CA SAS, c. 2, Zápisnica o zasadnutí všetkých pracovníkov SAVU 6.7. 1950. (Minutes from an assembly of all the staff of the SASA on 6 July 1950.).

66 The Minister of Education Zdeněk Nejedlý after 1948 expressed himself like this on universities. Connelly, *Zotročaná universita*, ref. 46, p. 210.

67 Spoločná česko-slovenská parlamentná knižnica, SNR 1948 – 1956 – stenoprotokoly, Stenografický zápis 5. zasadnutia pléna SNR 12 November 1948.



*Slovakia became a model for the whole state...*<sup>68</sup> The future role of the SASA had to lie in fulfilling state tasks and functioning according to the Soviet model: *“In the end, the whole character of the regulations indicates that the scientific research in the institutes of the Academy should not be the private affair of the scientists, but must be connected with the technical tasks and state planning, so that a state office through its expert planners can give the institutes scientific tasks, which need to be solved from the point of view of technical needs. It is not necessary to hide the fact that the model for the regulations of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts was the Academy of the Soviet Union with its socialist character of scientific work as a whole and in detail.”*<sup>69</sup> However, Chorváth’s speech was mainly politically conditioned propaganda, rather than a description of the reality at the time. For the speaker, it was clearly first of all a declaration of loyalty to the new regime. Although the academic institutes were sprinkled with numerous regulations and ideologues talked about the new socialist science, the real changes were minimal. In the first two years after taking power, the Communist Party did not have a clear policy on legislation in the field of science and education.<sup>70</sup> The immediate changes in the functioning of the SASA were not very substantial. Things changed only at the beginning of the 1950s. Plans for reorganization of the academic institutes appeared together with new legislation on universities. The SASA apparently survived partly because, in contrast to the Czech institutions, its complete dependence on the current government showed considerable similarity to academies of the Soviet type. However, when the government finally directed its attention to the SASA, it turned out that Michal Chorváth had been mistaken when he stated that *“the regulations on establishment of the Academy have an uncompromising spirit. These regulations already exclude the possibility of the new leading Slovak cultural institution becoming a refuge for reaction”*.<sup>71</sup>

However, the substantial political changes still did not bring a change on the question of appointment of the first members of the academy. New activity came to the scientific community when President Beneš signed the appointment document on 14 May 1948 and sent it to the office of the government. Unfortunately, this happened only after the Communist coup, when Beneš was already in a very weak position. In July 1948, further information on the fate of the proposal came from the Commission for Education, Science and Art (CESA),<sup>72</sup> after representatives of the SASA asked it to intervene with the central authorities. The Central Action Committee of the National Front (formal coalition of post-war political parties completely dominated by the Communists) replied by asking the representatives of the academy to submit a new proposal *“corresponding to the demands and spirit of the new age”* with regard for the change in the internal political situation after February 1948.<sup>73</sup> In this period, the President’s agreement already had no

---

68 Ref. 67.

69 Ref. 67.

70 This may have been connected with an initial strong anti-intellectual trend that was noticeable in the policy of the Czechoslovak Communists.

71 Spoločná česko-slovenská parlamentná knižnica, SNR 1948 – 1956 – stenoprotokoly, Stenografický zápis 5. zasadnutia pléna SNR 12 November 1948.

72 The former Commission for Education and Culture now had this name.

73 CA SAS, f. Umelecká a vedecká rada (UVR), c. 18.

weight. The problem was that although the original proposed academics belonged to the scientific and artistic elite of Slovakia, none of them belonged to the Communist Party or really sympathized with it. However, the SASA still asked that the representatives of the National Front not insist on changes: “*Since it is desirable that cultural life in Slovakia should be carried on under the leadership of the SASA, so that it does not lag behind the economic development of Slovakia, the ASC intercedes for the quick appointment of the administrative bodies of the SASA.*”<sup>74</sup> It is clear that the representatives of the academy had quickly adopted the communist “newspeak” and had a good understanding of the new reality, since they promised that at its first general assembly, the SASA would elect a progressive, that is, pro-communist leadership.

Ján Gonda explained the reason for the renewed activity of the Slovak academic community: “*If we produced a new list of proposed members of the SASA, the whole process would be delayed by a year. The prepared proposal for the organization of research is centralist, if establishment of the SASA was not already started, there would be a threat of its complete liquidation.*”<sup>75</sup> However, it is possible that the fear of liquidation of the academy was exaggerated. František Bokes wrote that “*already at that time [1948] the plan was that the SASA would be preserved in the framework of the new measures, but adapted to demands deriving from the new mission of science in the socialist society.*”<sup>76</sup> In any case, this was the last serious attempt to get members of the SASA appointed.<sup>77</sup> At the beginning of 1949, the CESA also gave up. It reacted to the activity of the leadership of the academy with a statement that it was not clear whether the proposal needed to be revised in relation to the new tasks after February.<sup>78</sup> Thus, the academy remained under the control of the Commission for Education, which was no longer even pretending that it was trying to fulfil the Act on the SASA.

On 18 December 1948, Mikuláš Bakoš gave up the function of official administrator. He clearly realized that in the given political situation he had already exhausted his possibilities. According to František Bokes, Bakoš also proposed to the commission that it should appoint a “*five member administrative committee, which would administer the SASA until the appointment of the first members and presidium according to the act.*”<sup>79</sup> The CESA adopted this plan and Commissioner Ladislav Novomeský appointed the Administrative Committee at the same time as dismissing Bakoš. The expert on Marxist philosophy Andrej Sirácky became chairman of the committee.<sup>80</sup> It was significant that all the members of the committee, perhaps with the small exception of Mikuláš Bakoš,

---

74 Ref. 73.

75 Ref. 73.

76 BOKES, ref. 2, p. 102.

77 The ASC soon became superfluous and was dissolved. Art began to be directed by individual artistic unions, while science was directed by the Commission for Education and other state offices (the Slovak Research Centre and the Slovak Planning Office).

78 CA SAS, f. ÚVR, c. 18.

79 CA SAS, f. SAVU, c. 1, Vestník SAVU – vyhotovenie úhrnnej správy za rok 1945 – 1949. (Bulletin of the SASA – Summary of news in the period 1945 – 1949.)

80 The other members were: Mikuláš Bakoš, the philosopher Igor Hrušovský, lawyer Štefan Luby and the head of the culture committee of the CESA Michal Chorváth.

unambiguously declared themselves to be Communists and Marxist scientists. The Administrative Committee was no longer only a temporary institution, but had to replace the SASA bodies foreseen by the act, namely the Presidium and General Assembly. This meant complete abandonment of application of the Act on the SASA from 1946. However, it is improbable that they were already planning the transformation of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts into the Slovak Academy of Sciences.<sup>81</sup> It is more probable that the government was trying to gain complete control over the academy, and shape it according to the needs of the time by means of administrative interventions from the CESA. A new element in the leadership of the SASA was collective decision making, introduced for the first time since 1945. In February 1950, the Administrative Committee was enlarged to include the historian and member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia Miloš Gosiorovský, the Rector of the Slovak Technical University Ján Gonda and the neurologist Jozef Černáček.

From the time of its appointment at the end of 1948, the new Administrative Committee intensively concerned itself with the internal functioning of the academy and with strengthening its position as the highest institution for scientific research. The greatest success of the SASA in the period 1949 – 1950 was taking over the scientific sections of the Matica Slovenská, which had been dissolved by the state. The dissolution of the scientific sections of the Matica Slovenská was mainly a political act by the Communist regime. However, the leadership of the academy unambiguously supported the decision to significantly limit scientific research by Matica, because this strengthened the position of the SASA. In spite of all the changes, the academy still constantly pursued the fulfilment of its basic aim, which was “*the supreme right to organize scientific life in Slovakia.*”<sup>82</sup> The two basic routes to achievement of this aim were an effort to maintain independence in relation to the central authorities in the framework of the plan to create the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, and, at the same time, support for “elimination of competition” within Slovakia. The Matica Slovenská was the academy’s main competitor. It was concerned with similar research questions and offered better conditions for work. The MS already had its tradition, it devoted two and a half times more resources to scientific activity than the SASA, and it had its own publishing and printing operation, so that it could produce scientific journals. The Matica even created a coordinating committee with the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts, at a time when the Slovak Academy had hardly any contacts with Czech institutions. Another advantage was that in 1946 the MS elected as its chairman Ladislav Novomeský, who was expected to protect it against accusations that it was pro-Ľudák.

However, other indicators, some of them purely practical, proved to be decisive. In spite of its activity, the Matica did not have the real pre-conditions to become a leading scientific institution. Its research was only a supplement to society activities, and its development had basic limits. The way the MS functioned and its statute were incompatible with modern demands for the organization and representation of science and

---

81 In that case it would have been superfluous to complete the SASA.

82 CA SAS, f. ÚVR, c. 18, List vedenia SAVU Ladislavovi Novomeskému. (Letter from the leadership of the SASA to Ladislav Novomeský.).

research in Europe. Apart from this, there was the problem of the great distance of Martin (seat of Matica slovenská) from the centre of scientific life, which was Bratislava. The organizational structure of the Matica as a society organization was adapted mainly to its original aim of public education, and not to modern scientific research going beyond the framework of homeland studies. František Bokes very accurately described the basic problems: *“The organizational and financial possibilities of the Matica Slovenská [...] are not sufficient to satisfy the rapidly growing and ramifying scientific life of Slovakia [...] If the MS [...] only partly fulfilled its basic mission given by its organizational structure from 1863 – 1875, with its own, appropriate scientific institute, it did not have the financial or human resources for widening its activity [...] and it was also clearly located away from the [...] rapidly developing centre of Slovak scientific life in Bratislava.”*<sup>83</sup>

The SASA was undoubtedly a more promising institution. It was legislatively prepared for the leading role in scientific research, it lacked personnel and it was situated in the centre of scientific life. Thus, it was a form the new regime could fill according to its needs, without regard for the traditions of the past. It offered the government the possibility to fill it with scientific workers and new institutes, which would satisfy the demands of the Communist regime. The example of the USSR undoubtedly worked in favour of the SASA, as did its “compatibility” with other similar institutions abroad. Therefore, in 1948 the government decided that the representative scientific institution would be the SASA, while the Matica would keep its public education and popularizing role. At the end of 1949, new statutes were imposed on the Matica, and these did not include the existence of scientific departments. Ladislav Novomeský submitted to the party decision without much opposition. The scientific workers considered loyal to the regime were transferred to the SASA, and so were the Matica’s scientific journals.

However, the political aims of the regime were also unambiguously behind the complete removal of the scientific research activity of the Matica. Although people in the environment of the SASA proposed limitation of the scientific activity of the Matica,<sup>84</sup> nobody directly proposed its complete abolition. It was more about the view that basic research and its coordination should be concentrated in the SASA.<sup>85</sup> According to a letter sent to the commissioner for education and chairman of the MS Ladislav Novomeský: *“On the basis of the act, the SASA has the supreme right to organize scientific work in Slovakia. However, this privileged position does not mean that other institutions cannot devote their attention to research.”*<sup>86</sup>

Several plans arose for the division of labour between the two organizations. However, the SASA gradually adopted an increasingly negative view of these efforts. The member of the Administrative Committee of the SASA Štefan Ľuby replied to the proposal to divide scientific activity between the MS and SASA, that the scientific and research

83 CA SAS, f. SAVU, c. 1, Správa o činnosti Akadémie 1945 – 1952. (A report on the activity of the Academy 1945 – 1952.)

84 However, there were similar considerations of abolishing the SASA in favour of the Matica.

85 This concerned only the social sciences. The SASA and Matica were not concerned with any other fields at the time.

86 CA SAS, f. ÚVR, c. 18, List vedenia SAVU Ladislavovi Novomeskému. (Letter from the leadership of the SASA to Ladislav Novomeský.)

activity at the MS should relate only to the theory of collecting and public education. The SASA had to do the real research.<sup>87</sup> The SASA did not yield to the Matica's effort to preserve its scientific activity, but supported the government in its interest. It is also clear that the Communist leadership did not have any sympathy with the Matica.<sup>88</sup> As a result of its important position in the Slovak state and personnel, its scientific departments were seen after 1945 as a centre of Ľudák and anti-communist thinking.<sup>89</sup> However, the Matica could not simply be dissolved. In Slovak society, its closure in 1875 universally evoked the beginning of a period of national oppression, and the Communist regime had no interest in creating parallels in 1948.<sup>90</sup> Thus, the Matica survived but at the price of complete liquidation of its scientific sections, ending of its society character<sup>91</sup> and removal of its possibility to publish. The SASA used all these measures to strengthen its position.

As already mentioned, the academy did not undergo any deep changes immediately after the change of regime in 1948. The leadership of the SASA and the chairmen of the institutes proclaimed new principles of work based on scientific materialism and declared their loyalty to the new political system. However, these were only formal declarations without any impact on the personal composition of the institutes. At first, it appeared that the party leadership was satisfied with such declarations. The main reason was the fact that Marxist science hardly existed in Slovakia before 1948. There was nobody to replace the ideologically unsatisfactory staff. Therefore, instead of repression or personnel changes, the Communists tried to persuade the scientific community to accept the principles of Marxism-Leninism. The majority of them accepted this demand. In the initial period from 1948 to 1950, this had little effect apart from the fact that many works began and ended with quotations from the "classics of Marxism-Leninism" and especially Stalin. Otherwise, they did not have a chance to be published.<sup>92</sup>

In this period, the Communist Party authorities directed their attention more to the education of future cadres directly in the university departments.<sup>93</sup> The staff of the SASA

---

87 Ref. 86.

88 It is paradoxical that in its Plan for the economic, social and cultural development of Slovakia from 1937, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia demanded the development and expansion of the scientific, literary and artistic departments of the Matica Slovenská to the level of an academy of sciences and arts. See: ŠIŠKA, Karol. Založenie a rozvoj Slovenskej akadémie vied – dôsledok leninskej národnostnej politiky a kultúrnej revolúcie v ČSSR. (The foundation and development of the Slovak Academy of Sciences – a result of the Leninist nationality policy and cultural revolution in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic). In *Slovenská akadémia vied 1953 – 1973*. Bratislava : SAV, 1973, p. 9-14.

89 It is true that the Matica as a whole was a preferred institution during the existence of the Slovak state. This damaged the moral credit of the Matica, which had difficulty defending itself against various accusations in the post-war period.

90 The records from the discussions of the Presidium of the CC CPS show that the party leadership decided to preserve the Matica only because of its tradition and position in Slovak history, in spite of its "faults and mistakes". SNA, f. ÚV KSS, c. 800, Správa o Matici slovenskej. (Report on the Matica Slovenská.).

91 The justification of the ending of the society character was the "politically inappropriate membership". Slovak National Archives (hereinafter SNA), f. ÚV KSS, c. 800, Správa o Matici slovenskej.

92 According to the circular worked out by Igor Hrušovský on 4 May 1950 only texts "worked out according to the principles of Marxism-Leninism from the point of view of methodology" could be published. CA SAS, f. SAVU, c. 2 Obežník (Circular) no. 18/50.

93 For this reason, the universities were under much tighter ideological control. The purges there were long-

had the advantage that they did not directly participate in the very strictly controlled university teaching. The regime realized that in the framework of achieving its aims, it could not allow ideologically unsatisfactory scientists to teach, but their knowledge could be used in scientific work, even if it was not built on Marxist foundations.<sup>94</sup> Therefore, while harsh purges were carried out in the universities in 1948,<sup>95</sup> the academic institutes were spared.

At the end of 1949, Ondrej Pavlík proposed the establishment of an Arts and Science Council of the Communist Party of Slovakia: *“It is necessary that the leading role of the party should also be applied in the field of scientific work [...] so that there will be a centre able to deal with this work directly in the party.”*<sup>96</sup> Thus, in November 1949, the Scientific Council of the CPS (Vedecká rada pri KSS) was established for the purpose of *“party influence over scientific work”*.<sup>97</sup> The creation of this commission ended the formal independence of the SASA from the party bodies, although it is possible to judge from the surviving sources that the commission did not intervene very substantially in the functioning of the academy, and devoted more of its attention to preparatory work for the opening of the new Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS, in Slovak: Slovenská akadémia vied – SAV).

A program of education or re-education was adopted at the SASA with the purpose of increasing the number of “socialist scientific workers”. The program included courses in the Russian language and compulsory study of Soviet literature. At the end of 1949, the leadership of the SASA threatened that it would not approve the employment records of any employees, who did not show the appropriate activity in this direction.<sup>98</sup> In 1950, all the assistants<sup>99</sup> had to take tests in the Russian language. From 1949, there was also compulsory political training of the staff of the SASA. For young or newly accepted employees, such knowledge was strictly required as a condition for acceptance. In this case, the regime no longer accepted compromises. The agreement of the Scientific Council of the Communist Party of Slovakia was necessary for the employment of new assistants.

However, the reality often substantially differed from the orders of the party leadership. At this time, the regime still did not have the resources to fulfil its aims. For example, it lacked Soviet literature that could be studied. There were no qualified teachers of Marxism-Leninism. Quickly trained propagandists could lead courses in factories, but they were not equal partners for university educated experts. At the beginning of 1950,

---

term and radical.

94 In the Czech lands some professors dismissed in 1948 – 1950 were administratively reassigned in 1952 to the newly formed CSAS, *“where it was still possible to use their qualities”*. See: Archive of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, f. Vládní komise pro vybudování ČSAV (Government commission for building up the CSAS), c. 6.

95 They had a mass character especially in the Czech Lands. In Slovakia only a few individuals were affected.

96 SNA, f. ÚV KSS, c. 5, Sekretariát november – december 1949.

97 SNA, f. ÚV KSS, c. 800, zasadnutia predsedníctva (Sessions of the Presidium) október – november 1950.

98 CA SAS, f. SAVU, c. 2, Pracovné výkazy vedeckých pracovníkov (Employment records of the scientific staff).

99 This means young scientific workers in the position of today’s doctoral students.

the committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia for the SASA stated: “*The scientific workers ask specific questions, which the teachers are not able to answer.*”<sup>100</sup> These tasks had to be left to people with sufficient education, but there was a desperate shortage of them.<sup>101</sup> In 1949, one of the few Marxist historians Jaroslav Dubnický gave a lecture at the Institute of History of the SASA on *Historical materialism as a method of historical research*. However, the subsequent discussion showed that the majority of the historians present could not imagine how to write history by this new method.<sup>102</sup> The Sovietization of science and research also included new methods of work – collectivism and planning. Scientific research also had to be involved in the preparation of the first five year plan. The individual institutes worked out yearly plans for activities with regard to the five year plan, and sent them to the Administrative Committee. However, also in this case reality lagged behind expectations. The plans were mostly either unrealistic or represented only a simple list of the work of individual members of staff without the collective projects of Soviet type demanded by the Communist ideologues.

The Administrative Committee of the SASA was also concerned with the internal restructuring of the academy. Three separate components arose in the framework of this process: presidium, institutes and enterprises, namely bookshop, publisher and printer.<sup>103</sup> The directors of the institutes were appointed again in January 1949 on the proposal of Mikuláš Bakoš. Igor Hrušovský remained at philosophy, Alexander Húščava came to the head of the Institute of History, Eugen Paulínyi remained at linguistics, Mikuláš Bakoš proposed himself for literary science, and Alexander Isačensko became chairman of Slavonic studies. The Sociographic Institute, renamed the Institute of Social Research, was to be headed by Andrej Sirácky, while Ján Hromádka remained at the Institute of Geography. Apart from Sirácky and Hrušovský, the new directors cannot be described as convinced Marxists. They were university professors, who did not openly criticize Marxism-Leninism. Several new institutes were established on the basis of the activity of the leadership.<sup>104</sup> However, none of them survived beyond 1951. We can interpret their establishment as an effort by the SASA to escape from its home-land studies character.<sup>105</sup> However, the mistake of the leadership of the SASA was that it allowed the establishment of institutes, although there were not enough resources to support them. Such badly considered activities compromised the SASA and its leadership to some degree in the eyes of the government.<sup>106</sup>

---

100 CA SAS, f. SAVU, c. 53, Školenie zamestnancov SAVU – návrh ZOKSS pri SAVU 13. 1. 1950. (Training of the staff of the SASA – proposal of the Basic organization of CPS at the SASA 13 January 1950).

101 All the Eastern European totalitarian communist regimes had a similar problem in the 1950s.

102 For example, it was not clear to Branislav Varsik how scientific materialism should be applied to Slovak history. After the lecture, Belo Polla stated that historical research must start from facts and not from ideas. CA SAS, f. SAVU, c. 12, Zápisnica z pracovnej porady HÚ SAVU (Minutes from a working meeting of the Institute of History of the SASA) 8 June 1949.

103 The SASA gained its own printer on 1 January 1949.

104 Psychology, biology and the Institute for Legal and Economic Science.

105 KLAČKA, Jozef. Prerastenie SAVU do SAV. (The growth of the SASA into the SAS). In PÖSS, Ondrej (ed.). *Z dejín vied a techniky na Slovensku XVI. Slovenská akadémia vied a umení*. Bratislava : HÚ SAV, 1994, p. 44.

106 “*Impulsiveness and lack of overall conception in the leadership of the SASA*” became one of the argu-

In general, it is possible to state that the majority of the Slovak scientific community did not regard Marxism-Leninism as a useful scientific theory.<sup>107</sup> Few were willing to consistently apply it in their work. This concerned especially the older generation, who had not come into contact with this ideology before, or were trained to believe it was harmful. It appears that even after 1948, the majority of scientists did not realize that Marxism was not only the preferred, but the only permitted approach to research work. However, only a few scientists openly declared that they were anti-communist, and even fewer of them cast doubt on Marxist postulates on the methodological level. A long tradition of conformism towards the demands of the ruling regime existed in the Slovak environment, especially in the social sciences. The cause was the frequently changing state doctrines to which it was necessary to adapt. With some exceptions,<sup>108</sup> this trend was clearly visible after 1948. However, formal adoption of the Marxist method often came only at a level that still enabled meaningful research, supplemented by a few quotations from the “classics”. There were very few really convinced Marxists or Stalinists in the Slovak scientific community. In 1949 it still appeared that the formal transition of the older generation to a Marxist position would be enough for the new regime.<sup>109</sup> The first wave of purges in Slovakia in 1948 did not have much effect on the scientists, who were willing to adopt the Marxist method of writing and teaching.<sup>110</sup> Their gradual but complete transition to the Marxist position with the help of courses and training was expected.

The situation changed in the middle of 1949. At the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in May, Klement Gottwald outlined the so-called general line for building socialism. It contained ten basic points,<sup>111</sup> application of which would speed up the process of building socialism. The sixth point was the need to educate a new intelligentsia, tied to the people by class and ideology, and trained in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism and dialectical and historical materialism. The minister for information Václav Kopecký concerned himself with the development of science at the congress. He stated that it was necessary “*to put Czechoslovak science on a new path, to give it a new spirit, new teaching and new mission. That is now the problem of re-orientation in all sections of scientific activity.*”<sup>112</sup> Science had to adopt the world view of dialectical materialism, which starts from Marxism-Leninism, “*the science of all sciences*”.

Thus, the party had decided to definitively put an end to the so-called ideological heritage of the past. A logical step was to direct attention towards the universities and academic institutes. The students and assistants – the future Marxist intelligentsia – came

---

ments for the formation of the new SAS.

107 Among the professors appointed before 1948, Marxism-Leninism was definitely unpopular, and its supporters were considered intellectually inferior.

108 Such as the historian Daniel Rapant.

109 After 1948 there were much stricter cadre checks on assistants than on professors, because they came into contact with students more frequently. SNA, f. ÚA KSS, c. 5, Protokol zo zasadnutia – Personálne opatrenia na vysokých školách. (Record of a session – Personnel measures at universities.)

110 They proceeded much more radically in the Czech Lands. See: HANZEL, Josef. *Cesty české historiografie 1945 – 1989. (The paths of Czech historiography 1945 – 1989)*. Prague : Karolinum, 1999.

111 National Archives of the Czech Republic (hereinafter NA CR), f. Praha IX. sjezd (Prague Ninth Congress), a.j. 112, c. 67.

112 Ref. 111.



into the centre of attention. The universities had to act as indoctrination centres, educating an elite entirely committed to the ideas of Marxism-Leninism. This process was obviously more intrusive in the social sciences, than in the technical and natural sciences, where ideological convictions did not directly influence the results of work. After the Congress of the CPC, the Administrative Committee of the SASA stated in connection with this trend that *“the older members of staff cannot quickly progress to the positions of Marxism-Leninism and historical materialism,”*<sup>113</sup> and emphasized the need to fill the scientific institutes with a young generation of convinced Marxists. Members of the older generation, who did not oppose the regime, could be left in their places,<sup>114</sup> but the leading positions would be held by new scientists educated in the Marxist spirit.

The Ninth Congress of the Communist Party of Slovakia, held on 24-27 May 1950, can be regarded as marking the beginning of the “Sovietization” of Slovak science and higher education. There was an important speech by the general secretary of the Central Committee of the CPS Štefan Bašťovanský on scientific and cultural policy. It was essentially an expansion of Gottwald’s sixth point: *“It is necessary to place the whole of Slovak science on the firm foundation of Marxism-Leninism, to incorporate the method of dialectical and historical materialism into it without reservation, to place science at the service of the great constructive effort of the workers, to bring its aims into harmony with the aims of the working class – with the building of a socialist social order in our homeland.”*<sup>115</sup> Bašťovanský appealed for continual criticism and self-criticism as an essential method of scientific creation. This speech showed the full depth of Stalinist dogmatism, not allowing any sign of deviation from the “canon” approved by the party ideologues. Failure to respect the current norms meant immediate accusation of spreading some sort of “hostile ideology”. After the congresses of the CPC and CPS, bourgeois nationalism became the most topical of these in Slovakia. This arose as a mixture of a power struggle in the Communist Party and application of the Stalinist philosophy of sharpening of the class struggle. In the Czechoslovak case, leading figures in the Communist Party of Slovakia were accused of this deviation on the basis of the claim that they put Slovak national interests above the class interests of the proletariat.

Unconditional importation of Soviet models influenced the development of various branches of science.<sup>116</sup> At the SASA, the results of the congress caused an immediate reaction and change in the situation, in the direction of immediate efforts to raise the ideological level of the scientific staff. The leadership immediately ordered obligatory self-criticism by the chairmen of institutes, directors and assistants. They all had to unconditionally submit criticism of their activities, especially acknowledgement of ideolo-

---

113 CA SAS, f. SAVU, c. 13, Zasadnutie správneho výboru SAVU 19. 4. 1950. (Session of the Administrative Committee of the SASA on 19 April 1950.).

114 This was easier at the academy than at the universities and other teaching institutions.

115 CA SAS, f. SAVU, c. 13, K IX. zjazdu KSS – referát s. Bašťovanský, Hlavné smernice kultúrnej politiky na Slovensku. (From the IX Congress of the CPS – speech by comrade Bašťovanský, The main directions for cultural policy in Slovakia.).

116 For example, sociology was abandoned as a separate branch of science. In the biological sciences, the pseudo-scientific theories of Michurinism and Lysenkoism were introduced. In physics some theories were rejected because they did not correspond to Marxist ideology.

gical deficiencies “*from the point of view of Marxism-Leninism and the efforts to build the republic*”.<sup>117</sup> Revision of the work plans of the institutes according to the resolutions of the congress was also decreed. Planning had to be flexible, it had to be revised and adapted to practical needs. In reality, this meant that especially the social sciences had to rigidly follow the current declarations and ideas of the party structures, so that they could react immediately to the latest power-political changes. The party line could change from one day to another. The former majority view could become a dangerous deviation and heroes could become criminals.<sup>118</sup> The leadership of the SASA was aware of this problem. A circular from 1950 explained that if people suspected that research was not topical, it was necessary to submit the case to the presidium, which would decide whether it was necessary to continue or to begin a new project.

The regime decided to entrust the task of putting the results of the congresses of the CPC and CPS into practice to the meritorious member of the CPS Ladislav Novomeský. On the basis of an agreement between the CESA and the State Committee for Universities, the Board of Commissioners appointed another eleven members to the Administration of the SASA, which represented the individual branches of science.<sup>119</sup> The new leadership of the academy with this composition began to work on 3 October 1950. The responsibilities of the individual members of the Administration show that some of them were responsible for fields that were still not represented in the SASA. Therefore, the task of the new leadership was to develop the natural, technical and medical sciences,<sup>120</sup> which were expected to contribute to the economic development of Slovakia. The Institute for Veterinary Medicine,<sup>121</sup> Institute for Natural Sciences and Institute for Medical Sciences<sup>122</sup> were established in the framework of this plan. However, the main responsibility of the Administration of the SASA and especially its chairman was “*to direct its activity in harmony with the general line of the CPS in the field of science and art, as it was presented by the general secretary Štefan Baš'ovanský at the ninth congress of the CPS*”.<sup>123</sup> In this respect, the struggle against bourgeois nationalism was considered to be

117 CA SAS, f. SAVU, c. 2, Obežník. Samokritika prebehla na SAVU 6. júla 1950. (Circular. Self-criticism undertaken at the SASA, 6 July 1950.). Criticism and self-criticism had to be based on the conclusions of the latest congresses of the CPC and CPS.

118 The career of the chairman of the CC CPS Baš'ovanský ended in 1952 as a result of accusations that he had collaborated with the Ľudák regime of 1939 – 1945. He later committed suicide because of fear of being arrested.

119 At a session on 9 October 1950, the tasks were divided as follows: Ľudovít Bakoš – deputy chairman, Miloš Gosiorovský – Institute of History and Ethnography, Ján Hovorka – veterinary science and representative of the interests of the SASA in contacts with the branches of the higher education institutions in Košice, Ferdinand Kevický and Rudolf Lukáč – technical science, Ivan Kuhn and František – legal and economic science, Ladislav Novomeský – Institute of Literary Science and Linguistics, Pavol Nemeč and Ľudovít Pastýrik – natural sciences, Andrej Sirácky – Institute of Philosophy, Institute of Psychology and Institute for Social Research, Viliam Thurzo – medical sciences. CA SAS, f. SAVU, c. 32, Administrative Committee of the SASA.

120 KLAČKA, ref. 105, p. 44.

121 It was established in Košice because its members were professors in the Veterinary College located in that city.

122 Several fields of science and commissions with specific responsibilities fell under both these institutes.

123 Cited according to KLAČKA, ref. 105, p. 44.

the primary task of the scientific workers.<sup>124</sup> This also meant the end of consideration of the specific position of Slovakia and Slovak science in Czechoslovakia:<sup>125</sup> “*there is one working class, and so it is necessary to see the activity of the SASA as the activity of a united Czechoslovak academy, although it has not been formally established yet.*”<sup>126</sup>

The Administration of the SASA devoted considerable attention to the work plans of the individual institutes for 1951. The ČESA asked for them to be submitted by 23 October 1950. This process began while the old leadership of the academy was still in office. Its members had to identify work problems and the urgency of tasks from the point of view of their usefulness for the “building of socialism”.<sup>127</sup> Every plan had to have an ideological and content part. The ideological part had to include a report on how the planned task would contribute to “*overcoming the remnants of the bourgeois ideology and methodology in the given field*” and a detailed account of the “*planned study of the Soviet ideological and progressive literature, as well as the progressive literature from Czechoslovakia and the people’s democratic states.*” In the case of such decrees, it is obviously impossible to suppose that there was freedom of scientific research. On the contrary, science based on the “*class evaluation of cultural facts*”<sup>128</sup> became part of propaganda. The Administration of the SASA evaluated proposed plans from this point of view. There were significant reservations in the majority of cases.<sup>129</sup> They concerned mainly ideological shortcomings such as the presence of bourgeois ideologies, and the need to accept young researchers, trained in Marxism-Leninism. It is paradoxical that precisely Ladislav Novomeský, who had fallen into political disfavour at this time, had to be responsible for the struggle against bourgeois nationalism at the SASA. Before his appointment to head the SASA, he lost all his political functions because of accusations of nationalism and sympathy with Ludákism. Together with Vladimír Clementis and Gustáv Husák, he finally became a victim of the wave of political trials, also occurring in the other socialist dictatorships. On 3 April 1951, the deputy chairman of the Administration of the SASA Ľudovít Bakoš introduced the new administrator Lev Hanzel. Ladislav Novomeský had already been arrested.

Accusation of the leading personality of the SASA threw suspicion on the whole organization, and led to the greatest wave of cadre screening so far, under the slogan “*purge the SASA from hostile elements*”.<sup>130</sup> The head of the culture and propaganda department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia Július Šefránek expressed an extraordinarily sharp view on the situation at the academy. He stated that since the

---

124 CA SAS, f. SAVU, c. 2, Rezolúcia vedeckých pracovníkov SAVU. (Resolution of the scientific staff of the SASA).

125 According to the IX Congress of the CPC, the “Slovak nationality problem” had to be solved by raising Slovakia’s economic level to that of the Czech Lands.

126 Cited according to KLAČKA, ref. 105, p. 44.

127 CA SAS, f. SAVU, c. 3, Návrh plánov výkonov a ukazovateľov na 1951. (Proposed plans for output and indicators for 1951).

128 CA SAS, f. SAVU, c. 2, Zpráva o činnosti vedeckých ústavov SAVU za prvý štvrťrok 1950. (Report on the work of the scientific institutes of the SASA in the first quarter of 1950).

129 See: KLAČKA, ref. 105, p. 45.

130 SNA, f. ÚV KSS, c. 20, 22. Zasadanie sekretariátu ÚV KSS 14. 6. 1951, Návrh na očistu SAVU. (Session of the secretariat of the CC CPS on 14 June 1951. Proposal for purging the SASA).

SASA had for a long time been subject to the Commission for Education, Science and Art, it had been led, influenced and directed by the “traitor” Novomeský. Therefore, it had not been purged after 1948. On the contrary, Novomeský had assembled in it, even more Ludáks than there were before.<sup>131</sup> Šeřfránek further complained that not even the most basic records were kept concerning the staff of the SASA, and this hindered screening. It had to be done at the same time as a “*campaign to convince the scientific staff of the need to re-orient themselves according to the Marxist-Leninist methods of work.*”<sup>132</sup> It was necessary to ensure that young scientific research workers would direct their attention “*to tasks important for the building of socialism*”. Lev Hanzel analysed the work of Ladislav Novomeský in a very similar way.<sup>133</sup> He also mentioned the need for cadre screening and purges. Fear seized the other members of the administration. In an effort to distance themselves from Ladislav Novomeský<sup>134</sup> as much as possible, they resorted to humiliating self-criticism as in the case of Andrej Sirácky, called for radical ideological struggle and purging of the SASA like František Mestitz or heaped the blame onto the scientific staff as Pavol Nemeč did. Struggle against the bourgeois ideologies, especially against nationalism, became the main aim of the academy. From the point view of its survival, it was necessary to prove that the scientific workers were sufficiently “re-educatable” and the leadership of the SASA was capable of taking vigorous action against ideological “deviations”.

This is illustrated by the situation in the Institute of History, where criticism of the work up to that time was undertaken immediately in April 1950. The administrative director Ľudovít Holotík<sup>135</sup> warned against deficiencies of an ideological character to which the party congress drew attention: bourgeois objectivism, cosmopolitanism and “*lack of Bolshevik vigilance towards the manifestations of bourgeois ideology.*”<sup>136</sup> As a result of the frequent ignorance and lack of expertise of the scientists and suspicions “*of other party bias*”,<sup>137</sup> a substantial part of the working time in the rest of the year had to be used for ideological training. Apart from this, the party branches at the institutes were activated. As Miloš Gosiorovský stated: “*Before 1951, party work at the SASA hardly existed.*”<sup>138</sup> Change happened when young members of the party began to come to the academy. One of the main tasks of the party branches at the SASA was ideological monitoring of the work plans.

---

131 Ref. 130.

132 Ref. 130.

133 He also concerned himself with Novomeský’s political and public activity.

134 Ladislav Novomeský was completely deleted from history of the academy. In 1952, his name did not appear in a report on the activity of the SASA since 1945. He is mentioned only under the designation “chairman”.

135 Ľudovít Holotík was one of the few real Marxists among the Slovak scientific workers. He had previously worked in Prague at the University of Political and Economic Sciences, where he taught future propagandists and political workers.

136 CA SAS, f. SAVU, c. 1, Zápísnička z 1. riadnej štvrtročnej porady sekcie pre najnovšie dejiny 19. 4. 1951. (Minutes from the first regular quarterly meeting of the section for the most recent history 19 4. 1951).

137 Ref. 136.

138 SNA, f. ÚA KSS, c. 52, Správa o úlohách a práci ZO KSS pri SAVU. (Report on the tasks and work of the Basic Organization of the CPS at the SASA).

Meanwhile, the cadre commission of the CESA worked at the SASA. According to directives for screening state employees, they divided the staff of the academy into three groups: ideological enemies, scientifically worthless workers<sup>139</sup> and those, who were striving to re-orient themselves.<sup>140</sup> Fourteen scientific workers were dismissed at the end of July, representing about a quarter of the total number. During the screening, they did not consider expertise, but rather the person's past. Therefore, personalities such as Ľudovít Novák and Eugen Paulíny, who had played a significant part in the building up the academy, had to leave. Others were transferred to subordinate positions or sent for political education. On the other hand, new, young scientists, who were expected to apply "Marxist-Leninist methods of work" began to come to the SASA in larger numbers. The ideological struggle caused a permanent state of uncertainty, which did not contribute to scientific work. The year 1951 was one of the worst periods of stagnation of research.

In spite of all the problems, the beginning of the 1950s paradoxically brought the academy a further strengthening of its position as an institution for scientific research. New legislation from May 1950 changed the position of universities and other institutions of higher education in Czechoslovakia. Organizational changes emphasized their role in teaching and ideological training, but marginalized them as research centres.<sup>141</sup> As Václav Kopecký stated at the Ninth Congress of the CPC: "*Together with the change of higher education, we intend to quickly introduce a new organization of all scientific work, divided from the teaching activities of higher education.*"<sup>142</sup> The new view of the role of higher education was also presented by the minister of education Zdeněk Nejedlý, who described the universities as mainly teaching organizations. In his view, the mission of the academy was to free scientific work from teaching obligations.<sup>143</sup>

Reports from the SASA also state that things were developing towards a situation in which university professors would not have time for scientific work.<sup>144</sup> In the new regime, universities and especially faculties of philosophy had to fulfil the role of educators of the Marxist intellectual elite, under the strict supervision of the state and party authorities. Changes in organization and in the method of teaching and running of institutions were part of an effort to bring the universities under the tightest possible control. Especially the first half of the 1950s was characterized by tendencies to under-estimate the need for research work by university teachers. The teachers had extensive obligations, they were burdened with administration and the need to participate in propagandist

---

139 For example, this was the evaluation of František Bokes, who was described as a characterless person, formerly a militant anti-communist and a worthless scientist. The SASA had a place for him only as a translator from Hungarian and German. SNA, f. ÚV KSS, c. 20, 22. Zasadanie sekretariátu ÚV KSS 14. 6. 1951. Návrh na očistu SAVU. (Session of the secretariat of the CC CPS on 14 June 1951. Proposal to purge the SASA).

140 KLAČKA, ref. 105, p. 45.

141 However, this trend was not publicly declared. Officially, the scientific activity of universities and other institutions of high education had to be preserved on the original level even after the planned changes.

142 NA CR, f. Praha IX. sjezd, a.j. 112, c. 67.

143 NEJEDLÝ, Zdeněk. *Výbudujeme Československou akademii věd. (We are building the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences)*. Prague : Československý spisovatel, 1952, p. 32.

144 CA SAS, f. SAVU, c. 1. Správa o činnosti a potrebách SAVU 1949. (Report on the activities and needs of the SASA in 1949).

and ideological actions to such an extent that they had no time left for science.<sup>145</sup> From the end of the war, the number of students to one teacher continually increased, and from 1950, the staff of the SASA also helped with teaching. The professors and senior lecturers were evaluated only according to the results of their teaching and political education work. Their scientific research activity was not taken into account, and hardly any resources were provided for it.<sup>146</sup>

However, the beginning of preparations for fundamental reorganization of the academic institutions of Czechoslovakia meant the most substantial change for the SASA. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia approved the formation of a Party Commission to Prepare the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences already in November 1950. The Government Commission for Constructing the CSAS was established a year later. This meant a return to the plans for centralization of scientific research from 1947. The Communist regime was openly developing this idea at least from 1949. Václav Kopecký already informed about it in his speech at the Ninth Congress: *“A plan for a newly established Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences is already prepared. Various so far unorganized and scattered scientific, research and study institutes will be joined together to undertake central scientific activity. It will enable centralized solution of newly developed scientific work in all branches of science, with the closest cooperation between science and the various components of national life.”*<sup>147</sup> The minister of education Zdeněk Nejedlý, one of the main supporters of creating an institution according to the model of the All-Union Academy of Sciences of the USSR, had responsibility for the directives and proposed legislation. The plan for the establishment of the CSAS was a continuation of the process of Sovietization of science and research, which began after the Ninth Congress of the CPC. It was also part of the centralization effort of the Communist regime. After the failure of 1947, the Communists already refused to discuss this problem with individual institutions. Instead of this, they began to create parallel research institutions. The first step was the establishment of the so-called central scientific institutes in December 1949.<sup>148</sup> The institutes oriented towards natural and technical sciences had to be centres for basic research in the state. These elite institutions functioned entirely separately from the academic institutes. They worked on state approved plans with government support. Their activity was directed by a central body named the Centre for Scientific Research (Ústredie vedeckého výskum). Precisely these institutions were expected to form the basis for the future CSAS, oriented towards technical and natural sciences. There was less interest in the mainly social science institutes of the SASA.

The plans for the formation of the CSAS were sufficiently known in Slovakia. After he became head of the SASA, Lev Hanzel spoke of the need to prepare it for the *“overall*

---

145 For example, in 1952, teachers had to agitate against biological warfare in all lectures and publish articles about this “problem” in the newspapers. Archives of the Philosophical Faculty of The Comenius University, no. A5. Zápis zo zasadnutia Katedry všeobecných dejín a archívniectva. (Minutes from a meeting of the Department of Universal History and Archive Studies).

146 In 1956, the whole Faculty of Philosophy of Comenius University received 3000 Kčs for research.

147 NA CR, f. Praha IX. sjezd, a.j. 112, c. 67.

148 In the Czech Lands these were institutes of Astronomy, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Polarography. In Slovakia, the Slovak central institutes of Astronomy, Biology and Geology.

*solution and organization of the new Czechoslovak Academy*".<sup>149</sup> This preparation had to be directed towards the reorganization of the SASA according to the model of the future CSAS. The view of the SASA substantially changed after the purges of 1951. The praise of Michal Chorváth, who enthusiastically spoke of the first, exemplary academy of socialist type in the state, was long forgotten. In 1952, this view was replaced by the criticism of Miloš Gosiorovský: "*The SASA has not become an academy of socialist type, either in terms of work or personnel. It has not become a leading scientific institution. [...] The work of the SASA has suffered from serious ideological shortcomings. [...] Many of the staff do not have even the most basic ideological level, and there have even been cases of saboteurs.*"<sup>150</sup> This situation had to be corrected on the basis of substantial reorganization and transformation of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts into the Slovak Academy of Sciences, by the new Administration of the Academy appointed by the commissioner for education, science and art Ernest Sýkora on 4 March 1952. The next period was already entirely a matter of the preparations for the fundamental reform of Czechoslovak science and research carried out in the period 1952 – 1953.

The outline of the history of the SASA in the turbulent period 1945 – 1952 documents to a significant degree that it was an illusion to think it possible for science and research to develop autonomously in a society undergoing great political upheavals. The development of this academy documents how various external, political, national or ideological interests can have a substantial influence on the formation of scientific institutions. In the case of the SASA, such external interventions actually prevented its stable functioning. It is paradoxical that the criticism of its inadequate functioning came precisely from the environment that was directly responsible for this situation, or which exploited it for its own aims. In the end, precisely, the unsatisfactory functioning of the SASA, for which it was responsible only to a small degree, was the cause of the changes of 1953. It is undoubtedly true that in spite of all the efforts, the position of the SASA as the leading institution in Slovak science and research was only illusory in the period 1945 – 1952. However, the mere fact that such an organization existed ensured that Slovakia continued to have its own "national" academy, although in a different form.

\* The paper was produced in the framework of the grant VEGA no. 2/0097/10 with the title *Social pre-conditions and results of the development of science and technology in Slovakia 1918 – 1989*.

## SLOWAKISCHE AKADEMIE DER WISSENSCHAFTEN UND KÜNSTE IN DEN JAHREN 1945 – 1952

ADAM H U D E K

Die relativ kurze Existenz der Slowakischen Akademie der Wissenschaften und Künste (SAVU) in der Nachkriegszeit ist durch eine Verknüpfung von großen Umbrüchen, oft mit einer erstaunlichen

---

149 Cited according to KLAČKA, ref. 105, p. 45.

150 SNA, f. ÚV KSS, c. 822. Zadadnutia predsedníctva ÚV KSS august – september 1952, Správa o prípravách realizácie zákona o ČS akademii vied. (Session of the Presidium of the CC CPS August – September 1952, Report on the preparations to implement the Act on the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences.

Entwicklung, geprägt. Die meisten Veränderungen, deren sich die Slowakische Akademie der Wissenschaften und Künste unterziehen musste, waren direkt mit den politischen Veränderungen, die die ganze Gesellschaft betrafen, verbunden. Eine Skizze von der Geschichte der Slowakischen Akademie der Wissenschaften und Künste in den ziemlich turbulenten Jahren 1945 – 1952 dokumentiert die Illusorität der Vorstellung über eine autonome Entwicklung der Wissenschaft und Forschung in einer Gesellschaft, die sich großen politischen Erschütterungen unterzieht. Im Gegenteil, die Entwicklung der Akademie dokumentiert, was für einen grundlegenden Einfluss die verschiedenen äußerlichen, politischen, nationalen oder ideologischen Interessen auf die Gestaltung der wissenschaftlichen Institutionen haben können. Die Slowakische Akademie der Wissenschaften und Künste stand seit ihrer Entstehung immer unter einem gewaltigen Einfluss der aktuellen politischen Macht. Sie wurde zum Bestandteil der Debatten über die Stellung der Slowakei innerhalb der wiederentstandenen Tschechoslowakei, sowie der Konflikte zwischen Kommunisten und deren Opponenten. Für die Geschichte der Wissenschaft bedeutete der kommunistische Umsturz im Jahr 1948 das Ende der Unabhängigkeit der Forschung. Die Festigung des totalitären Regimes bedeutete zugleich das Verbot für eine Diskussion und Deklaration von Missbilligung der Entscheidungen „der Regierung und Partei“. Das folgende Schicksal der Slowakischen Akademie der Wissenschaften und Künste war eng mit den Ideologie- und Machtkämpfen innerhalb der Kommunistischen Partei verbunden, die schließlich über die endgültige Reorganisation der tschechoslowakischen Wissenschaft entschied. Zum Schluss wurde gerade die Unzufriedenheit mit dem Fungieren der Slowakischen Akademie der Wissenschaften und Künste, was die Akademie selbst nur im geringen Maße beeinflussen konnte, zum Anlass für die Veränderungen im Jahr 1953, die zur Entstehung der neuen Slowakischen Akademie der Wissenschaften führten.

Mgr. Adam Hudek, PhD.

Historický ústav SAV, Klemensova 19, 813 64 Bratislava, [hishude@savba.sk](mailto:hishude@savba.sk)



THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF SLOVAKIA 1945 – 1948.  
MEMBERSHIP, ORGANIZATION, LEADERSHIP, PARTY APPARATUS,  
RELATIONSHIP TO THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

JAN PEŠEK

PEŠEK, Jan. The Communist Party of Slovakia 1945 – 1948. Membership, organization, leadership, party apparatus, relationship to the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. *Historický časopis*, 2012, 60, Supplement, pp. 97-119, Bratislava.

The Communist Party of Slovakia (CPS) formed in May 1939, became a government party in spring 1945. Its membership base grew rapidly, reaching almost 200,000 by the end of 1945. After re-registration of members and party screening at the end of 1945 and beginning of 1946, the party had about 150,000 members in the middle of 1946, but their number was again approaching 200,000 at the time of the February coup of 1948. The organizational structure of the CPS comprised four parts. The first was the local or village organizations, the second was the district organizations in all 80 districts, and the third was the 11 regional organizations. The fourth and highest part was the leadership of the CPS, that is the Central Committee and associated bodies. The CPS had a professional party apparatus. It was not very numerous, with perhaps 200 functionaries from the districts to the centre. This number increased only slightly up to February 1948. After the liberation, the central figures in the leadership of the CPS were Karol Šmidke and Gustáv Husák. This leadership was removed at the national conference of the CPS at Žilina in August 1945. Viliam Široký became chairman of the party, and Štefan Baš'ovanský became general secretary. The CPS was formally an independent political party, but it worked in unity with the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, active in the Czech Lands, and was subordinate to its political line.

Communist Party of Slovakia. Membership. Organization. Party apparatus. Leadership of the CPS. 1945 – 1948.

The Communist Party of Slovakia was established in May 1939. Until the stopping of the activity of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in Slovakia (the Slovak Region of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia) in October 1938, the illegal Regional Leadership of the CPC with its seat in Bratislava directed its work. The most important functionaries of the CPC in Slovakia: Viliam Široký, Karol Bacílek, Vladimír Clementis, Karol Šmidke and others, gradually went into exile and the party continued its activities illegally. On the basis of a resolution of the Secretariat of the Executive of the Communist Internationale from 22 February 1939,<sup>1</sup> the organization of the CPC in Slovakia adopted the

---

1 The Secretariat of the Executive of the Communist Internationale adopted a resolution, which stated: "*As a result of the declaration of autonomy of Slovakia and Transcarpathia, the Secretariat of the Executive Committee of the CI considers it useful for the Slovak and Transcarpathian Region of the CPC to be renamed as the Communist Party of Slovakia and the Communist Party of Transcarpathia, although the party as a whole will continue to bear the name Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, and there will still be a united leadership for the whole of Czechoslovakia.*" Národní archiv (National Archives) Prague (hereinafter NA), fund (hereinafter f.) ÚV KSČ, 03/10 (Commission of the Central Committee of the CPC on investigation of the justification for criticism of bourgeois nationalism, raised by the IX Congress of the

name Communist Party of Slovakia in May 1939, but it did not become a section of the Communist Internationale. It was linked with the CPC by a common political line and a common leadership exiled in Moscow and headed by Klement Gottwald. The regional leadership of the CPC in Slovakia was revived in May 1939 as the illegal leadership of the Communist Party of Slovakia composed of Július Ďuriš, who remained from the illegal regional leadership, Ľudovít Benada and Ján Osoha.

As a result of arrests and persecutions, various people alternated in the illegal leadership of the CPS. After the arrest of Ďuriš and Benada in August 1941, only Osoha remained free. Meanwhile, Viliam Široký also found himself in prison. He returned from Moscow to Slovakia in June 1941, but he was arrested in July 1941, even before he could establish contacts with the representatives of the illegal CPS. In September 1941, Osoha, who had escaped arrest, created the second illegal leadership of the CPS together with Otto Krajňák and Vincent Škrabal. This was broken up in April 1942. Only Osoha remained free. Together with Jozef Lietavec and Štefan Dubček, he created the third illegal leadership of the CPS in July 1942. In August 1942, Štefan Baš'ovanský and Miloš Hrušovský formed the fourth illegal leadership, but in April 1943 Hrušovský was arrested, and in May 1943 so was Baš'ovanský. Karol Šmidke came from Moscow at the beginning of July 1943. He formed the fifth illegal leadership of the CPS together with Gustáv Husák and Ladislav Novomeský.<sup>2</sup> In December 1943 the Communists and representatives of the non-communist resistance concluded the so-called Christmas Agreement on the creation of a Slovak National Council and co-ordination of the national liberation and anti-fascist movement.

After the outbreak of the Slovak National Uprising on 29 August 1944, the CPS came out of illegality and became a government party in the territory controlled by the uprising. At a congress in Banská Bystrica on 17 September 1944, the CPS merged with the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Workers' Party of Slovakia. However, the merger did not create a qualitatively new party that would be a synthesis of communism and social democracy, since it accepted the ideological and organizational platform of the Communist Party, including its name. The leadership of the CPS was elected at the unifying congress. According to the accepted organizational directives, the leadership was composed of the Presidium and the wider leadership. The Presidium was made up of the chairman and four deputy chairmen, while the wider leadership had 30 members. Since the CPS operated illegally in occupied territories or its leading functionaries were imprisoned<sup>3</sup> or in exile, the positions of chairman, two deputy chairmen and 15 members of

---

CPS in 1950, the so-called Barnabite Commission), vol. 20, a.j. (archívna jednotka - archive unit) 234. Published by: ŠKURLO, Ivan. Celoslovenská konferencia KSS v Žiline roku 1945 a čo jej predchádzalo. The national conference of the Communist Party of Slovakia at Žilina in 1945 and what preceded it.). In *Historický časopis*, 1971, year 19, no. 2, p. 166.

- 2 *Dejiny Slovenského národného povstania 1944. Zv. 5. Encyklopédia odboja a SNP. (History of the Slovak National Uprising of 1944. Vol. 5. Encyclopedia of the Resistance and the SNU)*. Bratislava : Pravda, 1984, p. 236-238.
- 3 Many leading functionaries of the illegal CPS were in prison when the uprising broke out. They included members of the first four illegal leadership of the CPS such as V. Široký. Their liberation was part of the preparations for the SNU. Some, including Š. Baš'ovanský, M. Hrušovský and J. Lietavec actually got out of prison, but a large group of leading communists imprisoned in Nitra, including V. Široký, J. Ďuriš,

the wider leadership had to be filled at the congress. The others would be appointed after the liberation.<sup>4</sup> Karol Šmidke was elected chairman of the CPS, while Gustáv Husák and Ján Čech (a former Social Democrat) became deputy chairmen.<sup>5</sup> The central committee had 15 members.<sup>6</sup> Ladislav Novomeský was coopted as an additional member after he arrived in Banská Bystrica. Apart from Šmidke, Husák and Čech, the following were elected to the political commission: Karol Bacílek, František Čáp, Ondrej Pavlík and Jozef Šoltész, with the addition of Ladislav Novomeský after he was coopted.<sup>7</sup> Two of them, Čech and Šoltész, were former Social Democrats. Karol Bacílek became the organizational secretary of the Central Committee of the CPS. This position was understood mainly as an organizational – administrative function.

After the defeat of the SNU, the CPS went into illegality, but it gradually revived its legal activity in the territories liberated from the east by the Soviet army. It established itself here quickly, and after the passing of the front from the beginning of 1945 and especially after the end of the war, its membership base grew extraordinarily quickly. Its size reached about 150 thousand<sup>8</sup> in August 1945, perhaps 200 thousand in September and 197,365 on 31 December 1945.<sup>9</sup> The CPS had about 10 thousand pre-war members

---

J. Osoha and L. Benada, remained in captivity. They could not participate in the uprising, and later they accused G. Husák, who had been responsible for freeing the prisoners in Nitra, of deliberately failing to release them. This increased their aversion to the uprising leadership of the CPS. After the suppression of the SNU, when German security police took over responsibility for political prisoners from the Slovak officials, the illegal structures of the CPS organized the escape of Široký and Ďuriš on 5 February 1945. They reached the Nitran Partisan Brigade, with which they crossed the river Hron and the front line at Tekovská Brezica on 14 February 1945. This brought them to territory controlled by the Red Army. Široký went to Moscow, where the future government programme was discussed in March. Ďuriš went to liberated Košice. Some other leading functionaries of the CPS including Ján Osoha and V. Škrabala perished, while others, such as L. Benada, remained in prison until the liberation. On the problem of the unsuccessful attempt to free V. Široký, J. Ďuriš and others, see: KAPLAN, Karel. *Mocní a bezmocní. (Powerful and powerless)*. Toronto : Sixty Eight Publisher, 1989, p. 155-156; JABLONICKÝ, Jozef. *Povstanie bez legiend. (The uprising without legends)*. Bratislava : Obzor, 1990, p. 260-266; JABLONICKÝ, Jozef. *Samizdat o odboji. Štúdie a články. (A samizdat about the resistance. Studies and articles)*. Bratislava : Kaligram, 2004, p. 173-182; RAŠLA, Anton. *Civilista v armáde. Spomienky na roky 1938 – 1945. (A civilian in the army. Memories of the years 1938-1945)*. Bratislava : Vydavateľstvo politickej literatúry, 1967, p. 133-141.

- 4 Organizational directives adopted at the unifying congress of the Communist Party of Slovakia and the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Workers' Party, 17 September 1944. In VARTÍKOVÁ, Marta (ed.). *Komunistická strana Slovenska. Dokumenty z konferencií a plén 1944 – 1948. (The Communist Party of Slovakia. Documents from conferences and plenary sessions 1944-1948)*. Bratislava : Pravda, 1971, p. 41.
- 5 Report in "Pravda" about the course of the unification congress, 19 September 1944. In VARTÍKOVÁ, *Komunistická strana*, ref. 4, p. 53.
- 6 The following 15 members of the Central Committee of the CPS were elected: Karol Bacílek, Rudolf Balco, Rudolf Blažovský, František Čáp, Karol Dolinský, Daniel Ertl, Oskár Jeleň, František Kubač, Jozef Lietavec, Ján Mazúr, Ján Púll, Marek Smida, Ján Szücs, Jozef Šoltész and Rudolf Viktorín. *Dejiny Slovenského národného povstania 1944*, ref. 2, p. 633.
- 7 Ref. 2.
- 8 NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 9, a.j. 201. Some facts about the development of numbers and the composition of the membership of the party in Slovakia (from the statistical data of the CPC). Note: This figure is added by hand to a type-written text (J.P.)
- 9 NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 9, a.j. 201. Brief statistical review of the development of the party in Slovakia

and 20 thousand former Social Democrats.<sup>10</sup> From the point of view of records of party membership, the situation was not transparent. Individual regional party organizations issued their own temporary membership cards. There was no firm central overview of the number of members or of their social composition. If such data existed, it was not very reliable.

According to the organizational statute approved at the unifying congress of the CPS and Social Democrats in Banská Bystrica on 17 September 1944, the party had two types of membership. Only a person who could be proved to have been an active member of the illegal Communist or Social Democrat parties could be a full member. For those who had not been members or if there was any doubt, a six month waiting period was introduced. A local organization could accept them as full members only after this period.<sup>11</sup> The six month waiting period was retained in the more detailed Organizational Directives adopted by the Central Committee of the CPS in March 1945. According to them, the conditions for party membership were knowledge of the principles and programme of the party, subordination to party discipline and active work in the basic organization. The minimum age for acceptance into the party was set at 18.<sup>12</sup>

The waiting period brought various practical complications, which were increased by the extraordinarily rapid growth of the membership base. In some party organizations the majority consisted of candidates for membership, or even only candidates so that they could not operate and take decisions properly. It was also impossible to reduce education and training only to the waiting period. Abolition of the candidate period was already discussed at a joint session of the presidia of the central committees of the CPC and CPS on 1 June 1945.<sup>13</sup> The appropriate decision in connection with the prepared re-registration of members and issuing of new membership documents, was adopted at the session of the CC CPS on 25-26 October 1945. The report presented by the organizational secretary of the CC CPS Karol Bačilek accepted the position from 1 June 1945: "*This temporary measure is not necessary today, it is only an obstacle to the further growth*

---

(from 1945 to 1950). Note: M. Barnovský gives only moderately different figures: in August 1945 the CPS had 167,574 members and candidates, in September 203,609 and on 31 December 1945 197,635. BARNOVSKÝ, Michal. *Sociálne triedy a revolučné premeny na Slovensku v rokoch 1944 – 1948. (Social classes and revolutionary changes in Slovakia in the period 1944-1948)*. Bratislava : Veda, 1978, p. 198.

10 BARNOVSKÝ, Michal. Komunistická strana Slovenska. (The Communist Party of Slovakia). In MALÍŘ, Jiří – MAREK, Pavel et al. *Politické strany. Vývoj politických stran a hnutí v českých zemích a Československu 1861-2004. II. díl: Období 1938-2004*. Brno : Nakladatelství Doplněk, 2005, p. 1203.

11 Organizational directive adopted at the unifying congress of the Communist Party of Slovakia and the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Workers' Party of Slovakia, 17 September 1944. In VARTÍKOVÁ, *Komunistická strana*, ref. 4, p. 42.

12 BARNOVSKÝ, ref. 9, p. 197.

13 The minutes from the session of the CC CPC and CC CPS on 1 June 1945 state: "*The Slovak comrades are recommended to carry out a re-registration of members as quickly as possible, introduce a unified membership document and abolish the system of candidates.*" NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 02/1, zv. 1, a.j. 3. Zapis č. 3. Predsednictvo ÚV KSČ a ÚV KSS 1.6.1945. This material is published in: VARTÍKOVÁ, *Komunistická strana*, ref. 4, p. 304, and PREČAN, Vilém. Záznam o zasedání Ústředního výboru KSČ 17.-18 července 1945. (A record of the session of the Central Committee of the CPC of 17-18 July 1945.). In *Česko-Slovenská historická ročenka, 1997*. Brno : Masarykova univerzita, 1997, p. 283.

*of the party, and with appropriate responsibility in acceptance of members, it is also superfluous. Therefore, we propose its abolition.*"<sup>14</sup>

From the turn of the years 1945-1946, re-registration and screening of party members was done. Checks on the state of membership were done. Definitive membership documents had to be issued only to members, who passed the checks in the basic organizations and district screening commission, and whose applications were approved by members of the CC CPS. The cadre division of the CC CPS issued the party membership documents from the centre.<sup>15</sup> According to the state on 31 March 1946, the CPS had 151,330 members,<sup>16</sup> and on 30 April 1946 there were 152,999 members.<sup>17</sup> However, the replacement of the temporary party membership documents was still not complete, and the above mentioned state expressed only the number of newly issued party membership documents. The actual number of members of the party was higher. It was originally expected that the issuing of new party membership documents would be completed much sooner. The directives for re-registration and party screening from the beginning of October 1945 state: *"The issuing of definitive new party membership documents will begin on 1 December and has to be completed by 31 January 1946."*<sup>18</sup>

In September 1946, the CPS recorded a total of 158,028.<sup>19</sup> Compared to the situation before the re-registration and party screening there was a significant decrease. The leadership of the CPS strove to reverse this trend, for example, with the action *"25,000 new pioneers for the two year plan"*. From the beginning of August to the end of November, they aimed to recruit 25 thousand new members of the CPS. The whole action was not very successful, and by the end of 1946 only 5,691 new party members had been gained.<sup>20</sup> Although the action continued in 1947, it succeeded in gaining only half the expected number of new members. Up to the end of April 1947, the number of members of the CPS grew by 13,587, which represented 54.3% of the aim set by the CC CPS, and even less according to the targets adopted by the individual regions, which aimed at 27,798 new members. The actual number of 13,587 represented only 48.8% of this number.<sup>21</sup>

14 VARTÍKOVÁ, *Komunistická strana*, ref. 4, p. 304.

15 Report by K Bacilek to the plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia on the situation in the CPS after the liberation and the tasks of the communists in the following months, 26 October 1945. Ref. 4, p. 313.

16 NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 9, a.j. 201. Some facts about the development of the number and composition of the membership of the party in Slovakia (from the statistical data of the CPC).

17 NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 9, a.j. 201. A brief statistical review of the development of the party in Slovakia (from 1945 to 1950).

18 Slovenský národný archív (Slovak National Archives) Bratislava (hereinafter SNA), f. ÚV KSS, k. 2126, GT-126. Circular no. 18, Bratislava 3 October 1945.

19 SNA, f. ÚV KSS, k. 2119, GT-20. Recapitulation of the area for September 1946.

20 SYRNÝ, Marek. K organizačnej výstavbe a štruktúre KSS v rokoch 1945 – 1948. (On the organizational development and structure of the CPS in the period 1945-1948). In ŠMIGEL, Michal et al. *Radikálny socializmus a komunizmus na Slovensku (1918 – 1989). Spoločnosť medzi demokraciou a totalitou*. Banská Bystrica : Katedra histórie FHV UMB; Historický ústav SAV, 2007, p. 96-97.

21 SNA, f. ÚV KSS, k. 2 119, GT-19. A general review of the recruitment campaign (from 15 August to 30 April 1947).

Unified figures are not available for the later development of the membership base of the CPS. There are two different series of data.<sup>22</sup> The first series gives a figure of 175,328 members on 31 December 1946, only 127,683 on 30 June 1947, then rapid growth to 174,021 members on 25 February 1948.<sup>23</sup> The second series includes the following figures: on 31 December 1946 191,882 members, on 31 December 1947 210,022 members, but the state at the time of “solving” the crisis of February 1948 is not given.<sup>24</sup> The figures from the first and second series are different, but the tendency of development is the same. The mass growth of the membership base up to the autumn of 1945 was followed by stagnation and decline until the middle of 1947. From the autumn of 1947 and continuing into the early part of 1948, there was an influx of new members as a result of an intensive campaign and mobilization of forces.<sup>25</sup> The enormous growth of the membership base of the CPS after the seizure of power already represents an entirely different phenomenon. Throughout the period 1945-1948 the CPS retained the character of a working class party. Workers made up 70% of the members, small farmers about 15%, small businessmen perhaps 9% and members of the intelligentsia 5-6%.<sup>26</sup>

After the declaration of the Košice government programme, the CPS supported all the measures directed towards eliminating the position of the Hungarian minority including transfer, exchange of populations and re-Slovakization. It was argued that “*the nationality question needs to be subordinated to the general needs of progress*”.<sup>27</sup> This was also reflected in relations with communists of Hungarian or Magyar nationality. On 18 May 1945 the Presidium of the Slovak National Council, which included representatives of the CPS, decided to prohibit the acceptance of Hungarians as members of

- 
- 22 Primarily M. Barnovský has pointed out these different types of data on the state of the membership base of the CPS on the eve of the February events of 1948. He mentions 180,000 members of the CPS as stated in the work: BOUČEK, M. – BENČÍK, M. DEYL, Z. – KLIMEŠ, M. *Na rozhraní dvou epoch. (On the boundary between two epochs)*. Prague : Svoboda, 1968, p. 195, and 210,222 members of the CPS according to ŠULIČ, Ján. K niektorým otázkam práce KSC v období budovania základov socializmu. (On some questions concerning the work of the CPC in the period of laying the foundations of socialism). In VARTÍKOVÁ, Marta (ed.). *Generálna línia výstavby socializmu na Slovensku*. Bratislava : Pravda, 1975, p. 41. See BARNOVSKÝ, Michal. *Prvá vlna destalinizácie a Slovensko (1953 – 1957)*. (*The first wave of de-Stalinization and Slovakia (1953-1957)*). Brno : Prius, 2002, p. 50.
- 23 NA, f. ÚV KSC, 03/10, zv. 9, a.j. 201. A brief statistical review of the development of the party (from 1945 to 1950). Note (J.P.): A similar type of archive material gives a figure of 127,683 not for 30 June 1947, but for 31 December 1947. However, it is difficult to believe that two months later in 1948, the number of members reached the above mentioned 174,021. See: NA, f. ÚV KSC, 03/10, zv. 16, a.j. 232. Some facts about the development and position of the membership of the party in Slovakia (from the statistical data of the CPC).
- 24 This type of data was most recently summarized by SYRNÝ, K organizačnej výstavbe a štruktúre KSS, ref. 20, p. 98, 103.
- 25 5,500 new members joined the CPS in January 1948, and up to 10,000 in February 1948. NA, f. ÚV CPC, 03/10, zv. 16, a.j. 232. The second variant 1945-1948. II. 1. Changes in Slovakia after the elections.
- 26 NA, f. ÚV KSC, 03/10, zv. 9, a.j. 201. A brief statistical review of the development of the party in Slovakia from 1945 to 1950. For more details on the development of the social structure of the CPS see: BARNOVSKÝ, ref. 9, p. 202; SYRNÝ, K organizačnej výstavbe a štruktúre KSS, ref. 20, p. 103.
- 27 Report by K. Bacílek to a plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia on the situation in the CPS after the liberation and the tasks of the communists in the following months. 26 October 1945. In: VARTÍKOVÁ, *Komunistická strana*, ref. 4, p. 287.

political parties. In exceptional cases, anti-fascists and participants in the uprising could be accepted with the approval of the party leaders. If they were already party members, their membership had to be suspended. This understandably provoked indignation among communists of Hungarian nationality. They did not agree with it, they developed their own activities, and criticized the leadership of the CPS for not following the true communist nationality policy.<sup>28</sup> The leadership of the CPS acted firmly, even against leading pre-war functionaries of the CPC in Slovakia. For example, Štefan Major could not be a member of any party body. They “tidied him away” into the position of general director of the party press company Pravda. Only 514 Hungarians were registered as members of the CPS in October 1946. In reality there were more, because according to other sources, the CPS had 3,803 Hungarian speaking members.<sup>29</sup> The majority of them clearly declared Slovak nationality at this time.

The organizational structure of the CPS had four parts in the period 1945-1948. The first element was the local or village organizations and the organizations at workplaces. Local or village organizations predominated with a total number of 3,099 in December 1946. There were only 66 workplace organizations in larger enterprises at this time, with 50 in the Bratislava and 16 in the Žilina region.<sup>30</sup> Thus the centre of gravity of political organization clearly lay in the local place of residence, and this did not change up to February 1948. The second element of the organizational structure was the district organization, which existed in all 80 districts. The third element was the 11 regional organizations, namely Bratislava, Nitra, Trenčín, Žilina, Ružomberok, Banská Bystrica, Rimavská Sobota, Poprad, Prešov, Košice and Michalovce.<sup>31</sup>

The fourth and highest element of the organizational structure was the leadership of the CPS, that is the Central Committee and its bodies, namely the Presidium and Secretariat. The leadership of the CPS in the liberated territory of Slovakia did not have its full composition at first. The chairman of the CPS K. Šmidke<sup>32</sup> and other members of the leadership of the CPS, elected on 17 September 1944 at the unifying congress in Banská Bystrica, were not in Košice during February and March 1945. The “central leadership

---

28 In his report to a session of the CC CPS in October 1945, K. Bacilek stated that many communists of Hungarian nationality, including pre-war communists who had been in concentration camps “often act as defenders of an allegedly “Stalinist” policy. They demand rights for Hungarians, schools and magazines. [...] recently they have gone so far that their activity exactly resembles factional activity. The members of the local organization in Nové Zámky call factional meetings, they send out their letters to their Hungarian comrades in other districts such as Galanta, Šala and Levice, bypassing the district and regional leadership. They are even organizing mass demonstrations with 5-6 thousand participants, at which they speak Hungarian and demand the publication of a Hungarian anti-fascist magazine.” Ref. 4.

29 BARNOVSKÝ, Michal. Komunistická strana Slovenska. In MALÍŘ, Jiří – MAREK, Pavel et al. *Politické strany*, ref. 10, p. 1206.

30 NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 9, a.j. 201. A brief statistical review of the development of the party in Slovakia from 1945 to 1950.

31 SNA, f. ÚV KSS, k. 2119, GT-20. Statistical data about members in individual regions.

32 After the defeat of the SNU, Šmidke travelled through Liptovský Mikuláš to Prešov. At the end of November 1944, he went to Bratislava, where he established contact with illegal local communists and people of various political orientations. Under threat of arrest, he found refuge in Nitra at the beginning of March 1945 and was still there when the Soviet army liberated the town on 31 March 1945. KOVÁČIKOVÁ, Terézia. *Karol Šmidke*. Bratislava : Pravda, 1978, p. 108-115.

of the CPS”, as it was called at the time, was gradually formed here, as functionaries of the CPS elected in Banská Bystrica, and then active in illegal conditions, in partisan units or in the Soviet Union arrived in the liberated territory. Other communist functionaries, who had not participated in the SNU and unifying congress for various reasons also joined them. Karol Bacílek, Karol Dolinský (a former social democrat), Ladislav Novomeský, Ján Púll and Ondrej Pavlík participated in the work of the leadership of the CPS at the beginning. K. Bacílek and O. Pavlík acted as secretaries of the CC CPS.<sup>33</sup> Bacílek was actually the only functionary in Košice, who had been elected at the unifying congress in Banská Bystrica. Pavlík’s activity as a temporary secretary is problematic. He performed this function to some extent in Košice as a substitute for elected or more important party functionaries, who were absent.<sup>34</sup> After 20 February 1945 they were joined by Gustáv Husák and Edo Friš,<sup>35</sup> who arrived from Moscow. After the suppression of the SNU, Husák went into hiding. He came into contact with the Soviet army at Žemberovce and on 31 January he travelled to Moscow, where he joined the Moscow leadership of the CPC. Friš had been in exile in the USSR since 1939, and from 1941 he worked as chief editor of the Slovak section of Moscow Radio. He had the confidence of the leading functionaries of the CPC active in Moscow during the war, and they sent him to Slovakia. The first known minutes of discussions of the CC CPS record that on 26 February 1945, Viliam Široký, Július Ďuriš,<sup>36</sup> Marek Čulen, Edo Friš and Jozef Valo were coopted into the CC CPS.

- 
- 33 For the activity of K. Bacílek and O. Pavlík as secretaries of the CC CPS see: NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 9, a.j. 201. The leadership of the party up to the Žilina conference. Note: O. Pavlík is mentioned as a temporary secretary of the CC CPS only in this material (J. P.).
- 34 Karol Bacílek stated for the needs of the so-called Barnabite Commission: *“The truth is that I was elected secretary at the Banská Bystrica congress. The chairman of the party, that is Šmidke was the political leader, and at the secretariat he had his assistant Pavlík, who had to direct these political affairs. In fact I directed these affairs.”* NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 1, a.j. 1. Karol Bacílek. Statement on the situation in Slovakia before and after the Slovak National Uprising. Note: After the outbreak of the SNU, O. Pavlík held the position of secretary of the CC CPS in Banská Bystrica until the unifying congress of the CPS and SD, at which he was not elected secretary of the CC CPS. As mentioned by K. Bacílek, he apparently worked at the Secretariat of the CC CPS as assistant or secretary to K. Šmidke (J. P.).
- 35 Friš had three first names: Edmund, Edo and Eduard, and it is not entirely clear when and why they changed. He was originally called Edmund. According to the statement of his sister Marta Frišová-Šimečková, the name on his identity document was changed to Eduard during his time in exile in Moscow. He apparently did not want to arrange things again, so he used the “compromise” name Edo. Various similar adaptations of names occur in the period after the war, for example: Viliam – Vilo, Ladislav – Laco. Since the problems considered here concern the period immediately after the war, the name Edo is used. In later periods, Friš used the name Eduard as his “official” first name. (J. P.)
- 36 At the discussions of the “central leadership of the CPS” on 26 Feb 1945 they still did not know where Široký and Ďuriš were. It became known that they had successfully crossed the front and reached the territory controlled by the Red Army only at the conference of the CPS in Košice on 28 February to 1 March 1945. G. Husák mentioned this in a discussion with members of the so-called Barnabite Commission: *“At the Košice conference at the end of February 1945, I was giving a report and there was a discussion, when news came that Široký and Ďuriš had succeeded in escaping from prison. Therefore, we immediately interrupted the programme and announced it.”* Husák did not forget to mention that Široký and Ďuriš were not very well known among the members of the CPS: *“The majority of people wondered, who is it? The majority of these delegates, I don’t know from how many districts, perhaps 30 or 40, most of them were thinking: who are Široký and Ďuriš.”* NA, f. ÚV KSČ, zv. 2, a.j. 25, p. 102. Record of an interview



Gustáv Husák was the leading figure in the “central leadership of the CPS” from 20 February 1945, when he arrived from Moscow, until 12 April 1945, when Karol Šmidke came to Košice and took up the position of chairman of the CPS.<sup>37</sup> He went to Moscow on 7 March 1945 as a member of a delegation from the Slovak National Council. He met the Moscow leadership of the CPC and participated in discussion of the government programme, or the parts of it concerned with the Slovak question. He returned to Košice with President Edvard Beneš and delegations from the exiled political parties only at the beginning of April. After arriving from Moscow, Friš replaced O. Pavlík as secretary of the CC CPS, as had been agreed in talks between Husák, Gottwald and other members of the Moscow leadership of the CPC in February 1945 in Moscow. Husák later said of this: “*Friš was in exile in Moscow. The comrades in Moscow said to me that it would be best if he could be the leading worker standing at the head of the party as secretary.*”<sup>38</sup> Bacílek, until then the only elected functionary from the unifying congress, felt offended by this, regarding it as a personal insult.<sup>39</sup> J. Ďuriš came to Košice in March 1945, and as an “old functionary of the party” he worked temporarily as secretary of the CC CPS for political campaign questions. According to his own statement, he performed this function from about 14 March 1945 until he moved to liberated Prague as a member of the government.<sup>40</sup> The form of the so-called Uprising leadership of the CPS was fixed as follows: Chairman of the CPS Karol Šmidke, first deputy chairman Gustáv Husák, second deputy chairman Ján Čech, secretaries of the CC CPS Edo Friš and Karol Bacílek. Friš acted as political secretary,<sup>41</sup> which was then similar to the later position of central

---

with G. Husák on 19 Nov 1963.

- 37 On the formation of the “central leadership of the CPS” in Košice, see: VARTÍKOVÁ, *Komunistická strana*, ref. 4, p. 73.
- 38 NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 2, a.j. 25. Record of a conversation with G. Husák on 26 August 1963.
- 39 Later at the time of the sessions of the so-called Barnabite Commission, Bacílek recalled that when he came to Košice, he was the only representative of the functionaries elected at the unifying congress in Banská Bystrica. Then Friš came and took over as general secretary of the party. “*On “who elected you, who sent you here”, he says, “They sent me from Moscow.” Later I learnt that he was not sent as general secretary, but as political secretary of the party, as a political worker: [...] I considered it entirely incorrect, when Friš returned with Husák from Moscow, and after discussion with Novomeský he was appointed secretary. I still was not used to these things. It is possible to speak of being personally offended. [...] It is true that I was confronted with an accomplished fact, that nobody discussed it with me.*” NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 1 a.j. 1. Karol Bacílek. Statement on the situation in Slovakia before and after the Slovak National Uprising.
- 40 J. Ďuriš recalled this in a discussion with members of the so-called Barnabite Commission: “*[...] when I came to Košice on 9 March, after we escaped from imprisonment, I had no function in the first days, as an old functionary of the party in Slovakia. Comrade Bacílek and I complained that we had no functions and no work. [...] When Beneš came to Košice, I welcomed him in the National Theatre on behalf of the party. [...] Friš was then political secretary, Bacílek was responsible for organizational and political campaign matters until more comrades returned from Moscow.*” NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 1, a.j. 9. Discussion with Ďuriš on 9 October 1963.
- 41 V. Široký expressed the following view on the position of E. Friš in a discussion with the so-called Barnabite Commission: “*When I came to Košice and went to the secretariat of the Central Committee, on the first floor I found the business card ‘Political secretary of the CC CPS Edo Friš’. I was surprised, because in our tradition, we never had a political secretary, nobody acted as the political secretary. And there I found it.*” NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 3, a.j. 55. Discussion with Viliam Široký 10 October 1963. Note: The statement of V. Široký on the question of the function of political secretary is inaccurate, because the

or general secretary and in practice the second position in the party after the chairman of the CPS. Bacílek held the position of organizational secretary.<sup>42</sup> At a session of the Presidium of the CPS<sup>43</sup> on 16 June 1945, František Zupka was co-opted as a member after being co-opted into the CC CPS. He was also expected to participate in sessions of the Secretariat of the CC CPS.<sup>44</sup>

Continuation of the activity of the so-called Uprising leadership of the CPS had various connections, but it undoubtedly also resulted from agreements at the Moscow talks in March 1945, at which the delegation of the CPS led by G. Husák agreed to Gottwald's proposal: "*You, who worked in the Uprising, know the situation in Slovakia well, you have authority among the people. You should work in the party and national institutions in Slovakia. Delegate to the government, the comrades who could not participate in the Uprising.*"<sup>45</sup>

Such people included leading functionaries active in Slovakia before the war, especially V. Široký, who became deputy prime minister, J. Ďuriš, who became minister of agriculture, and V. Clementis,<sup>46</sup> who was in London during the war. He became deputy foreign minister. From the participants in the Slovak National Uprising, only one person, the former social democrat Jozef Šolész elected to the CC CPS at the unifying congress in Banská Bystrica, was delegated to the government. He became the minister for the protection of labour and social affairs.

---

illegal regional leadership of the CPC in autumn 1938 already included the position of political secretary, held by J. Ďuriš. It was the same in the illegal leadership of the CPS from spring 1939 (J.P.).

- 42 The designation "central secretary (ústredný tajomník)" also sometimes appears in the terminology of the time, concerning Bacílek and Friš. For example, in the case of Bacílek, the report on his participation in the conference at Košice on 28 February 1945 states that "the central secretary of the party participated". However, they meant that he was the secretary of the centre or headquarters (ústredie). The minutes of the meeting of functionaries of the CPS and representatives of the CPC from Moscow and London on 8 April 1945 contains the expressions "central political secretary Friš" and "central organizational secretary Bacílek". Their correct titles would be political secretary and organizational secretary of the CC CPS. See: VARTÍKOVÁ, *Komunistická strana*, ref. 4, p. 104, 125, 131.
- 43 Contemporary materials from the years 1945-1948 use the official designation Presidium of the CPS (Predsednictva KSS) or Presidium of the party, not Presidium of the CC CPS (Predsednictvo ÚV KSS) (J. P.).
- 44 SNA, f. ÚV KSS, k. 788. Minutes of a session of the widened Presidium of the CPS, held on 16 June 1945. Note: Apart from F. Zupka, Ludovít Benada and Pavel Stahl were also co-opted into the CC CPS at this session of the Presidium of the CPS (J.P.).
- 45 KAPLAN, ref. 3, p. 120-121. Note: K. Kaplan apparently took this formulation from a letter, which G. Husák sent to the CC CPC on 1 May 1963, as a request for complete rehabilitation in the party. Various photocopies exist of the letter, which was widely distributed from 1963, especially in Bratislava intellectual circles. The author used a copy, which is in the personal possession of Tomáš Černák, a doctoral researcher in the History Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (J. P.). A similar text is found in the work *Slovensko I. Dejiny (Slovakia I. History)*. Bratislava : Obzor, 1978, p. 834.
- 46 At the beginning of 1940, Vladimír Clementis was excluded from the CPC for not agreeing with the Soviet – German Pact of August 1940 and the foreign policy of the USSR, especially the war with Finland. V. Široký strongly engaged in his exclusion. In spring 1945, Clementis did self-criticism and Gottwald supported his appointment as deputy foreign minister, in spite of opposition from Široký. KAPLAN, ref. 3, p. 152. The acceptance of Clementis back into the CPC was approved by a session of the Presidium of the CC CPC at the beginning of July 1945. NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 02/1. Session of the Presidium of the CC CPC on 3 July 1945.

The so-called Uprising leadership did not remain at the head of the CPS for long. There were various reasons for its replacement, some of them personal, but first of all, it was a result of the different strategic lines of the Slovak and Czechoslovak parties. The leadership of the CPS expected extensive changes in property relations and a shorter route to the seizure of power. It over-estimated the political influence of the CPS.<sup>47</sup> It expected that Slovakia would be more revolutionary than the Czech Lands, and would be in the “vanguard of revolutionary changes”. The leadership of the CPS counted on such changes,<sup>48</sup> but developments took a different direction. The Democratic Party (DP) at first cooperated with the CPS, but it soon politically established itself, and the differentiation between it and the CPS began to grow. The growing influence of the DP, expressions of opposition from the Catholic Church including protests against state control of education, several anti-Jewish demonstrations and continuing supply problems promoted radical feelings in the leadership of the CPS. All these events were put into context or evaluated as the “rise of reaction”, which the leadership wanted “*to knock out with a sudden blow and attack*” as K. Šmidke put it at a session of the Presidium of the CPS on 13 July 1945.<sup>49</sup> They should use police – administrative, political and economic means, including police action against “reactionary priests”, dissolution of Catholic societies, and promotion of a campaign for general land reform. In relation to the DP, they intended to support the “democratic forces”, although views varied on who represented such forces.<sup>50</sup> They planned a congress of delegates of the national committees, elected in August 1945, to be held on the first anniversary of the beginning of the Slovak National Uprising. The CPS had a strong predominance in the revolutionary national committees as a result of post-war development,<sup>51</sup> and it wanted to use this to make changes in its favour in the Slovak National Council.

These ideas and plans did not correspond to the views of the leadership of the CPC. It had its own view of the situation in Slovakia and how to solve this situation. The leader-

---

47 For example, K. Šmidke wrote on 27 May 1945 in a report for the head of the international information apparatus of the Central Committee of the Union Communist Part (Bolshevik) Georgi Dimitrov: “*The CPS holds the leading position in the nation, its influence is increasing. Our party organizes or influences the decisive part of the working class, a large part of the poorer farm workers and a smaller part of the middle level farm workers. It has a strong position among the intelligentsia.*” BARNOVSKÝ, Michal. *Národný front na Slovensku v rokoch 1945 – 1948. (The National Front in Slovakia, 1945 – 1948).* In IVANIČKOVÁ, Edita et al. *Z dejín demokratických a totalitných režimov na Slovensku a Československu v 20. storočí. Historik Ivan Kamenec 70-ročný.* Bratislava : Historický ústav SAV in the publishing house Prodama, 2008, p. 238.

48 At a session of the CC CPC with the participation of members of the Presidium of the CPS on 18 July 1945, R. Slánský recalled the original expectation “*that Slovakia will progress faster than the Czech Lands and will help us, but today Slovakia is a brake on the Czech Lands.*” PREČAN, Vilém. *Záznam o zasedání ÚV KSČ 17.-18. července 1945, ref. 13, p. 262.*

49 SNA, f. ÚV KSS, k. 788. Minutes of a session of the widened Presidium of the CPS on 13 July 1945.

50 BARNOVSKÝ, Michal. *Na ceste k monopolu moci. Mocenskopolitické zápasy na Slovensku v rokoch 1945 – 1948. (On the road to a monopoly of power. Power political struggles for Slovakia in the years 1945 – 1948.)* Bratislava : Archa, 1993, p. 47-56.

51 In summer 1945 there were 66 district national committees operating in Slovakia as well as district administrative commissions in districts with mainly Hungarian populations. Among the 66, the CPS had a majority in 43, half in 16 and a minority in only 7. In 48 districts the chairman of the national committee was a communist. VARTÍKOVÁ, *Komunistická strana*, ref. 4, p. 899.

ship of the CPC was dissatisfied with the activity of the Slovak National Council and with the work of the leadership of the CPS. It wanted to strengthen the legal powers of the government at the expense of the SNC, tie the CPS to the CPC more firmly and harmonize their political approach. At this time, the CPC had a different strategic-tactical line based on the situation in the Czech Lands. It planned to use elements of parliamentary democracy and introduce political and economic changes gradually. An orientation to general land reform and a change of the power political situation in Slovakia by non-parliamentary means would complicate this orientation of the CPC, and hinder the activity of the Czech communists. Therefore, the leadership of the CPC decided to intervene in the plans and ideas of the leadership of the CPS. The result was a change in the leadership of the CPS at the Slovak national conference at Žilina in August 1945, and the adaptation of the political line of the CPS to the needs and interests of the CPC.

The initiative in organizing the national conference of the CPS actually came from the Prague leadership of the CPC, strongly influenced by Široký and Ďuriš. V. Široký presented a “report on Slovak questions” at the session of the CC CPC on 12 July 1945. From the Slovaks, J. Ďuriš and J. Šoltész participated. The conclusion of Gottwald’s statement led to the decision: “*The ulcer requires an operation.*” Organizational changes had to be made “from both sides at the same time”. A party conference had to be called as quickly as possible, “*and by then prepare a change of leadership. Prepare it so that it comes from Slovakia. Before that call the whole Bratislava presidium.*”<sup>52</sup> The date was set as the 17 July 1945. However, nobody informed the leaders of the CPS about the preparation for the discussions or about their content, and this was clearly deliberate. Therefore, they were surprised and taken unawares.<sup>53</sup>

The session of the CC CPC with the participation of members of the Presidium of the CPS was held on 17-18 July 1945.<sup>54</sup> The leadership of the CPS was subjected to sharp criticism for its “*incorrect approach to solution of the national question*”, failure to master economic problems, not understanding the policy of the National Front and management without knowledge of the real situation. Formulations about separatism and anti-Czech views also appeared. The leaders of the CPS were surprised by the criticism. They attempted to defend themselves by explaining the complicated situation in

---

52 The official minutes of the session of the CC CPC are not available, but the notes of Bohuslav Lastovička, who was present at the meeting, have survived. They were published by PREČAN, Záznam o zasadání ÚV KSČ 17. – 18. července 1945, ref. 13, supplement 9, p. 293-296.

53 In a discussion with members of the Barnabite Commission, Gustáv Husák stated that they knew nothing about what they were going to discuss: “*The invitation came by telegram or in a report that briefly informed us, I remember well that we asked what things we should prepare, what questions they would discuss, and nobody could tell us anything. Perhaps it was telephoned or telegraphed to Friš. He led the political secretariat at the time, but nobody knew anything concrete about this question. And so we were surprised by the tone and especially by the sharpness [...]*”. NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 2, a.j. 25. Record of a discussion with G. Husák on 19 Nov 1963.

54 Some works state that it was a session of the Presidia of the CC CPC and CC CPS, e.g. VARTÍKOVÁ, *Komunistická strana*, ref. 4, p. 153; BARNOVSKÝ, ref. 50, p. 57; ŠKURLO, *Celoslovenská konferencia KSS v Žiline roku 1945 a čo jej predchádzalo*, ref. 1, p. 168. It was officially a session of the CC CPC with the participation of members of the Presidium of the CPS, as is stated in PREČAN, Záznam o zasadání ÚV KSČ 17. a 18. července 1945, ref. 13, p. 208.

Slovakia, but they did not find understanding.<sup>55</sup> Apart from an orientation “*to the progressive forces in the Czech Lands and the central government*”, the building up of mass organizations, strengthening its influence in them and concentrating its effort to achieve economic revival, the resolution adopted *On the policy of the CPS* gave the Slovak communists two organizational tasks. The first was to call a national conference of the CPS as soon as possible, “*to elect a new temporary Central Committee of the CPS, which would lead the party until the congress*”. The second task was to authorize V. Široký “*to devote his main attention to work in Slovakia. For this purpose, comrade Široký will go to Bratislava within the next few days and start work as the acting chairman of the CPS and representative of the Central Committee of the CPC.*”<sup>56</sup>

On 9 August 1945, a narrow group of the “most powerful” members of the Presidium of the CC CPC<sup>57</sup> decided what had to happen at the approaching national conference of the CPS. They approved the text of the resolution that had to be adopted at the conference, including what still had to be put into it. It had to emphasize that the main cause of problems was “reaction”, and that the National Front was not composed only of two political parties, but also of large social organizations. These were essentially controlled by the CPS and had to be used in its favour. In particular, it decided who would form the Presidium of the CPS. V. Široký had to become chairman, K. Šmidke would be deputy chairman, and Š. Baš'ovanský central secretary. The other members of the presidium would be J. Ďuriš, Ladislav Holdoš, G. Husák, J. Šoltész. Martin Valachovič and F. Zupka.<sup>58</sup>

Ladislav Holdoš was the least known, or actually almost unknown. He had not been active in Slovakia since 1936, when he went to join the international brigades in Spain. After the war he returned to Prague, where he worked in the apparatus of the CC CPC. His move to Slovakia was a great surprise for him.<sup>59</sup> Later, he stated that “[...] *they decided inappropriately in my view, when they sent me to a leading political position precisely there. I learnt only later that I was actually the victim of a political manoeuvre: They wanted to paralyse the influence of Husák and Novomeský in the leadership of the CPS, so they sent an unknown person, an “internationalist”, who could be manipulated better. It is necessary to say that I was loyal and devoted to Široký, who I had known in France.*”<sup>60</sup> In Prague, they even considered making him general secretary, but finally

---

55 An account of the session including the discussions was published by PREČAN, Záznam o zasedání ÚV KSČ 17. – 18. července 1945, ref. 13, p. 219-274. For a shortened account see: VARTÍKOVÁ, *Komunistická strana*, ref. 4, p. 154-156.

56 Resolution from the session of the CC CPC in Prague on 17-18 July 1945. In PREČAN, Záznam o zasedání ÚV KSČ 17. – 18. července 1945, ref. 13, p. 296-297.

57 Only 6 persons were present: from the Czechs K. Gottwald, R. Slánský and V. Nosek, from the Slovaks J. Ďuriš and J. Šoltész. NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 02/1 zv. 1, a.j. 8. Protocol from the meeting of the Presidium of the CC CPC on 9 August 1945.

58 Ref. 57.

59 In a conversation with workers for the so-called Barnabite Commission in 1963 L. Holdoš stated that V. Široký from the Prague cabinet called him at the Ambassador Hotel, where he was accommodated, to tell him that he should go to the Žilina conference of the CPS. Minister J. Ďuriš personally drove him there by car. NA f. ÚV KSČ, 3/10, zv. 2, a.j. 19. Record of an interview with L. Holdoš on 26 August 1963.

60 HOLDOŠ, Ladislav – BARTOŠEK, Karel. *Svědék Husákova procesu vypovídá. Rozhovory Karla Bar-*

decided to give priority to Bašťovanský.<sup>61</sup> Another surprise was the nomination of M. Valachovič, a former social democrat. Various people did not like this, including Husák, who commented after a passage of time: “*Why Valachovič? He was a person without experience and without abilities. He came to the leadership of the party but was sometimes entirely embarrassing.*”<sup>62</sup> However, Široký knew him and insisted on his view. Later, he continued to insist that it was correct and necessary.<sup>63</sup>

The national conference of the Slovak party at Žilina on 11-12 August 1945 was already prepared by Široký's supporters in the leadership of the CPS and its apparatus. They were also joined by Friš, who actually “defected” to the side of Široký, apparently under the influence of the leading functionaries of the CPC he had got to know in Moscow during the war. In spite of the carefully prepared “staging”, the situation became rather tense during the conference. Široký stated before the so-called Barnabite Commission that according to the decision of the CC CPC with participation of members of the Presidium of the CPS on 17-18 July 1945, “*they had very strict directives to put the questions of nationalism in their full width before the national conference of the party in Slovakia*”, but they had not done it, they had appointed nobody because of the risk of conflict within the party, which would weaken it and perhaps cause its defeat.<sup>64</sup> Later, in 1968, he modified his testimony, saying that Gottwald wanted to act sharply against the Uprising leadership of the CPS in Žilina, and had urged him to do this, but he had not followed Gottwald's intention.<sup>65</sup> Under great pressure and with the personal engagement of Gottwald,<sup>66</sup> Široký was finally elected chairman of the CPS. The change of chairman

---

*toška s Ladislavem Holdošem o zažitých z věznic a táborů pěti zemí, o komunistech bez moci a u moci, o Slovensku a o jiném ... (A witness at Husák's trial testifies. Conversations between Karel Bartošek and Ladislav Holdoš about experiences from prisons and camps in five countries, about communists without power and in power, about Slovakia and about other ...). Prague: Naše vojsko, 1991, p. 102.*

- 61 In a discussion with members of the so-called Barnabite Commission, G. Husák said of this: “*Comrade Holdoš came there and had to become general secretary. It was established as the official position. Then they selected Bašťovanský, Comrade Friš was actually moved from this.*” NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 2, a.j. 25. Record of a discussion with G. Husák on 26 August 1963. L. Holdoš expressed himself similarly. He recalled that in April 1950 at a meeting after appointment as commissioner or chairman of the Slovak Office for Ecclesiastical Affairs, Š Bašťovanský told him that before the Žilina conference they considered making him general secretary. They decided against this, because he had been away for 9 years and would have to get to know the Slovak situation. NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 2, a.j. 19. Record of a discussion with L. Holdoš on 26 August 1963.
- 62 NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 2, a.j. 25. Record of a discussion with G. Husák on 26 August 1963.
- 63 Široký defended Valachovič in front of the members of the so-called Barnabite Commission: “*Why Valachovič? An honourable worker and social democrat. At the time of building the popular front, he actively supported cooperation with the communists. As a former member of the leadership of Social Democracy, [...] he brought various things about how they assessed us. That was very valuable [...].*” NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 3 a.j. 55. Discussion with Viliam Široký on 10 Oct. 1963.
- 64 NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 3, a.j. 55. Record of a discussion with V. Široký on 3 Oct. 1963.
- 65 KAPLAN, ref. 3, p. 156-157.
- 66 G. Husák remembered in front of the so-called Barnabite Commission: “*This was a very sensitive matter for Šmidke, who was seriously offended by his removal from the leading position in such a simple way. He had done honourable work for the party since 1943, but he had to leave his position for no good reason. [...] The appearance of Comrade Gottwald was understood as being simply intended to apply this change. Comrade Široký did not express himself entirely openly at this time. He was afraid of not being accepted.*” NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 2, a.j. 25. Record of a discussion with G. Husák 19 Nov. 1963.

was not simple, because the existing chairman Šmidke had great authority, especially among the delegates at the congress, who had been partisans. They accepted him as the party representative of the Uprising and its commander, so Široký's election was accompanied by noisy protests, shouts and threats.<sup>67</sup>

The leadership of the CPS was elected at the conference in exactly the form decided by the Presidium of the CC CPC on 9 August 1945. Viliam Široký became chairman of the CPS with Karol Šmidke as deputy chairman, and Štefan Baš'ovanský as general or central secretary, although he was said to be more the "personal secretary" of Široký than the general secretary of the CPS.<sup>68</sup> Thus the holders of two key positions in the party were changed. The first was the chairman of the party, and the second was replacement of political secretary of the party Friš with the new general secretary Baš'ovanský. The other members of the Presidium of the CPS were Július Ďuriš,<sup>69</sup> Ladislav Holdoš, Gustáv Husák, Jozef Šoltész, Martin Valachovič and František Zupka. The Uprising leadership of the CPS was essentially removed. Only three of its former members – Šmidke, Husák and Šoltész – became members of the new leadership, and Šoltész, who worked as a minister in Prague, inclined more to the Prague view. The "degradation" of Husák was intensified by his removal from the extraordinarily important function of commissioner for the interior in September 1945. He was replaced by Július Viktory, who had no political independence and supported Š. Baš'ovanský. The supporters of Široký now had a clear predominance. The secretariat of the CC CPS consisted of Štefan Baš'ovanský (general secretary of the CPS), Karol Bacílek (organizational secretary), Edo Friš (secretary for political campaign work) and Ladislav Holdoš (secretary for mass organization activity). The conference elected 39 members of the Central Committee of the CPS.<sup>70</sup>

The positions of former members of Social Democracy remained minimal after the national conference of the CPS in Žilina. The former deputy chairman of the CPS from the unifying congress, Ján Čech did not get into the Presidium and remained only a member of the Central Committee of the CPS. The nine member Presidium had two members from the former social democrats: J. Šoltész and M. Valachovič, the Secretariat of the CC CPS had not even one, and the whole 39 member CC CPS had nine of them. Some of the former social democrats expressed their dissatisfaction, and some left the CPS at the beginning of 1946, after the formation of a party of social democratic type: the Labour

67 KAPLAN, ref. 3, p.157.

68 On the characteristics of Š. Baš'ovanský, see PEŠEK, Jan et al. *Aktéri jednej éry na Slovensku 1948–1989. Personifikácia politického vývoja. (The actors of an era in Slovakia 1948-1989. Personification of political development)*. Prešov : Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška, 2003, p. 35-38.

69 In the case of the election of J. Ďuriš as a member of the Presidium of the CPS at the Žilina conference in August 1945, I am forced to admit a mistake. In the work: PEŠEK, Jan. *Centrum moci. Aparát ústredného výboru Komunistickej strany Slovenska 1948 – 1989. (Centre of power. The apparatus of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia 1948 – 1989)*. Bratislava : AEPRESS, 2003, p. 38, I did not mention him. Apparently this was a result of the fact that he played little part in later meetings of the Presidium of the CPS, and when he did attend, he appeared as minister of agriculture. His activity in the Presidium of the CC CPC in Prague may also have contributed. (J. P.).

70 Zloženie nového vedenia KSS (The composition of the new leadership of the CPS). See *Pravda*, 14 August 1945. Note: According to *Pravda* 40 members of the CC CPS were elected, but the list of names includes only 39. The number 39 is also mentioned in the materials available to the so-called Barnabite Commission (J. P.).

Party (Strana práce), which changed its name to Social Democracy in Slovakia in September 1946. They included Ivan Frlička, one of the members of the CC CPS elected at the national conference of the CPS in Žilina. He became chairman of the Labour Party. Various former social democrats left the CPS for tactical reasons. They were convinced that the revival of social democracy would widen the position of the left and prevent the election victory of the Democratic party, by taking the votes of people, who did not agree with the policies of the CPS, but were not conservative and “reactionary” in their thinking.<sup>71</sup>

There were some changes in the leadership of the CPS after the Žilina conference, especially in the composition of the Secretariat of the CC CPS. Július Bránik was co-opted into the Secretariat of the CC CPS at a session on 19 March 1946, and the national economic, social-policy and trade union agenda was assigned to him.<sup>72</sup> Koloman Moškovič participated in meetings of the Secretariat of the CC CPS from 15 April 1946, although he was not formally co-opted.<sup>73</sup> He originally came from the apparatus of the Prague CC CPC, where he worked in the cultural promotional department, to assist with the campaign in Slovakia before the elections to the Constitution-writing National Assembly in May 1946. After the elections, which went badly for the CPS, Široký and Ďuriš decided that as a supporter of Široký, he would remain a member of the apparatus of the CPS and would mainly concentrate on organizational and cadre questions.<sup>74</sup>

71 BARNOVSKÝ, Michal. Strana práce. (The Labour Party). In MALÍŘ, - MAREK et al. *Politické strany*, ref. 10, p. 1216 – 1217.

72 At the same time as the co-opting of J. Bránik and definition of his agenda, the responsibilities of the secretaries of the CC CPS were further specified. Military and partisan matters were assigned to L. Holdoš, the Union of Slovak Women and communal department to Š. Bašťovanský, and youth affairs to E. Friš. SNA, f. ÚV KSS, Sekretariát ÚV KSS, 04, a.j. 8. Minutes of a meeting of the Secretariat of the CC CPS on 19 March 1946.

73 SNA, f. ÚV KSS, k. 1, a.j. 10. Meeting of the Secretariat of the CC CPS on 15 April 1946. Note: The original name of this person is Moškovič, but in the period 1945 – 1948, the modified form Moško also appeared. The records of sessions of the Presidium and Secretariat of the CC CPS contain both forms. After 1948, the “more Slovak” form Moško was strictly used in the minutes of sessions of the Presidium or Secretariat of the CC CPS, although paradoxically and for unclear reasons, his name is given as Moškovič in the protocols of the IX Congress of the CPC from May 1949 and the IX Congress of the CPS from May 1950, as a newly elected member of the CC CPC (CPS). However, it is curious that his speech to the IX Congress of the CPS is recorded under the name Moško. When he was “unmasked” as a traitor and supporter of Jewish nationalism at the end of 1952, his name is regularly given as Moškovič (J. P.).

74 In the framework of the activity of the so-called Baráková Commission, Moškovič testified: “*At the end of 1945, Široký and Ďuriš agreed with me that I should go to Slovakia. Sometime in February or March 1946, Bašťovanský sought me at the CC CPC and told me that they had decided in Slovakia that I would go to Slovakia, but it was still being discussed with the CC CPC. At the VIII Congress, Ďuriš told me that my move to Slovakia was arranged. I went to Slovakia about 15 April 1946 [...] In Bratislava, I announced my arrival to Bacílek, Bašťovanský and in the evening also to the chairman of the party. The Presidium of the CC CPS decided that I would work at the Secretariat of the Party directing the organization and administration of the election campaign for the National Assembly. Bacílek delivered the appropriate things to me. Since the 1946 election result was not favourable for the Party, Široký called me in Prague, and in the presence of Ďuriš, we discussed the policy of the Party after the election. It was decided that after the elections, I would be concerned with organizational matters, while Bacílek would move to the agricultural department.*” NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 2, a.j. 35. Protocol on the interrogation of K. Moškovič on 31 March 1955 in Prison no. 2 in Prague 14.



In November 1946, the CPS had Š. Baš'ovanský as its general secretary, and a further four secretaries of the CC CPS, namely Karol Bacílek, Július Bránik, Edo Friš and Koloman Moškovič.<sup>75</sup> This meant that Holdoš was no longer the secretary of the CC CPS, but he still participated in meetings of the Secretariat of the CC CPS. This also applied in the case of Edo Friš, who was appointed chief editor of Pravda in August 1947, and so he probably did not work as secretary of the CC CPS.<sup>76</sup> K. Bacílek also stopped working as secretary of the CC CPS, apparently at the beginning of 1947, and organizational affairs were transferred from him to K. Moškovič. Bacílek remained head of the agricultural department of the CC CPS and a member of the Secretariat of the CPS.<sup>77</sup> From its original composition of four people – the general secretary and four secretaries – the Secretariat grew to include twice as many members. Various members of the Presidium of the CPS and invited party functionaries often participated in its meetings.

In the period 1945 – 1948, the Communist Party of Slovakia had a professional apparatus on the district and higher levels. Its workers were paid from the resources of the centre. About 200 people worked in the party apparatus in Slovakia at the end of 1945.<sup>78</sup> One to three secretaries worked in each district depending on its size and importance, with a maximum of two in the majority. The district was headed by the district secretary as the “party’s first man in the district”. If there were additional secretaries, they were the secretary for agitation and propagation and the secretary for agriculture. The reality at the end of 1945 was that the position of district secretary, financed from central resources, was not filled in all the districts.<sup>79</sup> They apparently did not work in all or most of the districts where the majority of the population was of Hungarian nationality, which influenced the size of the membership base of the CPS. There was also the alternative that the position of district secretary was filled not by a paid functionary, but by a “volunteer”, who performed it in addition to ordinary employment. It is possible to suppose, although data are not available, that the positions of “professional” district secretaries were gradually filled in the following period. A party region had 2-3 secretaries, not all of whom were professionals paid by the centre. A region was headed by a regional

---

75 SNA, f. ÚV KSS, k. 788. Session of the Presidium of the CPS on 11 Nov. 1946. Note: It is the only record of a session of the Presidium of the CPS from the period 1945 – 1948, which includes the list of names of participants with indication of which people acted as secretaries of the CC CPS. The records of other sessions give the names of those present without indication of their function or whether they are only invited. It is not clear when these four secretaries of the CC CPS were appointed or how long they served. (J.P.).

76 See PEŠEK et al., ref. 68, p. 109.

77 The minutes of the sessions of the Presidium and Secretariat of the CC CPS do not make clear when K. Bacílek stopped working as secretary of the CC CPS. (J.P.).

78 NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 9, a.j. 201. List of workers in the apparatus of the CC CPS in 1945. Note: The document mentions 202 workers. However, the following is written in pencil by the title of the document: “*It is not only about the apparatus of the CC CPS, but also regional and district secretaries, who are members of the CC CPS.*” (J. P.).

79 The list of regional and district secretaries of the CPS up to the end of 1945 gives 75 names. The party had 11 regions, and it is possible to suppose that the positions of regional secretaries were successfully filled. There are 64 names of district secretaries, but there were 80 districts. NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 9, a.j. 201. List of regional and district secretaries of the CPS in 1945.

secretary. The others were the secretary for agitation and promotional activities and the secretary for agriculture.<sup>80</sup>

Some regions had CPS political schools, and on the Slovak national level, there was the Central Political School of the CPS. Functionaries of the CPS also attended the Central Political School of the CPC or the School of Journalism of the CPC.<sup>81</sup> The central newspaper of the CPS was the daily *Pravda*. In central Slovakia they published *Stredoslovenská pravda* and in eastern Slovakia *Východoslovenská pravda*. Apart from these, the CPS published various district and regional newspapers. *Nové slovo*, a weekly for politics, economics and culture, was published in Bratislava from 1945. It was started by G. Husák during the Slovak National Uprising. From 1946, the National Economic Commission of the CC CPS published *Výstavba Slovenska*, a monthly on economic policy.<sup>82</sup>

The apparatus of the CC CPS understandably had the most important position from the point of view of the functioning of the CPS. At first only a minimal number of people worked in its headquarters. The available documents state that in June 1945 about 20 people worked for the CC CPS.<sup>83</sup> Their number rapidly grew, and by the beginning of 1946 there was a staff of about 90.<sup>84</sup> However, the relevant document does not distinguish the numbers of political, administrative and economic employees. There may have been about 60 political workers. It is realistic to suppose that their number did not substantially increase up to February 1948. Growth came only after the Communist Party seized power. From being a party struggling for power, it became a party that actually held and applied power.

After 1945, the apparatus of the CC CPS created the most varied mixture of departments and commissions, which often changed their form. Their existence was apparently based on a system of sections, which had to be established according to the organizational directives approved at the unifying congress in Banská Bystrica on 17 September 1944.<sup>85</sup> By the beginning of 1946, the apparatus of the CC CPS had established the follo-

---

80 The original idea of how the party apparatus should look in the regions and districts, was more ambitious: “*It is desirable that the secretariat in every district should have four secretaries: a leading political secretary, an organizational and cadre secretary, a secretary for cultural and promotional work and an agricultural secretary. Every district secretary should have at least one deputy.*” Report by K. Bacilek to a plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia on the situation in the CPS after the liberation and the tasks of the communists in the coming months, 26 October 1945. In VERTÍKOVÁ, *Komunistická strana*, ref. 4, p. 311.

81 The apparatus of the CPS in the districts and regions and the existence of political schools cannot be fully reconstructed on the basis of the existing archive materials. The materials from the discussions of the Presidium and Secretariat of the CC CPS preserved in the SNA are incomplete and unspecific with many gaps in their time coverage. (J. P.)

82 BARNOVSKÝ, Michel. Komunistická strana Slovenska. (The Communist Party of Slovakia.). In MALÍŘ – MAREK et al., *Politické strany*, ref. 10, p. 1204-1205.

83 NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 14, a.j. 231. On the organization and political work of the party in Slovakia. Note: The number of 20 workers in the apparatus of the CC CPS in June 1945 was also given by Otto Krajňák, a worker in the cadre department of the CC CPS at the time. NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 2, a.j. 30. Statement by O. Krajňák from January 1963.

84 SNA, f. ÚV KSS, k. 1, a.j. 3. Minutes of a meeting of staff of the Secretariat of the CC CPS on 1 Feb 1946.

85 The organizational directives contain the following provisions: “*The leadership of the party shall estab-*

wing departments: cadres, organization, agriculture, national economy, agitation and promotion, public administration, mass organizations, social intervention, economic, records and accounts.<sup>86</sup> The departments often changed their names. For example, the National Economic Department became the National Economic Commission, the Department of Public Administration became the Department for People's Self-Government and so on. Existing departments or commissions were divided. For example, departments for social health, and for co-operatives and small businesses were separated from the National Economic Commission and established as independent departments. The documents of the Presidium and Secretariat of the CC CPS mention the origin of new departments, such as the Department of the Central Secretariat of the CC CPS for National Security and others.<sup>87</sup> The establishment and dissolution of various commissions, which existed in parallel to the departments, was a separate phenomenon. They included the Agricultural Commission of the CC CPS. Other commissions were occasionally formed, for example, the Legal Commission, Constitutional Commission, Social Policy Commission at the CC CPS, Defence Commission and so on. There was also the Central Revision Commission, called at the session of the CC CPS on 26 October 1946. Its chairman was Martin Valachovič.<sup>88</sup> However, its powers were minimal, involving only formal supervision of the economic affairs of the party.

The formation of the Communist Party of Slovakia was a logical result of the break up of Czechoslovakia in March 1939 and the reunification of the state in the spring of 1945 should have meant the end of its activity as an independent party. However, the CPS had already built up its own organizational structure, and it had swallowed Slovak Social Democracy by means of “unification” during the Slovak National Uprising. An extraordinary meeting of the CC CPS with functionaries of the CPC from Moscow and London was held in Košice on 8 April 1945. Klement Gottwald proposed the creation of a Central Committee of the CPC, which would direct the work of the party until a congress could be called and a new central committee elected. All those present unanimously approved the proposal. This extraordinary CC CPC had 17 members, including 9 functionaries from Moscow and London (K. Gottwald, Václav Kopecký, Rudolf Slánský, Václav Nosek, Marie Švermová, Josef Krošnář, Bohuslav Lastovička, Jaroslav Procházka, Jan Harus) and 8 functionaries from the CPS (K. Šmidke, V. Široký, G. Husák, L. Novomeský, J. Ďuriš, J. Šoltész, K. Bacílek, E. Friš). Instead of the former Politbyro,

---

*lish the central secretariat of the party and the following sections: a) political, b) military and partisan, c) organizational, d) economic-financial, e) social and health, f) press, g) cultural, h) women, i) youth, j) trade union organizations. The central secretariat and sections shall be subject to the Presidium.”* The organizational directives adopted at the unifying congress of the Communist Party of Slovakia and the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Workers' Party in Slovakia. In VARTÍKOVÁ, *Komunistická strana*, ref. 4, p. 41.

86 SNA, f. ÚV KSS, k. 1, a.j. 3. Minutes of a meetings of staff of the Secretariat of the CC CPS on 1 Feb. 1946.

87 For example, in the collection of the SNA, f. ÚV KSS secretary Ladislav Holdoš also mentions a Department of Hostile Elements and a Military Department, but the document is not dated (J. P.).

88 Resolution of a plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia on establishment of the Central Revision Commission, 26 October 1945. In VARTÍKOVÁ, *Komunistická strana*, ref. 4, p. 327.

they formed the Presidium of the CPC, which included the chairman of the CPC K. Gottwald,<sup>89</sup> deputy chairman K. Šmidke, who came to Košice only on 12 April 1945 and was represented by G. Husák until then, general secretary R. Slánský, and two further members: V. Kopecký and V. Široký. The so-called day to day leadership of the party would consist of the chairman K. Gottwald, deputy chairman K. Šmidke and general secretary R. Slánský.<sup>90</sup>

The leadership of the CPC never met in this form either in Košice or in Prague. Its nine Czech members moved to Prague with the government and began to operate there as the temporary CC CPC. At a session on 24 May 1945, 9 domestic communist functionaries were added to them. The list of members of the joint central committee includes the 8 Slovak members of the “Košice” central committee, but this body never actually met, and neither did the temporary presidium, which included K. Šmidke or his representative G. Husák as deputy chairman of the CPC and chairman of the CPS, and V. Široký as an additional member.<sup>91</sup> The leadership of the CPS saw this as an inadequacy, especially because it was not informed about what the Prague leadership of the CPC was considering.<sup>92</sup> The Presidium of the CC CPC began to meet from 26 May 1945. The Slo-

- 89 At the extraordinary meeting of the CC CPS with functionaries of the CPC from Moscow and London on 8 April 1945 in Košice, V. Kopecký proposed the creation of the new function of chairman of the CPC and K. Gottwald was unanimously “placed” in it. However, the formulation about the creation of a new function did not entirely correspond to reality, because such a function existed in the CPC before the Second World War. Gottwald’s function at the head of the party was designated as central secretary from the V congress. Various designations appeared in later years, with Gottwald described as the chairman of the CPC, chairman of the Czechoslovak Communist Section, political secretary or chief political secretary. In reality, Gottwald held the function of chairman, when he represented the party externally, and, at the same time, also the function of political secretary. See: ŠTVERÁK, František. *Schematismus k dějinám Komunistické strany Československa (1921 – 1992). Základní informace o ústředních orgánech a biografické údaje o vedoucích představitelích strany. (Summary of the history of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (1921 – 1992). Basic information about the central bodies and biographical data about the leading representatives of the party)*. Prague : Národní archiv, 2010, p. 12-14.
- 90 NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 16, a.j. 232. II variant. Supplements to the period 1945 – 1948. Supplement 2. Protocol of the extraordinary meeting of the CC CPS with functionaries of the CPC from Moscow and London held on 8 April 1945 in the premises of the Central Secretariat of the CPS in Košice. Note: The same data are given by PREČAN, Záznam o zasedání ÚV KSČ 17. a 18. července 1945, ref. 13, p. 205. The work by RYCHLÍK, Jan. *Češi a Slovinci ve 20. století. Česko-slovenské vztahy 1945 – 1992. (The Czechs and Slovaks in the 20 century. Czecho-Slovak relations 1945 – 1992)*. Bratislava : AEP, 1998, p. 31, speaks of 15 members of the temporary central committee, composed of 8 Czechs and 7 Slovaks. This was also stated, for example, by G. Husák in his discussions with members of the so-called Barnabite Commission. The work by J. Rychlík also mentions a narrower presidium with K. Gottwald as chairman and K. Šmidke as deputy chairman. This narrower presidium was supposed to include V. Ďuriš and J. Šoltész as Slovak representatives. Such a body is not mentioned in the sources I have used. (J. P.)
- 91 NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 16, a.j. 232. II variant. Supplements to the period 1945 – 1948. Supplement no. 3. Composition of the joint Central Committee formed on 24 May 1945.
- 92 G. Husák stated in front of the so-called Barnabite Commission: “We demanded a unified body several times, but without results. We found that Comrade Gottwald did not want to solve the problem. The reality was that the leadership of the party in Slovakia was not informed about sessions and we did not receive resolutions. We only accidentally learnt how questions were solved there. I often visited Comrade Gottwald and asked him about things that were unclear and how the party saw matters. I informed him about the situation in Slovakia.” NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 03/10, zv. 2, a.j. 25. Record of a conversation with G. Husák on 26 Aug 1963. Note: The statement “I often visited Comrade Gottwald” concerns the period after the

vaks working in Prague as members of the government, namely deputy prime minister V. Široký, minister of agriculture J. Ďuriš and minister for the protection of labour and social affairs J. Šoltész, participated in its meetings, but not the deputy foreign minister Vladimír Clementis. V. Široký was apparently accepted as a member of the Presidium, elected at the meeting of the CC CPS and functionaries of the CPC from Moscow and London on 8 April 1945 in Košice. J. Ďuriš was officially co-opted into the Presidium of the CC CPC at its session on 4 September 1945,<sup>93</sup> although he already participated in some sessions before this. J. Šoltész is last mentioned as a participant in a session of the Presidium of the CC CPC on 9 August 1945. He did not appear later, although he was a member of Fierlinger's first and second governments up to 2 July 1946. Apparently the reason was that he was a former social democrat.<sup>94</sup>

The CPS outwardly acted as an independent political party, and was presented as such in relation to other political parties and the public. However, its political line was unambiguously subordinate to the Prague leadership of the CPC. The leaders of the CPC and their supporters in the leadership of the CPS regarded it as part of a united CPC. This is unambiguously shown by the content of the joint discussions of the Presidium of the CC CPC and Presidium of the CPS on 31 May – 1 June 1945. The first day was devoted to discussion of how the Slovak communists should proceed at discussions of the Government and Slovak National Council about questions concerning responsibilities. On the second day, attention concentrated on the relationship of the CPS to the CPC.<sup>95</sup> The minutes from these talks state: *“Debated the question of the relationship of the CPS to the CPC. Formulated that the CPS is part of a united CPC with a united leadership.”*<sup>96</sup> No concrete measures in this direction were adopted, but the leadership of the CPC was clearly preparing “to create order” in the leadership of the CPS. The national conference of the CPS at Žilina in August 1945 fulfilled this task, and the new leadership headed by V. Široký was a guarantee that the CPS would not “cause any problems”.

V. Široký presented the main report to the conference, not as a “representative of the CC CPC”, but as the future chairman of the CPS. Gottwald appeared on 12 August 1945 as a guest with a “congratulatory speech”. In the introduction he said: *“We feel together with you as one body, one heart, one soul, simply as the CPC, we were, are and will be one united party, because our greatest strength lies in this”* but he continued *“yours here in Slovakia and ours there in Bohemia and Moravia.”*<sup>97</sup> He continued with such

---

May 1946 elections when Husák became chairman of the Board of Commissioners (J. P.).

93 NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 02/1, zv. 1 a.j. 9. Meeting of the Presidium of the CC CPC on 4 Sept 1945.

94 For the presence of V. Široký, J. Ďuriš and J. Šoltész at meetings of the Presidium of the CC CPC see NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 02/1, zv. 1, a.j. 1 and above.

95 The following Czech functionaries participated in this session: K. Gottwald, R. Slánský, V. Kopecký and V. Nosek. The representation of Slovak communists was larger, namely: V. Široký, J. Ďuriš, J. Šoltész, K. Šmidke, G. Husák, L. Novomeský, E. Friš, K. Bacilek and J. Čech. NA, f. ÚV KSČ 1 June 1945.

96 Ref. 95.

97 Prejav K. Gottwalda na konferencii Komunistickej strany Slovenska o aktuálnych politických a hospodárskych problémoch Slovenského povojnového vývinu, 12. august 1945. The speech of K. Gottwald to the conference of the Communist Party of Slovakia on the current political and economic problems of the post-war development of Slovakia, 12 August 1945. In VARTÍKOVÁ, *Komunistická strana*, ref. 4, p. 222.

general and indefinite formulations, and in any case he did not emphasize that “*the CPS is part of a united CPC with a united leadership*”. This was a strictly confidential, secret occasion known only the narrowest leadership. Outwardly, the CPS still had the status of an independent political party, and nobody cast doubt on this. Even the leadership of the Democratic Party, when it reacted to Gottwald’s critical words addressed to it, did not raise an objection or question about whether the CPS was an independent party or part of the CPC. The activities of V. Široký and J. Ďuriš as members of the Presidium of the CC CPC were not mentioned, and neither was the fact that Štefan Bašťovanský, Ladislav Holdoš and Marek Čulen were co-opted into the temporary Central Committee of the CPC together with Czech communists at the end of November 1945.<sup>98</sup>

The VIII Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, held on 28-31 March 1946, demonstrated the outward existence of two, close, but independent political parties, the CPC and CPS. On 26 February 1946, the Presidium of the CPC decided that a fifty member delegation of Slovak communists would participate in the congress of the CPC. However, this was officially “decided” at a session of the CC CPS on 12 March 1946, where the general secretary of the CPS Štefan Bašťovanský announced that the CPS would send to the congress of the CPC: “*a 50 member delegation, the members of which will be present as guests at the congress discussions and will greet the congress in the name of the CPS.*”<sup>99</sup> V. Široký spoke in the name of the Slovak communists at the VIII Congress of the CPC. After the congress, Široký and Ďuriš participated in meetings of the Presidium of the CC CPC on the basis of a resolution from 3 April 1946 that “*Comrade Široký and Comrade Ďuriš will be invited to all meetings of the presidium*”.<sup>100</sup>

It was politically advantageous for the Prague leadership of the CPC to have two communist parties available, one active in the Czech Lands and the other in Slovakia. The CPS headed by V. Široký and his supporters represented a guarantee that the question of a joint and united approach would not be a problem. The formal existence of two national communist parties was also politically advantageous, because it provided an argument against the effort of the Czech political parties to widen their activity to Slovakia, or in the case of the Democratic Party to the Czech Lands. The leadership of the CPC could insist that it would not build up parties active in the whole state, but only in the Czech Lands or in Slovakia. The relationship of the two parties was subordinate to the common aim of the total seizure of political power. When this aim was achieved in February 1948, the existence of two communist parties was already superfluous and contradictory to the application of totalitarian power. In autumn 1948, the Communist Party of Slovakia became formally part of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, merely its regional organization in Slovakia.<sup>101</sup>

98 NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 02/1, zv. 1, a.j. 15. Meeting of the Presidium of the CC CPC on 29 Nov 1945.

99 Oznamenie o zvolaní VIII. zjazdu KSČ a zdôvodnenie vyslania delegácie ÚV KSS na zjazd, ktoré predniesol na rokovaní pléna ÚV KSS 12. marca 1946 Št. Bašťovanský. (Announcement of the calling of the VIII Congress of the CPC and explanation of the sending of a delegation from the CC CPS to the congress, presented at the meeting of the plenary session of the CC CPS on 12 March 1946 by Š. Bašťovanský.). In VARTÍKOVÁ, *Komunistická strana*, ref. 4, p. 409.

100 NA, f. ÚV KSČ, 02/1, zv. 1, a.j. 27. Meeting of the Presidium of the CC CPC on 3 April 1946.

101 The study was researched in the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in the

KOMMUNISTISCHE PARTEI DER SLOWAKEI 1945 – 1948  
MITGLIEDSCHAFT, ORGANISATION, FÜHRUNG, PARTEIAPPARAT, BEZIEHUNG ZUR  
KOMMUNISTISCHEN PARTEI DER TSCHECHOSLOWAKEI (ABGEKÜRZT: KSCĚ)

JAN PEŠEK

Kommunistische Partei der Slowakei (Komunistická strana Slovenska, abgekürzt: KSS) entstand im Mai 1939 und war illegal. Bei der Befreiung der Slowakei seit dem Herbst 1944 nahm sie allmählich ihre legale Tätigkeit wieder auf und seit dem Frühling 1945 wurde sie zur Regierungspartei. Ihre Mitgliedsbasis vergrößerte sich rasch, am Ende des Jahres 1945 hatte sie fast zweihunderttausend Mitglieder. Nach der Umregistrierung der Mitglieder und der parteilichen Überprüfung an der Jahreswende 1945/1946 hatte sie Mitte des Jahres 1946 etwa hundertfünfzigtausend Mitglieder, danach folgte eine Stagnation und ein schwacher Rückgang. Seit dem Herbst 1947 wuchs die Anzahl der Mitglieder wieder und während des Februarumsturzes im Jahr 1948 erreichte die Anzahl fast den Stand wie zum Ende des Jahres 1945. Die Organisationsstruktur der KSS bildeten vier Glieder. Das erste Glied waren die lokalen, bzw. örtlichen Organisationen und die Organisationen in den Betrieben; mit der Dominanz der lokalen (örtlichen) Organisationen. Das zweite Glied waren die Bezirksorganisationen in allen 80 Bezirken. Das dritte Glied stellten die 11 regionalen Organisationen dar. Das vierte, höchste, Glied war die Führung der KSS d.h. Zentralkomitee und seine Organe (Präsidium und Sekretariat). Die KSS verfügte über einen professionellen Parteiapparat. Er war nicht allzu zahlreich, zum Ende des Jahres 1945 bestand er von etwa 200 Funktionären, von Bezirk- bis zur Zentralebene. Diese Anzahl erhöhte sich nach dem Februar 1948 nur gering. Der wichtigste Bestandteil des Parteiapparats war der Apparat ÚV KSS (Zentralkomitee der Kommunistischen Partei der Slowakei). Mitte des Jahres 1945 bestand er nur aus etwa 20 Mitarbeitern, anfangs des Jahres 1946 waren es 90 Mitarbeiter, weiterhin erhöhte sich die Anzahl nur gering. In der Führung der KSS war sog. Aufstandsführung, die während des Slowakischen Nationalaufstandes geformt wurde (seit dem Ende August 1944) und nach der Befreiung seine Tätigkeit wiederaufnahm. Die Zentralpersonen waren Karol Šmidke und Gustáv Husák. Bei der gesamtslowakischen Konferenz der KSS in Žilina im August 1945 wurde diese Führung im Grunde genommen abgesetzt und zum Parteivorsitzenden wurde Viliam Široký und zum Generalsekretär Štefan Bašťovanský. In die Führung der KSS setzte sie die Prager Führung der Kommunistischen Partei der Tschechoslowakei (KSCĚ) durch, persönlich der Vorsitzende Klement Gottwald. Formell war die KSS selbstständige politische Partei, handelte aber einheitlich mit der KSCĚ, die in Tschechien tätig war, und unterordnete sich ihrer politischen Linie. Nach der Machtergreifung im Februar 1948 wurde die KSS organisatorisch mit der KSCĚ vereinigt, wurde zu ihrer regionalen Organisation in der Slowakei.

doc. PhDr. Jan Pešek, DrSc.

Historický ústav SAV, Klemensova 19, 813 64 Bratislava, histpese@savba.sk

---

framework of the project VEGA 2/0103/10 *Komunistická strana na Slovensku: cesta k moci, monopol moci (1945 – 1968) (The Communist Party in Slovakia: the road to power, monopoly of power (1945 – 1968).)* and in the framework of the project APVV-51-017105 *Slovensko v 20. sto-ročí (Slovakia in the 20th century).*

## REVIEWS

TEICH, Mikuláš – KOVÁČ, Dušan – BROWN, Martin D. *SLOVAKIA IN HISTORY*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2011, 424 pages.

*"In the world not even historians know much about Slovakia and what they read is not worth anything."*<sup>1</sup> According to Mikuláš Teich this was the main reason for initiating the publication: *Slovakia in History*. The result was intended to be the first comprehensive cross-section through Slovak history written in the English language. This ambition is already clearly formulated on the first page: *"This book explores key moments and themes in the history of Slovakia from the Duchy of Nitra's ninth-century origins to the establishment of independent Slovakia at midnight 1992 – 1993."* This sentence also characterizes the publication as a whole. This work does not have the form of a continuous "grand narrative", but of "case studies" analysing key periods and "grand controversies" from Slovak history, as the editors defined them. Each of these "key moments" is presented by one author, an expert on the given theme. The book has 22 authors, 19 of them from Slovakia, two from the Czech Republic and one from Norway.

It is entirely obvious that the editors saw most of the key moments of Slovak history in the 20th century, since more than half the chapters are devoted to this period. As Mikuláš Teich notes in Afterword, in the case of the book *Bohemia in History*, they were only three chapters from eighteen (p. 371). From the point of view of long-term tendencies in the formation of the Slovak national narrative, the concept of Slovak national identity and the territorial definition of Slovakia, it is certainly defensible. Over-representation of the 20th century is typical of all the major syntheses of Slovak history since the second half of the 1950s. On the other hand, the much smaller space "for the 1000 years in the Kingdom of Hungary" means that the introductory criticism of Czechoslovakism due to which *"the Slovaks were deprived their Hungarian historical heritage"* (p. 11) does not sound very convincing. The argument that it is precisely the history of the second half of the 20th century that is key *"for an understanding of contemporary Slovak society"* (p. 9) could also be applied to other periods, as some chapters of this publication actually show.

In the summarizing introduction, Dušan Kováč provides basic information about Slovakia and its historical development, which led to the origin of Slovakia as a distinct geopolitical entity. An important and useful part of this chapter is an analysis of the development of Slovak professional historiography and the various approaches to the formation of the Slovak national story. Dušan Kováč defines Slovak history as the connection of the history of the nation with the history of the states that included the territory of Slovakia. He also describes the basic *"key points of Slovak historical development"* concerning the formation of the modern Slovak nation (p. 7-8):

Great Moravia as part of the national tradition and a significant stage of Slovak ethnogenesis; evolution of the Slovaks into their own ethnic group in the Hungarian Kingdom; Humanist and Baroque cultural development together with Reformation and Counter-Reformation; formation of the national political programme in the 19th century and reactions to the Magyarizing tendencies in Hungary especially after 1867; the existence of the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918 – 1938) as the period when the formation of a modern Slovak national identity concept was completed;

---

1 KRČMÁRIK, Radovan. Prelomové dielo o slovenských dejinách mieri do sveta. (A ground-breaking work on Slovak history comes into the world.). In *Pravda* [online]. Accessible on the Internet: [http://spravy.pravda.sk/prelomove-dielo-o-slovenskych-dejinach-mieri-do-sveta-pfz-sk\\_domace.asp?c=A110325\\_210621\\_sk\\_domace\\_p29](http://spravy.pravda.sk/prelomove-dielo-o-slovenskych-dejinach-mieri-do-sveta-pfz-sk_domace.asp?c=A110325_210621_sk_domace_p29)



the Slovak National Uprising as the most important event in 20th century Slovak history. Most of the chapters in the publication are concentrated around these “key points”. It is possible to say that from the point of view of the development of Slovak professional historiography, the above mentioned points represent the classic outline of the Slovak national story, but in many cases also of national mythology. This is certainly not the case with *Slovakia in History*, which places this book far above similar works written in English by historians connected with the so-called Ľudák exile community.

Three chapters are devoted to the medieval history of the territory of Slovakia. The editors reasonably decided to leave out a chapter on Great Moravia and devote the space to a chapter by Ján Steinhübel on the less familiar problem of the Duchy of Nitra, which showed developmental continuity from the 9th to the 12th centuries. The chapter by Ján Lukačka on the development of the nobility in Slovakia presents a similar idea. This way of presenting the national story means especially the rejection of the long existing and often politically instrumentalized idea of a radical break between the Great Moravian “golden age” and the “Hungarian yoke”. The medieval part of the book is completed by a text from Vladimír Segeš on the development of towns and their burgers in Slovakia.

The origin and development of the concept of Slovak national identity was fundamentally influenced by the confessional division of the inhabitants of Slovakia into Protestants or Evangelicals and Catholics. To understand the causes of this fact, it was important that the book should include chapters devoted to the period in which the confessional division arose: *Renaissance and humanist tendencies in Slovakia* by Eva Frimmová and *The period of religious disturbances in Slovakia* by Viliam Čičaj. As historian Stefan Berger stated: “*National revivals rarely began with history. Far more frequently, they were connected to language revivals and the attempt to save or recuperate an allegedly national language.*”<sup>2</sup> A study by Ewa Kowalská is devoted to the beginnings of the origin of “modern ideas” about the Slovak nation in the Enlightenment period and the role of confessional duality, in connection with the so-called language question. From the analytical point of view, it is one of the highest quality texts in the book. It very clearly defines the basic developmental tendencies and problems in development of the concept of Slovak national identity for the next century.

It is undoubtedly useful, that a special chapter by Ľudovít Haraksim is devoted to *Slovak Slavism and Panslavism*. However, it is a pity that the analysis really ends with Štúr’s *Slavdom and the World of the Future* from 1853. Greater attention should have been devoted to the period around 1900, when Panslavist tendencies directly influenced the activities of the Slovak political elites, as shown by Vajanský’s statement: “*It would be better to dissolve in the Russian sea than in the Czech puddle.*”<sup>3</sup>

The chapter by Dušan Kováč: *The Slovak political programme: from Hungarian patriotism to the Czechoslovak state* has a key position in the book. The text concludes the part of the book not devoted to the 20th century, and represents the “transition” between the Hungarian and Czechoslovak periods of Slovak history, in the age of culminating nationalism. Describing 100 years of the political activities of Slovak politicians, their plans and ideologies in twenty pages inevitably requires some degree of simplification. However, in this case, the transition from

2 BERGER, Stefan. National historiographies in transnational perspective: Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In *Storia della Storiografia*, 2006, no. 50, p. 24.

3 HOLLÝ, Karol. Negácia udalostnej histórie a historický optimizmus: historická ideológia Svetozára Hurbana Vajanského (1881 – 1897). (The negation of event history and historical optimism: the historical ideology of Svetozár Hurban Vajanský (1881 – 1897).). In *Historický časopis*, 2009, year 57, no. 2, p. 264.

Hungarian patriotism to the Czechoslovak state seems to be described too unambiguously. In fact, the Slovak case is characterized by ambiguity and ambivalence of national identity concepts. It is typical for multi-ethnic and multi-religious regions to produce competing identities. In addition it was only the global political development during World War I which enabled the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and was the reason why the pragmatic political Czechoslovak concept, by far not dominant in the Slovak milieu, prevailed in 1918 in the form of the Czechoslovak Republic. On the other hand, foreign readers will undoubtedly appreciate the extraordinarily clear and logically structured analysis of this essential period of Slovak history.

The next 13 chapters are concerned with development in the 20th century. A general chapter by Natália Krajčovičová about the First Czechoslovak Republic is followed by five studies describing the extraordinarily hectic and turbulent period of 1938 – 1948: from Munich (Valerián Bystrický), through the Slovak state (Ivan Kamenec), the resistance movement during World War II (Jan Rychlík), the Slovak National Uprising (Vilém Prečan) to the post-war development of the so-called Slovak question in Czechoslovakia and the communist coup of 1948 (Michal Barnovský).

*“In the 19th and 20th century Slovaks defined themselves in the process of confrontation with two ethnic and national groups: Hungarian and Czech.”*<sup>4</sup> In the 20th century it was mainly confrontation with the Czech environment and Czech views of Slovakia and the Slovaks that formed the main element shaping the concept of Slovak national identity. In the first half of the 20th century, the whole of this process was simplified into the problem of Czechoslovakism and so-called Prague centralism. Elisabeth Bakke analyses this theme in the excellently written chapter *Czechoslovakism in Slovak history*. The editors also deserve credit for including this high quality study in the book. They turned to a Norwegian historian in an effort to maintain the greatest possible impartiality on this sensitive theme.<sup>5</sup>

The editors made an equally important decision to devote a chapter to the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia (Štefan Šutaj). Simply by existing, this minority significantly influenced the ideas and activities of the (Czecho-)Slovak and Hungarian political elites. The Hungarian minority was placed in the position of a defenceless hostage, which suffered mostly negative consequences from all the key moments in 20th century Central European history. Perhaps the book should have included a similar chapter about the other, less numerous minorities in Slovakia, such as the Germans, Ruthenians, Roma and Jews.

The next four chapters are devoted to the period of the socialist dictatorship (1948 – 1989) and its influence on Slovakia. Individual case studies deal with the period of so-called Stalinism (Jan Pešek), the attempt to reform the system (Stanislav Sikora), and the process of changing Czechoslovakia into a “socialist federation” (Jozef Žatkuliak). A chapter by Miroslav Londák and Elena Londáková is devoted to the development of the Slovak economy, society and culture during the 40 year rule of the Communist Party. However, there is a noticeable lack of an analysis specifically devoted to the so-called “Normalization” period of 1970 – 1989, as a phase that significantly contributed to the formation of some basic characteristics of Slovak society, which continue until the present and have a substantial influence on the present social and political development of Slovakia.

The above mentioned chapters are written on a professional level by experts, who have been concerned with the given problems for a long time. Reservations have the form of only minor

---

4 MACHO, Peter. Symbolické aspekty národnej identity: Zaľudnenie národného príbehu. (Symbolic aspects of national identity: Populating the national narrative). In KILIÁNOVÁ, Gabriela – KOWALSKÁ, Eva – KREKOVIČOVÁ, Eva (eds.). *My a tí druhí v modernej spoločnosti. (We and those others in modern society)*. Bratislava : Veda, 2009, p. 289.

5 KRČMÁRIK, ref. 1.

comments. In the case of the federalization proposals of the historian Miloš Gosiorovský (p. 302 – 303), it would be good to mention that up to 1951 he was a member of Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia. During this time he was a trusted colleague of Viliam Široký in his struggle against Slovak bourgeois nationalists. Therefore it is probably that his “change of view” (in the time of rehabilitation of bourgeois nationalists) lay more in opportunism than in concern for “national equality”. It is difficult to say of Ladislav Novomeský that “in the initial period” he was “*blinded by the ideals propagated by the Communists*” (p. 338). Novomeský remained a rather dogmatic communist throughout his life, as his opposition to “*excessive democratization*” in 1968 showed.<sup>6</sup> One final remark: my personal view is that formulations such as “*justified Slovak proposals*” (p. 319) are rather teleological and essentialist, and therefore not suitable for the scholarly nature of the text. The chapters on Slovak history are completed by an excellent review by Michal Štefanský of the events from the fall of communism in 1989 to the break up of Czechoslovakia in 1993. The book ends with the inspiring *Afterword* by the initiator of the whole project Mikuláš Teich.

The book *Slovakia in History* arose from various reasons over 15 years and so it documents the state of development of the historical science in this period. Research has undoubtedly progressed since it was written, and some authors would now give interpretations different to those found here. At the same time, the book also provides a picture of the level of development and theoretical – methodological background of professional Slovak historical science as a whole. It will undoubtedly also be judged from this point of view. Experts on the history of historiography will certainly note “positivist tendencies”, as well as remnants of essentialism and teleological approach. However, this is not exceptional in classical mainstream historiography, and not only in Central Europe. However, it is necessary to emphasize that this publication is certainly the highest quality review of Slovak history written in English. Its quality also exceeds that of the majority of similar monographs in the Slovak language. From this point of view, it is possible that students in English speaking countries have available a better handbook of Slovak history than those in Slovakia. The book *Slovakia in History* certainly easily fulfills the aim with which it was written.

*Adam Hudek*

DUDEKOVÁ, Gabriela et al. *NA CESTE K MODERNEJ ŽENE. Kapitoly z dejín rodových vzťahov na Slovensku. (ON THE ROAD TO THE MODERN WOMAN. Chapters from the History of Gender Relations in Slovakia)*. Bratislava : Veda, vydavateľstvo SAV, 2011, 773 p.

For its broad thematic range and especially for the depth of knowledge of the researched question, it is possible to state that from the point of view of methodological approach and choice of theme, this collective monograph is one of the most important products of the “new wave” of Slovak professional historiography. The problem of reconstructing gender relations or to put it more simply: the roles and positions of women in the history of society was avoided or under-valued in Slovak historiography for a long time. However, examination of the rich bibliography of the book shows that Slovakia also has various expert or memoir works and especially the most varied occasional articles, for example, about the women’s society Živena or about more or less interesting female

---

6 MERVART, Jan. *Naděje a iluze. Čeští a slovenští spisovatelé v reformním hnutí šedesátých let. (Hopes and illusions. Czech and Slovak writers in the reform movement of the 1960s)*. Brno : Host, 2010, p. 334.

personalities, especially from the field of literature. The absence of more systematic knowledge of the women's question or gender relations in history was also caused by an avoidance of research into social history in general. For ideological reasons, consideration and interpretation of them concentrated for a long time on the history of social and class struggles, in which "progressive women" also participated. However, in recent decades, perhaps under the influence of the results of foreign historiography, systematic research into gender relations began to be done in Slovakia, and led to various expert studies, volumes of papers and monographs. The book reviewed here can be regarded as a very successful synthetic culmination of the first stage of this trend.

The monograph has a multi-disciplinary character. Thirty authors, including 20 women and 10 men, participated in writing it. Almost half of them work at the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, which was the guarantor of this imposing project. Authors from the institute contributed to the majority of texts in the book. Some of them contributed to various chapters in the monograph and did a lot of demanding editorial work in compiling and arranging the book. Authors from other social science institute of the SAS, as well as from universities, galleries and museums also participated. The broad group of authors enabled the reconstruction of a picture of the activity of women in history and society from many points of view. It brought new, sometimes surprising findings also from such fields of the family and professional lives of women, which were previously avoided in our historiography for the most varied reasons. On the other hand, the exceptional variety of the team of authors from many professional fields sometimes caused repetition of facts and connections, but this can never be entirely avoided in such synthesizing works. This is not a criticism of the authors or editors, only a statement. In the given case, repetition does not disturb the reader and in many places it is entirely logical or even unavoidable. It would also be incorrect to criticize the book for not including or marginalizing some spheres and problems from the history of gender relations. The compilers had to take into account the size limits of the publication and especially the existing range of authors in Slovakia. It is necessary to state that the monograph *On the Road to the Modern Woman* is not a light or entertaining book to be read all at once, although the majority of its chapters bring the historian or general reader little known facts and connections. It is written in very lively and attractive language, sometimes with a good pinch of irony and sarcasm flickers in the details. It does not have an apologetic – feminist "emancipatory" character, but presents objective, sober views. Woman does not appear in it only as an unequal person or as a victim of violence and humiliation, but also as equal shaper of her own destiny. The whole book shows an attractive effort by the authors to avoid traditional stereotypical views on the position and role of women in the family, in society, in public life, including political and association activities. However, avoidance of stereotypes does not only concern views of women themselves, but also various traditional evaluations of historic events and processes in the framework of which women lived and worked. The more interested reader can repeatedly return to the problems of gender relations raised here, compare them and draw his or her own conclusions.

I would like to point to another important aspect of the book that is unusual for our historiography: Its methodological approach, clarifying or defining the terminology, and the thematic range reaching far beyond the frontiers of Slovakia. When reconstructing gender relations in Slovakia, the majority of the authors start from wider world, European, Central European and Hungarian connections, as is shown by the large amount of foreign literature that the team of authors exploited. In foreign, especially German, Austrian, Hungarian or English language historiography, research into gender relations is relatively broadly developed, and this has an inspiring effect. Its use makes the view of gender relations in Slovakia more rounded and convincing, without making it a mere appendix of general European development. Slovak history writing has successfully placed itself in the context of European historiography in this area. For this reason, the 700 page book deserves a much more extensive foreign language summary than has been provided.

The internal structure of the monograph is relatively complex, for the reader sometimes too complicated. The thematic and chronological principles overlap. It is necessary to fully accept this, although the reviewer or reader may have some comment on the division of the individual materials into five parts, which are internally divided into 39 separate chapters.

The introduction by G. Dudeková acquaints the reader with the current state of research on gender relations in European and partly also world historiography, and with the aims of the creators of the monograph. In the conclusion, the same author summarizes the results of the work and points to problems and further perspectives for research in this field of Slovak historiography. I think that precisely this text should be translated into English or German.

It is natural that apart from their varied specific themes, the individual chapters also have a varied character. They differ from each other from the point of view of theoretical or factographic approaches to researched problems, of methods of research and interpretation or use of sources. These are really very varied and inventive, ranging from “traditional” archive and published materials, through expert and memoir literature, unpublished memories and diaries, statistics and cardiograms, findings from oral history research, to sources from the artistic field. The latter often play the role of a primary source in this monograph. This not only concerns artistic or literary works depicting women in their most varied functions and situations or as creators of artistic products. In various cases, the authors of the book make critical and creative use of numerous artistic and literary works to illustrate or to supplement and convincingly justify their research findings.

Apart from some general digressions, the research into gender relations covers the period from the beginning of modern times in about the 16th century to the middle of the 20th century. From the point of view of quantity, most attention is devoted to the problems of the second half of the 19th century and the first two to three decades of the 20th century. Precisely in this period, in Europe, in the Kingdom of Hungary or Czechoslovakia and so also in Slovakia, the complex, sometimes contradictory process of the “transition to the modern woman” occurred. This process was determined by the socio-political situation in individual countries or regions, the ability of contemporary society to overcome deeply rooted stereotypes about the role and place of women in family and public life, the educational level and wider range of knowledge of women, their social position and self-identification, voluntary or enforced ability and willingness to take the “risk” of professional or personal independence in the framework of social or family structures. The authors used these and many other factors not only for research and interpretation of the position of women in various fields of public life, including the economic, cultural, educational, religious and sporting sphere as well as the traditional family environment. The fields of legal and political self-identification and self-realization were also considered. At the same time, it would be a misunderstanding to see the monograph only in narrow “female” terms. Its findings extend beyond gender studies and document a large amount of information and stimuli for the reconstruction of the history of the whole of society during the given period. This must be seen as a further important achievement of the book.

It is interesting but also symptomatic that the “road to the modern woman” was permanently accompanied by prejudices, often on the side of women themselves, regardless of whether the political system was liberal, democratic or totalitarian, and when women were already participating in national-emancipation, cultural, socio-economic, religious or other social developments, either spontaneously or with encouragement. When looking at the chronological arrangement of the problem and the actual title of the monograph, the reviewer finds himself asking: Why do authors concerned with the “path of women to modernity”, usually, although with some exceptions, conclude their accounts in the middle of the last century. A view of Slovak women in the second half of the 20th century is noticeably lacking. The stimulating chapter by N. Veselská on the position of women in “real socialism” is an exception to some degree. The author concentrated on examination

of the view that in its “solution of the women’s question”, the communist regime was pursuing the total control of society by weakening the institution of the family as its potential social, political and especially religious opponent.

The space of a review obviously does not enable even the mentioning, let alone the critical evaluation of all 39 chapters in the book. However, the untraditional themes, analysis of researched problems and especially the stimuli of the various sections, suggest that their themes could also be further developed into separate monographs. Perhaps chronological criteria could be chosen, meaning reconstruction of the legal, economic, social, family and general social position of women in Early Modern times, the 19th century or the first half of the 20th century. Much space is devoted to the legal and especially the real position of the woman as wife, mother, widow or unmarried person. There are also interesting chapters tracing the process of the education of women in individual historical periods. Their complicated route to “modernity” developed from this. The second group of texts starts from thematic criteria. The individual chapters map the process of the emancipation of women in many fields of social life, although not all, since that would not be possible in the present state of knowledge. The more or less successful efforts to put emancipation into practice are also considered. Both these groups include really innovative texts, which speak revealingly and inventively both about the establishment of women in the traditional female professions (nurses, servants, dressmakers and so on), and about their complicated penetration into professions long reserved for men. Against the background of these emancipation efforts, the reader is presented with forgotten or entirely unknown stories of Slovak women or women active in the Slovak environment, who were able to achieve something in public life as well as in their professions either at home or abroad. The gallery of these interesting figures could probably be enlarged. This could be a subject for further research. Chapters with themes that were entirely avoided up to now, or distorted on the basis of over-simplified ideological approaches, are especially stimulating. They include the social position and role of women from the noble or bourgeois estates, the position of women in monastic orders, women servants and so on. Chapters on the history of literature, art and music are an important part of the monograph. They are concerned both with the depiction of women in works of art and with the activity of women as writers, painters, sculptors and composers.

The work includes a rich pictorial supplement, which not only fulfils the standard illustrative role, but also has an important informative function.

Ivan Kamenec

PETRUF, Pavol. *ZAHRANIČNÁ POLITIKA SLOVENSKEJ REPUBLIKY 1939 – 1945. (THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC 1939 – 1945)*. Bratislava : Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, 2011, 328 pages.

The initial aim of the book, according to the author, is “*to provide especially university students, but also the wider reading public, with a work enabling them to gain a general view of the basic circumstances of the origin of the Slovak Republic and the characteristic features of its foreign policy and diplomacy, although not with full details of everything...*” The extensive work is divided into two parts of unequal length, with the second section of nine basic chapters representing the core of the author’s testimony. Each part is divided into thematic sub-chapters. Since the foreign policy of the Slovak state bore basic signs of subordination to the German Reich, the possibility to build bilateral relations with other states was entirely dependent on this circumstance.

In connection with the fact that the actual origin of the independent Slovak state in March 1939 is a question answered differently by different authors, P. Petruf devotes an extensive introduction

to this problem. He expresses his basic finding with the statement that the foreign policy of the Slovak state “*was consistently carried on in the framework of the individual articles of the Treaty of Protection signed with the German Reich.*” The connection with Nazi Germany was a fundamental and permanent element of the foreign policy of the Slovak state. The introductory passage points to the circumstances of the birth of Slovak foreign policy and draws on the considerations of the first Foreign Minister F. Ďurčanský. The politician followed the basic realities, which Slovakia had to accept, and he emphasized the “*existence of Hungarian imperialist ideology, based on the ideology of the Crown of St. Stephen.*”

The first part of the book is concerned with key events on the path of Slovakia to independence in March 1939. It is thematically divided into four basic chapters: from consideration of Slovak independence, through the influence of international factors, solution of the given question during the Munich conference, to the development of Slovakia from autonomy to independent statehood. The author examines the question in detail and from various points of view, including the views of important foreign historians. The reader gains an extraordinarily extensive picture of the problem. The author’s detailed explanation of the role and place of Slovakia in the foreign policy aims of Hitler’s Germany is important. In this context, he outlines the problem of the Vienna Arbitration of November 1938. Apart from the arbitration decision, the author mentions the claims of Poland, which was successfully cooperating with Berlin in this period. The author emphasizes that the decisions taken at the Munich Conference had a negative impact on Slovakia as well as on the Czech Lands. If we compare the situation with the pre-Munich position, Slovakia represented a “*considerably reduced state formation, easily blackmailable by all its neighbours.*” The initial part of the book ends with a chapter devoted to analysis of the political activities of Slovakia on the road from autonomy to independent statehood. The author starts from the fact that the Czechoslovak state mutilated by Munich “*was entirely at the mercy or lack of mercy of the Germans.*” The author analyses this situation on the basis of many materials and memories, with a strong sense for detail. At the same time, he emphasizes that in the given situation the activities of the Slovak radicals were an important instrument assisting Hitler. In connection with the complex political game developed by Hitler and the defeatist position of the West, the author emphasizes that Hitler placed the Slovak representatives before an “*either – or*” choice. The Slovak politicians regarded the decision to declare the independence of Slovakia as the “*only politically acceptable solution*” in the given circumstances. It also opened the need to create a conception of foreign policy and a practical policy towards foreign states.

The second, extensive part of the book is directed towards the foreign policy and diplomacy of the Slovak state. This problem is the subject of nine chapters, divided into varying numbers of sub-chapters. The introductory passage examines the construction of the foreign policy of the Slovak state, describing the initial problems of setting up the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and pointing to the critical shortage of properly qualified personnel. The author notes that the building up and operation of a foreign service was also hindered by very limited financial resources. In some general comments on the questions of the diplomacy of the Slovak Republic, the author states that the diplomats of the new state had various distorted ideas about the content of their work. The Slovak diplomatic service emerged slowly and with great difficulty. On the subject of the foreign trade connections of Slovakia, the author emphasizes that in the given circumstances of “*two strictly divided hostile military blocs, such activities could only be minimal.*”

The next chapter traces Slovakia’s relations with the three neighbouring states: Hungary, Poland and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The complex political connections of relations with neighbouring Hungary understandably appeared also in this period. The author points to the contradictory connections and complications of these relations. At the same time, however, he points to the importance of, but also the limited possibilities for Slovak – Hungarian commercial

relations. Contacts with the Polish Republic were developed in even more complex conditions. The complications were clearly expressed in the specific political and diplomatic relations, as well as in the field of commercial contacts. Nazi Germany's military action against Poland, in which Slovak units participated, put an end to Slovak – Polish ties in this period. The final part of the chapter describes Slovakia's relations with the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. This rather brief sub-chapter considers several basic questions. It informs about the aim of the Slovak political elite to move the Czech inhabitants of Slovakia back to the Protectorate, it explains the conditions and possibilities for political relations, and finally deals with economic contacts.

The third chapter is concerned with Slovakia's relations with the states of the Tripartite Pact and with Manchuria. The most extensive part of the chapter is devoted to relations with the German Reich. In the introductory passage the author already emphasizes the importance of the German – Slovak talks in Salzburg in June 1940 and the resulting enforced political changes in Bratislava. The passage analyses in detail the formation of the appropriate diplomatic contacts and bilateral economic relations. The author states that the diplomatic recognition of Slovakia by Germany was the first clear signal to the international community that the newly established state "*did not exist in a vacuum*" but had the political and legal support of the decisive power in continental Europe at the time. The author takes a detailed description of the ceremony accompanying the arrival of German diplomats in Bratislava from the relatively long account in the central *Ľudák* daily *Slovák*. According to the pattern followed in the whole work, the author first traces the diplomatic contacts of Slovakia with the German Reich, then examines political relations and finally economic contacts. The author emphasizes that National Socialist Germany strove to achieve the most effective possible control over the Slovak economy. The chapter continues with a description of the diplomatic relations between Slovakia and Italy, then the economic relations between the two countries. The contacts of Slovakia with the states in the Tripartite Pact ends with a section on relations with the Empire of Japan. As a result of the more or less symbolic character of these contacts, the sub-chapter is rather short. The chapter on relations between Slovakia and the leading countries of the Pact ends with a very brief sub-chapter on contacts with Manchuria. As a result of the historical situation and given conditions it was an absolutely formal relationship.

The fourth chapter of the book is devoted to Slovakia's relations with the Western powers: France, Great Britain and the USA. The author analyses Slovakia's relations with France during the period after Munich, and considers the possibilities for diplomatic contacts after the creation of the Slovak state. He devotes attention to the position of the French political elite and the gradual change from the original position. As an expert on French politics, the author devotes considerable attention to the various stages of development of the given question. He also analyses the position of the Slovak politicians and the decisive position of Hitler's Germany. In the following analysis of Slovakia's relations with Great Britain, the author states that the British political elite took extraordinarily little interest in the "Slovak question". Diplomatic recognition of the Slovak state demonstrates Great Britain's pragmatic approach. As a result of further development this relationship did not last long and the British government gradually deepened its relations with the Czechoslovak government in exile in London. The basic element of the relationship of the Slovak Republic with the USA in the given period was "the unambiguous and continual unwillingness of the United States of America to grant diplomatic recognition to the Slovak Republic. The author examines this question from the time of the Munich Conference and analyses the various attempts by Bratislava to establish contacts with the USA. However, according to a government declaration, Slovakia entered a state of war against the USA from December 1941.

A relatively brief chapter describes Slovakia's relations with the Vatican. The author correctly mentions Slovakia's deeply rooted Catholicism, which created conditions for understanding from the side of the Holy See. The author traces the question of the attitude of the Vatican to J. Tiso,



a Catholic priest, who also held the highest political office in the state. As a result of the specific Slovak conditions, the Holy See finally came to terms with this problem. Analysis of the political activities of Karol Sidor as Slovak ambassador to the Vatican is an interesting part of this chapter.

The author devotes the sixth chapter to the development and circumstances of Slovakia's relations with the USSR, Baltic states and Finland. It is possible to trace in the text how the author has precisely used the published works of other historians. Where the relationship of Bratislava to Moscow is concerned, the situation gained a new dimension and political form after the signing of the German – Soviet Non-Aggression Pact in August 1939. The given question is appropriately outlined and explained in the book. The author devotes his attention to the problem of diplomatic relations, but also examines the possibilities of Slovak – Soviet economic contacts. In relation to the circumstances the relations of the Slovak Republic with the Baltic states are very briefly described. Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were incorporated into the USSR in autumn 1939. The final sub-chapter traces Slovakia's relations with Finland. According to his usual practice, the author considers diplomatic contacts, political relations and economic contacts. He emphasizes the friendly relationship of Slovakia to Finland, especially during the Soviet – Finnish conflict.

The following seventh chapter is rather long and deals with the development of Slovakia's relations with the Balkan states. The author describes the contacts of Slovak diplomacy with Yugoslavia only briefly. He relies on materials from the press such as the newspaper *Slovák*, and published works on the given theme. The Slovak Republic's contacts with Rumania were relatively interesting, but it appears that the author has not used everything he could. He does not know some studies of domestic origin. However, the size of the book clearly did not enable the author to go into too much detail. As usual, the next part of the chapter traces diplomatic contacts, political relations and economic cooperation. The fact that economic contacts occurred during a war had an unfavourable influence on their extent and development. The author deals in a similar way with relations with the Kingdom of Bulgaria. The final part of the chapter traces Slovakia's relations with Croatia. As in the whole book, the author describes diplomatic contacts, political relations and the problems of economic ties.

In the eighth chapter, the author considers Slovakia's contacts with the neutral states: Spain, Switzerland and Sweden. The chapter is divided in a similar way to the others, with consideration of the questions of diplomacy, political relations and economic contacts.

The final, ninth chapter deals briefly with Slovakia's relations with Denmark and the Netherlands. The author has clearly struggled with a significant shortage of usable materials.

The aim of the author to trace the foreign policy of the Slovak Republic from 1939 to 1945 is extraordinarily brave. For various reasons, access to archive material is not always adequate for this theme, and in various cases it is necessary to rely mainly on newspaper reports. It is necessary to comment here that the extensive quotations from statements by accredited diplomats can be considered rather excessive. The author could have broken up the large blocks of text and enlivened them with comments.

The greatest positive feature of the work is the author's effort to provide the reader with the most complete selection of the available facts. The extent of the researched material is praise-worthy. Since the previous works on this theme were few and oriented towards individual parts or countries, it is necessary to highly appreciate the effort of the author to summarize the foreign policy connections of the Slovak state under one title. In spite of the praise-worthy extent of the work, the author did not have the possibility to research some partly known problems in detail. However, it is necessary to highly appreciate the fact that the book gives the reader comprehensive information about the composition of the diplomatic corps in Bratislava during the war, and this can be appropriately used in history writing.

The considerations of the author appropriately titled: *Instead of a conclusion* complete the extensive book. The author's account of the starting points and possibilities for the foreign policy of Slovakia are interesting and stimulating. The fact that the republic "arose mainly from the will and power-political calculation of those who lost the war" and that it stood by their side until the bitter end, meant that it already lost credit in the course of the world conflict. The author already analyses this question from various points of view and traces in detail the foreign policy circumstances of the shaping of Slovak policy. The appropriately extensive concluding considerations bring the evaluation to the inglorious end – the day of capitulation of Nazi Germany in May 1945. The given passage concludes the theme in an appropriate and considered way.

The overall structure of the book is completed by a select bibliography, summary, list of abbreviations and index of names. In spite of this, the detailed bibliography does not include some interesting works among the most recent foreign publications. These include the extensive Russian selection on important Eastern European questions in documents from the Moscow archives and a German study of the links between the Third Reich and Slovakia in the period 1939 – 1945. In spite of this, the list of literature used is respectable. The work is appropriately supplemented with illustrations: portraits of politicians, pictures of various meetings and signatures on agreements, interesting texts from the newspaper *Slovák*. A selection of extracts from diplomatic documents concludes the supplement.

It is necessary to warmly recommend Pavol Petruť's extensive and very informative book as the first comprehensive work on an important and interesting theme. It is an excellent contribution to university teaching and historical research. It will undoubtedly also be read by many other people.

Dagmar Čierna-Lantayová

TISO, Jozef. *PREJAVY A ČLÁNKY. Zv I. (1913 – 1938) (SPEECHES AND ARTICLES. Vol. I (1913 – 1938))*. Editors: Miroslav Fabricius, Ladislav Suško. Bratislava : Historický ústav SAV – Academic Electronic Press, 2002, 568 p.

TISO, Jozef. *PREJAVY A ČLÁNKY. Zv II. (1938 – 1944) (SPEECHES AND ARTICLES. Vol. II (1938 – 1944))*. Editors: Miroslav Fabricius, Katarína Hradská. Bratislava : Historický ústav SAV – Academic Electronic Press, 2007, 697 p.

TISO, Jozef. *PREJAVY A ČLÁNKY. Zv III. (1944 – 1947) (SPEECHES AND ARTICLES. Vol. III (1944 – 1947))*. Editors: Katarína Hradská, Miroslav Fabricius. Bratislava : Historický ústav SAV – Spoločnosť PRO HISTORIA, 2010, 247 p.

The project of publishing and making accessible to the expert and wider interested public the speeches and articles of the politician and statesman Jozef Tiso, as well as the German records of his five meetings with Adolf Hitler between 13 March 1939 and 13 May 1944, is complete after a decade. The third volume also includes his final speech in his defence before the National Court on 17-18 March 1947. Indexes of people and places for all three volumes are found in the third part, which may complicate work with the published texts for readers. Every text has bibliographic data and where necessary also supplementary notes. Especially Miroslav Fabricius and Katarína Hradská participated in this publishing project. They devoted much time and effort to bringing it to a successful end.

Perhaps no Slovak politician in modern history is accepted and rejected with so much passionate hatred or admiration as J. Tiso, the long-serving leading figure in Hlinka's Slovak People's Party (HSPP) and from 1939 its chairman and President of the Slovak Republic. It was characte-

ristic of the formation of the view of the public on this personality, that for decades it was shaped on the basis of second hand information with little knowledge of his real activities and especially of his published views from various stages of his public and political activity.

Jozef Tiso was a man with great ambitions, at first in the framework of the Catholic Church, and then in politics. He was active as a journalist from 1913, and in politics as a member of HSPP from the end of 1918, that is for practically the whole duration of the first Czechoslovak Republic. In the second Czechoslovak Republic, he was already the leading political personality in Slovakia, and from 14 March 1939 clearly the leading politician in the Slovak state until its dissolution in April 1945. However, the public activity of J. Tiso did not end there, rather his social role changed from that of leading statesman to investigated, tried and convicted prisoner. His trial before the National Court became an important event, which attracted the attention of the general public and the new political leadership on both the Slovak and Czechoslovak levels. His activity as a living priest, politician and statesman finally ended with his execution early on the morning of 18 April 1947. From that moment, his controversial political legacy together with his tragic personal fate began to influence Slovak society, especially the socially interested public.

The three volumes published between 2002 and 2010 testify to the nature of his legacy in the form of mainly political articles and speeches. They include 692 articles, speeches and conversations on the most varied themes on which this priest, politician and statesman could, had to, did not have to or wanted to express a view. The style especially of his public speeches shows that the priestly and perhaps also the teaching profession left significant traces in his political statements. His political speeches bear the marks of sermons and teaching, while published sermons, for example, from pilgrimages, have the character of political speeches, but always with the typical teacher's diction.

In Tiso's journalistic writings, some of his views on social problems, inspired by Papal encyclicals, do not appear entirely anachronistic even today. At the time they appeared, his defence of the separate identity of the Slovak nation and critical views on the centralist political practices of all the governments of the First Republic, including those in which he participated as a minister for HSPP, had validity and meaning. Historians positively assess his activity as minister of health in the coalition government of 1927 – 1929 and appreciate his negotiating abilities directed towards compromise and the achievement of aims wider than mere party-political interest. In the end, like other politicians in various historical periods, J. Tiso gradually changed as the times changed and people had to evaluate the changes. I will concentrate especially on two problem areas that concerned J. Tiso and his party colleagues known as the *Ludáks*. Their "solutions" led the party, the state they founded and the individuals themselves to political catastrophe and in some cases personal destruction. The first area is Tiso's views on the role and meaning of the political party, especially his own Hlinka's Slovak People's Party, and on the political system of the Czechoslovak and Slovak states. In this context, it is necessary to note that J. Tiso was a leading personality with increasing influence on its political position. Under the first Czechoslovak Republic, Tiso stood on the ground of Czechoslovak statehood and democracy. In this framework, he and his party strove to gain the autonomy of Slovakia, but did not achieve this until October 1938. However, from the parliamentary elections of 1925, when HSPP became the strongest party in Slovakia, the *Ludáks* claimed the position of the only political representative of the Slovaks, although they gained only a relative not an absolute majority of votes, and their electoral success of 1925 was never surpassed in later democratic elections. The Slovak politicians working in Czechoslovakist oriented parties were usually described as renegades and traitors, although more than one formerly pro-Hungarian or "quiet Slovak", including J. Tiso himself, found places and even strong positions in HSPP. Before the First World War, J. Tiso did not belong to the pro-Hungarian radicals, more than a few

of whom existed in Slovakia, but he was careful not to harm his promising Church career by publicly expressing his Slovak identity.

In 1938, at a time when the state was threatened and the government was negotiating with the Germans about the nationality statute, Tiso made clear as a Ľudák representative that the republic and its democratic system was only an instrument or means for the well-being of the nation, apparently according to the ideas of HSPP, which was not a political party according to the standard definition, but a “*national movement*”. Therefore, it was not presenting to the government only the demands of a particular political party, but of the whole Slovak nation. This idea of the exclusiveness of HSPP in Slovak politics was fully expressed after 6 October 1938, when the Ľudáks with the cooperation or assistance of representatives of other civil parties in Slovakia, but not the communists, social democrats and minority parties, achieved acceptance of the Ľudák proposals for the autonomy of Slovakia. HSPP immediately began to “steam roller” its allies. The head of the autonomous government J. Tiso ideologically justified this with words such as these: “*Our future life will not be based on political parties, but on hard-working and creative social groups. Political parties have fulfilled their role... The idea of the nation has triumphed, and in future the nation will not need party membership cards and colours*”, naturally apart from the identity cards and colours of his own party. It is necessary to add that J. Tiso was also minister of the interior and so was able to deal with the other parties.

This led to perhaps the most depressing period of the liquidation of pluralist democracy in Slovakia. The democratic parties allowed themselves to be politically liquidated by merging with HSPP, even without the use of force, which the Ľudáks still did not possess. In this context, Jozef Tiso spoke of the end of the splintering of the nation, because the “*whole Slovak nation united*” in his party. After the origin of the Slovak state – at an accelerated tempo according to the will and orchestration of Adolf Hitler – Tiso again commented: “*... immediately after 6 October we said: One God, one nation, one organization, one party in Slovakia.*” Other articles and speeches add the further epithet: “*state party*”. HSPP had to be the bearer and director of the task of building the Slovak state. It was the party “*of the political will of the Slovak nation*”, the “*oil in building the state*”, the driving force of the Slovak political revolution and the only bearer of the historical continuity of the Slovak nation. At the same time, the President and leader J. Tiso constantly appealed to members of the party to undertake a lot more party activity, but the more or less satisfied party members were not very willing.

The second thematic field, closely connected with the theme of the ruling party is the problem of the Slovak state, which was to a large extent Tiso’s Slovak state, accepted from the hands of Hitler – certainly also with a feeling of unavoidability at the given moment and under the influence of the self-preservation instinct. For many years under the first Czechoslovak Republic, the Ľudáks including Tiso declared that Czechoslovakia was their state, and they demanded from it only fulfilment of the promise of autonomy for Slovakia given in the Pittsburgh Agreement. At the beginning of the 1930s, Tiso pointed out that “*autonomy is the recognition of state sovereignty and the autonomists stand on the ground of recognition of the integrity of the state*”. However, in the new situation after the achievement of autonomy in October 1938, the Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Region, which Tiso presented in the newly formed Slovak Regional Parliament in February 1939, was already clearly dominated by the vision of a separate Slovak state, although preliminarily in the framework of the common Czecho-Slovak state, which Tiso mentioned only rather marginally, to the dissatisfaction of his Czech political partners. Immediately in the introduction resound the notable words: “*Here on the floor of our parliament, we are building our state, our new state, our Slovak state.*” The speech also included ambitious plans to create economic, educational and artistic institutions, which had not existed before the achievement of autonomy.

The independent Slovak state, which originated suddenly and even for the majority of Ľudáks prematurely, according to Hitler's aims, was established as an authoritarian state headed by one party, although Tiso assured the population that everything had happened without any pressure from their great ally and protector. The Slovak state would be built in the spirit of Christian nationalism and Christian socialism. Obviously it could not and should not be a democratic state, since that had failed because of lack of authority. However, much changed after the Salzburg talks of July 1940, when President Tiso also suddenly learnt that he must build "*the people's Slovakia according to the directives of national socialism*". This was naturally of German, or more precisely Nazi origin. However, it is impossible to claim that Jozef Tiso, in contrast to the politicians around Vojtech Tuka, excessively emphasized this national socialist course in the long-term. In the final months of the war from the outbreak of the Uprising in August 1944 to spring 1945, he already spoke only of defending the Slovak nation and state without any further labels.

Foreign policy was not Tiso's domain, as his articles and speeches also show. He concentrated in them on the internal problems of Slovakia. Foreign policy appeared in them only as an external framework and factor "given from above", which had to be respected and submitted to. Tiso usually only stated the development of the international situation in his speeches and did not explain it. However, the foreign policy doctrine was clear: close, even the closest possible alliance with the German Reich, which was a guarantee of the existence of Slovakia as a country and state. Especially after Salzburg and still in the final months of the existence of the Slovak state, the President and leader emphasized this so much that it changed into a foreign policy incantation, which became a serious argument against him in his trial before the National Court. The position of a faithful vassal of the Reich is also confirmed by the records from Tiso's five meetings with Hitler, published in the third volume. They are records from the German side. If Slovak records existed, they are not available. On such occasions, the tendency of the German dictator to produce long monologues and his "power-political weight" did not leave much space for the formulation of really original foreign policy positions, and Tiso had only modest space for expressing polite agreement.

The President's foreign policy position always emphasized his fundamental opposition to communism. From the beginning of his political activity, Tiso as a politician and Catholic priest regarded Bolshevism or "Judaeo-Bolshevism" as the greatest danger for the Slovaks and for the Church. The President devoted hardly any attention to the Western powers in his speeches, but from the point of view of how the Second World War developed from beginning to end, this was not important. Similarly, it was not important that in his public statements he said relatively little about the so-called Jewish question. The important thing was that in his public speeches he definitively confirmed the government or parliamentary decisions against the Jews. He did not sign the so-called Jewish Code from September 1941 because it was a government decree, but he clearly approved it, for example, with the words that the people who harmed the Slovak nation and had to be stopped "*had long included the Jews, who politically oppressed and economically exploited the Slovak people and strove for their social destruction*". Similarly, he approved the deportation of Jews in a commemorative speech at Holič in August 1942. After this, he remained silent on the Jewish theme, and this continued in the period from autumn 1944, when a final wave of deportation of Jews happened under German direction after the outbreak of the Slovak National Uprising. He only occasionally made summarizing statements of the type: "*The insidious enemy of the freedom of the Slovak nation: Czech imperialism, under the protection of Judaeo-Bolshevism threw itself on quiet Slovakia and on the peaceful, hard-working Slovak nation.*"

The three volume collection of Tiso's speeches and articles ends with his extensive speech in his defence presented before the National Court at the end of his trial. It was a special retribution court established according to Decree no. 33/1945 Collection of Decrees of the Slovak National

Council from 15 May 1945 and later amendments, in the spirit of political agreements between the parties in the Košice coalition government. We know that J. Tiso's defence before the court did not succeed and could not succeed, because it was an extremely political case. However, in his speech he pointed to the peculiarity of retributive justice, especially to the principle of retroactivity and some other aspects of the trial, which were not permitted in normal criminal proceedings. His defenders also pointed to these aspects of the trial. For a comprehensive view of Tiso's trial, it would also be necessary to publish the concluding speeches of the prosecutors and the whole text of the verdict, not only its concluding part. There was space for this in the third volume, since it has scarcely a third of the length of the previous two volumes. After more than 60 years since the retributive trials, perhaps it is time to devote some systematic research and analysis to this specific phenomenon in our modern political and legal history. There should also be comparison with similar trials in other European countries. Any public speeches by politicians cannot be taken literally in historical retrospective, and the proverb that speeches are spoken and bread is eaten applies here. Therefore, it is important to confront them with other documents and especially with real political actions. The three volumes of articles and speeches by Jozef Tiso and the other published documents in the third volume are highly symptomatic for his political activity. Therefore, they remain important testimony and sources explaining the steps of the first and only President of the first Slovak Republic on the long road from which there was no return and no new starting point after the outbreak of the Second World War and Slovakia's participation in it on the side of Nazi Germany.

*Milan Zemko*