

ARTICLES

THE ORIGIN, GLORY AND FALL OF THE NEW BUSINESS NOBILITY OF THE HABSBURG MONARCHY

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The study describes the origin, glory and fall of several important business families (Fries, Henikstein, Friesenhof and others), who gained noble status in Vienna at the end of the 18th century and retained considerable social prestige and wealth in the early 19th century. However, their minimal political influence as new noblemen did not correspond to their enormous economic and great cultural importance. The strong founding generation was usually followed by stagnation and often gradual decline with members of later generations not having the necessary persistence and qualities.

This development is shown in most detail in the case of the Friesenhof family, with Johann Michael (1739–1812) founding a tradition as the first baron. His son Adolph (1798–1853) still significantly applied himself in the field of business, but his younger brother Gustav (1807–1889) already settled at Brodzany in territory now belonging to Slovakia, where he devoted his attention to business on the local level rather than on that of the whole state. With a loyal attitude to the court and the monarch, strong links with Russia, the Slovak national emancipation movement and Germany, he became a representative of a unique type within the new aristocracy with very strong European connections. His children developed these tendencies further. All this made the Friesenhofs a very interesting and entirely atypical noble family, which only confirmed the variety of this social group.

Key words: Habsburg Monarchy. 18th – 19th centuries. New business nobility. Friesenhof-Oldenburg baronial family. Links with Russia and Slovak politics.

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Three businesses with representatives who became part of the so-called new nobility will be in the centre of the attention of this text. Two Viennese banking

houses from around 1800: Fries & Comp. and Henikstein & Comp with the now almost unknown personality Johann Michael Vogel, who was connected with both and interested in their deals. One of Vogel's sons followed his father's business career, while the other undertook various diplomatic missions abroad before settling in the territory now belonging to Slovakia before the 1848 revolution.¹

Our story begins in the French municipality of Beblenheim in Alsace, north of Colmar and almost on the border with present-day Germany. The founder of the Friesenhof family and first bearer of his name, the already mentioned Johann Michael Vogel, was born there in 1739. It is thought that the family originated from Mülhausen, then loosely connected with Switzerland. His father David died in 1746 and mother Verena, born Rack, in 1765.²

Johann Michael lived and worked in Vienna, capital city of the Habsburg Monarchy, where many financially demanding Enlightenment ideals and reform projects were in progress. Vienna was the centre of a large state and a place where ambitious and enterprising people could apply their talents. Johann Michael was clearly such a person. People like him came from abroad, bringing new forms of behaviour, culture and business. They decisively participated in the industrially backward country. They settled in Vienna, enjoyed religious freedom there and found new homes for themselves and their families.

The year of the outbreak of the French Revolution was also a turning point for Johann Michael. In 1789, at the relatively late age of fifty, he married a young compatriot, 18 year old Baroness Anna Maria Bössner, born 1771, daughter of Ambrose Bössner, a burger, senator and pharmacist in Colmar.³ Anna was niece of the banker Johann Jakob Bössner from the city of Brody in Galicia. Her ancestors show various indications of the Jewish origin of the family. Marriage with the young girl was clearly connected with a further important event in the life of Johann Michael.

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- 1 This text originated with support and in the framework of the project APVV-14-0644: *Kontinuita a diskontinuita politických a spoločenských elit na Slovensku v 19. a 20. storočí* (Continuities and discontinuities in political and social elites in Slovakia) and VEGA 2/0121/17: *Politická korupcia na území Slovenska v 19. a 20. storočí* (Political corruption in the territory of Slovakia in the 19th and 20th centuries).
 - 2 STEEB, Christian. *Die Grafen von Fries. Eine Schweizer Familie und ihre wirtschafts-politische und kulturhistorische Bedeutung für Österreich zwischen 1750 und 1830*. Bad Vöslau: Stadtgemeinde, 1999, p. 147. ISBN 3950120505.
 - 3 Archív Slovenského národného múzea (Archive of the Slovak National Museum) Bratislava (hereinafter ASNM), fund Brodzany (unsorted), Stammbaum; Slovenský národný archív (Slovak National Archives) Bratislava (hereinafter SNA), fund Rod Friesenhof – Brodzany, separately deposited correspondence of others, Rodokmeň Bössnerovcov (Family tree of the Bössner family).

In the same year as his marriage, namely 1789, the Emperor Joseph II granted him the status of a hereditary baron of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation as Johann Michael Baron Vogel von Friesenhof. This was preceded by a request to the Emperor for elevation to the rank of imperial baron, in which Vogel appealed to his already long ennobled and by then deceased chief Johann Fries and a detailed enumeration of his achievements in the economic and financial field, on the basis of which he proposed the above mentioned predicate.⁴

The request to the Emperor came soon after the wedding, and a wife appropriate to a baron was one of the strongest arguments. It was usually necessary for a person to gain noble status and only then apply for the title of baron. However, in the case of Johann Michael it was all very quick: first an advantageous marriage, and then an immediately application to be a baron, simply jumping over one step. Ennoblement for social reasons such as a family connection with the nobility was usual, but the granting of the title baron without prior ennoblement was exceptional. It appears that money was also decisive here. Ennoblement papers did not contain a request for remission of payment, which had to be appropriately large in such as case, which involved both becoming a baron and jumping over a stage (so-called *tax cum saltu*).⁵ However, for Johann Michael this was an investment like in an industrial enterprise. It was an investment that would increase in value and could be inherited by his descendants. The question arises of whether the marriage of Johann Michael and Anna was not a classic case of a marriage of convenience between social status and a bag of money or rather bank deposits.

We learn from the charter of ennoblement in almost identical terms to those in the application that the new baron gained merit mainly in the business sphere. For 27 years, since 1762 he had worked in the bill of exchange business and for the Fries family. As an employee in the banking and bill of exchange house Fries & Comp., he actively and significantly participated in founding and operating “*various very important enterprises of this house in Galicia*” and various other manufacturing or other businesses, such as the establishment in 1751 of the fustian manufacturing business at Obergrafendorf in Lower Austria with its management in Fridau Castle. In 1787 in the framework of the Henikstein banking house, he participated in founding a sugar refinery in Bohemia, as well

4 SNA, fund Rod Friesenhof – Brodzany, separately deposited correspondence of others, Johann Michael Vogel to the Emperor 9 June 1789.

5 Österreichisches Staatsarchiv Wien, Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv, fund Adelsarchiv (1500 ca – 1918 ca), Reichsadelsakten (1500 ca – 1806), Allgemeine Reihe, Johann Michael Vogel, Freiherrstand (von Friesenhof) und Prädikat „Wohlgebohren“ 1789 and fund Hofadelsakten (1600–1918), Allgemeine Reihe, Johann Michael Vogel, Freiherrnstand (von Friesenhof) 1789. I thank Jan Županič for profit-free provision of materials.

as expanding the silk manufacturing business belonging to this house and running a pressed calico factory at Fridau. These contributions to expanding the economy of the state were combined with activities in favour of the ruling dynasty “*both in financial operations and in the establishment of important manufacturing and commercial enterprises*”.⁶

We should not forget that we are dealing with the age of early capitalism, when the reform plans of Maria Theresa and Joseph II were directed towards the economic growth of the country. State policy supported the establishment of manufacturing enterprises. This often involved granting of permission to individuals to establish businesses. Efforts were beginning to rationalize agriculture and revive trade. Various measures aimed to fill the state treasury, which had been exhausted and emptied by war. The state granted the right to establish factories mainly to aristocrats, but also to monasteries, high state officials and ever more frequently also to businessmen, and without regard for their nationality or origin. They included Protestants, Jews, and whole commercial companies (Compagnien) associating individuals of the most varied types: noblemen, Jews, foreigners, domestic businessmen, speculators and various adventurers. Tradesmen became founders of manufacturing businesses, which was in the interests of the state, and so subject to the same pressure from its side. People from countries to the west of the Monarchy played a significant part, as in the case of Johann Michael Vogel.

While in the reigns of Charles VI and Maria Theresa, there were relatively clear social boundaries between the so-called court society, and the bourgeois, official and other groups, Joseph II began to “complicate” the structure with his ennoblement policy. The first bourgeois counts, including the above mentioned Fries came from the traders and manufacturers. Apart from them, many more businessmen and industrialists including the first Jews were raised into the lower level of the noble estate, where they formed the so-called second society. Their social prestige was raised, but the amalgamation of the nobility for which Joseph II strove was not achieved, in spite of various penetrations into its structures.

The businessmen with starting capital knew how to invest it in ways that brought the accumulation of ever increasing financial resources. They had the green light from a state that did all it could to help them. The above mentioned banking house Fries & Comp was such a business, strongly involved in the financial market of the Empire.

6 ASNM, fund Brodzany (unsorted), copy (kivonatos másolat) of the ennoblement charter of Joseph II from 1789. Similar information is also given in: *Neues allgemeines Deutsches Adels-Lexicon. II*. Leipzig: Voigt, 1868, p. 403, but here the document granting ennoblement gives the date 1790. On bill of exchange deals also SNA, fund Rod Friesenhof – Brodzany, separately deposited correspondence of others.

The businessman, industrialist and banker Johann Fries (1719–1785) established it in 1766 in cooperation with the Frankfurt businessman Johann Jakob Baron Gontard. The latter was originally Fries' accountant, and his share of the legally required share capital of 60,000 gulden was a quarter, meaning 15,000 gulden. The rest belonged to Fries. According to the founding documents, the banking house also involved all Fries' existing business activities.

Fries was born in Alsace in the town of Mülhausen, south of Beblenheim, hometown of the Vogel family. Thus, the connection of Fries with Johann Vogel appears to have been facilitated by their shared origin. Fries came from an old Swiss Calvinist family involved in banking and trade. As a result of the Tolerance Patent, he became one of the founders of the orthodox Helvetic Confession in the Monarchy. The favourable business climate in an Alpine country and Protestant disposition gave the Swiss good pre-conditions for "*export of their abilities*".⁷ Fries entered the service of Austria, where he concerned himself, like many other non-Catholic or Jewish private bankers with trade and delivery experience, mainly with bill of exchange deals, financing of the trade in goods and supplies for the army. The integration of Jewish and Protestant businessmen into society happened at a time when Austria desperately needed money after the loss of Silesia. Especially in the case of the first group, it was a complicated and unfinished process.

Johann Fries achieved great success in obtaining financial support from abroad for the army of the Habsburg Monarchy and its allies. After the end of the War of the Austrian Succession in 1748, he was entrusted with negotiating the payment of British support, which London owed to Austria, but was no longer willing to pay after the conclusion of the peace treaty at Aachen. Fries fulfilled this delicate task after a year of negotiations in London, and the Empress Maria Theresa gave him the right to settle in Vienna without the obligation to pay tax.

The Fries & Comp banking house was an example of vigorous rise, accumulation of great wealth and tragic fall. It meant combination of large-scale trade, finance and industry, simply: big business. This demanded a high level of qualification, numerous qualified forces, from the beginning exclusively foreign, and much new knowledge. These changes are also interpreted as pressure for modernization.⁸ The tendency towards autarchy gradually increased, and more competition created strong modernizing pressure on the businessmen of Austria.

7 On this see: MIKOLETZKY, Hanns Leo. Schweizer Händler und Bankiers in Österreich (vom 17. bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts). In REDLICH, Virgil – FELLNER, Fritz (eds). *Österreich und Europa. Festgabe für Hugo Hantsch*. Graz; Wien; Köln: Styria, 1965, p. 150 and following.

8 For more details see: MITTENZWEI, Ingrid. *Zwischen Gestern und Morgen. Wiens frühe Bourgeoisie an der Wende vom 18. zum 19. Jahrhundert*. Wien: Böhlau, 1998. ISBN 9783205988724.

During the Seven Years War, Fries dealt with the French financial support of 12 million gulden per year, and mediated advantageous deals with the Ottoman Empire. Apart from the Orient, he had intensive contacts with Italian businesses. For a return of 0.5%, he administered 45 million gulden for the state military treasury until 1767. When payments were delayed, he provided advances from his own resources. For example, he financed the army of General Laudon after the Battle of Frankfurt an der Oder in 1759.

He became one of the leading figures in the development of Austrian industry in the capital of the Habsburg Empire. Maria Theresia granted him various economic privileges, which he used to establish various manufacturing operations, and the government behaved equally generously towards him. In spite of the fact that he was not a Catholic, Fries received a privilege in 1751 to establish a factory for the production of all types of fustian and silk fabrics in the Lower Austrian villages of Fridau and Rabenstein, properties of Baron Johann Georg von Grechtler. The above mentioned Johann Michael Vogel already contributed here. In 1764 Fries and Grechtler formed a joint consortium, and in 1770 at Fridau they engaged the important Augsburg expert and manager Johann Heinrich Schüle, thanks to whom the level of final adjustment reached the highest level. Apart from foreign experts, they imported the most modern technology, so the technical level of individual factories constantly rose.

In 1751, Fries and the Italian tradesman Peter Togniolo gained a privilege to establish a factory to produce velvet at Oberdöbling. They had the right to produce all types of velvet and silk. They appointed the Dutchman Friedrich Christian Ascher as the expert in this field. The number of the weaver's looms was not limited here, and neither was the number of journeymen and apprentices he had the right to train. Maria Theresia promised "*to defend the granted favour and freedom, and to provide peace for their factory, undisturbed production and development...*"⁹

A year later, in 1752, Fries and the artillery lieutenant Johann Schmidt received the right to establish a works for brass and metal production at Weissenbach in Lower Austria. The privilege from Maria Theresia guaranteed them a ten year monopoly on the mechanical equipment of the factory, including the equipment for using water power. It also provided an advantageous fixed price for obtaining iron bars from the state mines in Tyrol and Styria, as well as tariff free trade in the territory of the Monarchy and advantageous conditions for exporting their products beyond its frontiers. At the beginning of 1755, the privilege was extended to cover the production of various wire products, needles and files at

9 OTRUBA, Gustav (ed.). *Österreichische Fabriksprivilegien vom 16. ins 18. Jahrhundert*. Wien; Köln; Graz: Böhlau, 1981, p. 283 (the privileges from 28 March and 23 December 1851). ISBN 3205087291.

Lichtenwörth near Wiener Neustadt. The location of the new industrial operation was called Nadelburg, and the businessmen had an obligation to build a Catholic church or chapel dedicated to St. Theresa for the office staff and workers of the factory. Annual pay also had to be provided for two clergy from the Cistercian monastery in Neustadt. This shows that such privilege grants had not only economic, but also wider social parameters.¹⁰

However, these exclusive privileges granting monopolies were gradually broken by the issuing of further licenses to establish factories, which positively influenced the development of competition and initiated much more intensive industrial development and a more demanding business environment.

In 1752, Fries and the above-mentioned silk entrepreneur Togniolo were entrusted with management of the imperial silk factories. In 1754, on the basis of the privilege they had been granted, they founded an enterprise for the production of velvet and silk fabrics at Oberdöbling, where they used supplies and equipment from existing imperial stocks. Later they expanded the production of silk to further factories at Schottenfeld and Neubau. Fries established a woollen factory in the property of Baron Wolf K. von Neffzern at Hradec nad Moravicí. On the other hand, he did not succeed in gaining control of the trade in flax textiles in Bohemia through the Thun trading house. In 1759 Fries was made head of the administration of the transport of rocks from the state mines. In the course of 24 years the turnover of this enterprise reached 55 million gulden, and Fries lent it six million with a half-percent provision.

It was obvious that Maria Theresa was striving to compensate for the loss of Silesia by systematically supporting the establishment of manufacturing activities. Precisely Johann Fries was one of the most useful men, who organized numerous activities for which he received many privileges and financial reliefs.

From 1756 (also recorded as 1752) until 1776, Fries made immense profits from the so-called Thaler-Negotium, which was nothing other than a scheme for trade with the Orient invented by him, and in which he had a monopoly. More than 20 million Maria Theresa thalers were exported to the Eastern Mediterranean. The coins continued to be struck after the death of the Empress. They were demanded as a means of payment in parts of Asia and Africa until the Second World War because of their high silver content. Fries gained more than a million gulden in net profit from agio, namely the difference between the higher market value in comparison with the nominal value based on the value of the metal and cost of striking the coins. For one thaler he gained an agio of 10 kreuzers (120 kreuzers = 1 thaler). According to other data, he gained a third of the net profit. The legendary wealth from striking 20 million silver coins also

¹⁰ OTRUBA, ref. 9, pp. 374–375 (the privilege from 11 January 1755).

accumulated thanks to the fact that from 1769 Fries enjoyed freedom from tax. The mint adjunct Franz Kaschnitz in the mint office at Kremnica secured striking of the coins.¹¹

In 1774 we find Fries in Brussels, where in a further diplomatic mission, he equalized the new customs tariff between the German states and the Austrian Netherlands (mainly today's Belgium). He also secured increased exports of copper from Upper Hungary to the Austrian Netherlands. After the Monarchy gained Galicia, Fries & Comp built the manufacturing town of Ederow at a cost of 100,000 gulden. The company had representatives in the Galician cities of Brody and Lviv, as well as at Naples in Italy.

In the course of Maria Theresa's complex struggles for the existence of her state, Fries secured two state loans for Austria: in 1777 and 1779. Together with the banking house, he was also involved in a large trading organization, which specialized in trade down the Danube to the Orient. It had a base in Constantinople, which controlled trade with the Ottoman Empire. In 1781, he took over a suppressed Pauline monastery in Wiener Neustadt, and used it as a factory producing a wide range of silk products. A Swiss specialist became the chief of production. From 1783, Fries was the largest shareholder of a factor for cotton and printed calico at Kettenhof. Johann's brother Philip Jakob von Fries, ennobled as a baron in 1791, became one of its directors, as well as being director of a spinning mill for cotton at Schwechat. He was a forerunner of what we would now call a manager.

Among the many sided and sometimes very lucrative activities of Johann Fries we can mention the importing of the Blauer Portugieser vine variety to Bad Vöslau, where he had bought a grand mansion, and where he was responsible for the origin of the excellent reputation of the local wine. He was clearly close to the court, and although not all his aims went according to plan, he succeeded in accumulating immense wealth, which he invested mainly in the purchasing of real estate and palaces or in their construction and reconstruction. He had a luxurious palace, now called the Pallavicini Palace built near the Hofburg to a design by a court architect. He acquired the lordships of Vöslau, Dennenlohe and Oberschwanningen.

Fries was raised to the noble estate in 1752. He was made a knight in 1757, a baron in 1762 and an imperial count in 1783.¹² The future first Baron Vogel von

11 MATIS, Herbert. Die Grafen von Fries. Aufstieg und Untergang einer Unternehmerfamilie. In *Tradition*, 12 (München 1967), 4. Heft, p. 486–491. On this see also: SEMPLE, Clara. *A Silver Legend. The Story of the Maria Theresa Thaler*. Barzan Publishing Lim., 2005. ISBN 9780954970109.

12 For polemics and doubts on this see: WALDERDORFF, Hugo Graf von. *Beweis dass Graf Johann Fries von Geburt an adelig war*. Landshut: Thomann, 1914. Later research overturned

Friesenhof, who had worked with Fries for many years, also appealed to this imposing advancement in his already mentioned application for ennoblement. We can suppose that his proposed noble predicate derived from the name of the then already Count Fries, who was more than Johann Vogel's ordinary superior, and can be considered his partner and benefactor. This is also confirmed by the striking similarity between the shields of Vogel and Fries. Many years of paternalism and cooperation played an important role in the Vogel-Friesenhof family, and tradition still had an important role.

The position of Johann Michael Vogel was strengthened by a basic change in the company in December 1782. He progressed from the position of a long-term cooperater with Fries and Gontard to that of a partner. He contributed capital of 50,000 gulden, and took up the management of a trading company.

In 1785, Fries was found drowned in a lake in the lordship of Vöslau. His death remained unexplained, with suicide under the influence of depression mentioned.¹³ His wealth was estimated at 6 million gulden. His widow Anna Fries, born Parish (1737–1807), daughter of a manufacturer and Polish – Saxon consul in Lyons prepared to act as guardian for his still underage children. She participated financially in the industrialization projects of the Fries & Comp. firm, including the sugar refineries at Rijeka, Trieste, Klosterneuburg, Zbraslav near Prague and Náchod, the cotton mills at Fridau and Kettenhof, which employed up to 20,000 on the basis of the putting-out system, the silk factory at Wiener Neustadt and the textile factory at Mödling. The property of the banking house up to 1800 reached 2.5 million gulden, from which up to 80% fell to the widow, that is to Fries's family. The half yearly profit varied in the range 300,000–400,000 gulden. The family had about 5–6 million gulden invested in state bonds, not to mention a huge amount of land in its possession.

After Fries died in 1785, guardianship of his underage children, Moritz and two daughters was held according to his wishes by his widow Anna, his former associate Gontard, nephew Philipp Jakob von Fries and another former associate Johann Michael Vogel, still without the predicate "von Friesenhof".¹⁴ In the

the claim from this publication.

13 BRŇOVJÁK, Jiří. *Šlechticem z moci úřední. Udělování šlechtických titulů v českých zemích 1705–1780*. (Noblemen by official order. The granting of noble titles in the Czech Lands 1705–1780). Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita, 2015, p. 228. ISBN 9788074644610; STEEB, ref. 2; MENTSCHL, Josef – OTRUBA, Gustav. *Österreichische Industrielle und Bankiers*. Wien: Bergland, 1965, p. 39 and following; KATZER, Ernst. *Ein Frühindustrieller. Johann Reichsgraf von Fries*. In: *Niederösterreichischer Kulturbericht 1985. Kunst und Wissenschaft. Bericht über Förderungsmaßnahmen der Abteilung Kultur und Wissenschaft des Amtes der NÖ Landesregierung*. St. Pölten: Amt der NÖ Landesregierung, 1985, p. 14 and following.

14 Valuable information about the business activities of the company but with some inaccurate names can be found in the study: MATIS, ref. 11, pp. 484–496.

instructions from the founder of the noble – business family for the guardians, they are told among other things to prevent unequal marriages, manage money economically and justly divide the property between the heirs. Each guardian apart from the widow would receive 1000 gulden each year. The widow considered that she had been harmed by her husband's will, and the guardians effectively restricted her tendency to use money for the most varied personal needs. The two daughters also had their own ideas about the use of money, and very skilfully exploited the disputes between their mother and the guardians.¹⁵

In 1787, Vogel and the other guardians became the joint owners of the silk factory in the buildings of the former Carmelite monastery at Wiener Neustadt. We know about the role of Johann Michael Fries in the Fries business and its spheres of interest in the varied business activities of the banking house mostly only from the ennoblement charter cited above.

After Joseph Fries (1765–1788) son of Johann came of age, he took up the leading place in the Fries family. He was a famous collector of art and founder of a world famous picture gallery. He lived mainly in Rome and Naples, where he had contact with Johann Wolfgang Goethe. He died suddenly of a high fever.

On the occasion of the accession of the Emperor Leopold in 1790, the company Fries & Comp produced a memorandum under the title “Promemoria”, which summarized the company's huge property, rich business activities, achievements in the development of industry and reducing the trade deficit of the Austrian state. It was understandable that they wrote more about patriotism than about high profits. Ennoblement of the leading figures in the company was supposed to be evidence of patriotism and merit, but protection and favour from the ruling house was still required. A list follows of the enterprises in which the company had deposited its capital: the cotton factories at Fridau and Kettenhof (basic capital of more than a million gulden from which the Fries family held more than half, as well as 20,000 from the enterprise of dependent weavers, spinners and other workers), the weaving works at Wiener Neustadt (which concentrated manufacturing transferred from larger towns, and had capital of 300,000 gulden, with 120 weaver's looms), the cloth making factory at Mödling (entirely in the hands of the company), operations in the Galician town of Ederow (factory established in 1788 with capital of 100,000 gulden and more than 50 weaver's looms)¹⁶, the trading house Roesner & Comp. of Brody and its representatives

15 HAUGWITZ-EL KALAK, Johanna. Rodina Friesů. (The Fries family). In HAUGWITZ-EL KALAK, Johanna (ed.). *Panství Náměšť v proměnách času. Obraz v zrcadle evropských dějin*. Telč: NPÚ Telč, 2013, p. 133. ISBN 9788090424074. One of the sisters Sofia Fries (1769–1835) married Count Henrich Wilhelm Haugwitz in 1794.

16 On this see: *Provinzialnachrichten aus den Kaiserl. Königl. Staaten über Statistik, Oekonomie, Handel und Wissenschaften*, 1, no. 51 from 25 June 1788, p. 391.

in Lviv (which concentrated on the sale of Styrian scythes and Polish wax). The company supported trade in Czech cloth and glass, as well as other Austrian products. With the intension of strengthening links southwards to Trieste, the company cooperated with a Naples trading house (financial share amounting to 165,000 gulden), and with it supported a sugar refinery in Rijeka with capital of 250,000 gulden. The last enterprise also stimulated the establishment of a refinery at neighbouring Trieste, in which the Fries family was also involved. Finally, the most recent activities of the company included a newly established sugar refinery at Klosterneuburg. Their role was to compete with the refined sugar from Hamburg and Prussia, with the aim of completely excluding it from the Austrian market. Expanding the production of the refinery at Zbraslav (Königsaal) in Bohemia also had to play a key role in this. In this area, the company demanded state support and protective measures in terms of price in relation to foreign sugar.¹⁷

Another extensive document of all the guardians was produced in 1792. It shows that Baron Johann Michael Vogel von Friesenhof already had an important position. For example, Friesenhof received a quarter of the net profit. The legal representative of the company Moritz von Fries contributed half and Friesenhof a fifth (200,000) to the fund of a million gulden, which was ready to disposition. Friesenhof paid this sum gradually, paying interest on each capital instalment.¹⁸ The guardians bought the lordships of Neulengbach and Plankenberg in 1797.

The guardians also consistently cared for the education of the young Moritz von Fries (1777–1826), another son of the founder of the family and younger brother of Joseph. The Military Academy in Colmar had been disrupted by the French Revolution, but one of its leading teachers became a tutor to the Fries family, and Friesenhof was largely responsible for this.¹⁹ From the turn of the century Moritz von Fries took up the leadership of the banking house and management of his property, successfully enlarged by the guardians. According to an official record of tradesmen, entrepreneurs, artists and others from 1803, the firm had its headquarters at Breunerstrasse 1195. Johann Michael Baron von Friesenhof, Alexander Brevillier and Ludwig Peschier were mentioned as associates. Each of them was authorized to lead and represent the firm as a whole.²⁰

17 STEEB, ref. 2, pp. 156–160.

18 FRIES, August Graf von. *Die Grafen von Fries*. Dresden-Neustadt: Heinrich, 1903, pp. 182–190.

19 STEEB, ref. 2, p. 171 and 352.

20 *Vollständiges Auskunftsbuch, oder einzig richtiger Wegweiser in der k. k. Haupt- und Residenzstadt Wien ... auf das Jahr 1803*. Wien 1803, p. VIII.

During the period of greatest flourishing of the company, Johann Michael Baron von Friesenhof separated from the Fries & Comp banking house at the end of 1807 and became independent. The reason must have been his advanced age and weakened state of health. He received as a share of the property, 100,000 gulden paid in several precisely defined instalments, and 6% interest on the property of the company for himself and his heirs. The agreement guaranteed him another 40,000 gulden and a share of 6% as interest from profits in connection with the industrial enterprises that had been established and as compensation for their expected profits.²¹ With this financial securing, he could begin a new life. However, Friesenhof still closely cooperated with his former chief Moritz von Fries. They maintained friendly relations in spite of the age difference between them.

Further parties to this contract are also interesting to us. They give some idea of the circles in which the founder of the Friesenhof family moved, although he was much less rich and notable than Fries. Apart from the founder's son Moritz von Fries, we find at the bottom of the contract the signature and seal of Baron Johann Jakob von Gontard, one of the other founders of this successful firm. Another is the above mentioned Alexander Brevillier, Fries' associate, who came from Frankfurt am Main to Vienna in the 1780s and was Gontard's nephew. He later became one of the founders of the banking house. The Brevillier family lived in Fries' palace, now the Pallavicini Palace near the Hofburg in Vienna. In her youth, Alexander's wife had been a friend of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Their son Ludwig was an important entrepreneur and industrialist. We also find the signature of the above-mentioned Baron Ludwig Peschier, a relation of Fries and another successful banker. He participated in the firm, and together with other leading Central European bankers, he was involved in a contribution deal in France to a value of 55 million gulden.

The departure of Johann Michael from the company happened in a very complicated period. Brevillier died soon after aged only 48, and the young Count Fries had to leave art and devote more attention to trade, which certainly did not fill him with enthusiasm. To make matters worse, several of his children died in a short time, and the atmosphere in his house and household significantly changed, as was registered even by random visitors.²²

21 Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, fund Merkantil- und Wechselgericht, Firmenakten, 1. Reihe, F 50, fol. 108r., contract from 21 December 1807; SNA, fund Rod Friesenhof – Brodzany, separately deposited correspondence of others, Societättrennungs-Vertrag.

22 REICHARDT, Johann Friedrich (ed.). *Vertraute Briefe geschrieben auf einer Reise nach Wien und den Österreichischen Staaten zu Ende des Jahres 1808 und zu Anfang 1809... I. Band.* Wien 1815, p. 126 and following; STEEB, ref. 2, pp. 222–224. Recorded in: *Vollständiges Auskunftsbuch, oder einzig richtiger Wegweiser in der kaiserl königl. Haupt- und Residenzstadt Wien ... auf das Jahr 1808.* Wien 1808, p. 9 these changes in the firm are still not recorded.

Moritz von Fries was equally a banker, patron and collector of art. He led a very expensive life, corresponding to the fact that contemporaries regarded him as the richest man in the Monarchy. He had about 5 – 6 million gulden in state bonds and real estate. Apart from this, the family had the privilege of tax freedom granted in 1769. If he was not the richest man in the Monarchy, his annual income of about 500,000 gulden placed him on the level of the richest princely families. However, this was not enough. He also surrounded himself with luxuries surpassing his fairytale income. His library contained about 16,000 volumes, and the artistic treasures of the Fries family, including more than 300 notable works that Moritz took over after the death of his brother Joseph, included works by Raffael, van Dyck, Rembrandt, Dürer and many others.²³ He also owned huge collections of minerals, coins and engravings. As a patron of art, Moritz von Fries financially supported Ludwig van Beethoven, who dedicated his Seventh Symphony to him.

The Fries company successfully expanded its “empire”. The weaving enterprises at Schwandorf and Neunkirchen were enlarged, as was the silk factory at Himberg established in 1804. The Styrian properties of Count Trautmannsdorf were bought in 1812. The last successful speculative purchase was the buying of the inheritance of the Duke of Otranto (Joseph Fouché) in Paris in 1818.

Appropriately to his fairytale wealth, Moritz von Fries married Princess Maria Theresa Hohenlohe-Waldenburg-Schillingfürst. The importance of such capital strong individuals and businesses increased during the Napoleonic Wars. The Jewish barons Nathan Adam von Arnstein and Bernhard von Eskeles, the non-Jewish Fries and Johann Heinrich von Geymüller Jr. from Switzerland and John and David Parish from Hamburg secured war loans and the provisioning of armies. In return, they were fantastically enriched.

However, the end of the Napoleonic Wars and of the continental blockade and devaluation of currencies foreshadowed economic decline of the banking house and its industrial activities. In 1820 the share of the Fries family in the ownership of the business declined to 40%. In the first quarter of the 19th century, the huge property of the Fries & Comp business shrank to a minimum, and the owners had to declare bankruptcy in 1826. The reason was the unbearably expensive lifestyle of the Fries family, huge investments and devaluation of the currency during the Napoleonic Wars. The whole of the family’s art collection was auctioned to pay the most urgent debts. The pictures now hang in many leading European

23 PREYSING, August Graf. Das Familienbildnis der Grafen Fries. In *Jahrbuch des Vereines für Geschichte der Stadt Wien, Band 9*. Wien 1951, pp. 91–109; SANDGRUBER, Roman. Einkommensentwicklung und Einkommensverteilung in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts – einige Quellen und Anhaltspunkte. In PLASCHKA, Richard G. (ed.). *Österreich im Europa der Aufklärung. Bd. 1*. Wien: Verlag der ÖAW, 1985, pp. 256–257. ISBN 3700107129.

galleries. After receiving the news of the suicide of his associate Parish, Moritz von Fries, now married for the second time to a French dancer, declared the firm's inability to make payments in 1826 in Paris. He placed his son Moritz von Fries junior (1804–1878) at the head of the banking house, but he was also unable to avoid catastrophe.

The renting of the coal mine at Brennberg, now Brennbergbánya near Sopron and only a kilometre from the present Austrian frontier, is the field of business of the Fries & Comp banking house that has been best studied by historiography.²⁴ The mines belonged to the town of Sopron for the whole 200 years of operation from their discovery in 1759. However, in the period 1822–1827, thanks to intervention from the Emperor, they were rented by a businessman from Fries & Comp, namely the above-mentioned Moritz. This was the critical period for the banking house, which finally had to give up any business activities after its bankruptcy.

We know almost nothing about the employees of the banking house. We find Johann Michael Baron Vogel von Friesenhof in 1812 as the main provider of credit for the textile factory at Meidling near Vienna, and he clearly developed similar activities in other cases.

Like Johann and Moritz von Fries, Johann Michael Baron Vogel von Friesenhof also undoubtedly accumulated considerable financial resources in the framework of the business during the period when the banking house was still in its best period. He gained ennoblement precisely thanks to his activities in it.²⁵ Even almost a hundred years after his death, in connection with his granddaughter Duchess Nathalie von Oldenburg, it was said that she came from an honoured Viennese family, and her grand-father was an associate of the “world-famous banker” Fries.²⁶ Thus, Johann Michael had passed into historical memory as a guarantee of solidarity and business success. Until his death, he devoted his attention to extensive bond deals. However, in his business activities, he did not disdain enforcement action concerning an ordinary house and garden in Penzing,

24 FALLER, Jenő. Brennbergbánya a bécsi Fries és Társa Bankház bérletében (1822–1827). (Brennbergbánya rented by Fries & Comp. from Vienna, 1822–1827). In *Soproni Szemle*, 11 (Sopron 1957), no. 1–4, pp. 10–33.

25 On this see: STEKL, Hannes. *Österreichs Aristokratie im Vormärz. Zur Geschichte der Fürstenhäuser Liechtenstein und Schwarzenberg*. Wien: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1973. ISBN 370280059X; STEKL, Hannes – WAKOUNIG, Marija. *Windischgrätz. Ein Fürstenhaus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*. Wien; Köln; Weimar: Böhlau, 1992; HÖBELT, Lothar. Bürokratie und Aristokratie im Österreich der vor-konstitutionellen Ära. In *Etudes Danubiennes*, 1995, 11, pp. 149–162. ISSN 0769-3656.

26 Aus dem Gerichtssaale. In *Tages-Post* (Linz), 41, no. 11 from 14 January 1905.

in which he engaged at the beginning of 1809 through his employees.²⁷ Johann Micael apparently also lived in Penzing, now part of Vienna.

When he died on 2 September 1812, a “foundation”, or in modern terms a “fund” began to be interesting for his sons: Adolph Johann Friedrich (1798 – 1853) and Gustav Viktor (1807–1889). The foundation began its existence in Vienna on 1 February 1816. Johann Michael’s widow Anna Maria Vogel von Friesenhof concluded an agreement with the children’s guardian Karl von Löhr on the detailed functioning of the fund.

While he was still alive, the head of the family directed according to paragraph 16 of his will from 9 April 1808, undoubtedly on the basis of the already mentioned generous agreement with the banking house Fries & Comp, that an “appropriate existence” should be secured for all his descendants. Johann Michael himself described the basis of the fund as “not much property”, although we know from the agreement, that a really large amount of money was involved.

According to the will, 25,000 gulden had to be invested in “state bonds”, mainly obligations, and from the interest on this sum, half-yearly payments had to be made to the heirs. These interest payments had to accumulate separately, and after 60 years they had to be divided in accordance with Austrian inheritance law. The heirs would be children, grand-children, great-grand-children... The basic 25,000 gulden had to be deposited again in a similar way for another 60 years. However, if there were no descendants, the deposited sum had to be divided into four equal parts: for servants, for charitable purposes or public fund for the poor, for invalids and for the orphanage in Vienna founded by Joseph II and among the largest in the world. Administration of the money had to be entrusted to a “solid bond management house” in return for a provision. A supplement to the will from 22 March 1811 spoke of a further sum of 20,000 gulden, which had to be deposited either for 5% interest or in state bonds. In the end, the money was invested in 1815 in the ninth state loan with an interest rate of 2.5%.²⁸ We have a bill of exchange of a Vienna bank from 1811 confirming the receipt of 25,000 gulden in the first form of paper money, so-called *Bancozettel*. This was the basis of the will of Johann Michael.

We do not know much about the fate of this money. On one side, it is possible to suppose that the fund did not have a long duration. State bonds gradually

27 Some bills of exchange are preserved in the SNA, fund Rod Friesenhof – Brodzany, separately deposited correspondence of others; Licit. Widerrufung. *Oesterreichisch-kaiserlich-privilegierte Wiener Zeitung*, no. 3 from 11 January 1809.

28 ASNM, fund Brodzany (unsorted), Stiftbrief (Abschrift). It concerns an agreement from 24 February 1816 concluded by the widow and guardian of the children on the detailed functioning of the foundation.

lost value, and the good intention of an old father and founder of the Friesenhof family probably did not reckon with inflation, state bankruptcies in 1811 and 1816, and radical changes in the Austrian currency of which such funds often became the victims. However, everything could have been entirely different.²⁹

The money the old Johann Michael secured a little less than five years before his death from the agreement with the firm Fries & Comp could have been an excellent launch pad for his sons' own business and career activities. We suppose that precisely this inheritance meant a financial basis for them and enabled them to lead relatively expensive although not ostentatious lives.

We do not know much about Adolph Friesenhof, who was ten years older than Gustav, and question-marks remain in his personal and public life. The abundant correspondence, which survives only from Gustav's pen, shows that there was a close relationship between the two brothers, perhaps that Adolph cared for Gustav almost like a father. Gustav trusted his older brother with all his problems and largely followed his advice. He did not take an important or even a less important step in life without Adolph's agreement. In a situation where his father had died during his early childhood and his mother on 4 November 1816 without leaving a will as a "*widow of a big businessman with an imperial and royal grant of privileges*",³⁰ Adolph took a fatherly role in relation to his younger brother. Apart from this, the two brothers were entirely different in nature. Adolph became a successful businessman and an energetic person, who directed things more from the background, while Gustav headed more towards provincial activities, as if he still needed support, whether from his brother, a good administrator and secretary in one person or an understanding wife.

Adolph Friesenhof most probably started his career in the field of sales for commission in cooperation with the Fries & Comp banking house. In 1823 he was described in the press as a trader. This is also shown by his close connection with the Fries family, with us almost always finding him by the side of members of this business family. In 1819 we already find both brothers among the shareholders of the Austrian National Bank, which is noteworthy, especially when we consider that Gustav was aged only 12. Even in the case of 21 year old Adolph it was

29 The state bankruptcy was declared by patent on 20 February 1811 (that is a month before the above mentioned supplement to the will), but kept secret and announced to the public only on 15 March. It is questionable to what degree Friesenhof could have been informed about its principles or how he could have protected himself. It is a complicated problem and I refer to the works by STIASSNY, Paul. *Der österreichische Staatsbankrott von 1811*. Wien; Leipzig: Hölder, 1912 and PRESSBURGER, Siegfried. *Das österreichische Noteninstitut 1816–1966*. Wien: Österreichische Nationalbank, 1959, pp. 60–73. A further state bankruptcy followed in 1816.

30 Konvok. Vogel Freyin v. Friesenhofscher Nachlassansprecher. In *Allgemeines Intelligenzblatt ... zur Wiener Zeitung*, no. 34 from 11 February 1817.

not obvious... However, if we notice among the bank shareholders the whole Fries dynasty, including the actual Fries & Comp firm, much is explained.³¹ It was a time of business paternalism, when care for the employee or the family of a former associate occurred in the informal sphere, and we can speak of closer links between the Fries and Friesenhof families.

The role of the privileged Austrian National Bank was to stabilize the state finances after the two already mentioned state bankruptcies. We still find Adolph Friesenhof among its shareholders in 1839–1841. He was accompanied by names such as Erggelet, Henikstein & Comp., Sina, Geymüller & Comp. and other personalities from the Viennese banking world, as well as aristocrats such as Prince Liechtenstein, Count Dietrichstein and others.³² Adolph was much more established in this world than his brother Gustav, who drew on it where possible.

A document surviving from the period of Gustav's university study shows that a year before the final examinations, he interrupted his study so that he could travel to Milan with his brother Adolph.³³ We know nothing about the purpose of this journey, but we cannot suppose business purposes. It was the beginning of extensive travel by the two brothers, from Paris to St. Petersburg and Odessa, from the Italian peninsula to the German states and Scandinavia.

Gustav regularly wrote to his brother until Adolph's early death, about his work in foreign services, his first diplomatic posts, social relations, views on politics and public life. Some of Gustav's letters have survived. He solved in them especially his personal emotional problems, family and financial matters. Since he did not react to similar themes connected with Adolph, it is clear that the older brother was probably not sending similar things, but only advising, helping and influencing Gustav, who was much less decisive. This made Adolph one of the most important factors in Gustav's life.

This was best seen before the conclusion of Gustav's second marriage, in many ways rather sensitively, when soon after the death of his first wife, Gustav's prospective bride Alexandra N. Goncharov sought Adolph's favour, and Gustav trusted his brother with all his plans, doubts and the circumstances of this serious step. It is possible to say that Adolph gave the green light, and

31 *Alphabetisches Nahmen-Verzeichnis der sämmtlichen Herren Actionäre der privilegierten Oesterreichischen National-Bank, am 31. December 1819*, no page numbers.

32 *Österreichischer Beobachter*, no. 330 from 26 November 1839; *Amtsblatt zur Wiener Zeitung*, no. 328 from 26 November 1840; *Lemberger Zeitung*, no. 111 from 27 September 9. 1841.

33 Институт русской литературы АН РФ Санкт Петербург (Institute of Russian Literature Saint Petersburg, hereinafter ИРЛИ), рукописный отдел (Department of Manuscripts), фонд но. 409 Фогель фон Фризенгофы, (fund no. 409 Vogel von Friesenhof), п. 1., Documents about the education of Gustav von Friesenhof; *Gazetta di Milano*, no. 279 from 5 October 1824.

without his agreement, it is doubtful that the marriage would have happened. The hesitant Gustav would not have decided, although he wanted and wished for a union with Alexandra.³⁴

The correspondence before this wedding and statements in it clearly show that Adolph must have been in St. Petersburg at some time in the years 1834–1836. Gustav always regularly informed his brother about social life in the Russian capital, where he worked as a diplomat, and various statements show that Adolph must have been familiar with things there. It is even possible that he got to know personally the poet Alexander Sergejevich Pushkin and people close to him. At least Alexandra seemed familiar to him, as if they had met years before and he should have remembered her. Gustav's letter written in Naples in 1837 informing in detail about the course of the fatal duel and Pushkin's death, gives the impression that Adolph must have known Pushkin personally and not only as a poet.³⁵ In the end, Adolph's artistic interests lead us to expect this.

A diploma appointing Adolph as an honorary member of the Austrian Imperial Academy of Fine Art in Vienna survives from 1836. It shows his strong relationship to art, which may have originated from the collecting passion of the Fries family. However, such a diploma was not issued only for love of art, but mainly for support and contributions in this field, as is clearly expressed in the text of the diploma.³⁶ At the same time, we know that Adolph was also a collector of fine art, and especially a patron, precisely from the 1830s, which agrees with the date of the diploma. For example, in 1832 he bought a picture by the Austrian painter Friedrich Gauermann, and soon after two pictures by Friedrich Amerling, the most notable Austrian portrait painter of the 19th century. He also owned one of a pair of pictures by the Austrian painter Peter Fendi. The Archduchess Sophia, mother of the future Emperor owned the other.³⁷ In 1843 he became a member of the Kunstverein art society of Vienna, and two years later he donated an oil painting by an artist from the German Reinhold family to a lottery.

34 For more details see: LUKÁČOVÁ, Alexandra. *Kaštieľ v Brodzanoch a jeho majitelia v regionálnom i slovenskom kontexte (1844 – 1945)*. Rigorózná práca na FF UK. (The manor house at Brodzany and its owners in the regional and Slovak context (1844–1945). Dissertation at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University). Bratislava 2016, p. 59 and following.

35 ИРЛИ, рукописный отдел, фонд н. 409 Фогель фон Фризенгофы, п. 6, Gustáv Friesenhof to Adolph Friesenhof from 7 March 1837.

36 The diploma is part of the collections of the Slavonic Museum of A. S. Pushkin SNK Brodzany. On this see also: *Oesterreichisch-kaiserlich-privilegierte Wiener Zeitung*, no. 78 from 6 April 1836.

37 Nekrolog. Peter Fendi. In *Oesterreichisch-kaiserlich-privilegierte Wiener Zeitung*, no. 276 from 6 October 1842; FRIMMEL, Theodor von. *Lexikon der Wiener Gemäldesammlungen*. München: Müller, 1913, p. 439.

The cultural and collecting activity of the Fries family and Adolph Friesenhof only confirm that the field of culture had become an important arena for enhancing one's social prestige. It was also some compensation for the fact that these and other business families of the highest rank, as well as many individuals, still remained cut off from direct political influence, in contrast to the wealth that was concentrated in their hands. Therefore, they gained greater influence in the cultural sphere. Especially during the Congress of Vienna, there were efforts to use cultural salons to enter the field of international politics.³⁸

The support of rich business families for gifted artists, patronage, investment in art, and following the example of the first and second societies, organizing regular salons, theatre performances, concerts and reading societies contributed to the development of cultural activities and cultural life, mainly in the capital of the Monarchy. They played a significant part in promoting modernization, cafe life and Free Masons' lodges, which developed a public space, as well as politicizing the public in the environment of an absolutist state. Although they were monitored by the secret police, we often encounter in their environment members of all the above mentioned business families. These social phenomena facilitated connections and cooperation between them.³⁹

It is not surprising that we keep encountering the same names in business, and they also pursued deliberate marriage strategies. Instead of competition, cooperation and respect for spheres of influence came into the foreground. Let us show this using the example of Adolph Friesenhof. We have only selective information about how he made his living and what he was concerned with. We repeat that we have available only letters from his brother, and they indirectly testify that Adolph was the leading person in joint business activities. He was always in the places where decisions were taken about important questions concerning the economic development of the Habsburg Monarchy. Therefore we can suppose that he had enough capital and possibilities to properly invest and accumulate it. Adolph Friesenhof undoubtedly belonged to the big business world. For example, in 1831 we not only find him among the shareholders in the privileged first railway company (*K. k. Privilegierte Erste Eisenbahn-Gesellschaft*), which built the first railway in the Monarchy: from České Budějovice to Linz, but he was also one of its two directors. The other was Baron Johann Heinrich von

38 DE LA GARDE, August Graf. *Gemälde des Wiener Kongresses 1814–1815. I. Bd.* München: Müller, 1914, pp. 188–193, 390–394, 450–451.

39 MITTENZWEI, Ingrid. Wiener Grosskaufleute und ihr Anteil an der Durchsetzung der „Moderne“ (1763–1815). In HARTMANN, Anja Victorine – MORAWIEC, Małgorzata – VOSS, Peter (eds.). *Eliten um 1800. Erfahrungshorizonte, Verhaltensweisen, Handlungsmöglichkeiten*. Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2000, p. 178. ISBN 3805326696; REICHARDT, ref. 22, pp. 226–227, 302 and following.

Geymüller, a Swiss banker and industrialist.⁴⁰ The company regularly entrusted Friesenhof with various responsible tasks. For example, at a general meeting in February 1843, he was entrusted as a member of a special committee with investigating the possibility of the railway company (shares were already for sale) participating in constructing railway track to specific Czech coal mines. They would also consider how such track could be connected to the company's existing track.⁴¹

We also find Adolph Friesenhof in the highest bodies of the Danube Steam Ship Company (*Erste Donau Dampfschiffahrtsgesellschaft*), founded in 1829 with the aim of sailing ships on the Danube and all its tributaries. Its founding general meeting was held on 13 March 1829. The meeting decided to require payment of 20% of the price of every share, to accumulate the resources to build the company's first ship. For this purpose, a five member committee was formed from Barons Johann Heinrich von Geymüller, Johann Baptist von Puthon, Adolph von Friesenhof, Johann von Sina and Johann Baptist Benvenuti, who had to conclude a contract with the British Andrews and Pritchard, work out statutes and bring the whole matter to a successful conclusion. The company issued shares in 1830. The owners included Archduke Ferdinand, the Palatine of Hungary Archduke Joseph, Count Reviczky, the Chancellor Prince Metternich, the two British founders John Andrews and Joseph Pritchard, as well as the most important members of the Vienna banking world: Johann Baptist Benvenuti, Baron Nathan Adam von Arnstein, Baron Bernhard von Eskeles, Baron Johann Heinrich von Geymüller Jr., Adolph von Pereira-Arnstein, Johann Baptist von Puthon (until 1840 president of the company), Rudolph von Puthon, Salomon Meyer Baron von Rothschild and Johann Baron von Sina (until 1866 second president).⁴² Although the traditional aristocracy looked down on this constellation of barons with undisguised scorn, in reality anger and envy lay behind their views, because these financial sharks and the elite of the "second

40 Kundmachung. In *Der Wanderer*, no. 40 from 9 February 1831, p. 69; *Adressen-Buch der Handlungs-Gremien und Fabriken in der kais. Kön. Haupt- und Residenz Stadt Wien ... für das Jahr 1831*. Wien 1831, p. 93; *Amtsblatt zur Wiener Zeitung*, no. 14 and 101 from 19 January 1. and 4 May 1831.

41 Auszug aus dem Protokolle der am 15. Februar 1843 abgehaltenen General-Versammlung... In *Allgemeines Intelligenzblatt ... zur Wiener Zeitung*, no. 63 from 4 March 1843.

42 The individual Hungarian nominations are attributed to Count István Széchenyi as the greatest expert on transport problems, but he had reservations about the character of the company in relation to Hungarian interests (from the first 200 shares only 13 were in Hungarian hands). Friesenhof was not a politician (like Metternich), or a person of the highest rank (like an Archduke), or a Hungarian representative. He clearly gained this position because of his merits in the business and financial field.

society” of the Monarchy knew how to buy everything: palaces, coats of arms, respect, the love of women and positions in society.

Puthon and Friesenhof were entrusted with obtaining a place at Erdberg in Vienna to store wood for the building of ships. Almost quarter of a century later, they saw their steps as “prehistoric” or the “good old days of childhood” in the then already well functioning business organism. The two directors personally investigated the situation at the place where the first ship was going to be built, they checked the wood, coal and iron that were going to be used. In less than a quarter of a century, these activities had become highly sophisticated work for a whole professionally organized department.⁴³

The most important task for Puthon and Friesenhof was to obtain a privilege document for operating ships on the Danube and its tributaries. The result of their work and of the whole five member committee was the fact that in 1830, the first steam ship *Franz I* already ploughed the waves of the Danube between Bratislava and Pest. It took 14 hours and 15 minutes to sail downstream, and 48 hours and 20 minutes to sail upstream.⁴⁴ The course of the Danube was then substantially more divided and longer than today.

The company was granted the privilege for operating ships on the Hungarian part of the Danube in 1831. It was not the most favourable period. Some sections, for example, Pressburg (Bratislava) to Gönyű with extensive sandbanks and shallow water, were impassable. Cholera broke out in Hungary and profits remained behind expectations. We have evidence of the committee of five people including Friesenhof running the Danube Steam Ship Company until 1837.⁴⁵ By then the company had five ships.

The pioneer of economic reforms and basic changes in transport infrastructure, Count István Széchenyi had great influence on the orientation of the whole company. From June to October 1830 he undertook with several friends a memorable voyage up the Danube from Pest in a small boat called the *Desdemona*. In this way, he demonstrated his interest in the river and its national economic importance. Regulation of the Danube and its tributaries, bridging of the river between Buda and Pest, navigation of the Iron Gates and the problems

43 Geschichte der Entwicklung der österreichischen Dampfschiffahrt auf der Donau. In *Deutsche Vierteljahrs Schrift. Zweites Heft*. Stuttgart; Tübingen 1853, p. 215.

44 *Denkschrift der Ersten k. k. privilegierten Donau-Dampfschiffahrts-Gesellschaft zur Erinnerung ihres fünfzigjährigen Bestandes*. Wien 1881, pp. 8–10.

45 *Adressen-Buch der Handlungs-Gremien und Fabriken in der kais. Kön. Haupt- und Residenzstadt Wien ... für das Jahr 1831*. Wien 1831, p. 93; Magyarországi. In *Jelenkor*, no. 48 from 16 June 1832, p. 378 and *Adressen-Buch der Handlungs-Gremien ... für das Jahr 1834*. Wien 1834, p. 141; *Denkschrift der Ersten*, p. 30.

of the Danube Delta were on the agenda of this “greatest Hungarian” and his reform proposals.⁴⁶

Adolph Friesenhof’s undoubted public influence is shown by his voyage on the Danube with Széchenyi in July 1836. While in Banát, probably Orsovo, they had a long conversation, which Széchenyi recorded in his diary.⁴⁷ The Hungarian reformist politician was in constant contact with leading representatives of the Danube Steam Ship Company.

His position as a director was very important for Friesenhof. In 1835 he arranged for the company to establish the first shipyard for building steam ships in Buda, and up to 1880 it developed the largest inland ship-building operation in the world. Friesenhof left the position of administrator in 1837, after holding the highest position in the company from the beginning. Baron Adolph Friesenhof returned to the position of director in February 1842 by an almost unanimous vote. By then, the company was already achieving significant profits and dynamic growth.⁴⁸ It is not surprising that we find Count Moritz von Fries in the voting committee elected from the most important shareholders of the company.

Baron Friesenhof retained his function for two years. A general meeting of the shareholders of the Danube Steamship Company was held on 20 March 1844. Among the shareholders, we find the social, political, economic and financial elite of the Monarchy, including Count Moritz von Fries and Baron Adolph von Friesenhof. The last appeared among the administrators together with Karl Klein, Baron Johann Sina, Baron Adolph Pereira-Arnstein and Rudolph Puthon. Klein, Friesenhof and Pereira stood down from the administration at this meeting, and could not be persuaded even by Count Fries that in relation to the commercial results, they could remain in their places and be useful. Other elite experts were elected to take their places.⁴⁹

This important function was not an episode in Adolph’s life, and it indirectly testifies to his position, possibilities and social recognition. Széchenyi also mentioned Adolph’s resignation in his diary. Adolph Friesenhof remained a shareholder in the Danube Steamship Company. Many contacts from this business also passed to Gustav, for example, close contacts with Baron Wilhelm

46 On this see: WEITHMANN, Michael W. *Die Donau. Ein europäischer Fluss und seine 3000-jährige Geschichte*. Graz; Wien; Köln: Styria, 2000, p. 382. ISBN 9783791717227 and following; OPLATKA, András. *Széchenyi István*. Budapest: Osiris, 2005, p. 193. and following, p. 228 and following. ISBN 9789633897584.

47 *Gr. Széchenyi István naplói. V. kötet (1836–1843)*. (Diary of Count István Széchenyi. Vol. V. (1836–1843)). Budapest 1937, p. 13.

48 Dampfschiffahrts-Chronik. In *Allgemeines Wiener Polytechnisches Journal*, 1, no. 35 from 22 March 1842; Oesterreich. In *Regensburger Zeitung*, 1, no. 63 from 4 March 1842.

49 Sitzungs-Protokoll der General-Versammlung der österr. k. k. priv. ersten Donau-Dampfschiffahrts-Gesellschaft am 20. März 1844, p. 4, 9, 24 and 31.

Protivenský, who was one of the supporters and promoters of shipping on the Danube from 1841.⁵⁰

Adolph also developed many other public activities. We know most about his charitable and support activities, which were recorded in the press of the time, and belonged to the agenda of every nobleman, especially the richer ones. In March 1838, he donated 100 gulden to the victims of extensive floods in the Kingdom of Hungary. Adolph von Friesenhof and Moritz von Fries, who were apparently always in contact and communicating, are found among the buyers of an impressive multi-volume publication about the Kingdom of Dalmatia from the beginning of the 1840s. In the same way, they also indirectly supported the publication of the *Nibelungenlied* (The Song of the Nibelungs) and many other scientific and artistic works. Count Fries and Adolph also subscribed to a literary almanach, the profits from which went to help the victims of floods in Bohemia in 1845. Adolph also donated to this cause an oil painting by Reinhold, which was auctioned to help the victims. The wider Viennese business and aristocratic elite united in this charitable effort.⁵¹ Adolph and his brother Gustav subscribed to the reports of the Lower Austrian business society. Gustav was a regular member of it from 1842 and must have followed his brother Adolph in this.

According to the addresses in the brothers' letters and mentions in the press, we know that Adolph's mobility was admirable, and Gustav also participated in a similar life style and activities. At a time when trains were only beginning their victorious journeys, long distance travel was mostly by stage-coach and very physically demanding. It is possible to hope that further research will enable us to reconstruct in detail the course of the sometimes very logistically sophisticated commercial journeys of the two brothers.⁵²

Adolph spent most of his time in Vienna or at Ischl, where he received spa treatment for his health problems. In Vienna he owned part of a house at Hohebrücke 144 in the city centre. In 1822 he exchanged it for a nearby house at Wipplingerstrasse 26. It dated from 1684, occupied an area of 1054 square metres and after reconstruction it contained 39 flats on 4 floors. The Friesenhof family is also supposed to have owned a two-storey house at Tiefe Graben 35 with an area of only 65 square metres, containing four flats.⁵³ Both houses were

50 ИРЛИ, рукописный отдел, фонд no. 409 Фогель фон Фризенгофы, п. 6, Gustáv Friesenhof to Adolph Friesenhof from 29 August 1851.

51 *Album. Zum Besten der durch Ueberschwemmungen im Frühjahr 1845 in Böhmen Verunglückten*. Wien 1845, p. 432 and 436.

52 A parallel from an earlier period is the work: OTRUBA, Gustav (ed.). *Europäische Commerzreisen um die Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts von Ludwig Ferdinand Prokopp, Aloisius Graf Podstatzky und Karl Graf Haugwitz*. Linz: Trauner, 1982.

53 Verschwindende Häuser. In *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 39, no. 36 from 5 February 1905.

bought by one baronial family, the larger being sold by Gustav in 1870. From 1848, Adolph also had a house with a garden at Ischl, where he liked to do physical work during his rare free time. He also invited there his brother Gustav and friends from the business world, or made the house available to them when he was absent, for example to the family of Baron Ergelet.

Perhaps the only time Gustav acted against his brother's view, was when he bought in the half of 1840s the Renaissance manor house at Brodzany and gradually also the whole of its lordship from the Kvassay family, in spite of opposition from Adolph.⁵⁴ In this way, Gustav secured a regular family seat for himself and his descendants in the upper Nitra basin. The noble Friesenhof family could be associated with one place, in which there could be a gallery of ancestors, graves for deceased members of the family, and an extensive network of social connections. Gustav could extend his business activities to the surroundings of Brodzany, and invest money in expensive renovation of the manor house and elimination of considerable debts.

Many of Gustav's letters to his brother, especially from the last period of Adolph's life, were addressed to the banking and commercial company Henikstein & Comp. It was another leading firm belonging to the strong league of Viennese financial sharks, already mentioned in the Friesenhof ennoblement document, which shows that the commercial contacts with them reached back to the 1780s.

However, to find the beginning of the Henikstein activities, it is necessary to go back another two decades, to 1764, when a consortium of associated traders paid to hold the tobacco monopoly in the Czech Lands and Austria. The contract was concluded for ten years and was extraordinarily successful for both the contractors and the state. Not surprisingly, it was extended. The individual Jewish businessmen acquired and gradually strengthened privileged positions, as a result of which many of them were ennobled. They included especially the heads of the consortium – Hönig, father and sons, originally from western Bohemia. They had experience of the tobacco monopoly in Prague, and when they were able to gain the whole state monopoly nothing stopped their rise. After moving to Vienna, accepting Catholicism and founding their own trading house, they widened their activity and obtained more and more privileges from Maria Theresa. One of the sons, Adam Albert (1745–1811), already a privileged large-scale trader, received baptism in 1781 and asked Joseph II to enoble him. This was granted in 1784 with the predicate Hönig, nobleman from Henikstein. He became director of the salt chamber at Wieliczka, and gave the state valuable,

54 Xavier de Maistre to Angela de Vignet from 5 December 1846. In MAISTRE, Gabriel de (ed.). *Xavier de Maistre. Lettres a sa famille. Tome IV. 1844–1852. Saint-Petersbourg*. Clermont-Ferrand: Paleo, 2006, p. 60. ISBN 9782849091753.

mainly financial services during the wars with revolutionary France. It was natural that he gained the status of knight in 1807.

Adam Albert's eldest son Joseph (1768–1838) and youngest son Albert born in 1776 followed in their father's footsteps. The latter died single and without descendants. As a large-scale trader and finance expert, Joseph became one of the directors of the Austrian National Bank and a member of the bank committee. The paths of members of the Fries, Henikstein and Friesenhof families inevitably crossed in the framework of this bank. Joseph was a great lover of music and a friend of W.A. Mozart. This could also have brought him close to the art and music loving Fries and Friesenhof families. One of them of Adam Albert's daughters Josephina (1769–1848) married Baron Johann Erggelet, who often appears in the correspondence of the brothers Gustav and Adolph Friesenhof, who both knew him well.⁵⁵

In the end, Joseph's second son Wilhelm (1800–1876) continued in the finance business, taking over his father's Henikstein & Comp. Ennobled as a baron, he also had a key position in the Viennese finance world. His name also appears in familiar form in the correspondence of the brothers Gustav and Adolph Friesenhof. Later, in the 1870s, he acted as chairman of the Duna insurance company. From Joseph's daughters, Carolina (1797–1844) is interesting to us. In 1816 she married the famous Orientalist, diplomat and court adviser, Baron Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (1774–1856).⁵⁶ Adolph Friesenhof had a close correspondence relationship with him, as a collection of surviving letters shows.⁵⁷ From October 1841 we have information that Adolph Friesenhof travelled from Hainfeld in Lower Austria to Vienna with Captain Alfred Henikstein (1810 – 1882).⁵⁸ He was Joseph's youngest son, who went down in history as the officer of Jewish origin, who achieved the highest rank. From 1859 he was a general lieutenant, and from 1863 chief of the general staff of the Austrian army.

The financial influence of the Henikstein family gradually declined, although individuals continued to do business. However, they avoided pauperization in contrast to other lines of the Hönigs: the Hönighbergs and Hönighofs.

As the preceding account shows, there were more than enough inter-connections between the Fries, Erggelet, Henikstein and Friesenhof families.

55 For example, ИРЛИ, рукописный отдел, фонд но. 409 Фогель фон Фризенгофы, п. 6, Gustav Friesenhof to Adolph Friesenhof from 27 June 1850.

56 ŽUPANIČ, Jan. *Židovská šlechta podunajské monarchie*. (Jewish nobles of the Danubian Monarchy.). Praha: Lidové noviny, 2012, pp. 355–360. ISBN 9788074221804.

57 HÖFLECHNER, Walter – WAGNER, Alexandra (eds.). *Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall: Erinnerungen und Briefe. Bd. 3. Briefe von 1790 bis Ende 1819*. Graz: ADEVA, 2011, p. 1770. ISBN 9783201019521.

58 Angekommen. In *Oesterreichisch-kaiserlich-privilegierte Wiener Zeitung*, no. 286 from 16 October 1841.

These and many other names are constantly repeated in business, charitable and presentation activities in the capital city and in the “provinces”. Adolph’s position in the Henikstein company, to what degree he worked for it or held a leading position remains an open question...

The outbreak of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848 and the gradual abandoning of its legal platform placed every noble family in the Kingdom of Hungary in a serious dilemma: whether to take the side of the Hungarian liberal nobility, even in armed struggle for the rights and greater constitutional freedom of the country, or to remain loyal to the Emperor and court? Similar dilemmas were also solved in Austria. The Friesenhof family did not have a clear answer at first, although it had received the title of baron from the Emperor less than 60 years before and the two brothers had closely cooperated until then.

At the end of April 1848, Adolph was elected to a committee in Vienna which had to find candidates for the constitution writing Parliament in Frankfurt. Soon after, he donated 200 gulden, a very large amount for the time, to the Ministry of the Interior to pay for National Guard uniforms.⁵⁹ Sometime in the first half of 1848 he bought the above mentioned house at Ischl, and, at the same time, decided to donate 100 gulden to the local guard to buy weapons. He was equally generous with donations to poverty relief and hospital funds.⁶⁰ These facts show that Adolph welcomed the revolution and placed himself on its side.

Gustav’s position was diametrically different. As a man who had worked in the state diplomatic service at least until 1841, he had and needed to have an appropriately loyal and conservative position, which put him in a conservative position in relation to his immediate Hungarian or Magyar surroundings. This drew him ever more into the whirlwind of events. On 26 September 1848, at the instigation of Gustav Friesenhof, the court judge Baron Franz Scheiner wrote to the mayor of Oslany about the course of the armed uprising and the situation in the ranks of the Slovak “revoltants” at Brezová pod Bradlom, in the framework of the so-called September volunteer campaign. Scheiner received detailed information about the leaders of the campaign Hurban and Štúr, armaments, mood, battles and the intention to march on Pest, from Friesenhof’s scribe, who had spent some time among the forces of the uprising. “*God knows how it will all end ... If somebody gives up nothing will happen to him, but whoever resists will be burnt and slaughtered*” as the suggestively written declaration concludes.⁶¹

59 Nicht-amtlicher Theil. In *Oesterreichisch-kaiserlich-privilegierte Wiener Zeitung*, no. 121 from 1 May 1848 and Inland. In *Oesterreichisch-kaiserlich-privilegierte Wiener Zeitung*, no. 123 from 3 May 1848.

60 Oeffentlicher Dank. In *Wiener Zeitung*, no. 185 from 6 July 1848.

61 Štátny archív Nitra (State Archives Nitra) (hereinafter ŠA Nitra), fund Tekovská župa – kongregačné písomnosti, (County of Tekov, administrative documents), box 681, inv. no. 2002,

In June 1849, at the time of culmination of the Austrian – Hungarian fighting, Friesenhof's office worker Peter Schrimf suffered exemplary punishment in Nitra. He had left his usual work to serve in the ranks of the forces of the imperial General Šimunič and Jablonowský in the Malé Karpaty area. Leader of the Hungarian guerillas Arnošt Simonyi had Schrimf executed as a suspected spy. As can be seen, the situation around Brodzany was as tense as it could get, and various indications pointed to the pro-Austrian position of the baron's family. This could substantially complicate its situation at a time when placing oneself on one meant a threat to one's life from the other. Testimony from more than 60 years later says that Gustav Friesenhof almost ended up on gallows.⁶² We have no more definite information, but such things were not mentioned in Hungary if there was not at least a little truth in them...

In summer 1849 Russian Cossacks stopped at Brodzany and were very surprised to find a Russian Baroness Nathalie Friesenhof, born Zagriazschka and a nine year old Russian speaking boy Grischa Friesenhof, with whom they entertained themselves in the large park.⁶³ The Hungarian nobility certainly looked resentfully at Friesenhof with his pro-Vienna and pro-Russian views. It was clearly no accident that Gustav also attributed the death of his first wife Nathalie Zagriazschka in October 1850 to the “storms in Hungary” or to the “sad times in Hungary”, which exhausted her and undermined her health.⁶⁴

In this spirit, it is also necessary to note the fact that in March 1853, in the period of the most rigid neo-absolutism, he donated 100 gulden to the construction of the Votivkirche in Vienna, built to express thankfulness for the young Emperor surviving an assassination attempt in February 1853.⁶⁵ With this act, he clearly declared his political position. He also contributed to the construction of Protestant schools, and at the end of 1854 he invested 6,000 gulden, a really substantial amount, in a state loan through the Austrian National Bank.

Thus, in the period of neo-absolutism, Gustav Friesenhof remained a loyal supporter of the most conservative views. He welcomed the removal of the

1848/1464, F. Scheiner to Mayor Tagány of Oslany from 22 September 1848 (also published in: RAPANT, Daniel. *Slovenské povstanie roku 1848–49. Dejiny a dokumenty. Diel II., časť 2.* (The Slovak Uprising of 1848-49. History and documents. Volume II, part 2.). Turčiansky Svätý Martin 1948, p. 353).

62 Országos Széchényi Könyvtár Kézirattára Budapest (Manuscripts of the National Széchényi Library), XI/729, Arthur Odescalchi to Lajos Thallóczy from 15 July 1912.

63 Xavier de Maistre to Éloi de Buttet from 4 August 1849. In MAISTRE, ref. 54, p. 115.

64 ИРЛИ, рукописный отдел, фонд но. 409 Фогель фон Фризенгофы, п. 6, Gustav Friesenhof to Adolph Friesenhof from 18 October 1850.

65 Verzeichniss. In *Oesterreichisch-kaiserlich-privilegierte Wiener Zeitung*, no. 73 from 26 March 1853.

constitutional responsibility of the government and its dissolution as a collective body. His interpretation of events was as follows: “*The Emperor has declared himself absolute. That could be so important that it would interest me in spite of my political apathy. It could give a strong stimulus to future even more unpleasant movements, especially in Hungary... Yesterday’s Lloyd brought us the abolition of the constitution from 4 March [it was the Constitution from 7 March 1849 – R. H.]. That may be welcome to me. You know that it did not have a greater opponent than me... However, at present, we find ourselves in pure absolutism, as we already were in reality, only a fiction has ceased to exist.*”⁶⁶ He considered these steps to be the best for the Kingdom of Hungary, in spite of them being strongly criticized from the Hungarian side. However, it was difficult to live in Hungary with such views

Adolph’s life remains veiled in mystery and so does his death at a relatively early age. Several months after the marriage of Gustav Friesenhof to Alexandra Goncharov, Adolph underwent a serious operation in Vienna in November 1852. Gustav went to his brother and sent to letters to his wife at Brodzany, informing her about Adolph’s health.⁶⁷ Gustav’s last known letter to Adolph written at Brodzany at the end of November 1852, testified to a surprisingly rapid improvement and the various possibilities for rehabilitation. Gustav also wrote to his brother about commercial matters, about bills of exchange reaching the end of their validity, peasants relations at Brodzany and the mechanisms for emancipation of peasant farmers (compensation for abolition of peasants duties was set at more than 12,000 gulden in 1855), as well as the problems of distilling alcohol.⁶⁸

Even at the beginning of the last calendar year of his life, Adolph supported new year charities, and his state was apparently clearly improving. On 8 January 1853, the two brothers travelled to Magdeburg. We do not know whether the aim was treatment or other activities. They were probably together because we do not have correspondence between them. Adolph’s death came as a surprise, with Gustav announcing it from Magdeburg. His funeral was held there on 18 May 1853.⁶⁹

66 ИРЛИ, рукописный отдел, фонд но. 409 Фогель фон Фризенгофы, п. 6, Gustav Friesenhof to Adolph Friesenhof from 29 August 1851.

67 Gustav Friesenhof to Alexandra Friesenhof from 12 November 1852 and 13 November 1852. In ОБОДОВСКАЯ, Ирина – ДЕМЕНТЬЕВ, Михаил. *После смерти Пушкина. (After Pushkin’s death)*. Москва: Советская Россия, 1980, pp. 223–224.

68 ИРЛИ, рукописный отдел, фонд но. 409 Фогель фон Фризенгофы, п. 6, Gustav Friesenhof to Adolph Friesenhof from 28 November 1852; *Amtsblatt zur Wiener Zeitung*, no. 285 from 2 December 1855.

69 Gustav Friesenhof to Alexandra Friesenhof from 17 May 1853. In ОБОДОВСКАЯ – ДЕМЕНТЬЕВ, ref. 67, p. 224

Adolph's death was a huge loss for Gustav. Even during Adolph's illness, Gustav wrote: "I don't have to tell you how much I regret that I don't have dearest Adolph any more."⁷⁰ Death made this situation entirely real and permanent. Gustav was left alone, and although he became the universal heir to his brother so that he could most probably invest the additional resources at Brodzany, which freed him from many burdens and made him an independent estate owner, it did not really help him very much in the end. The financial situation of Friesenhof family began to significantly worsen in the second half of the 1860s. This reduced the possibility to invest in the high quality education of Gustav's growing daughter Nathalie, born in 1854. After sale of the house in Vienna, Gustav went to the capital less frequently, and appropriate home tutors for Nathalie could not be found at Brodzany.⁷¹

The joint business activity of Adolph and Gustav had concentrated on bill of exchange deals, mortgage loans, real estate deals, securities deals involving especially promissory notes but also agricultural commodities. Such business was often very untransparent and difficult to reconstruct. Change came only with systematic publication of stock exchange reports, and the integrative communication possibilities of the telegraph, which substantially improved the effectiveness of the financial markets.

In any case, if in earlier decades, the extent and profits of the activities of banking companies were identified with the general interests of the state, and so could acquire a patriotic added value, from the 1840s the Friesenhofs' deals changed into financial operations on a much smaller scale. We have exact information on only some deals by the two brothers. For example, there was the Vienna property without known heirs or legal representatives of the former owner from the Edle con Lauch family, which the two Friesenhof brothers "took over" and had to "free" from all financial "burdens" so that it could be sold. There were also the debts of Simon Bossányi and his wife Johanna born Stahl, bought in 1856 for 6,000 gulden, and eventually solved in court by Gustav in 1856 already after Adolph's death.⁷² We know the mechanisms of these deals from other environments. We suppose that after the revolution, skilled people could advantageously obtain large properties that had been taken from participants in the revolution and convicts, especially in the Kingdom of Hungary.⁷³ Land also

70 ИРЛИ, рукописный отдел, фонд но. 409 Фогель фон Фризенгофы, п. 6, Gustav Friesenhof to Adolph Friesenhof from 16 May 1852.

71 ОБОДОВСКАЯ – ДЕМЕНТЬЕВ, ref. 67, p. 232.

72 Erinnerungen. Amtsblatt zur Wiener Zeitung, no. 139 from 19 May 1848 and Amortisationen. Amtsblatt zur Wiener Zeitung, no. 165 from 18 July 1856. See also ИРЛИ, рукописный отдел, фонд но. 409 Фогель фон Фризенгофы, п. 6, Gustav Friesenhof to Adolph Friesenhof from 10 October 1845, 13 August 1846, 29 August 1851, 2 June 1852.

73 MOTTRAM, Ralph Hale. *Wesen und Geschichte der Finanzspekulation*. Leipzig: Insel, 1932,

became a tradable asset after the revolution, so there were more than enough possibilities for deals.

Gustav continued similar business activities, although without Adolph's range of knowledge and contacts, certainly to a smaller extent, more in the regional framework of the upper Nitra district and with less success, sometimes even with fatal mistakes. This was also why he had the ambition or was forced to do business on the Brodzany estate, although not very successfully. He did not have an expert education, and his son Gregor, known as Griša, who had excellent qualifications and pre-conditions for business soon became independent.

In addition, political clouds filled the Brodzany sky. A loyal attitude to the court during the revolution, a French speaking household and the Russian wife of an Austrian baron all aroused distrust of Gustav Friesenhof and his family among the neighbouring noble families. This did not change in the post-revolution period. The passive resistance of the liberal Hungarian nobility in the period of strengthening absolutism led to them avoiding, ignoring and not communicating with the Friesenhof family. The pejorative designation of Gustav Friesenhof as a "*Regierungsmann*" – a man who approved the policies of the Vienna government and was devoted to it without reservations in his thoughts and actions, originated in this period. Even in September 1863, his son Gregor complained in a letter to Karol Kuzmány about his father's complicated position in an environment of hostility from the Hungarian nobility.⁷⁴

Gustav's son from his first marriage Gregor (1840–1913) gained a close relationship to the peasantry, the Slavs and the Slovak national emancipation movement from his Russian education, childhood among Slovak peasant children at Brodzany and relationship to Russian literature of ideology, known as narodnichestvo (form of agrarian socialism). Perhaps youthful idealism and enthusiasm led the young baron into Slovak public writing and contact with Štefan Moyzes, Karol Kuzmány, Daniel Gabriel Lichard and his economic magazine *Obzor* (Horizon). He placed himself by word and deed on the side of the Slovaks, becoming a member of the first committee of the newly founded Matica Slovenská cultural organization.⁷⁵

p. 136 and following; CLEMENS, Gabriele B. – REUPKE, Daniel. Kreditvergabe im 19. Jahrhundert zwischen privaten Netzwerken und institutioneller Geldleihe. In CLEMENS, Gabriele B. (ed). *Schuldenlast und Schuldenwert. Kreditnetzwerke in der europäischen Geschichte 1300–1900*. Trier: Kliomedia, 2008, pp. 111–238. ISBN 9783898901246.

74 Archív Matice slovenskej Martin (Archives of Matica slovenská), fund Matica slovenská I. (1857) 1863 – 1875 (1912), sig. 56 194, Gregor Friesenhof to Karol Kuzmány from 18 September 1863.

75 HOLEC, Roman. *Zabudnuté osudy*. (Forgotten destinies.). Martin: Matica slovenská, 2001, pp. 72–103. ISBN 9788070906293.

Therefore, it was no accident that in August 1863 a letter from the Office of the Governor of Hungary to the Sheriff of the County of Tekov asked for more information about the political views of the Friesenhof family. It was certainly connected with the energetic activities of the son Gregor, but also with the political views of the still ostracized father Gustav. The sheriff's reply mentioned Gustav's diplomatic past in Russia, but evaluated his political views as loyal, which was certainly true. He could not or did not want to express his view on Gregor, because he had been away from the county for a long time studying.⁷⁶

The family at Brodzany was certainly socially rather isolated, and the situation gradually changed only in the mid 1860s. This is shown by albums with photographs of representatives of neighbouring noble families, which began to establish social contacts with the Friesenhofs. In 1872 Gregor established a unique Economic Society for the Nitra Valley with democratic tendencies and great attention given to economic education of the Slovak small farmers and improvement of their position.

Gustav freed himself from financial problems only with the marriage of his daughter Nathalie to the solvent and highly placed Duke Elimar von Oldenburg in 1876. However, we should not forget that this was also the year of the division of the accumulated interest on the inheritance from the founder of the family Johann Michael von Friesenhof, if the money invested in state bonds had actually survived until this time. We do not have the marriage contract, so we cannot distinguish how much money came from the inheritance and how much from the marriage. The fact that in inheritance of the family properties, the younger daughter took priority over the older son shows that the marriage with a Duke of Oldenburg was an important event in the life of the family, and must have provided considerable financial help.⁷⁷ In any case, the matter was concluded and the family entered a new period of its life.

When an account was written in 1867 of the most important ennoblements of the reign of Joseph II and the origin of the so-called second society, it also emphasized the name of Fries' associate and newly ennobled Baron Johann Michael Vogel von Friesenhof. His family "*is still [in 1867 – R.H.] one of the most important, although its original name Vogel has not been used for a long time*".⁷⁸

76 ŠA Nitra, fund Tekovská župa – hlavný župan, (fund County of Tekov, chief sheriff), prez., box 14, inv. no. 17, 1863/126.

77 ASNM, fund Brodzany (unsorted), box 1, Testament of Gustav Friesenhof from 6 February 1887.

78 Aus der Geschichte der Wiener Gesellschaft im Vormärz. VI. In *Neues Fremden-Blatt*, 3, no. 357 from 29 December 1867.

Seven decades and two generations later, the situation was already diametrically different. The marriage of Baroness Nathalie to the Duke of Oldenburg was the last upsurge of the third generation of Friesenhofs. Her half-brother Gregor became a notable personality from the point of Slovak national emancipation efforts, from the point of view of the development of democratic organized activity of small farmers, which was unique in the period of dualism, and finally also from the point of view of the dynamic development of agricultural science, meteorology and sociology.⁷⁹

The example of the Fries, Henikstein and Friesenhof families shows that business and making money on a large scale, the activity from which they arose and gained ennoblement, was already a thing of the past. In the second and third generations, spending of money and gradual decline in wealth came into the foreground. Only traditional means such as marriage strategy, economizing and social closedness associated with gradual social marginalization served as survival strategies. On the other hand, the family played a positive role on the regional level, where its publicly beneficial and charitable activities fulfilled many absent social functions of the state.

DIE ENTSTEHUNG, DER GLANZ UND STURZ
DER UNTERNEHMERISCHEN ART DES NEUEN ADELS
IN DER HABSBURGERMONARCHIE

ROMAN HOLEC

Die Studie beschreibt die Entstehung, den Glanz und den Sturz von einigen unternehmerischen Familien (Fries, Henikstein, Friesenhof und geläufig auch weitere), die in Wien am Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts zur Nobilitation gelangten und noch zu Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts über merkliches gesellschaftliches Ansehen und den Reichtum

79 For more details see: LUKÁČOVÁ, ref. 34, p. 94 and following; HOLEC, Roman. „Ako Martin Rozumný zbohatol a s ním celá dedina“ (Poľnohospodárska didakticko-osvetová literatúra na Slovensku v rokoch 1848 – 1914 a jej zdroje). (“How Martin the Wise enriched himself and his whole village” (Agricultural didactic public information literature in Slovakia in the period 1848–1914 and its sources).). In *Zemědělské školství, výzkum a osvěta jako předpoklad hospodářského a sociálního rozvoje venkova v 19. a 20. století*. Studie Slovákého muzea 9/2004. Uherské Hradiště: Slováké muzeum, 2004, pp. 39–49. ISBN 8086185389; HOLEC, Roman. *Barón Friesenhof v kontexte veľkej doby a malých dejín*. (Baron Friesenhof in the context of large and small-scale history), Biografické štúdie, 38 (Martin 2015), pp. 39–55. ISBN 9788081490576.

verfügten. Ihr geringfügiger politischer Einfluss aus neuen Adels entsprach jedoch dessen enormer ökonomischer und großer kultureller Bedeutung nicht. Nach der starken Gründergeneration folgte gewöhnlich Stagnierung und oft ein schrittweiser Niedergang, wenn die Mitglieder weiterer Generationen über notwendige Ausdauer und Voraussetzungen nicht verfügten.

Am ausführlichsten wird diese Entwicklung auf der Familie Friesenhof dargestellt, bei welcher Landsmann aus Elsaß, Johann Michael (1739–1812), zu den Gründern der Familientraditionen gehörte und zum ersten Baron und Träger des unternehmerischen Erfolgs im Rahmen des Bankhauses Fries & Comp. wurde. Sein Sohn Adolf (1798–1853) setzte sich in der zweiten Generation sehr bedeutend in der Geschäftswelt durch, der zweite Sohn Gustav (1807–1889) siedelte sich jedoch im Gebiet der heutigen Slowakei, in Brodzany, an, führte hier die Bauernwirtschaft und gab die Unternehmertätigkeit auf staatlicher Ebene auf. Durch enge Verbindungen zum Russland dank zwei russischen Ehefrauen und durch loyale Haltung zum Hof und dem Monarchen wurde er zur weißen Krähe unter dem Adel in der Region. Dies intensivierte noch mehr sein Sohn Gregor (1840–1913) durch seine Neigung zu der slowakischen nationalemanzipatorischen Bewegung und seine Mitgliedschaft im Ausschuss von Matica slovenská, sowie durch die Gründung eines demokratischen dreisprachigen Wirtschaftsverbandes. Die jüngere Tochter Nathalie (1854–1937) heiratete den Herzog von Oldenburg, Enkelsohn des schwedischen Königs, womit sie noch mehr den europäischen Kontext der Familie verbreitete, die zu einer seltenen und sehr interessanten Art des neuen Adels wurde. Sie verlor ihr Vermögen dank ihrem Lebensstil und dessen Unzweckmäßigkeit, aber auch dank den getroffenen Maßnahmen gegen den Adel in der Tschechoslowakei. Die letzte Generation des Geschlechts Friesenhof-Oldenburg war nur noch ein anschaulicher Beweis für die Agonie und den Niedergang.

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THE FIRST SLOVAK
IN A WHIRLWIND OF
WORLD EVENTS,
FROM TRIANON TO
THE WAY OF FREE,
DECLARATION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS,
DIPLOMAT IN THE
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS,
IN THE SERVICE OF
CZECHOSLOVAK
FREEDOM, LEGAL
ADVISER OF THE
UN SECRETARY-
GENERAL, FIGHT FOR
DEMOCRACY AND
HUMAN RIGHTS

Slavomír Michálek

**Milan Rastislav Štefánik
and Those Who Followed Him**

*“DONE! THE SPLENDID WORK, THE NEW ORNAMENT OF OUR BEAUTIFUL, ANCIENT CORONATION CITY IS COMPLETED!”*¹
IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION OF THE URBAN ELITE
ILLUSTRATED ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE MUNICIPAL
THEATRE IN PRESSBURG

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LASLAVÍKOVÁ, Jana. *“Done! The Splendid Work, the New Ornament of Our Beautiful, Ancient Coronation City is Completed!”* Identity Construction of the Urban Elite Illustrated on the Example of the Municipal Theatre in Pressburg. *Historický časopis*, 2020, 68, 6, pp. 947–975, Bratislava.

Discussions about the need to build a new Municipal Theatre started in the municipal council of Pressburg in 1879 and lasted for years. They were marked by an ambiguous attitude of the municipal representatives to the modernization of the city. The final decision was reached only in 1884, prompted by a decree of the ministerial president and minister of the interior, Kálmán Tisza, who called on Pressburg to build a home for the national (Hungarian) muse. The designs were made by renowned architects of theatre projects in Central Europe, Ferdinand Fellner jr. and Hermann Helmer, which reveals the long-standing cultural ties between Pressburg and Vienna, and the ambitions of the inhabitants of Pressburg to assert the status of their (former coronation) city in Hungary. The key figure behind the theatre project was Anton Sendlein, the chief engineer of Pressburg, whose testimony in the form of an extensive documentation of the construction of the Municipal Theatre provides scope for reflections on the events and on the main players behind them.

Keywords: Pressburg. Municipal Theatre. Ferdinand Fellner jr. Hermann Helmer. Anton Sendlein. Municipal council.

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Theatres have always been places full of ideas, stories and ideals communicated to the audience. The special relationship between the artists and the audience that had evolved throughout history from a physical and thematic distance between the protagonists of the theatrical art and its recipients up to a close connectedness or even an exchange of the roles, conditioned not only the

1 *„Vollendet! Das prächtige Werk, die neue Zierde unserer schönen altehrwürdigen Krönungsstadt ist vollendet!“* (Otto von Fabricius, 1886).

theatrical content but, mainly, the theatrical space. Building theatres had been part of the history of European culture and the theatre buildings reflected the cultural, social and technical aspects of their time. They manifested the taste, mission and significance of the theatre in the given era, and became a source of information about the composition of the paying audience and the development of the theatrical art as such.

The “long” nineteenth century, marked with industrialization, new inventions and rapid changes, appears to have ended the continuity by diverting from the tradition and following a double standard. Changes in the layers of the society brought about the emergence of a new elite who, paradoxically, demanded a revival of historical styles in the form of historicism as an artistic style in architecture.² This period saw a boom in theatre buildings, prompted by the rise of a social layer that was able to finance the construction of new theatre buildings and showed great interest in arts and education.³ Theatres became one of the main forms of representation because they bore witness to the culture of the nation and raised the prestige of the city and its inhabitants.

Municipal Theatres in the Nineteenth Century as Mediums of Cultural Transmission

The desire to return to the past, or to turn to historical topics, in arts manifested itself in theatre architecture, too. Historicism as the artistic style of the bourgeoisie meant a combination of various styles and a return to history in the form of Gothic Revival, Renaissance Revival, Baroque Revival, Neoclassicism, or Neoromanticism. In a sense, the destruction of the core of the historical buildings reflected the heterogeneity of the social and cultural awareness of this open social class. With the help of pieces of knowledge from history, people consciously differentiated between the styles and used them to express certain political and ideological messages. Renaissance, as a manifestation of humanism, symbolized education and culture, whereas Baroque emphasized power and seriousness. These two revival styles dominated in nineteenth-century theatre buildings.

Municipal theatres became the modern temples of the cultural religion of the bourgeoisie. They were symbols of prestige, self-representation, modernity

2 DIENES, Gerhard Michael: Fellner & Helmer. Die Zeit, in der sie wirkten. In DIENES, Gerhard Michael (ed.): Fellner & Helmer – Die Architekten der Illusion. Theaterbau und Bühnenbild in Europa. Anlässlich des Jubiläums „100 Jahre Grazer Oper“. Graz: Stadtmuseum Graz, 1999, p. 21. ISBN 3900764212.

3 TRÜMPI, Fritz – MARSCHALL, Brigitte – ROSENZWEIG, Warren. Between Monarchy and Civil Society. Theatre and Architectural History in Austria. In KOVAČEVIĆ, Igor (ed.). *Beyond Everydayness: Theatre Architecture in Central Europe*. Prague: Národní divadlo, 2010, p. 33. ISBN 978-8-0725-8364-5.

and progress, and visible signs of a right to national equality or hegemony. With political and social development, they became the medium of a collective identity and identification policy. Thanks to national symbolism, present in the speeches and newspaper reports whenever a new theatre was opened in the presence of crowds of people, the theatre was changing to a memorial venue with a strong national significance.⁴ This role also permeated the discussions about the cultural and political role of the theatre held during important shows, jubilees, celebrations, or even scandals and conflicts that occurred in the theatre. It was not only a question of the staged plays; the theatre served as a refined representation of the city and became a tool for collective identity in the discussions and debates about its role and status.

The theatre, as an aesthetic institution and a social communication agency, had a major influence on the city and its memory; the growing space of cities was changing into a memory storage with structures that were determined by the concentration of communication, dynamics, and traffic.⁵ In this patchwork, theatre buildings appeared as separate categories that engulfed the space with their specific symbolism with concrete significance for the given urban area. Architecture became connected to communication, intensified by technological progress: in the nineteenth century, the equipment of the theatres abounded with technological achievements that transmitted cultural symbolism to their exterior. In this way, the theatre became a medium that made its way to the virtual space of the media and, by this, the theatre itself became a “medium” that reproduced the urban area and symbolically transmitted communication structures.⁶

In the nineteenth century, mediums in urban areas also included global exhibitions which were a public way of presentation for the bourgeoisie, sort of an official visiting card of their time, or staged versions of the global theatre. They demonstrated the latest developments in industry and construction, and revived the people’s long desire for illusion, enabling them to identify themselves with the mission of the theatre in that period. An important “theatrical staging” in Central Europe was the International Exhibition of Music and Drama in Vienna in

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- 4 UHL, Heidemarie. Das Theater als Gedächtnisort. Das Grazer Stadttheater – ein Medium kultureller Identität im sozialen Raum. In DIENES, Gerhard Michael (ed.). *Fellner & Helmer – Die Architekten der Illusion. Theaterbau und Bühnenbild in Europa. Anlässlich des Jubiläums „100 Jahre Grazer Oper“*. Graz: Stadtmuseum Graz, 1999, p. 113. ISBN 3900764212.
 - 5 CSÁKY, Moritz. *Das Gedächtnis der Städte. Kulturelle Verflechtungen – Wien und die urbanen Milieus in Zentraleuropa*. Wien; Köln; Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2010, p. 21. ISBN 978-3-2057-8543-9.
 - 6 BAUER, Marcus. TheaterStadtRaum – Urbane Kommunikationsstrukturen in „Mitteleuropa“. In ZVARA, Vladimír (ed.). *Musiktheater in Raum und Zeit. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Theaterpraxis in Mitteleuropa in 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*. Bratislava: NM CODE in collaboration with the Corpus Association, 2015, p. 19. ISBN 978-8-0894-8405-8.

1892, which revived the Alt-Wien myth: “*a fantastic image of old Vienna, which never existed, but which would have nevertheless been the truest of truths*”.⁷ The exhibition was viewed as a showcase of the culture of the multi-ethnic empire and was visited by thousands of people from far and wide daily. The real face of the city reflected itself in paradoxes: the reproduction of the Upper Market from the seventeenth century (illuminated in the evenings with state-of-the-art electric lighting) was viewed as a synonym for old Vienna which, after the demolition of the city walls, was changing its looks too rapidly. The fast-paced growth of the city, combined with a high population growth rate, led to a conflict in the life of its population between a desire for progress and an idealized notion of withdrawal into peaceful family life. The return to old Vienna became a forced consequence that shaped the image of Vienna at the turn of the 19th and the 20th centuries and had an impact on spreading this myth throughout the empire, including Pressburg.⁸

This syndrome of escaping into the past, or into idealized family life, was experienced by the population of several major European cities. At the same time, the bourgeois class, which was getting increasingly strong, looked for ways to present itself and found these in the newly established municipal theatres. These were owned by cities, which either managed them themselves (this applied only to a few cases of wealthier cities) or leased the building to theatre directors who ensured the functioning of the theatre under the supervision of a theatre committee. Cities showed great interest in the smooth functioning of their theatre, since it was the visiting card of their local culture and, along with the church and the city hall, an important pillar of urban culture. At the same time, theatres were one of the most prominent architectural structures in the cities and the architects who designed theatre projects were the most renowned ones of the nineteenth century.

In the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the most prominent theatre architects included Ferdinand Fellner jr. (1847–1916) and Hermann Gottfried Helmer (1849–1919). With their buildings, they created Central Europe’s own topography. They designed almost fifty theatres, from Hamburg, through Zürich, up to Odessa. One of their projects was the Municipal Theatre in Pressburg (today’s

7 WESSELY, Katharina. ... dies „Ragout aus Anderer Schmaus“ Die Neuerfindung des Alt-Wiener Volkstheaters im Rahmen der Internationalen Musik- und Theaterausstellung in Wien 1892. In SOMMER-MATHIS, Andrea – GROSSEGGGER, Elisabeth – WESSELY, Katharina (eds.). *Spettacolo barocco – Performanz, Translation, Zirkulation*. Wien: Hollitzer, 2018, p. 191. ISBN 978-3-9901-2506-9.

8 BÉKÉSI, Sándor. Die Erfindung von „Alt-Wien“ oder: Stadterzählungen zwischen Pro- und Retrospektive. In SOMMER, Monika – UHL, Heidemarie (eds.). *Mythos Alt-Wien. Spannungsfelder urbaner Identitäten*. Innsbruck; Wien; Bozen: Studienverlag, 2009, p. 52. ISBN 978-3-7065-4386-6

Historical Building of the Slovak National Theatre on Hviezdoslav Square). Thanks to them, an imaginary world came into being in which the cities could improve their looks by theatre buildings branded “Fellner and Helmer”, with a virtual space that highlighted in the artistic plane – despite all the differences – one common trait: that of being Central European. Their joint architectural atelier did not work only on theatre projects. They designed several shopping centres (many of them for the Thonet company), palaces, hotels, family villas, mausoleums, and factories.⁹ Theatre designs, however, stood in the forefront of their activities and, because of their low price, they had no rival.

To start with, the Viennese atelier assessed the urban network in Pressburg and subsequently suggested building the new theatre at the edge of the historical city centre, on the border of the “old” and the “new” city. This solution preserved the original urban architecture but, at the same time, created a new centre at the heart of the extended city area, inhabited by the new social class. The choice of the place reflected the role of municipal theatres: they drew on theatre history but brought something new and, first and foremost, stood at the centre of the (new) society.¹⁰ Similarly to the Pressburg theatre, many of them were later transformed into national theatres and became bearers of the constitutive ideas of newly established states. The work of these Viennese architects may be regarded as a cultural heritage of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and a legacy from the past that reached into the future.

For Pressburg, the Viennese atelier meant a guarantee of prestige and of a promising future based on a wealthy past, since the proximity of Vienna had had a major impact on the social and cultural life of the people of Pressburg for centuries. In the nineteenth century, both Budapest and Vienna viewed Pressburg as a provincial city on the western border of Upper Hungary. With growing Hungarianization, the tone changed and Pressburg was increasingly often mentioned as the western bastion of the Hungarians.¹¹ The pro-Hungarian

9 *Sammelwerk der ausgeführten Bauten und Projekte in den Jahren 1870/1914*. Wien: Fellner & Helmer; K. K. Oberbauräte Wien, [ca. 1915], 52 p.

10 MORAVČÍKOVÁ, Henrieta. Zrod moderného mesta: zmeny obrazu slovenských miest v druhej polovici 19. a prvej polovici 20. storočia [The Origin of the Modern Cities: the Changes in Slovak Cities in the Second Half of 19th Century and the First Half of 20th Century]. In *Forum historiae: odborný internetový časopis pre históriu a príbuzné spoločenské vedy*, 2016, vol. 10, no. 2, p. 6. ISSN 1337-6861.

11 TANCER, Jozef – MANNOVÁ, Elena. Od uhorského patriotizmu k menšinovému nacionalizmu. Zmeny povedomia Nemcov na Slovensku v 18. až 20. storočí” [From Hungarian Patriotism to Minority Nationalism. Changes in the Awareness of Germans in Slovakia from the 18th to the 20th Century]. In KILIÁNOVÁ, Gabriela – KOWALSKÁ, Eva – KREKOVÍČOVÁ, Eva (eds.). *My a tí druhí v modernej spoločnosti. Konštrukcie a transformácie kolektívnych identít*. Bratislava: Veda – vydavateľstvo Slovenskej akadémie vied, 2009, p. 373. ISBN 978-8-0224-1025-0.

circles of Pressburg voiced the need to publicly strengthen the ideas of one (Hungarian) nation with one (Hungarian) language. Constructing public buildings and facilities was a useful tool to demonstrate the cultural refinement of the city and the modernness of its population. At the end of the nineteenth century, the municipal council regularly discussed some new projects in the city, which included a tram line to Vienna, a solid bridge, and the establishment of a university. In the end, the construction of a new theatre superseded all the other plans, and this points to the central position of the theatre as a tool for spreading the national language and a venue for the collective representation of the urban elite.

The Project of the Municipal Theatre Against the Background of the Activities of the Municipal Council of Pressburg

The decision to have a new theatre building erected in Pressburg was made for various reasons, as the documentation of the history of its construction reveals.¹² Its architect, Anton Sendlein (1842–1918), a recipient of the Knight's Cross of the Order of Franz Joseph and a graduate of the Technical College of Vienna, was a renowned professional not only in Pressburg but also beyond the city.¹³ In the late nineteenth century, he held the post of the chief engineer of Pressburg (he retired in 1902 after thirty-four years of service to the city), under which the theatre building also fell. Sendlein's interest in theatre did not stem only from professional reasons. His wife, Anna, came from the Laban family, from which several prominent artists emerged, including the actor Adolf Mylius (Adolf Laban by his real name), and the dancer and teacher Rudolf Laban. Sendlein's personal interest in a good background for dramatic arts manifested itself not only in initiating the erection of a theatre but, mainly, in monitoring its functioning from the technical as well as artistic aspect for many years as a member of the theatre committee. As a member also of the management board of the First Savings Bank of Pressburg, he had an influence on several decisions about the theatre, including the funding of the construction of the new theatre building. Sendlein's documentation was created after 1887, i.e. after the theatre operations

12 Zur Geschichte des Pressburger Theater-Baues 1879–1887. Zusammengestellt von Oberingenieur Anton Sendlein. Archiv mesta Bratislavy (AMB) [Bratislava City Archives], Bratislava City, Municipal Establishments, Theatre, box no. 2940, inv. no. 15879 (hereinafter referred to as Zur Geschichte des Pressburger Theater-Baues 1879–1887).

13 Kollegentag. *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 10/ 10/ 1912, 46, no. 278, p. 15. On the personal profile and career growth of Anton Sendlein, see BENYOVSZKY MÁNYA, Ágnes. *Belle Époque. Architekti a staviteľia v Prešporku 1890 – 1914*. [Belle Époque. Architects and Builders in Pressburg 1890–1914]. Bratislava: Marenčin PT, 2014, pp. 176–178. ISBN 978-80-8114-325-0.

were launched. By drawing up a detailed overview of the events, and by closely following the developments even after the construction was over, Sendlein left a precious testimony of a person who remained in the shadow of the renowned Viennese architects while being the main protagonist of the developments.

In his documentation, Sendlein refers to two other sources: minutes from the meetings of the construction committee set up to manage the construction of the new theatre,¹⁴ and minutes from the meetings of the theatre committee, mentioned by Sendlein with regard to the lease of the old theatre.¹⁵ He also quotes from the letters written to him by the architects Fellner and Hellmer.¹⁶ Sendlein commented on the course of the construction from its beginning, i.e. from 1879, when serious discussions began in the urban circles about the significant wear and tear of the old Municipal Theatre, built in 1776, and the need of extensive repairs. He reported that, in September 1879, the magistrate commissioned a stock-taking in the theatre and the Redoute, the latter being part of the theatre, and the committee noted some serious shortcomings in the condition of the building.¹⁷ No action was taken though, until part of the brickwork fell off the ceiling during a concert of the CMA in the Redoute hall on 12 October 1879. Although nobody got hurt, the incident immediately raised concerns about the safety of the building. Prompted by the editor of the *Preßburger Zeitung* and representative of the city, Carl Koller, the city decided to set up a construction-police committee of twelve and commissioned it to produce a report on the condition of the theatre building. The members of this committee, some of whom became in 1884 members of the construction committee commissioned to manage the construction of the new theatre, included municipal captain Johann Kozsehuba, chief municipal engineer Anton Sendlein, municipal physician Dr. Georg Kováts, commander of the fire brigade Ferdinand Martinengo, master architects Ignatz Feigler jr., Ludwig Eremit, Martin Kösler, master carpenter Moritz Sprinzl, and representatives of the municipal council, Carl Koller, Prince Arthur Rohan, Josef von Jeszenszky, and Josef von Záborszky. While inspecting the building, the committee was accompanied by director and actor Josef Seydl, who was the theatre inspector at that time.¹⁸

14 AMB, Bratislava City, Municipal Establishments, Theatre, box no. 2d 6/3, inv. no. 15862, minutes from the meetings of the construction committee from 1884–1887.

15 AMB, Bratislava City, Municipal Establishments, Theatre, box no. 2d 6/1, inv. no. 15860, minutes from the meetings of the theatre committee from 1875–1880, and box no. 2d 6/2, inv. no. 15861, minutes from the meetings of the theatre committee from 1881–1885.

16 AMB, Bratislava City, Municipal Establishments, Theatre, boxes no. 2938 and no. 2939, inv. no. 15879, letters of Ferdinand Fellner jr. and Herman Hellmer.

17 Zur Geschichte des Pressburger Theater-Baues 1879–1887, p. 3.

18 Ibidem, pp. 3–4.

The inspection was held on 17 December 1879, and the committee came to the conclusion that the building was not fire safe for several reasons. One of these was the fact that, although the building had separate rooms for storing flats and decorations, these were not large enough in the committee's view, or were not used for the intended purpose, so the flats and the decorations were stored behind the stage and in the attic of the Redoute. Both the flats and the decorations were made of flammable materials and this could cause extensive damages if a fire broke out. In addition, the building had few emergency exits and escape would have been difficult because the corridors were narrow. The committee also pointed out the inadequate ventilation, the absence of a safety curtain made of iron that would have prevented the spreading of a fire from the stage, as well as the lack of suitable hygienic facilities for the visitors and the performers. Consequently, the committee recommended an extensive renovation of the building because minor repairs would not have been sufficient.¹⁹

After submitting the conclusions to the municipal council, the president of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce and president of the First Savings Bank of Pressburg, representative of the city, and royal counsellor Theodor Edl became engaged in the matter. In his documentation, Sendlein described him as a tireless enthusiast of the theatre, fine arts, and music in the city, by which he briefly summarized the merits of this active pianist, one of the initiators of the Liedertafel and Singverein choirs in Pressburg.²⁰ Edl aroused a serious discussion in the municipal council, which culminated in Sendlein's proposal to invite the Viennese architect Ferdinand Fellner jr. to assess the condition of the theatre building independently. Sendlein knew Fellner through his close contact with the Viennese circle of architects, namely the Association of Austrian Engineers and Architects (Österreichischer Ingenieur- und Architekten-Verein in German), whose members included Fellner and Helmer. Fellner, a representative of a joint architectural atelier, accepted the invitation and inspected the theatre and the Redoute on 17 and 18 March 1880. He sent his report to the city on 25 March and confirmed the conclusions of the inspection carried out on 17 December 1879, emphasizing that no specialist could vouch for the safe continuation of the operations in the actual technical condition of the building.²¹ He enclosed several photographs of the latest projects of the atelier, including the Municipal Theatre in Liberec, the Wiener Stadttheater in Vienna, the Népszínház in Budapest, the Stadttheater in Augsburg, and their upcoming projects of the Municipal Theatre

19 Ibidem, p. 4; AMB, Bratislava City, Municipal Establishments, Theatre, box no. 2939, inv. no. 15879, Protokoll über die bau- und feuerpolizeiliche Besichtigung des Preßburger st. Theater- und Redouten-Gebäudes.

20 Zur Geschichte des Pressburger Theater-Baues 1879–1887, p. 17.

21 Ibidem, p. 5.

and Park Colonnade in Karlovy Vary.²² Also, he proposed a time frame for the renovation of the old theatre, or for the construction of a new theatre building. He estimated the budget, too: the renovation would cost 260,000 to 290,000 guilders, whereas the construction of a new building would cost 400,000 to 420,000 guilders. Sendlein added that this estimate referred to the safety requirements of the theatre building known at that time, but these increased significantly after the 1881 fire in the Ringtheater in Vienna.²³

Based on Theodor Edl's recommendation, the city contacted another architect, Otto Hofer, a native of Sopron, Hungary, who later became a member of the prominent architectural atelier Hasenauer and participated in the design of the new Burgtheater in Vienna. Hofer inspected the Municipal Theatre and the Redoute on 24 March 1880 and submitted his report, similar to that of Fellner, already on 25 March. Sendlein emphasized that both architects inspected the building for free, the city reimbursed only their travel and accommodation expenses in Pressburg.²⁴

Long discussions about the further course of the theatre began in the municipal council that moment. One of the proposals said that the premises used by the theatre should be exchanged with those in the Redoute. Another suggestion stated that the theatre, along with the Redoute, should shift to a single hall and a new theatre should be built opposite. Funding the renovation, or the construction of a new building, also played a role. Carl Koller presented a proposal in the municipal council to levy tax on each public cultural event in the city, including the shows in the Municipal Theatre, the Redoute, and the Arena, as well as on balls and parties. This would have meant a 10% increase in the ticket price.

Those who, according to Sendlein, were not members of the theatre audience, suggested to wait with the renovation, saying that the building was in an excellent condition (which, of course, they could not know since they were not visiting it). The standpoint of Ignatz Feigler jr., Ferdinand Kittler, and Karl Gratzl, builders in Pressburg, and of some others who were not willing to submit themselves to the view of renowned architects and declared that they themselves would be able to offer a cheaper and better solution is quite surprising.²⁵ When Fellner inspected the theatre, the city asked him about the amount of his remuneration, and the architect specified it as 5% of the total costs, which would have meant 12,500 guilders out of the total 250,000. Some of the representatives of the city considered this amount to be too high, so they contacted the architect Feigler

22 AMB, Bratislava City, Municipal Establishments, Theatre, box no. 2938, inv. no. 15879, letter of Ferdinand Fellner jr. of 25/03/1880.

23 Zur Geschichte des Pressburger Theater-Baues 1879–1887, p. 5.

24 Ibidem, p. 6.

25 Ibidem.

to produce a plan for the renovation of the theatre. After receiving incomplete sketches, and an incomplete budget, it was evident that this would not be a good solution. In addition, it turned out that the estimated amount of 250,000 guilders would not even be enough.²⁶

In March 1880, on the initiative of Dr. Ignaz Deutsch, a representative of the city, the city decided to enter into negotiations with the First Savings Bank of Pressburg to have the interest rate on the city's debt lowered from 6% to 5% to enable it to save up for new projects, such as the construction of barracks, a municipal water distribution system, a solid bridge, an abattoir, and also a new theatre. The negotiations took place in April 1880 and were chaired by Theodor Edl as the president of the financial committee and president of the First Savings Bank of Pressburg. Voting about the proposal to fund the theatre took place at the meeting of the municipal council on 28 and 30 June 1880. With 101 votes for and 7 votes against, the representatives approved an amount of 250,000 guilders for the theatre. The city sent the result of the voting to the Hungarian Royal Ministry of the Interior (Magyar Királyi Belügyminisztérium in Hungarian, hereinafter referred to as the Ministry of the Interior), which rejected the result for unknown reasons and demanded another inspection of the theatre building.²⁷

An architect, Béla Ney arrived in Pressburg during the Holy Week of 1881. Accompanied by Anton Sendlein, he inspected the whole building and came to the conclusion that it had to be closed immediately. However, some Hungarian shows were to be performed in the theatre after Easter, and he did not want to cause any damage to the Hungarian company. Dr. Ignaz Deutsch was also present at the inspection and asked Ney if a renovation of the building made any sense or if it was better to build a new theatre. Ney recommended building a new theatre because the difference between the two proposals would have been minor and only a small part of the original building could be utilized. He estimated the cost of the construction at 400,000 guilders. The Ministry of the Interior sent its decision as its Decree 31941 of 2 July 1881, agreeing to the renovation of the building in principle, but making its final decision subject to receiving detailed plans with the budget and its coverage.²⁸

The construction-police committee, which had carried out the first inspection of the theatre in the autumn of 1879, had to submit a plan of further action. Its members suggested to the municipal council to commission a renowned company to produce the architectural plans or to issue a request for tenders, either a limited or an unlimited one. On 29 August 1881, the municipal council discussed the submitted design and, as Sendlein put it, the debate had a

26 Ibidem, p. 9.

27 Ibidem, pp. 9–10.

28 Ibidem, p. 10.

patriotic tone. Several people, including Sándor Vutkovich and Moritz Pisztorý, demanded to commission exclusively architects from Budapest or Hungary. Others did not want to commission any architects, only local builders. Edl and Sendlein were for the Viennese architects Fellner and Helmer, and they argued that they were the authors of the designs of the Népszínház in Budapest and were working on the project of a theatre in Szeged at that time. If the capital, and an important Hungarian city like Szeged, commissioned these architects, Pressburg should not act otherwise, either. Moreover, Sendlein pointed out that arts had an international dimension and, at the same time, projects were subject to the financial resources of the client. Since Pressburg could not rely on any help from the Government of Hungary, he recommended the city to invite Fellner and Helmer, whose project was reasonably priced.²⁹ The arguments in favour of patriotism ultimately convinced most of the representatives; since they did not want to be put to shame, they authorized the committee to invite the Viennese atelier to produce all the necessary documentation for the construction. Also, they agreed that the theatre building would change places with the building of the Redoute to ensure continuity in theatre operations even during the construction.³⁰

The construction work was to begin on 1 April 1882, the theatre was to be completed by 1 August 1883, and the Redoute by 1 December 1883. A house standing at 8, Jägerzeile (today's 6, Palacký street) was to be purchased to store the decorations and to house the painting and carpentry workshop. The representatives also decided that they would exclude the paving of the pavements, the sewer network, and the levelling of the streets from the construction budget, since all this work would have to be carried out in near future anyway, regardless of the new theatre.

In the autumn of 1881, Fellner returned to Pressburg to demonstrate on his specific designs his objections to using the original walls of the old theatre, which prevented a new segmentation of the building. The city accepted Fellner's proposal and commissioned the atelier to produce a completely separate design of a new building. The decision in favour of a new building was partly influenced by the fact that the first phase of the systematic regulation of the Danube according to the plans of Enea Grazioso Lanfranconi had just been completed, and it made it possible to create public areas and construct representative buildings not only directly on the bank of the Danube but also in a wider area, where the theatre was, too.³¹

29 Die Pläne und Kostenüberschläge-Beschaffung für den Preßburger Theaterbau. Preßburger Zeitung, 30/08/1881, 117, no. 237, p. 1.

30 Zur Geschichte des Pressburger Theater-Baues 1879–1887, p. 11.

31 MORAVČÍKOVÁ, Henrieta – SZALAY, Peter – HABERLANDOVÁ, Katarína – KRIŠTEKOVÁ, Laura – BOČKOVÁ, Monika. *Bratislava (ne)plánované mesto = Bratislava (un)*

An extraordinary meeting of the municipal council was held in the afternoon of 9 December 1881, where the news of a fire that had broken out and caused many casualties in Ringtheater in Vienna the previous evening was discussed. Carl Koller immediately raised the question of the safety of the old theatre and Sendlein replied that, unless emergency staircases were built to the old theatre and to the Redoute, enabling a fast exit of the building, these building should not be used. After a short discussion, the chairman, chief county administrator Count Stephen Eszterházy ordered immediate adjustments to building, so the operations of the theatre were interrupted only for a few days and were resumed already on 13 December.³²

The plans of the new theatre, with a redoute, drawn by Fellner and Helmer before the disaster, arrived in Pressburg on 16 December 1881. The construction budget was 362,500 guilders, and they were able to reduce this amount to 326,000 guilders. In his letter enclosed to the plans, Fellner expressed his fears that the plans would have to be changed because of the new situation.³³ Fellner and Helmer were members of the professional committee set up by the Association of Austrian Engineers and Architects shortly after the Ringtheater Fire to propose recommendations to increase the safety of theatre buildings, so he was aware that new rules would be issued soon. In his letter, Fellner also mentioned that Ignatz Feigler jr. and partners Kittler and Gratzl visited him in Vienna before sending the plans and they agreed to write financial offers, both companies expressing their interest in participating in the construction. Their visit was not marred even by the campaign led by both companies in Pressburg against the Viennese atelier.

In his letter of 19 December, Sendlein submitted his official request for a modification of the plans. The architects replied by return and confirmed that they would soon send them. At the same time, Fellner congratulated Sendlein on his swift action in the matter of building emergency staircases, since the old theatre was a “matchbox” in his view.³⁴ In late January 1882, the architects submitted the promised documentation modified according to the recommendations of the professional committee of the Association of Austrian Engineers and Architects. The municipal council received the documentation on 6 February and called on the committee which had inspected the old theatre to check it. Also, it approved the purchase of the house at 8, Jägerzeile for the needs of the new theatre.³⁵

planned city. Bratislava: Slovart, 2020, s. 141. ISBN 978-80-556-4696-1.

32 Zur Geschichte des Pressburger Theater-Baues 1879–1887, pp. 13–14.

33 AMB, Bratislava City, Municipal Establishments, Theatre, box no. 2939, inv. no. 15879, letter of Ferdinand Fellner jr. of 10/12/1881.

34 Ibidem, letter of Ferdinand Fellner jr. of 24/12/1881.

35 Zur Geschichte des Pressburger Theater-Baues 1879–1887, pp. 15–16.

At a meeting of the municipal council on 3 April, it was concluded that there was no better place for erecting a new theatre in the city than the one where the old theatre was standing. Furthermore, the committee noted that the construction would cost 400,000 guilders and that the city could gain the annual amount of 24,000 guilders needed for the 5% interest and 1% amortization in the following way: 5,000 guilders from the lease of the Redoute, including the bars, 8,600 guilders from interest on flats in the house at 8, Jägerzeile, 16,000 guilders from the 2% tax on the shows performed in the theatre and the Arena, 1,600 guilders from the 20% tax on shows in the Redoute, 2,000 guilders from the 20% tax on other shows in the city, i.e. 25,200 guilders in total.³⁶ The committee accepted these proposals and asked the First Savings Bank of Pressburg whether it would be willing to lend money to the city under the above conditions. The savings bank approved a loan in the amount of 400,000 guilders under the condition that it set the interest rate at 5.5% and the amortization rate at 0.75%. Therefore, Johann Ludwig suggested issuing an invitation to tender to secure the loan. The city sent the complete construction documentation of the theatre to the Ministry of the Interior for approval. It also enclosed the objection of Ludwig von Mossóczy, representative of the city, who, along with several other representatives, did not agree to the construction.³⁷

On 14 June 1882, Theodor Edl, the central promoter of the theatre project, suddenly died. According to Sendlein, the whole situation took a negative turn against the new theatre from that moment, because Edl had headed the important financial institutions in the city and he had been able to support every good initiative. As head of the municipal financial committee, he was succeeded by a representative of the city and member of the theatre committee, Josef von Jeszenszky, who was characterized by Sendlein as a man with a single motto: to save.³⁸ In Sendlein's words, he was not publicly against the project of the new theatre, but, nevertheless, he had no understanding of beauty, progress, arts, or science.

The idea of building a new theatre became unpopular in the city, and negotiations came to a standstill on all sides. On 2 July 1882, the Ministry of the Interior sent its Decree of 11 June 1882, in which it rejected the modified plans because they did not appear to be safe enough and were financially underestimated. The ministry noted the modifications that Fellner and Helmer added after the Ringtheater Fire, but these were not enough for it to issue the construction permit. Therefore, it called upon Pressburg to deliver new plans.³⁹ In their letter

36 Ibidem, p. 16.

37 Ibidem, p. 17.

38 Ibidem, p. 18.

39 Ibidem, pp. 18–19.

of 13 July 1882, Fellner and Helmer expressed “*their disappointment with the situation*”, but were ready to propose even more extensive fire safety measures in accordance with the ministry’s opinion. However, this meant increasing the construction budget and the city did not accept that.⁴⁰ Not much time was left till the opening of the new season of 1882/1883, but Sendlein refused to issue the permit. Therefore, the city agreed with municipal engineers Leopold Kiss and Ignaz Linzboth, and with master carpenter Anton Durvay, who vouched for the theatre.

Jeszenszky’s influence on the actions of the construction-police committee, whose members included Jeszenszky himself and which wanted to contact Fellner and Helmer again, became evident soon. It submitted a proposal to the municipal council to commission local builders to create new plans. This was supported also by the financial committee headed by Jeszenszky, which submitted a proposal that, if local builders succeeded, the city would not request new plans from the Viennese atelier. Only Kittler and Gratzl, supported by Jeszenszky, replied to the invitation. According to Sendlein, they were skilful followers of Feigler, but did not have the expertise and the experience needed for complex architectural designs. Jeszenszky’s efforts met with Sendlein’s justified objections, so the city decided to contact the Viennese architects again. The lease agreement of the theatre building was quietly renewed for the subsequent, 1883/1884 season, too.⁴¹

The Viennese architects sent the new plans to the Ministry of the Interior on 19 April 1883 in compliance with the ministry’s Decree of 11 June 1882. Compared to the previous design, the architects significantly enhanced the safety elements in the theatre, hoping that the ministry would approve the plan this time.⁴² By its Decree of 26 April 1883, the ministry returned the plan with the objection that a financial control of the project should be performed. At the meetings of the municipal council on 4 and 5 June 1883, the construction-police committee reported that the new plan would require a coverage of 369,172 guilders, whereas other items had to be added to this amount, such as the purchase of the house at 8, Jägerzeile for 20,000 guilders, adjustments to the house in the amount of 500 guilders, securing a carriage for the transportation of the decorations for 200 guilders, and remuneration to the architects amounting to 12,500 guilders, i.e. 402,372 guilders in total. To gain the necessary amount, the financial committee suggested to the city to borrow 1,100,000 guilders for new projects and allocate

40 AMB, Bratislava City, Municipal Establishments, Theatre, box no. 2939, inv. no. 15879, letter of Ferdinand Fellner and Hermann Helmer of 13/07/1882.

41 Zur Geschichte des Pressburger Theater-Baues 1879–1887, p. 20.

42 AMB, Bratislava City, Municipal Establishments, Theatre, box no. 2939, inv. no. 15879, letter of Ferdinand Fellner and Hermann Helmer of 12/04/1883.

402,372 guilders out of this amount for the theatre. The proposal was approved, and the city decided to issue a request for tenders to negotiate a 4.5% interest rate to enable it to pay back the loan in fifty years.⁴³

Fierce protests against constructing a new theatre continued in the summer of 1883. One of the arguments of the protesters was that exchanging parts of the theatre would provide an area for a nice restaurant, which would be fully occupied both in the summer and in the winter, and this would cause damages to the nearby hotels and restaurants. Therefore, they suggested building the new theatre without a redoute. The hotelier Jakub Palugyay publicly announced his intention that he was planning to convert one of the rooms in his hotel called *Zum grünen Baum* into a dance hall, by which the city could save some money. Sendlein asked for the opinion of the Viennese architects whether they would recommend this solution. They replied they did, but suggested to lay the wooden flooring in a way that it could be used as a dance floor, too.⁴⁴ Logically, theatre shows would not be performed at the time when balls were held in the theatre. They also added that, for safety reasons, this would even be a better solution than to construct a theatre with a redoute. Of course, the costs would also have been lower in this case. Officially, no negotiations were led about this suggestion though.

After a meeting of the municipal council on 18 June 1883, the plans, including the budget and its coverage, were sent again to Budapest. Silence followed, no reply came, so doubts arose again about the viability of the project. In late 1883, the theatre committee insisted on entering into a lease agreement of the old theatre for a longer period. As a member of the committee, Jeszenszky claimed that even if the construction of a new building would be approved by Budapest, it would not be necessary to implement it, as repairs in the old theatre would suffice. This opinion was adopted by several representatives of the city. Consequently, Sendlein requested Kozsehuba, a member of the theatre committee, to ask for two days for making a decision before signing the agreement, and requested him for a report on the technical condition of the building. Kozsehuba agreed. On 13 February 1884, Sendlein announced in writing that the building was dangerous and life-threatening to both the performers and the audience. Therefore, the theatre and the Redoute would have to be closed after the end of the Hungarian shows in May that year.⁴⁵

Sendlein's written statement caused an explosion in the city. Along with Kozsehuba, the mayor Moritz Gottl was worried about the reaction of the

43 Zur Geschichte des Pressburger Theater-Baues 1879–1887, pp. 22–23.

44 AMB, Bratislava City, Municipal Establishments, Theatre, box no. 2939, inv. no. 15879, letter of Ferdinand Fellner jr. and Hermann Helmer of 08/06/1883.

45 Zur Geschichte des Pressburger Theater-Baues 1879–1887, p. 26.

inhabitants of Pressburg, since the theatre could close down any time. Therefore, Kozsehuba hurried to Budapest and met, among others, Kálmán Tisza, the ministry's president and minister of the interior, who confirmed Sendlein's statements. To avoid the city putting the blame on Kozsehuba, Tisza advised him to send him a written inquiry, along with Sendlein's statement. The Decree of 23 February, in which minister Tisza ordered the immediate closure of the theatre building and the Redoute, arrived from Budapest on 25 February 1884.⁴⁶

After this intervention by the minister, the city could have been expected to immediately submit itself and do its best to build a new theatre. This was not the case though. On 26 February, at a special meeting of the municipal council, the representatives set up a new committee and commissioned it to inspect the old theatre again. Its members included the commander of the fire brigade Ferdinand Martinengo, master carpenters Moritz Sprinzl, Anton Durvay and Franz Hubert, and master builders Ignatz Feigler jr., Carl Feigler and Ludwig Eremit. Sendlein's participation was not permitted. The committee concluded that all the safety requirements were met, so the shows in the theatre and the events in the Redoute could continue. Only minor repairs were required. Similarly, the committee concluded that the theatre was safe from the architectural aspect, too, and that the wood and the brickwork were in a good condition.⁴⁷

At the next meeting of the municipal council, the representatives noted the ministerial decree but interpreted it in the sense that the minister had not ordered an immediate closure of the theatre, but only recommended its renovation, or the erection of a new theatre. The city pretended to be implementing the ministerial decree. It requested the construction-police committee, which had carried out the first inspection of the theatre, to submit a plan to solve the situation. This committee, which was joined also by some members of the committee from the last inspection of the theatre, became almost inoperative because of the large number of its members. It did not propose anything new, only called on local builders to produce new plans since, in its own words, Pressburg did not have the necessary funds for constructing a new theatre, nor for an extensive renovation of the old one. The same mistake was thus repeated for the third time, delaying the construction further.

In the meantime, elections for the leading functions of the municipal magistrate took place on 9 April 1884 and a forceful campaign was being led against Sendlein. Nevertheless, he was reelected as the chief engineer of the city, since no one else from those contacted was willing to take over his function. Karl Mergl became the mayor, Gustav Dröxler the deputy mayor, and Theodor Brolly

46 Ibidem, p. 27.

47 Ibidem, p. 28.

the chief notary. The theatre committee submitted a proposal for extending the lease agreement of the theatre for the subsequent, 1884/1885 season, too. Due to the conflict between Sendlein's statement about the condition of the theatre and the committee's report from the last inspection of the theatre, the ministry ordered by its Decree of 19 May that it made its decision subject to another inspection of the theatre, this time by Heinrich Wohlfahrt, the building inspector of the building authority of Budapest.⁴⁸ The inspection began in early June 1884. The members of the committee which had carried out the inspection of the theatre in the spring of 1884 wanted to be present, but Wohlfahrt did not allow that. He invited only Sendlein and demanded the presence of one technical official and one carpenter. When leaving Pressburg, Wohlfahrt told Sendlein that the theatre had to be closed down immediately. The government decree of 26 June, prohibiting any further performances in the theatre, arrived in Pressburg on 27 June. At the same time, Minister Tisza emphasized that it expected the city to build a theatre which would correspond to its standards in every aspect.⁴⁹

On 28 June, the theatre committee announced that, according to the modified plans, the construction of the new theatre including a redoute would cost 500,000 guilders, whereas the construction of the theatre itself would cost 330,000 guilders. After reading the ministry's decree of 26 June at the meeting of the municipal council on 7 July 1884, the plan for the construction of the new theatre without a redoute was approved after a long debate. Sendlein stated that seven representatives, including himself, voted for a new building with a redoute, whereas, after the theatre opened and it turned out that a redoute would have been really necessary, at least fifty representatives stated that they had voted for it. Sendlein wondered how 7 became 57.⁵⁰

From that moment, things started to move forward. Fellner and Helmer had to be contacted again to produce the financial plan for the coverage of the project and an invitation to tender had to be sent out to local builders and masters. All this took place in the summer months of 1884. At the 19 August meeting of the municipal council, the representatives took a decision about the necessary preparatory work, including emptying the boxes of the aristocratic families containing their own pieces of furniture by 15 September at the latest, as the local dailies reported.⁵¹ At the same time, the city commissioned Sendlein to propose adjustments to Pálffy's Hall that was to serve as a provisional theatre (a so-called Interimstheater) for two years. Five thousand guilders were set apart for the adjustments. This ensured that the continuity of the theatre traditions did

48 Ibidem, p. 34.

49 Ibidem, p. 35.

50 Ibidem, p. 38.

51 [Announcement] *Preßburger Zeitung*, 24/08/1884, 121, no. 234, p. 2.

not have to be interrupted in the city. Thanks to Sendlein's adjustments to the premises, the opening show at the provisional theatre on 1 October 1884 turned out to be a real festivity.⁵²

The Funding and the Final Form of the New Theatre Building

Commissioned by the municipal council, the new construction committee started its activities on 21 August 1884, supervising the construction of the new theatre building. Its members were: municipal captain Johann Kozsehuba (president of the committee), chief municipal engineer Anton Sendlein (registrar and construction controller), commander of the fire brigade Ferdinand Martinengo, municipal representatives Johann von Csattogányi, Ludwig Eremit, Josef von Jeszenszky, Anton Pfanzelt, Dr. Moritz Pisztorý, Prince Arthur Rohan, and Josef von Záborszky. After his death, Prince Arthur Rohan was replaced by Felix Pisztorý, but, according to Sendlein, he never showed any interest in the construction.⁵³

The major part of the responsibilities connected to the construction fell on Sendlein, who performed these besides his other tasks that arose from his office of chief engineer of the city. He tried to solve all the technical issues directly with the architects, and this reveals his close relationship with the Viennese atelier. Also, he tried to avoid discussions with Jeszenszky, who had a very pragmatic attitude to the construction and rejected, in principle, any expense on theatre decorations. All the major decisions had to be approved by the construction committee and, subsequently, by the municipal council. Sendlein recalled that, as construction manager, he recommended to the architects a skilful young draughtsman (who later became a building master), Anton Keusch from Pressburg, who had no experience, however, so Sendlein had to substitute even him. All the work connected to weighing the materials was performed by a municipal representative and member of the construction committee, Anton Pfanzelt.⁵⁴

The city finally received the architectural plans of the theatre, including its budget, on 13 January 1885, and they were discussed by the municipal council on 3 February 1885. Subsequently, they were sent to the Ministry of the Interior in Budapest for approval, which definitively accepted them only in its Decree of 6 June 1885. This was practically the third version of the architectural plans, and each version was subsequently modified, too. The architects submitted the first plans before the Ringtheater Fire in 1881. They produced the second plan after

52 -a-: Eröffnungs-Vorstellung. Preßburger Zeitung, 02/10/1884, 121, no. 272, p. 4.

53 Zur Geschichte des Pressburger Theater-Baues 1879–1887, pp. 41–42.

54 Ibidem, p. 42.

the fire and it included a redoute, too. The third, and final, version was created after the definitive approval of the construction of the theatre without a redoute.

The preparatory work and digging the foundation started in the autumn of 1884. On 24 September 1884, the municipal council accepted the winning bids for the earthworks and the brickwork. The winning bid had been submitted by builders Ignatz Feigler jr. and his nephew Alexander Feigler. The city commissioned Moritz Sprinzl with the carpentry work. On 25 September, the building committee handed over the old theatre to the Feiglers for demolition. A firemen's training exercise still took place in the old building on 28 September, while part of the old shingle roof was being removed. The demolition of the theatre started on 29 September. The building was demolished gradually, the theatre office and the daytime ticket office remained standing in the first weeks.⁵⁵ On 25 October, the foundation stone of the new theatre was laid by master mason Michael Kittler in the presence of Anton Sendlein in the southwestern corner of the building. Sendlein added that this master had great expertise and played a major role in the successful course of the construction.⁵⁶

As for funding the project, Sendlein emphasized the skilfulness of the above-mentioned municipal representative, Johann Ludwig, who found a way to finance the whole construction by converting the interest of the city's debt. The city did not have to take any further loan and it did not even have to levy any unpopular taxes on cultural and entertainment events. An advance of 40,000 guilders was borrowed from Royko's fund, with 5% interest, to begin the construction. Further, Ludwig proposed the following strategy:

In 1868, the city had borrowed 600,000 guilders from the First Savings Bank of Pressburg, which it had to repay in 28 years, i.e. by 1896. Interest and amortization represented 7% of the total amount, i.e. 42,000 guilders. The city had also borrowed 165,033.43 guilders from the same bank. It was paying this amount back with a 5.5% interest, which amounted to 9,076.84 guilders. Finally, the city had taken a loan from the orphanage treasury in the amount of 11,862.34 guilders, whose annual interest and amortization were 792 guilders. The city had these three loans, amounting to a total of 776,895.77 guilders, and was paying 51,868.84 guilders of interest and amortization annually. It had already paid back 234,600 guilders from the loan of 600,000 guilders, so it still owed 365,400 guilders. Ludwig calculated that, if lower interest rates could be negotiated and amortization could be extended, the amount needed for the construction of the theatre could be gained without having to increase the annual instalment of the debts in the amount of 51,868.84 guilders.⁵⁷

55 [Announcement] *Preßburger Zeitung*, 25/09/1884, 121, no. 265, p. 3.

56 *Zur Geschichte des Pressburger Theater-Baues 1879–1887*, p. 43.

57 *Ibidem*, pp. 44–45. János Jónás, the chronicler of the history of the savings bank, made a brief

On 14 January 1885, the city issued a request for tenders, but only the First Savings Bank of Pressburg applied, with 5.25% interest and 0.25% amortization, i.e. 5.5% in total for a period of fifty-eight and a half years. This offer was accepted in the end and submitted to the municipal council for approval on 16 February 1885 in the following form:

The first loan, from 1868, had to be paid back in the amount of 365,400 guilders, the second loan in the amount of 165,033.43 guilders, and the third loan in the amount of 11,862.34 guilders. The construction of the theatre required 330,000 guilders; in addition, 17,000 guilders were needed for a new depot for wagons, and 10,704.23 guilders for fees, seals and other expenses. In total, this meant 900,000 guilders. Since interest and amortization were set for this amount at 5.5%, i.e. 49,500 guilders annually, whereas 51,868.84 guilders were being paid annually for the lowest amount (776,895.77 guilders), the city could save 2,368.84 guilders annually despite the two new items (the construction of the new theatre and the new wagon depot, including the connected fees), with additional 850 guilders (interest) and 170 guilders (maintenance costs) added to this amount, since these payments had to be paid to the town for the wagon depot by the military treasury every year. This plan was immediately accepted by the municipal council and approved by the Ministry of the Interior, too.⁵⁸

The final construction budget was made up of 297,000 guilders as construction costs, 9,500 guilders for the architects' remuneration, 7,000 guilders for the procurement of some decorations, and 16,500 guilders for unexpected expenses, i.e. 330,000 guilders in total. Four murals were planned as a decoration of the ceiling of the auditorium, but their cost was not included in the construction budget because Ferdinand Gervay, a municipal representative and the vice president of the First Savings Bank of Pressburg, had promised Sendlein that the savings bank would take care of everything connected to the decoration of the theatre.⁵⁹

Another meeting of the municipal council was held on 16 February 1885, where they had to take a decision about the proposal of the construction committee regarding the lighting in the theatre. Although the committee recommended electric lighting, some of its members were for gas lighting because of the higher operating costs of the electric lighting. Therefore, the representative Ludwig suggested to issue a request for tenders for the electrical devices, with

mention of the endowment for the theatre. See JÓNÁS, János. *Visszapillantás a Pozsonyi I. Takarékpénztár ötven évi működésére 1842–1891. években*. [Retrospection toward the Fifty Years of the Activities of the First Savings Bank of Pressburg in 1842–1891]. Pozsony: A takarékpénztár kiadása, 1892, p. 36.

58 Zur Geschichte des Pressburger Theater-Baues 1879–1887, p. 45.

59 Ibidem, p. 46.

the machine room to be placed in the basement of one of the pavilions on Csáky Square, which would also serve as a restaurant. Fellner and Helmer even drew sketches for the installation of electric lighting in the theatre.⁶⁰

Bids for installing and operating the lighting were sent in by Siemens & Halske from Vienna and Berlin, Egger & Co. from Budapest and Vienna, Ganz & Co. from Budapest, Brückner, Ross & Co. from Vienna, Křížík & Pielt from Plzeň, Societé Edison from Paris, and Österreichische Gasbeleuchtungs-Actiengesellschaft from Vienna and Pressburg. Sendlein announced the results of the tender on 18 May 1885. The entire electric lighting in the theatre, including the devices, would have cost 70,500 guilders, with a guaranteed cost of 36.25 guilders per performance. Installing a mixed lighting, consisting of electric lighting for the stage and auditorium and gas lighting for the other rooms, would have cost 72,500 guilders, with a guaranteed cost of 30 guilders per show. Exclusively gas lighting would have cost 14,275.54 guilders, with a guaranteed cost of 22 guilders per performance. At its 1 June meeting, the committee decided to install gas lighting in the new theatre and selected the Österreichische Gasbeleuchtungs-Actiengesellschaft company, which installed the lighting for 5,500 guilders. An advantage gained from the tender procedure was that, in its course, this company reduced the price of the installation and of the daily supply to half because it did not want to risk its competitors winning the tender.⁶¹ From 1904 to 1906, the accounting books of Pressburg contain an item for the installation of electric lighting and ventilation, which suggests that, previously, the lighting had been gas.⁶²

The results of the tender for producing the exterior sculptures, announced by the theatre committee, were also discussed at this meeting. Since the committee had repeatedly chosen the cheapest bids, in this case too it recommended the Viennese sculptor Theodor Friedl, who had been collaborating with Fellner and Helmer from 1877. At the meeting, many representatives were for Viktor Tilgner, a prominent sculptor and native of Pressburg, who had donated several precious items to the city. In the end, the choice fell on Friedl, who sculpted an allegorical group of statues depicting Thalia with angels.⁶³ The author of the stucco decorations of the interior of the theatre, painter and designer Reinhold Völkel, was also from Vienna. Similarly to Friedl, he had participated in several projects of the Fellner and Helmer atelier.

60 Ibidem, p. 47.

61 Ibidem, p. 48.

62 *Pozsony szabad. királyi város zárszámadása és vagyoneleltára/Schluss-Rechnung und Vermögens-Inventar der königlichen Freistadt Preßburg*. Pozsony: Nyomatott Angermayer Károly nyomdaintézetében, 1904–1906, p. 25.

63 *Zur Geschichte des Pressburger Theater-Baues 1879–1887*, p. 49.

The building committee submitted two additional plans to the representatives of the city regarding the safety of the theatre. The first plan was Fellner's proposal to have a double-walled safety iron curtain instead of a single-walled one, since a fire in the theatre in Szeged had revealed that a single-walled curtain did not prevent the spreading of a fire. The second plan was to implement the same procedure in producing the iron door. The municipal council accepted both these plans on 1 June 1885 and approved an extra sum for them, amounting to 3,146.90 guilders.⁶⁴

The construction committee tried to secure the above-mentioned remuneration for the four murals on the ceiling of the auditorium, amounting approximately to 2,500 guilders, from the First Savings Bank of Pressburg. On 17 June 1885, the members of the construction committee received the statement of the savings bank, which decided not to support the painting of the murals because it intended to finance something more valuable in the theatre and reserved the right to make the choice.⁶⁵ Consequently, the construction committee took a decision about the submission of a proposal for the approval of 2,400 guilders for the artist from Pressburg for painting the planned murals. The municipal council approved the proposal on 6 July 1885.⁶⁶

The construction progressed and updates on it appeared regularly in the local dailies. The theatre committee continued to have meetings because it had to take a decision about the lease of the new theatre building. The decision to build a new theatre was linked to the idea of stabilizing Hungarian theatre in the city and one of the proposals suggested to stage plays in the new theatre only in Hungarian. In 1884–1885, the city commissioned the theatre committee to examine the possibility of gaining subvention from the Hungarian Government, since they knew that the theatregoers in Pressburg were German-speaking inhabitants. At the 22 June 1885 meeting of the theatre committee, its members decided to invite the representatives of the important urban associations to comment on the proposal of leasing out the theatre exclusively to a Hungarian director.⁶⁷ After receiving a negative reply from Budapest, the committee submitted a proposal to

64 Ibidem.

65 GAUČÍK, Štefan. *Kultúrne stratégie elit Prešporskej I. sporiteľne (1883 – 1918)*. [Cultural Strategies of the Elite of the First Savings Bank of Pressburg (1883–1918)]. In HUDEK, Adam – ŠOLTÉS, Peter (eds.). *Elity a kontraelity na Slovensku v 19. a 20. storočí. Kontinuity a diskontinuity*. Bratislava: VEDA, Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, 2019), 2019, p. 204. ISBN 978-80-224-1778-5.

66 Zur Geschichte des Pressburger Theater-Baues 1879–1887, p. 50.

67 AMB, Bratislava City, Municipal Establishments, Theatre, box no. 2d 6/2, inv. no. 15861, minutes from the meeting of the theatre committee on 22/06/1885.

the municipal council to alternate German and Hungarian seasons in the theatre in line with the country's dualism.⁶⁸

Several pieces of information have been preserved about the total capacity of the theatre. Otto von Fabricius, the author of the first memorial on the theatre, *Das neue Theater in Preßburg*, written on the occasion of the opening of the new theatre in 1886, listed 1,167 people.⁶⁹ Before the opening of the theatre, the *Preßburger Zeitung* reported its capacity at 1,200.⁷⁰ A German theatre almanac mentioned 1,170 people.⁷¹

The Viennese atelier designed the building in a historical Neo-Renaissance style with a Neo-Baroque interior. A motif of a free-standing loggia was used on the façade, symbolizing the dignity of this new hub of education and noble entertainment. The Hungarian inscription Városi Színház, which means Municipal Theatre, was placed in the attic part of the façade of the building, which had not only a technical but also a cultural and social function.⁷² Busts were placed into the oval openings above the loggia on the façade, highlighting the national and political function of the theatre.⁷³

Based on the suggestion of the Toldy Kör society, the municipal council approved the busts of two prominent literary models of the Hungarian drama tradition, Mihály Vörösmarty and József Katona, besides world playwrights like Johann Wolfgang Goethe and William Shakespeare, and the “national” composer Franz Liszt,⁷⁴ all sculpted by Wilhelm Marhenke. The political undertone of the choice is also proven by the fact that, after the birth of the Slovak National Theatre in 1936, the busts were removed from the façade during some renovation work. The city was planning to replace the original busts by other well-known Czech and Slovak personalities, but, in the end, this did not happen. The busts

68 Ibidem, minutes from the meeting of the theatre committee on 25/08/1885 and 07/11/1885.

69 FABRICIUS, Otto von. *Das neue Theater in Preßburg. Festschrift*. Preßburg: Druckerei des Westungarischer Grenzboten, 1886, p. 14.

70 Das neue Preßburger Stadttheater. In *Preßburger Zeitung*, 18/03/1886, 123, no. 77, pp. 2–3.

71 *Almanach der Genossenschaft Deutscher Bühnen-Angehöriger (Gettke's Bühnen-Almanach)*. Jg. 15. Hrsg. Von Ernst Gettke. Leipzig: Verlag von Karl Reissner, 1887, p. 268.

72 MORAVČÍKOVÁ, Henrieta – DLHÁŇOVÁ, Viera. Universal Values and National Symbolism. Theatre and Architectural History in the Slovak Republic. In KOVAČEVIĆ, Igor (ed.). *Beyond Everydayness: Theatre Architecture in Central Europe*. Prague: Národní divadlo, 2010, p. 65. ISBN 978-8-0725-8364-5.

73 GROSSEGER, Elisabeth. Kulturpolitik und Theater in der Reichshauptstadt Wien. Die frühe und die verspätete kulturpolitische Mission des k.k. Hofburg- und Nationaltheaters. In THER, Philipp (ed.). *Kulturpolitik und Theater. Die kontinentalen Imperien in Europa im Vergleich*. Oldenbourg: Böhlau, 2012, p. 68. ISBN 978-3-2057-8491-3.

74 AMB, Bratislava City, Municipal Establishments, Theatre, box no. 2d 6/3, inv. no. 15862, minutes from the meeting of the construction committee on 18/05/1885.

were returned to their original place only in the new millennium. The destroyed bust of Vörösmarty was replaced by a bust of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.⁷⁵

In accordance with the recommendations issued after the Ringtheater Fire, the theatre bore evident signs of a triple segmentation. The architects designed the entrance hall generously, in the shape of a prolonged square, with white and gold stucco decoration, highlighting the fact that the theatre was a representative venue for the local bourgeois population.⁷⁶ The numerous exits from the auditorium, leading to paved arched corridors that protected the people from fire, were an important safety measure.

When designing the staircase, the architects proposed a mixed form, which served a decentralization purpose in the building and prevented the gathering of a large number of people. The auditorium, designed in the shape of a horseshoe in a terraced way on three levels (also called a mezzanine and two floors) and an upper gallery, also appeared spacious. The wide corridors were a suitable place for walks during the intermissions. The theatre had spacious cloakrooms, a cafeteria and a balcony. The performers' comfort and convenience was ensured by well-equipped dressing rooms, rooms for storing decorations and props, and a large, modern stage.

One of the technical novelties after the implementation of the new safety regulations was that the stage was divided from the other parts of the building by fireproof safety walls that ended in a tall rigging loft. Another safety element consisted of a safety iron curtain installed in a way that the stage and the auditorium did not stand under the same roof. The safety curtain was twelve metres wide and nine and a half metres tall, it hung on eight iron ropes, and was able to "fall" within ten seconds thanks to the latest technology. The motif on the curtain, which was a red drape, was designed by Carl Brioschi and Hermann Burghart. In 1911, the painter and designer Gustav Wintersteiner designed a new motif for it, with the veduta of Pressburg in the background.

As for the decoration of the theatre, its key elements reflected local and national patriotism. For painting the murals on the ceiling of the auditorium, the city contacted painters who were natives of Pressburg or active in the city: Gustav Fleischmann, Eduard Majsch, Emil Rózsay, Baron Willibald Leo von Lütgendorff-Leinburg, whose father was a native of Pressburg, and Kornel

75 BLAHOVÁ, Elena. Busty na priečelí historickej budovy Slovenského národného divadla [The Busts on the Façade of the Historical Building of the Slovak National Theatre]. In *Bratislava. Zborník Múzea mesta Bratislavy*, 2005, vol. 17, pp. 95–104.

76 KOPECKÝ, Jiří – KŘUPKOVÁ, Lenka. Das Olmützer Stadttheater und seine Oper. „Wer in Olmütz gefällt, gefällt der ganzen Welt“. In *Neue Wege – nové cesty: Schriftenreihe des Sudetendeutschen Musikinstituts*, Band 14. Regensburg: ConBrio Verlagsgesellschaft, 2017, pp. 313–315. ISBN 978-3-9407-6872-8.

von Spányik, brother of the mezzo-soprano Irma von Spányik.⁷⁷ The offer was accepted only by Lüttendorff-Leinburg, who sent his sketches with the following motifs to the city: Hungarian Rhapsody (folk play), Bánk bán by Melinda's bier (drama), László Hunyady in Prison (opera), Csongor and Tünde (comedy). However, his sketches appeared too dark and serious; therefore, the city called on him to create new sketches which would harmonize with the decorations of the auditorium, and which would be airier and depict merrier scenes. Lüttendorff redesigned only the second motif, by choosing another scene from the opera on Hunyady.⁷⁸ He designed a rhapsody in a lighter colour, which matched the overall architecture of the building. He left the other motifs remained unchanged. The paintings were delivered in early February 1886 and, before their installation in the theatre, they were exhibited at the historically first exhibition of the Artists' Society of Pressburg (Preßburger Kunstverein in German, Pozsonyi Képzőművészeti Egyesület in Hungarian) at the Primate's Palace on 14 February.⁷⁹

Lüttendorff's paintings inspired Spányik to participate in the decoration of the new theatre alongside his colleague. Spányik turned directly to Sendlein and offered to paint four murals in the foyer (of the salon) into the narrow areas on the walls and three semicircular arched paintings above the doors that lead to the loggia. Sendlein liked the proposal, but had to inform Spányik that the city was not planning any further expenses on the decoration of the theatre. The artist replied that he would paint the paintings "al fresco" and would only demand payment for the materials, amounting to 300 guilders. The building committee and, subsequently, the municipal council agreed to this proposal.⁸⁰ Spányik's paintings, depicting the allegory of the four muses – drama, comedy, music, and dance – have been preserved to this day.⁸¹

77 LENGOVÁ, Jana. Pressburg im letzten Drittel des 19. Jahrhunderts – das Musikmilieu der Jugendjahre Franz Schmidts. In OTTNER, Carmen (ed.). *Franz Schmidt und Pressburg*. Wien: Doblinger, 1999, p. 16. ISBN 390069544.

78 ZVARA, Vladimír. Hudba a hudobné divadlo v Bratislave pred prvou svetovou vojnou a po nej. Aspekty a súvislosti. [Music and Musical Theatre in Bratislava Before and After World War I. Aspects and Connections]. In CHALUPKA, Ľubomír (ed.). *Príspevky k vývoju hudobnej kultúry na Slovensku*. Bratislava: Stimul, 2009, p. 75. ISBN 978-8-0892-3666-4.

79 FRANCOVÁ, Zuzana – GRAJCIAROVÁ, Želmíra – HERUCOVÁ, Marta. *Bratislavský umelecký spolok 1885 – 1945*. [The Bratislava Art Society 1885–1945]. Bratislava: Albert Marenčin Vydavateľstvo PT; GMB; MMB, 2006, pp. 21–22. ISBN 80-89218-14-8.

80 Zur Geschichte des Pressburger Theater-Baues 1879–1887, pp. 52–53.

81 LASLAVÍKOVÁ, Jana – VYSKUPOVÁ, Martina. *Mestské divadlo v Prešporoku: [katalóg výstav: 23. 6. – 11. 9. 2016, Galéria mesta Bratislavy, Pálffyho palác]*. [The Municipal Theatre in Pressburg [Exhibition Catalogue: 23/06 – 11/09/2016 Bratislava City Gallery, Pálffy's Palace]]. Bratislava: GMB, 2016, p. 35. ISBN 978-8-0893-4077-4.

Tough times awaited Sendlein after the completion of the construction. On 19 February 1887, he submitted the final financial report of the new building, amounting to a total of 330,430.77 guilders. Initially, the municipal council approved an amount of 337,580 guilders, so, in the end, 7,149.23 guilders were saved.⁸² However, Jeszenszky disputed Sendlein's report, claiming that not all expenses had been included. Sendlein documented all the bills and statements, proving his calculation to be correct. Later, the representatives blamed him for not including the landscaping of the surroundings of the theatre into the costs, which was not Sendlein's fault, however; the municipal council concluded this at its meeting on 29 August 1881 and confirmed its stance again on 6 July 1885.⁸³ At the 2 May 1887 meeting of the municipal council, the correctness of Sendlein's financial report was finally confirmed, for which the representatives "awarded" him only with silence.

Conclusion

The ceremonial opening of the new theatre on 22 September 1886 was a great opportunity for the urban elite to represent themselves. The inhabitants of Pressburg were praised for their merits, for being able to erect a representative building for dramatic arts thanks to their unity and rapport.⁸⁴ Plaques in Hungarian were placed above the front door of the entrance hall. One of these bore the names of Karl Mergl, the mayor of Pressburg, architects Fedinand Fellner jr. and Hermann Helmer, and the chief engineer Anton Sendlein, finally awarding some public recognition to him. Another plaque immortalized the name of Emperor Franz Joseph I and the prime minister of the Hungarian Government, Kálmán Tisza.

The events described by Sendlein in connection with the erection of the new theatre provide information about the conduct of the bourgeoisie of Pressburg in public matters. Most of them were German-speaking inhabitants whose behaviour was usually moderate, traditional, even conservative, avoiding extremes and radical decisions.⁸⁵ They showed loyalty to the Hungarian Government, since efforts for public manifestations of loyalty were a good means to gain certain

82 Zur Geschichte des Pressburger Theater-Baues 1879–1887, pp. 54–55.

83 Ibidem, p. 57.

84 Der Eröffnungstag des neuen Theaters. Preßburger Zeitung, 22/09/1886, 123, no. 263, p. 2.

85 TANCER, Jozef. Obraz nie je odraz. Repräsentácie mesta ako výskumný problém [An Image is not a Reflection. Representations of the City as a Research Problem]. In DUDEKOVÁ, Gabriela (ed.). *Medzi provinciou a metropolou. Obraz Bratislavy v 19. a 20. storočí*. Bratislava: Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, 2012, p. 39. ISBN 978-80-89396-21-4.

advantages. More important, however, was their personal relationship to Pressburg and their interest in the modernization of the city, connected with a lively interest in its social and cultural development. At the same time, they appeared to be reluctant to invest into new projects. It is evident that the inhabitants of Pressburg wanted to have the building for their representation, but they were aware of the fact that it was not enough to erect the theatre; it had to be maintained, too. Although, in the end, Pressburg gave preference to the theatre project over other urban projects, five years were needed for the municipal council to reach a final decision, and even then it was influenced by a political one.

The decisive momentum for the birth of the new theatre building was the relationship of Pressburg to Budapest. The actions of the municipal magistrate suggest an effort to proceed in accordance with the decrees of the Ministry of the Interior, but, on the other hand, they interpreted the decrees subjectively and they consciously circumvented the recommendations. Although references to patriotism and deep commitment to Hungary led the German-speaking inhabitants of Pressburg to compromises and to the avoidance of conflicts, they expressed their disagreement in an indirect way whenever their own interests were jeopardized. Tension existed on the other side, too. Although the government tried to develop the provincial cities, it made the management processes difficult by its centralizing procedures and bureaucracy. In the three versions of the theatre project, and in their subsequent modifications, Fellner and Helmer had to repeatedly subordinate themselves to the ministry's decisions despite the absence of logical explanations and justifications of its objections.

The pride to take autonomous decisions about municipal institutions, which included the new theatre, too, was the vision of many sectionalists. However, growing Hungarianization brought increasingly big problems. The Hungarian Government interfered with decision-making by delaying the permit for the German shows, or by not giving approval to certain theatre directors. The aim of the new theatre was to convey classical education to the population of Pressburg and to provide entertainment of a good standard. The government viewed the theatre as a tool to assert its political ideas. On the completion of the new building, the possibility to name the newly erected theatre a national one surfaced, and this would have meant a great honour to Pressburg and would have ranked the city among other prominent cities in Central Europe. However, the inhabitants of Pressburg were interested in the actual support by the Hungarian Government and showed no interest in "changing the name". They named the theatre a municipal one, while giving scope for national (Hungarian) shows in it. Linking entertainment to politics was typical for 19th-century theatres, and Pressburg was no exception, either. However, what appears to be specific to the

city is the attitude of the main players behind the events, which reveals their true identity.⁸⁶

„VOLLENDET! DAS PRÄCHTIGE WERK, DIE NEUE ZIERDE UNSERER
SCHÖNEN ALTEHRWÜRDIGEN KRÖNUNGSSTADT IST VOLLENDET!“
IDENTITÄTSKONSTRUKTION DER STÄDTISCHEN ELITE AM BEISPIEL
DES STADTTHEATERS IN PRESSBURG

JANA LAŠLAVÍKOVÁ

Der Theaterbau war Teil der Geschichte der europäischen Kultur, und die Theatergebäude spiegelten die kulturellen, sozialen und technischen Aspekte ihrer Zeit wider. Sie zeigten den Geschmack, die Mission und die Bedeutung des Theaters in der jeweiligen Zeit und wurden zu einer Informationsquelle über die Zusammensetzung des zahlenden Publikums und die Entwicklung der Theaterkunst als solche. In der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie gehörten zu den bekanntesten Theaterarchitekten Ferdinand Fellner jr. und Hermann Gottfried Helmer. Mit ihren Gebäuden schufen sie eigene Topographie Mitteleuropas. Sie entwarfen fast fünfzig Theater von Hamburg über Zürich bis nach Odessa. Eines ihrer Projekte war das Stadttheater in Pressburg (das heutige historische Gebäude des Slowakischen Nationaltheaters am Hviezdoslav-Platz).

Für Pressburg bedeutete das Wiener Atelier eine Prestige Garantie und eine vielversprechende Zukunft auf der Grundlage einer reichen Vergangenheit, da die Nähe zu Wien jahrhundertlang das soziale und kulturelle Leben der Pressburger stark beeinflusst hatte. Im 19. Jahrhundert betrachteten sowohl Budapest als auch Wien Pressburg als Provinzstadt an der Westgrenze von Oberungarn. Mit zunehmender Ungarisierung änderte sich der Ton und Pressburg wurde immer häufiger als westliche Bastion der Ungarn erwähnt. Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts diskutierte der Gemeinderat regelmäßig einige neue Projekte in der Stadt, darunter eine Straßenbahnlinie nach Wien, eine solide Brücke und die Errichtung einer Universität. Am Ende hat der Bau eines neuen Theaters alle anderen Pläne abgelöst, und dies weist auf die zentrale Position des Theaters als Instrument zur Verbreitung der Landessprache und als Ort für die kollektive Vertretung der städtischen Elite hin.

Die Entscheidung, ein neues Theatergebäude in Pressburg errichten zu lassen, wurde aus verschiedenen Gründen getroffen, wie die Dokumentation der Baugeschichte zeigt. Sein Architekt Anton Sendlein, Absolvent der Technischen Hochschule in Wien, war nicht nur in Pressburg, sondern auch außerhalb der Stadt ein renommierter Fachmann.

86 This study came into being as part of the following VEGA project no. 2/0040/18: *Musical Theatre in Bratislava from the Second Half of the 19th Century to the First Half of the 20th Century (Personalities, Institutions, Repertoire, Reflections)* carried out at the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences.

Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts bekleidete er den Posten des Hauptingenieurs von Pressburg, unter den auch das Theatergebäude fiel. Als Mitglied des Vorstands der Ersten Pressburger Sparkasse hatte er Einfluss auf mehrere Entscheidungen über das Theater, einschließlich der Finanzierung des Baus des neuen Theatergebäudes. Sendleins Dokumentation wurde nach 1887 erstellt, d. h. nach dem Beginn des Theaterbetriebs. Sendlein hat einen detaillierten Überblick über die Ereignisse zusammengestellt und nach Abschluss der Bauarbeiten darüber nachgedacht und ein außergewöhnliches Zeugnis hinterlassen, das Raum für Überlegungen zu den Aktivitäten der einflussreichen Bürger von Pressburg im öffentlichen Interesse bietet.

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Mestské divadlo v Prešporoku na sklonku 19. storočia

Medzi provinciou a metropolou

Jana Laslavíková



THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN TOWN PLANNING IN THE
KINGDOM OF HUNGARY:
THE CASES OF BRATISLAVA AND NOVI SAD

HENRIETA MORAVČÍKOVÁ – ÉVA LOVRA – LAURA
KRIŠTEKOVÁ

MORAVČÍKOVÁ, Henrieta – LOVRA, Éva – KRIŠTEKOVÁ, Laura. The beginnings of modern town planning in the Kingdom of Hungary: the cases of Bratislava and Novi Sad. *Historický časopis*, 2020, 68, 6, pp. 977–990, Bratislava.

The principles of modern urban planning began to be applied in the Kingdom of Hungary in the second half of the 19th century. In most cases, the first regulation plans appeared around 1900, when these cities were experiencing dynamic growth. The ideas generated in the first plans for regulation and long-term development pre-determined the development of these cities and has determined their form until today. The study considers the principles and approaches applied in modern planning at the turn of the century. Using the example of two cities – Bratislava and Nový Sad – it analyses the key terms applied in expert discussion at the time, their use in territorial planning practice and the contribution of the notable Hungarian city planning expert Antal Palóczi to this discussion.

Key words: Planning. Regulation. Regulation plan. City. Bratislava. Nový Sad.

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The period between 1867 and 1918 was one of the most productive periods for the planning and modernization of towns in the Kingdom of Hungary. The reconstruction of historic structures and creation of new urban areas culminated at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. The social and economic changes that conditioned the Austro-Hungarian constitutional settlement of 1867 started the moderate industrialization of Hungary and the transformation of Hungarian towns and cities. The development of towns in Hungary was also directly influenced by a change in the paradigms in the field of town planning. New types of building development arose, producing new typologies of building, generally bringing to the principles of town building the ideas of modern planning, such as concern with hygiene, the principle of zoning and new ideas about transport infrastructure. European trends in modern urbanism penetrated into the territory of Hungary with some delay, and they were

applied to the practical planning and construction of towns only slowly and with difficulty. In spite of this, the architects and engineers of Hungary followed these tendencies very observantly, discussed them and applied them to the regulation and planning of towns in Hungary.

The first regulation plans started from the engineering approach of the German urbanists such as Reinhard Baumeister and Joseph Stübben. Regulation was applied mechanically with a rectilinear grid of streets, town blocks and transport routes regarded as the basis for planning and building a town or city. This approach also brought to the towns of Hungary the division of towns into zones according to function and an emphasis on hygienic or sanitary principles. However, this type of mechanically regulated urban structure soon became a target of criticism from experts, who created space for the application of an artistic approach to town planning following the views of the Viennese architect and urbanist Camillo Sitte. Such an approach to urban structure can be seen, for example, in the work of Josip Pospošil at Sarajevo, Antal Palóczy at Bratislava and Novi Sad, Lajos Ybl at Timișoara (Temesvár) or Lajos Lechner at Szeged and Budapest. Modern principles of town planning, like the basic typology of urban spaces, namely the circle, boulevard, promenade, city park, garden quarter and so on, became the common platform for the development of towns and cities in the whole of Austria-Hungary. This common urbanist language was most clearly readable where plans were carried out in their full complexity, as at Budapest and Szeged. However, most of the smaller plans were applied only partially or in fragmented form, so that it is now difficult to identify them in the morphology of towns. The fact that after the disintegration of the Monarchy, continuity of planning was interrupted and the successor states often deliberately rejected or ignored plans from the preceding period, also contributes to this. This was precisely the situation at Prešporok and Novi Sad. The following text presents the results of recent research, which has uncovered hitherto unknown documents concerning the beginnings of the modern planning of these two cities.

Today Bratislava and Novi Sad are situated in two different independent states. However, for several centuries they were part of the same Monarchy, which conditioned the parallels in their development. The two cities have similar geographical locations. Both are situated on the left bank of the River Danube. Novi Sad was the southernmost royal borough in the kingdom, and Bratislava was the westernmost. The morphology of both cities was influenced by the presence of the river and the Carpathian Mountains, which directly or indirectly determined the structure of the built-up areas.

In the mid 19th century, Elek Fényes in the *Geographical Dictionary of Hungary* described Bratislava as the “*oldest, most beautiful and most famous of all the royal boroughs... There is no market or square that does not deserve*

to be described as beautiful for its dimensions or regular shape. The streets are wide and long, clean and mostly paved with stone, the main ones with granite. A castle stands on a high hill by the city towers over the Danube, giving a superb view of the green islands of the Danube, the surrounding arms of the river and the wooded hills of Austria."¹ At that time, Bratislava had 46,540 inhabitants and 1,884 buildings concentrated in an area of 74.4 km². The same dictionary describes Novi Sad as follows: "*Although the city has been built without much idea of order, it can be praised for its beautiful houses. Danube Street, in particular, can take pride in its two-storey buildings with rich shops.*"² The city had an area of 156.3 km², which was twice as much as Bratislava. The number of buildings was also almost twice as large, with 2,706. However, the population reached only 19,119.

Novi Sad began to develop more substantially only in the second half of the 19th century, although its historic core remained unchanged. The first cadastral survey of the city was done in 1876, and on this basis the first cadastral map was produced in 1877 and published in 1880.³ The development was similar in Bratislava. The original form of the historic core including the castle hill was preserved, with new structures appearing around the edge. A map of the city with a scale of 1:3600 produced by the Technical Department under the leadership of the chief engineer Anton Sendlein in 1882 can be regarded as the first detailed plan capturing the form of Bratislava. The cadastral map of the city with a scale of 1:10,000 was produced in 1894. Three years later in 1897 a detailed cadastral map showed individual plots with numbers. However, the dynamic growth of towns in Hungary in the 19th century required not only mapping of the existing state, but also effective instruments for planning and regulating urban development. Expert discussion of this theme began soon after the Austro-Hungarian constitutional settlement, but precisely the lack of the basic documentation needed for regulation slowed down this process for several decades.

In the period of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, all building activity including the establishment of new quarters and streets or the erection of new buildings was subject to administration by the technical department of the town. However, town councils or ministries in Budapest decided on important investments. Decisions often reflected the individual preferences and interests of members of the town council or officials in the ministries. In 1896 the Technical Department headed by Anton Sendlein was entrusted with the preparation of a plan for the regulation

1 FÉNYES, Elek. *Magyarország geográfiai szótára*. Pesten 1851. <http://www.fszek.hu/digit-doc/fenyesh/> [cit. 2019-05-04].

2 FÉNYES, ref. 1.

3 Arhiv Vojvodine Novi Sad, F. 419 69-70-73-74-77.

and development of Prešporok and revision of the city's building regulations.⁴ The City Council discussed this plan at a special session in December 1898, and recommended some changes, especially concerning the width of some planned streets. The staff of the Technical Department continued their work on preparing the plan. Its final version is probably the plan from 1906 based on the cadastral map from 1894, which is preserved in the Széchényi National Library in Budapest.⁵ The plan proposed new streets, starting from the existing street network, but creating a rectilinear plan in hitherto unbuilt up areas. Continuing criticism of the plan and delays to its approval eventually led to a leading industrialist and city councillor Johann Ludwig getting a new plan prepared externally. Ludwig addressed the privy councillor and former commissioner of Hungarian State Railways Viktor Bernárdt. His plan was presented to the city council in September 1905, but also without success.⁶ Repeated discussion of a regulation plan led to the city council discussing specific questions of regulation, such as a city ring-road, regulation of industrial zones or the building of a second bridge over the Danube. In November 1906 precisely these discussions inspired the city councillors to entrust the preparation of the plan to a real expert, namely the already well-known urbanist and professor at the School of Applied Art in Budapest Antal Palóczy (1849–1927). Palóczy's role was to assess the two existing plans, but his erudite commentary probably addressed the city council so much that in March 1909 they asked him to produce a new plan for the regulation and expansion of the city.

It was similar in Novi Sad. Working out of a regulation plan was also entrusted to the Technical Department of the town under the leadership of the chief engineer Rudolf Stössel. The plan was based on a detailed map from 1900. It was completed in 1908. It is not known whether this plan was approved as a whole or was even publicly presented. However, in Novi Sad, as in Bratislava, they proceeded to obtain a plan from outsiders even before the official plan was complete. In spring 1907, they announced a competition for a regulation plan for the town, and the entries were assessed in December of the same year. Three equal prizes were awarded to the following: Imre Francsek and Lipót Berczeller; Antal Palóczy and György Kopeczek; József Wälder.⁷ All them were notable Hungarian

4 MORAVČÍKOVÁ, Henrieta – LOVRA, Éva – PASTOREKOVÁ, Laura. Červený alebo modrý? Začiatky moderného plánovania Bratislavy. (Red or blue? The beginnings of the modern planning of Bratislava.). In *Architektúra & urbanizmus*, 2017, vol. 51, no. 1–2, p. 30–43.

5 Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, OSZK TM 422, Pozsony sz. kir. város átnézeti térképe és városbővítési terve, 1906.

6 Stadregulierung. In *Pressburger Presse*, 25 Sept 1905, vol. 8, no. 400, p. 4.

7 Magyar Mérnök és Építész Egylet Heti Értesítője, 01 Dec 1907.12.01. 26(43); Építő Ipar, 01 Dec 1907. 31(48)

architects of the time, which probably testifies to the importance attached to the competition in expert circles. In the end, they entrusted preparation of the regulation plan of Novi Sad to Antal Palóczy.

Comparison of the first regulation plans worked out by the technical departments of Bratislava and Novi Sad shows that both applied the established principles of town planning, such as health measures, improvement of transport infrastructure by means of new streets in the form of a rectilinear street network, relatively mechanically without much intervention in the existing urban structure. The view of such a plan from the expert public is best shown by a comment from the Bratislava grammar school teacher and curator of the city museum Ágost Helmár, who wrote: “*Not much mental effort was put into making the regulation plan. ... The main aim was to get rid of every corner or sharper bend, to put straight, parallel lines everywhere possible.*”⁸

Planning according to Antal Palóczy

From the beginning of the 1880s, the Budapest architect and town planner Antal Palóczy devoted great attention to all the trends, principles and theories of modern town planning, and to promoting these ideas among colleagues in Hungary. His theoretical works were concerned with the theories of the time, and with criticism of town planning practice. He analysed and classified urban spaces, starting from the work of the German town planner Joseph Stübben, but also using principles mentioned in expert discussions by the Viennese architect and town planner Camillo Sitte. Palóczy was one of the few people in Hungary to emphasize that the most important aspect of town planning was not the construction of impressive buildings, but the consistent application of a single regulation plan for the whole city. During his professional career, he worked out many regulation plans and was considered the leading expert on town planning in the whole Kingdom of Hungary.⁹

In the case of our two cities, Bratislava City Council was the first to order a plan for the regulation and development of the city from Antal Palóczy. He presented the first outline of the plan to the public in 1907. Immediately on this occasion he stated his approach to such work, mentioning the principles of modern city building with rules derived from German hygiene congresses, and the approach of Camillo Sitte, who had allegedly “*succeeded in getting all current town planners into his camp*”. Palóczy defined his own position as a “*compromise between medieval and modern ideas*”. “*Designing the street*

8 HELMÁR, Ágost: Pozsony és a városépítési elvei a múltban és a jelenben. In *Városszabályozási kérdések*. Pozsony, Angermayer Ny, p. 29.

9 LOVRA, Éva. The Forgotten Urbanist – Antal Palóczy. In *Architektúra & urbanizmus*, 2019, vol. 53, no. 3–4, p. 212–223.

network and method of construction... will reflect modern demands, especially for transport and hygiene, but does not lose sight of artistic considerations and the demand for comfort."¹⁰ Palóczi supposed that in the next 50 years the population of Bratislava would increase to 150,000, and he planned the expansion of the city with this in mind. He indicated two main directions for territorial growth. The first included the flat land of the existing industrial suburbs, and the other, the slopes of the Malé Karpaty Mountains on the eastern edge of the city, where he proposed the construction of a garden quarter. In the framework of regulation, he proposed the removal of some of the railway tracks in the centre, or their rebuilding as elevated structures, and the removal or reconstruction of several railway stations. He also proposed an industrial canal on the eastern edge of the city. He proposed three new bridges across the Danube to serve development on the right bank of the river, as well as transit traffic. He placed great emphasis on the morphology of the terrain and the unique features of the original urban structure. He regarded the ruined castle as an extraordinarily important feature of the city. He proposed that it should be preserved in its existing form and supplemented with an extensive park. The views from the main regulated or newly proposed streets and city boulevards would be directed towards the castle.¹¹

In the same year that he was entrusted with working out the plan for Bratislava, Palóczi participated in the competition for a new regulation plan for Novi Sad. He worked on his proposal with another important Hungarian architect György Kopeczek, who also designed various important buildings in the territory of Slovakia. After assessment of the competition, working out of the plan was entrusted to Antal Palóczi. Engineer László Szesztay, who worked on a new orientation for the city, cooperated with Palóczi in working out the competition proposal. Their regulation plan was assessed by the Novi Sad City Council in January 1911 and accepted as a basis for the final version of the plan.¹² The press of the time described the plan as a document reflecting all the current trends in town planning, such as the separation of individual zones according to function, application of the principles of hygiene or construction of transport circles and city radials.¹³ As a potential direction for the growth of the city, he proposed the area south of the centre along the River Danube, where he proposed the construction of a new bridge. The street connecting the central Franz Joseph

10 Prof. Palóczi über die Stadtregulierung. In *Pressburger Zeitung*, 15 Dec 1908, vol. 145, no. 345, p. 2.

11 For more details on Palóczi's conception for the regulation of Bratislava see MORAVČÍKOVÁ – LOVRA – PASTOREKOVÁ, ref. 4.

12 *Újvidéki Napló*, 15 Nov 1911, vol. 3, no. 3, p. 4.

13 A detailed description of the plan was presented in the newspaper *Újvidéki Napló*, *Újvidék szabályozása és bővítése*, 30 July 1911, no. 31, p. 1–2.

Square with the new bridge would be the most impressive in the city. “According to the regulation plan, the most beautiful parks and public buildings, a harbour, railway line and market place would be placed by the Danube... and most transport would flow along this newly proposed street”, called in the press of the time “Francis II Rákóczi Street”, which “had to greatly impress the visitor with its width and rows of trees”.¹⁴ An interesting feature of this communication axis was the fact that going towards the centre it gradually widened and moderately changed direction. To improve hygiene conditions, the regulation plan included enlargement of green areas by extending existing parks or establishing new ones in unbuilt up parts of the city centre. Changing the originally dense structure by opening new squares and streets was intended to fulfil the same aim.

A closer examination of the process of preparing the plans for the regulation and expansion of Bratislava and Novi Sad enables us to identify various similar approaches. In both cases, we especially notice the role of the city’s Technical Department, but also the decision to entrust preparation of the territorial planning documentation precisely to Antal Palóczy. It is also worth mentioning the conceptual parallels between the two plans, which are excellent examples of the approach to planning and regulating towns and cities in Hungary around the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The decisive aspect was determining the future direction of the territorial growth of the city, the functional zoning of the urban area, organization of road and rail transport, circular and radial communication, including the siting of bridges, as required by the future growth of the city. An equally important aspect was improving the health conditions of the urban environment, proposing parks and tree lined avenues, but also the aesthetic aspects, the shaping of new squares and streets or the placing of impressive new buildings and monuments. In this context, Palóczy stated: “The key to the good effect of a square lies in its delimitation. It is necessary to create continuous surrounding walls..., interrupted only by several streets... The shape of a square does not have to be regular... The dimensions should correspond to those of existing buildings, including those still to be built.”¹⁵ Concerning impressive buildings, he added that it is not correct to concentrate them all in one place.¹⁶

In the case of both cities, Antal Palóczy devoted great attention to detailed specification of the functions and method of building of individual parts of a city. In the area of both cities, he defined six zones where precisely defined types of construction had to be applied. The zone that included the city centre needed to

14 *Újvideki Napló*, ref. 12.

15 PALÓCZY, Antal. Pozsony szabad királyi város szabályozásáról. In *Városszabályozási kérdések*. Pozsony: Angermayer, 1909, p. 10–11.

16 PALÓCZY, Antal. *A mai városépítés alapelvei*. Budapest: Pátria, 1908, p. 21.

have firm street fronts or closed city blocks. The wider centre should also have an equally compact structure. The form of construction gradually loosened towards the periphery of the city ranging from partly open rows to the open villa structure of a garden city. The peripheral zones included factories with workers' residential quarters and agricultural area with rural settlements. In both cities, the open villa structure with a lot of green would occupy attractive natural localities with good connections to the city centre. In Bratislava these were slopes of the Carpathians, in Novi Sad former pastures. In both cities, Palóczy proposed to provide inner and outer rings for traffic. In Bratislava this would mean the construction of two bridges over the Danube. Traffic problems would also be reduced by eliminating dead-end streets, widening existing communications and creating new radial routes. Palóczy proposed the planting of trees along new or widened streets. *"By planting rows of trees we strengthen the importance of a street, its comfort"* according to one of his texts. At the same time, however, he observed that *"successful planting of trees is only possible if the trees are placed at least 6 metres from facades. Therefore, a street with rows of trees must be at least 24–26 metres wide"*.¹⁷ Rows of trees and front gardens also supplemented apartment blocks on the edge of the city. Palóczy also devoted great attention to the Danube embankments, which he identified as unique places with great developmental potential, designated for the construction of impressive buildings.¹⁸

Another notable element that links the plans of the two cities is the organization of the industrial zone including the winter harbour and the so-called industrial canal. The latter was already built at Novi Sad in 1871–1875. It also appeared in all the regulation plans for Bratislava from before 1918. The Bratislava winter harbour composed of two basins constructed at the beginning of the 20th century close to the city's oldest industrial area probably served as the inspiration for the harbour in Novi Sad. Palóczy proposed it in the same form and placed it at the beginning of the existing canal. The regulation plans of both cities also included green zones or parks, which were placed around the edge of the city, by the industrial canal or near industrial areas to protect the city from emissions.

The method of graphic presentation of the plans is also worth mentioning. In both cases it involved coloured drawing on the background of the cadastral map. He presented his final version of the plan at a session of the Hungarian Union of Engineers and Architects in June 1917.¹⁹ The first proposal for the

17 PALÓCZY, ref. 15, p. 9.

18 For more details on A. Palóczy's relationship to the German urbanist school see MORAVČÍKOVÁ, Henrieta – LOVRA, Éva – PASTOREKOVÁ, Laura. Antal Palóczy and the Beginnings of Modern Urban Planning in the Kingdom of Hungary: The Example of Bratislava and Novi Sad. In *Planning Perspectives*, 2020, vol. 35, no. 2, p. 371–381.

19 Vortrag Prof. Anton Palóczis über den Stadtregulierungsplan. In *Pressburger Zeitung*, 17 June

regulation plan for Novi Sad by Palóczi and Szesztay was probably approved in January 1911.²⁰ The pair continued to work on a more detailed version, which they published in 1912. A complex process of discussion accompanied the whole process of preparing the plans. Not only the particular interests of members of the city council, but also the changing state policy represented by decisions of the ministries in Budapest played important roles. The original plans prepared by the technical department of the town provided a relatively firm starting point, and the basic outlines of Antal Palóczi's plans were added. This fact was explicitly expressed in the criticism of the Novi Sad regulation plan at the time, which stated: "*The regulation plan for the city was to a large extent proposed according to the ideas of this office.*"²¹ Thus, the entry of a well-known professor to the planning process cannot be regarded as a revolutionary rejection of existing practices, but rather their skilful gradual redirection. It is clear that Palóczi was able to sensitively analyse the existing, historical and natural features of the two cities as well as the preconditions for their expected growth. He could rely on existing work when conceiving and arguing for a plan for urban growth, transport and zonation of the urban structure. However, it can be considered revolutionary that they applied a two-stage planning mechanism, which included a regulation plan for the whole city, including development areas and the detailed regulation of the parts of the city that this approach required. Therefore, it is entirely correct to regard Antal Palóczi as the founder of modern urban planning practice in both our cities. His ideas represent a firm skeleton on which later planning of the two cities was deliberately or spontaneously based.

The determining role of Palóczi's plans

Antal Palóczi's regulation plans for Bratislava and Novi Sad were not finally approved or applied to their full extent to the construction of these cities. This was mainly a result of historic events, namely the outbreak of the First World War, the disintegration of the Monarchy, and the creation of new states in which both cities were included. However, factors such as the long-time interval from proposal to implementation and the general complexity characteristic of the planning process also played their roles. In spite of this, the influence of Palóczi's plans can be identified not only in later territorial planning documentation, but also in the physical form of both cities.

After 1918 the administration of the cities and the planning of their development and regulation came into the hands of new groups. The original

1917, vol. 154, no. 165, p. 3.

20 *Újvidéki Napló*, 15 Nov 1911, vol. 3, no. 3, p. 4.

21 *Újvidék szabályozása és bővítése*. In *Újvidéki Napló*, 30 July 1911, vol. 3, no. 31. p. 1–2.

officials were replaced by new ones, who tended to distance themselves from the past era. Antal Palóczy remained professionally active until his death in 1927, but he no longer had the possibility to be involved in the planning process at Bratislava and Novi Sad. Part of the planning documentation remained closed in the archives of the Budapest ministries, some was deposited as out of date documents in the city archives, but a considerable part still served as a basis for regulation of construction. Drawings of buildings erected according to the original regulation plan and planned new buildings were included in the cadastral maps of the city. Until the production of a new cadastral map in 1934, a map from 1897 was used when regulating new building in Bratislava. In the case of Novi Sad, the most significant influence of Palóczy's views on regulation and urban growth can be seen in the plan from 1929. The Technical Department of the city worked it out directly on the basis of the original plan by Palóczy and Szesztay, applying the same structure and division of city blocks, and the same way of connecting the winter harbour to the existing industrial canal.²² However, there are also substantial differences involving transport arrangement in the form of ring-roads, which we do not find in the new plan or in the present-day form of the city.

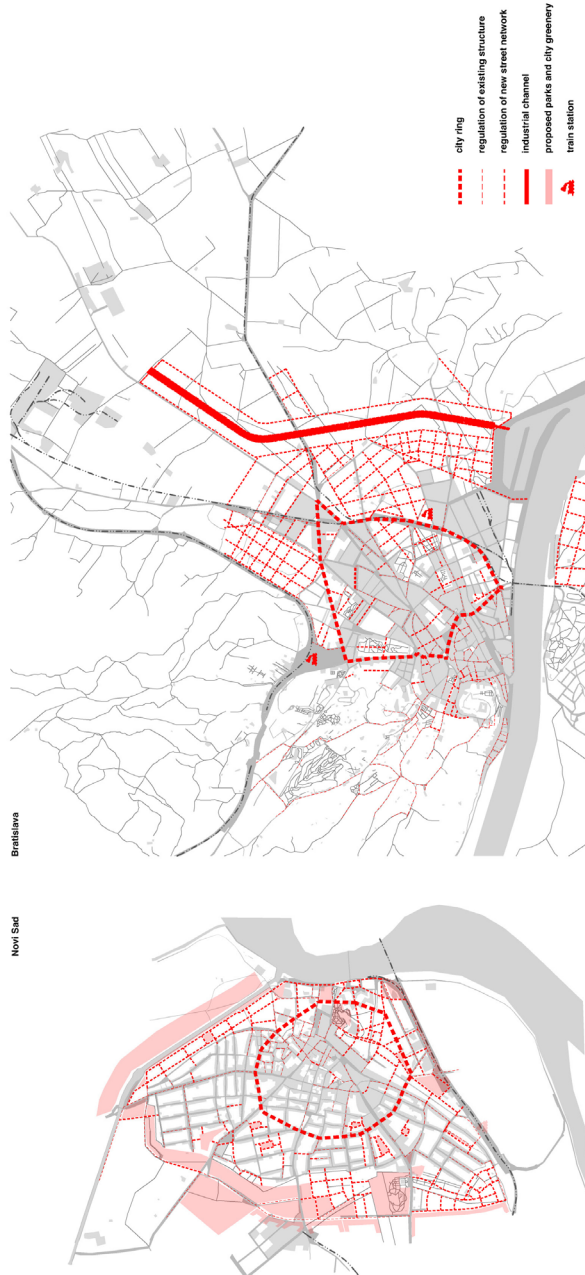
Comparison of the present form of Bratislava with Palóczy's plans also gives an interesting picture. Some of these plans, for example, the idea of an industrial canal, were abandoned even before the collapse of the Monarchy. However, other ideas, which attracted hardly any reaction from the public at the time of their origin, were entirely fulfilled. This applies to Palóczy's ideas about bridges over the Danube. All the present Bratislava bridges stand at places proposed in Anton Palóczy's regulation plan. The course of railway lines, the location of railway stations and their categorization are also the direct result of decisions relying on ideas outlined in Palóczy's plan. It is very similar with the location of the university complexes, which copy all three alternative possibilities suggested to the city by Palóczy in the period 1910–1917. Palóczy's idea of preserving the castle was also fulfilled, although not as a ruin, in spite of various suggestions to replace it with a government or university complex. The outline of various developments that substantially influenced the character of the city in the course of the 20th century can be clearly identified in Anton Palóczy's plan for the regulation and development of the city. In spite of the fact that it was never approved as a whole by the city council, Palóczy's regulation plan can be regarded not only as initiating but also as opinion forming in the field of the modern planning of the city.²³

22 Biblioteka Matice Srpske, BMS Pg III, 20, Plan grada Novog Sada, Gradski građevinski odeljak.

23 For more details see MORAVČIKOVÁ–LOVRA – PASTOREKOVÁ, ref. 4.

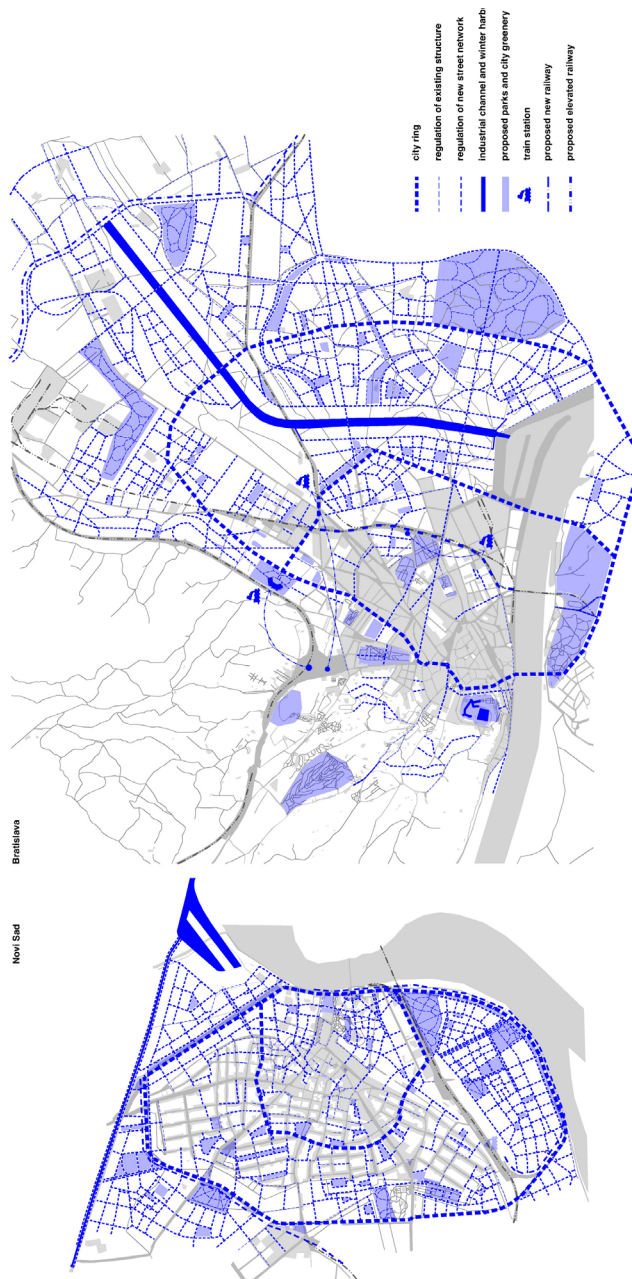
Analysis of the regulation plans for Novi Sad (1908) and Bratislava (1906), worked out by the technical departments of these cities

Source: Archív oA HÚ SAV



Analysis of the regulation plans of Novi Sad (1910–1911) and Bratislava (1907–1917) worked out by Antal Palóczi

Source: Archív oA HÚ SAV



However, it is noteworthy that later workers on regulation or territorial plans of the city following the original drawn or text documentation usually did not mention Anton Palóczi. Ignoring of historical materials was characteristic of the modern planning of the city after the Second World War, which aimed to give the impression of entirely new, original solutions. The fact that these planners actually worked out the same solutions as their forerunners at the beginning of the 20th century testifies to a sort of unintentional continuity flowing from the natural vitality and resilience of the urban structure, which led planners to the most natural solutions as if spontaneously.

A similar developmental trajectory from the penetration of modern planning at the end of the 19th century, through their thorough application in the form of the first regulation plans and general appropriation by the expert and wider public in the 1930s to their almost complete submergence under the layer of post-war urbanism can also be identified in other cities of the former Kingdom of Hungary. However, the present sounding into the historical layers of urban planning shows that it was precisely the original ideas shared by the first town planners across the Europe of their time that decisively marked the form of our cities.

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ANFÄNGE DER MODERNEN STÄDTEBAULICHEN PLANUNG IN UNGARN: FALL PRESSBURG UND NEUSATZ

HENRIETA MORAVČÍKOVÁ – ÉVA LOVRA – LAURA
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Der Zeitraum von 1867 bis 1918 stellt eine der produktivsten Ära der städtebaulichen Planung und Modernisierung der Städte in Ungarn dar. Der Umbau von historischen Strukturen und der Ausbau von neuen Stadtvierteln erreichten ihren Höhepunkt gegen Ende des 19. und am Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts. Die durch Österreichisch-Ungarischen Ausgleich bedingten gesellschaftlichen und wirtschaftlichen Veränderungen im Jahre 1867 wurden ein leichter Anstoß zur Industrialisierung Ungarns sowie zur Umwandlung der Städte. Die Entwicklung in den ungarischen Städten wurde dabei direkt auch durch den Paradigmenwechsel im Bereich der Stadtplanung beeinflusst. In diesem Zeitraum entstanden neue Bauweisen, es wurden Gebäude von neuen Typologien realisiert und

im Allgemeinen sind in die Baugrundsätze der Städte die Ideen einer modernen Planung hineingeraten, wie hygienische Grundsätze, Prinzipien der Zonenabgrenzung und neue Anschauungen über die Verkehrsinfrastruktur. Moderne Prinzipien der städtebaulichen Planung ebenso wie grundlegende Typologie der städtischen Räume (Ringstraße, Boulevard, Promenade, Stadtpark, Gartenviertel usw.) wurden zu einer gemeinsamen Plattform für die Gestaltung der Städte in ganz Ungarn. Diese gemeinsame städtebauliche Sprache war am besten lesbar dort, wo die Pläne in ihrer Komplexität realisiert wurden, wie es im Fall Budapest oder Szeged war. Die meisten damaligen Pläne wurden nur teilweise durchgesetzt, beziehungsweise in so fragmentierter Form, dass es heute sehr schwer ist, sie in der Morphologie der Städte zu identifizieren. Hinzu trägt auch die Tatsache bei, dass die Kontinuität der Planung nach dem Zerfall der Monarchie beeinträchtigt wurde und die Pläne aus dem früheren Zeitraum auch in den Nachfolgestaaten oft absichtlich abgewiesen oder ignoriert wurden. Ebenso war auch die Situation in Pressburg und in Neusatz. Die Studie zeigt die Ergebnisse der aktuellen Forschungen, dank denen die bisher unbekanntesten Dokumente über die Anfänge der modernen Planung dieser beiden Städte entdeckt wurden. Sie konzentriert sich dabei vor allem auf den Beitrag des Urbanisten Antal Palóczi aus Budapest, den Autor der ersten Regulierungs- und Entwicklungspläne von Pressburg und Neusatz.

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“EVERY GERMAN IN THE SPECIFIED YEAR GROUPS HAS TO APPEAR BEFORE THE COMMISSIONS WITHOUT INVITATION.”

THE RECRUITMENT AND SERVICE OF GERMANS FROM SLOVAKIA
IN THE WAFFEN-SS 1939–1945

MICHAL SCHVARC

SCHVARC, Michal. *“Every German in the Specified Year Groups has to appear before the Commissions without Invitation.”* The Recruitment and Service of Germans from Slovakia in the Waffen-SS 1939–1945. *Historický časopis*, 2020, 68, 6, pp. 991–1027, Bratislava.

The recruitment and military service of Carpathian Germans in the Waffen-SS during the Second World War is one of the still little researched questions in the history of this community in 20th century Slovakia. More than 8,200 men enlisted in the armed units of the SS in three phases: illegally, quasi voluntarily and finally as obligatory military service. Not all of them enlisted on the basis of their actual personal convictions. Some men found themselves against their will in places where crimes against humanity were committed. The study is devoted to the recruitment mechanism and analyses the motivation of the men of the German minority to join the Waffen-SS. It also focuses on their service in some Waffen-SS units and in concentration camps. The last part does not avoid the question of criminal responsibility after 1945.

Key words: Carpathian Germans of Slovakia. Waffen-SS. Concentration camps. Heinrich Himmler. Franz Karmasin. Gottlob Berger.

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News of the interest of German justice in the extradition of the former guard at the Auschwitz – Birkenau extermination camp Johann Breyer, who had lived for decades in the USA, flashed through the Slovak media at the end of September 2012. The information might not have attracted much attention, if the village of Nová Lesná below the Tatra Mountains had not appeared as Breyer’s birthplace.¹ The case more or less lost its fizz in the media for almost two years. This was connected mainly with the procedures of the German judicial authorities, which ended with the extradition of Breyer from the USA.² However, in June 2014,

1 See e.g. [https://www.topky.sk/cl/11/1325432/Vysetruju-rodaka--87--z-Ceskoslovenska--Podiel-na-vyhladeni-statisicov-v-Osviencime-](https://www.topky.sk/cl/11/1325432/Vysetruju-rodaka--87--z-Ceskoslovenska--Podiel-na-vyhladeni-statisicov-v-Osviencime-.). [2019-03-27]. Nemci budú súdiť nacistu. (The Germans will put a Nazi on trial.). In *Hospodárske noviny*, 26 Sept 2012, p. 8. ISSN 1335-2938

2 Bundesarchiv (hereinafter BArch) Ludwigsburg, B 162/43834, Bl. 231-239. Undated request

when the American police arrested Breyer and when he died at the end of July 2014 shortly before his extradition to Germany, various articles appeared in the serious press, both German and Slovak, about Breyer and his role in the murder of at least 344,000 Jews deported from Hungary. The great majority of them devoted hardly any attention to the mechanism for recruiting Germans from Slovakia into the armed component of Himmler's elite order when seeking Breyer's motive for joining the Waffen-SS. If they did, they touched only the surface of the problem without deeper analysis.³ However, the SS had begun to recruit Slovak citizens with German nationality systematically from as early as spring 1939.

During the existence of the Lúdák Slovak state from 1939 to 1945, more than 8,200 members of the German minority in Slovakia were recruited into various formations of the Waffen-SS and National Socialist security apparatus.⁴ According to the records of the Ministry of Defence of the Czechoslovak government in exile in London, about 1,500 of these served in various concentration camps.⁵ Whether willingly or unwillingly, they participated in a criminal system, and some of them knew they were committing crimes against humanity. The recruitment of Slovak citizens of German nationality occurred in three phases: The first illegal phase from spring 1939 to the end of summer 1942 really happened on the basis of the voluntary decision of the recruits. The second phase, from the end of 1942 to June 1944 was formally voluntary, while the third phase, from June 1944 to the end of the war in May 1945, was obligatory, based on the inter-state agreement between Germany and Slovakia from 7 June 1944 "*On the fulfilment of military service [...] in the German armed forces – Waffen-SS.*" For this reason, analysis of the changing mechanism for recruiting ethnic Germans of Slovakia into the Waffen-SS during these years is the subject of this study. However, the actual service in the Waffen-SS units, including concentration camp guard and police-security units are not left outside the focus of my interest, and neither is the question of the consequences of service in the Waffen-SS in terms of criminal law after 1945.

from the state representatives at Weiden in der Obepfalz for the extradition of Breyer.

- 3 See articles in the on-line editions: Der Tagesspiegel, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Sme and Pravda. The only exception in this area of the article by Vladimír Jancura in Pravda on 17 July 2014, in which he asks for the views of the historians Dušan Kováč and Ján Hlavinka.
- 4 MELZER, Rudolf. *Erlebte Geschichte. Rückschau auf ein Menschenalter Karpatendeutschum. Teil 2: Von 1939 bis 1945 und wie es weiterging.* Vienna: Karpatendeutsche Landsmannschaft in Österreich, 1996, p. 539. ISBN 9783853742662
- 5 Národní archiv (National Archives, hereinafter NA) Prague, f. Ministerstvo vnitra (Ministry of the Interior – London (hereinafter MV-L), carton (hereinafter c.) 119, 2-11-18b. "Volksdeutsche" from the Slovakia, 22 Feb 1945.

The recruitment of ethnic Germans from outside the frontiers of Germans – in National Socialist jargon known as “*Volksdeutsche*” – into the armed units of the SS began before the Second World War, with great probability in 1938.⁶ In relation to the small numbers in the “*SS-Verfügungstruppe*”, “*Leibstandarte-SS Adolf Hitler*” and “*SS-Standarte Deutschland*” it was rather sporadic, with people already living in Germany as students or low-paid workers joining voluntarily. It is quite possible that Germans from Slovakia came in contact with the recruiters at this time, but only in very small numbers and concrete supporting evidence is lacking. The available documents only testify to their service in the Sudetendeutsches Freikorps during the culmination of the Czechoslovak crisis or the resulting occupation of the annexed territories by Wehrmacht units and police-security forces.⁷

Himmler’s words about stealing “*Germanic blood from the whole world*”⁸ for the SS armed units began to be fulfilled by his subordinates already in spring 1939. Slovakia, which bought its independence with German “protection” on 14 March 1939, was an appropriate field for this experiment. Its ethnic German minority of 130 thousand people naturally attracted Himmler’s attention, and already in April, he directed the recruitment of its politically reliable members into the ranks of the SS.⁹ Men who belonged to the Freiwillige Schutzstaffel (FS) paramilitary units, thousands of whom came to work in the Third Reich, formed the initial target group. The chief of the SS directed their registration. Selected men had to undergo racial and medical examinations.¹⁰ The SS did not recruit only among seasonal workers. A promising environment was also found

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- 6 WEGNER, Bernd. *Hitlers Politische Soldaten. Die Waffen-SS 1933–1945*. Paderborn: Schöningh, 2010 (9th edition), p. 302. ISBN 350676313X. See also MILATA, Paul. *Zwischen Hitler, Stalin und Antonescu. Rumäniendeutsche in der Waffen-SS*. Köln am Rhein: Böhlau, 2009 (2nd edition), p. 35. ISBN 9783412138066.
- 7 Štátný archív v Bytči, pracovisko Martin (State Archive at Bytča, Martin Branch), f. Okresný úrad v Martine (District Office in Martin) 1923 – 1945, 3170/1938 prez. BArch Berlin, ehem. BDC, RuSHA-Akte Albert B. Biography from 31 Oct 1940. F. Karmasin was in temporary exile in Vienna. At the end of September 1938 he attempted to form the Karpatendeutsches Freikorps. See BArch Koblenz, NL 1180/42. Record from 26 Sept 1938.
- 8 WEGNER, ref. 6, p. 303.
- 9 Institut für Zeitgeschichte Munich (hereinafter IfZ), Fd 33/I, Bl. 3. Luther’s record for Likus from 19 April 1939. Himmler’s initiative was probably connected with the stationing of the II Battalion “*Leibstandarte-SS Adolf Hitler*” in north-western Slovakia in the second half of March 1939. The battalion temporarily placed in Žilina came into contact not only with local, but also with Germans from the Kremnica – Pravno area. (SNA, f. Národný súd (National Court) 1945–1947 (hereinafter NS), Tn ľud 17/1947 – Franz Karmasin, microfilm II. A 945. Karmasin’s letter to Himmler from 29 March 1939.)
- 10 IfZ, Fd 33/III, Bl. 352. Memorandum from the Chief of the Head Office of the SS from 15 April 1939.

among the Carpathian German college students in the occupied Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Socialization in the Zipserdeutsche Pfadfinderschaft,¹¹ a conspiratorial organization close to the Volkssport, a Sudeten German National Socialist paramilitary organization operating since about 1930, more or less predestined people to membership of the SS. A group of at least eight young men studying in Prague and Brno is an example. In spring 1939 they decided to join the SS, and this led to some of them joining the Waffen-SS in 1940.¹²

Heinrich Himmler did not limit his activities only to the territories of the Reich. In summer 1939 he directed them directly towards Slovakia. Since he regarded Slovak sovereignty as only a formal facade, he ordered the commander of “*SS-Oberabschnitt Donau*” Ernst Kaltenbrunner to form a unit of the general SS in the territory of the “protected” state, without the knowledge of the Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt – the foreign ministry of the Reich).¹³ In July 1939, he visited Bratislava to sound out the situation, but encountered unexpected opposition from the leadership of the Deutsche Partei (DP). The reason was prosaic, its leader Franz Karmasin hid behind the violation of the customs of international law, but he actually feared loss of influence over the development of the party’s FS units.¹⁴ Heinrich Himmler temporarily retreated from his aim after this unforeseen kick against the decree of Hitler’s deputy Rudolf Hess banning the recruitment of Germans from Slovakia into NSDAP organizations,¹⁵ and possible foreign policy complications.

The outbreak of the Second World War opened the door to the implementation of Himmler’s far-reaching plans and perverted visions. Apart from police-security roles, “strengthening of the German folk” by resettling “*Volksdeutsche*” and deportation or later liquidation of racially inferior ethnic groups,¹⁶ he emphasized building up armed SS units, known from winter 1939/1940 as the

11 The police authorities placed the groups among the “hackenkreuzler” movement. See: Štátny archív (hereinafter ŠA) Košice, f. Policajné riaditeľstvo (Police Directorate) Košice – Odbočka spravodajskej ústredne (Central Intelligence Department), c. 139, Zús 16/16/2.

12 BArch Berlin, ehem. BDC, PK-Akte Tibor K. and PK-Akte Karl K.

13 BArch Berlin, NS 19/218, Bl. 27. Memorandum of the Personal Staff of the Reich leader of the SS to Berger from 15 June 1939; NS 34/86. Bl. 17-18. Kaltenbrunner’s letter to Schmitt from 13 June 1941. Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik 1918–1945 (hereinafter ADAP). Serie E: 1941–1945, Band V, Göttingen 1978, document 19, p. 36.

14 SCHVARC, Michal. „Úderka a výchovný nástroj hnutia“ – Freiwillige Schutzstaffel – Dobrovoľné ochranné oddiely Deutsche Partei. (“The attack and educational instrument of the movement” – the Freiwillige Schutzstaffel – the voluntary para-military units of the Deutsche Partei.). In *Vojenská história*, 2009, year 13, no. 1, p. 58. ISSN 1335-3314.

15 BArch Berlin, R 142/2a. Memorandum of the central command of the SA from 13 Nov 1939.

16 See ALY, Götz. „Konečné řešení“. *Přesun národů a vyhlazení evropských Židů*. (“Final solutions.” The movement of nations and the extermination of the European Jews.). Prague: Argo, 2006. ISBN 8072038338.

Waffen-SS.¹⁷ As a result of limitations from the High Command of the Armed Forces (Oberkommando der Wehrmacht – OKW), these units had to be recruited mainly from ethnic Germans from outside the borders of the Reich and members of the so-called Germanic nations: Netherlanders, Flemings, Danes, Norwegians and Swedes. In this way, they avoided any control by the Wehrmacht, and represented a rich reservoir for Himmler's idea of the Waffen-SS as a counterweight to the conservative army. After the occupation of the countries of Western and Northern Europe, the foreign policy obstacles fell away, and intervention in the sovereignty of the satellite and allied states of Central and South-Eastern Europe was no longer seen as a serious problem.

The recruitment of ethnic Germans into the Waffen-SS is closely connected with the person of Gottlob Berger chief of the Recruitment Office at SS Headquarters and from 1 April 1940 chief of the SS Main Office.¹⁸ Although he joined the “black order” relatively late (in 1936), he quickly established himself in its hierarchy, and rose ever higher. “General Virvar”,¹⁹ as both colleagues and opponents called him, became one of people closest to Himmler. It was precisely Berger, who directed the attention of the chief to this human potential and endeavoured to use it for the needs of the Waffen-SS.²⁰ He earned Himmler's favour with quick results, and this was shown not only by appointment to further functions,²¹ but also by high military and party honours. In mid 1943, Adolf Hitler awarded him the German Cross in Silver for the recruitment of “Volksdeutsche” and volunteers among “Germanic” Europeans.²²

Gottlob Berger started the task of gaining ethnic Germans from South-East Europe for the armed units of the SS soon after the invasion of Poland. The first phase of recruitment, lasting until the turn of 1941/1942 occurred in an officially illegal way. The open form was not possible, because Himmler and Berger lacked

17 On the origin of the term Waffen-SS see WEGNER, ref. 6, pp. 127–129.

18 SCHOLTYSECK, Joachim. Der »Schwabenherzog« Gottlob Berger, SS-Obergruppenführer. In KISSENER, Michael – SCHOLTYSECK, Joachim (eds.). *Die Führer der Provinz: NS-Biographien aus Baden und Württemberg*. Konstanz: Universitätsverlag, 1997, p. 77. ISBN 3879405662; REMPEL, Gerhard. Gotlob Berger. »Ein Schwabengeneral der Tat«. In SMELSER, Ronald – SYRING, Enrico (eds.). *Die SS: elite unter dem Totenkopf. 30 Lebensläufe*. Paderborn: Schöningh, 2000, pp. 47–48. ISBN 3506785621.

19 WEISS, Hermann (ed.). *Biographisches Lexikon zum Dritten Reich*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 2002, p. 38. ISBN 3596130867

20 HÖHNE, Heinz. *Der Orden unter dem Totenkopf. Die Geschichte der SS*. Augsburg: Weltbild Verlag, 1992 (9th edition), pp. 424–425. ISBN 3893505490. See also LONGERICH, Peter. *Heinrich Himmler. Biographie*. Munich: Pantheon, 2010, p. 516. ISBN 9783570551226.

21 For more details see SCHOLTYSECK, ref. 18 and REMPEL, ref. 18.

22 BArch Berlin, ehem. BDC, SSO-Akte Gottlob Berger. Himmler's telegram to Berger from 30 June 1943.

the official consent of the relevant governments. Recruitment of foreign citizens of German ethnicity for seasonal work in the Third Reich served as a cover for the SS. Ethnic Germans resident in the territory of Germany represented a further source of reserves. After registration, they had to be quickly made available to the “SS-Verfügungstruppe”.²³ In this way, citizens of Yugoslavia,²⁴ Hungary,²⁵ Rumania²⁶ and occasionally also Slovakia²⁷ entered the formations of the SS in autumn 1939. Around the turn of the years 1939/1940, more Carpathian Germans joined but this time already in different circumstances.

After the failure of his original plan for Slovakia, Himmler with Karmasin’s timid agreement²⁸ decided to use the government decree with force of law no. 311/1939 Slovak Statute Book on the FS from the end of December 1939, specifically section 1§ 4. This allowed the formation of Einsatztruppe (ET) intended to fulfil unspecified “*special tasks*”.²⁹ The vaguely formulated passage enabled H. Himmler with Berger’s active cooperation to shape this unit initially existing only on paper over less than a year into a battalion, and use it as a reserve unit for the Waffen-SS. Commanders sent directly from Germany supervised it. These two commanders (Ernst Fuß and Heinz Riegler) were SS officers,³⁰ who reliably fulfilled instructions from Berger or Kaltenbrunner. During more than two years of service in Slovakia, Heinz Riegler made the ET battalion into an obedient instrument of the SS. He introduced the racial criteria of the “black order” for candidates for membership, and members could marry only with the approval of Himmler or the SS Race and Settlement Main Office (RuSHA).³¹ At the same time, he deliberately eliminated Karmasin’s growing opposition caused

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- 23 IfZ, Fd 33/I, Bl. 4. Decree of the county leadership of the NSDAP Niederdonau no. 21/39 from 9 Sept 1939.
- 24 LONGERICH, ref. 20, p. 518
- 25 SPANNENBERGER, Norbert. *Der Volksbund der Deutschen in Ungarn 1938–1944 unter Horthy und Hitler*. Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2005 (2nd edition), p. 310. Compare TIL-KOVŠZKY, Loránt. Die Werbeaktionen der Waffen-SS im Ungarn. In *Acta Historica Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 1974, vol. 20, p. 139.
- 26 MILATA ref. 6, pp. 50–51, 55.
- 27 BArch Berlin, ehem. BDC, RuSHA-Akte Wilhelm U. Biography from 8 Oct 1942. RuSHA-Akte Gustav A. Biography from 26 Oct 1944.
- 28 Slovenský národný archív (Slovak National Archives) Bratislava (hereinafter SNA), f. Alexandrijský archív, microfilm II. C. 982, 9 401 950-951. Report of the SD branch Bruck/Leitha SD-LA Vienna from 21 Dec 1939.
- 29 Vládne nariadenie s mocou zákona (Government decree with force of law) no. 311/1939 Sl. z. (Slovak Statute Book) o Freiwillige Schutzstaffel a Deutsche Jugend from 21 Dec 1939.
- 30 BArch Berlin, ehem. BDC, SSO-Akte Ernst Fuß; SSO-Akte Heinz Riegler.
- 31 BArch Berlin, R 142/2a. Riegler’s request to RuSHA from 18 Jan 1941; NS 2/88, Bl. 66. Memorandum to Sippenamt from 7 Aug 1941. SNA, f. 116-5-2/240. Riegler’s decree on the conclusion of marriage by members of the ET from 13 May 1941.

by the ever more visible exclusiveness of the ET.³² His actions repeatedly earned praise from his superiors in Vienna and Berlin.³³

The above mentioned government decree had scarcely been issued before Berger began to very intensively seek new possibilities for recruitment. He was not hindered by the fact that a large proportion of the potential recruits were in Germany, and Karmasin had practically nothing useful to offer.³⁴ That did not hinder the chief of the Recruitment Office of the Waffen-SS at all. In January 1940 he people screened 109 men from Slovakia, 52 of whom had volunteered, while another six were assigned to the “*SS-Verfügungstuppe*”.³⁵ Training of a large part of the first group (42 persons) occurred in the framework of the 4th “*SS-Totenkopfstandarte*” in Prague. In March 1940, Berger planned to undertake another recruitment directly in Slovakia. From 400 applicants,³⁶ 20–30 went to Prague for training at the end of March 1940,³⁷ with another 73 volunteers following in mid April.³⁸ At the beginning of May, the Waffen-SS recorded 83 Germans from Slovakia,³⁹ but their number was really higher, as confirmed by the cited documents. It is possible to suppose that the statistics did not include people who completed the eight week training courses and then returned to Slovakia,⁴⁰ or those who had gained citizenship of the Reich.⁴¹

Rapid recruitment continued in spite of Karmasin’s opposition. It was enabled by improved functioning of the ET, the coming of Berger’s representative Fuß to the unit in mid May and his appointment as commander at the end of August 1940.⁴² Himmler’s order to build up the ET to battalion strength also had far-

32 BROSZAT, Martin. Heranziehung von slowakischen Staatsbürgern deutscher Volkszugehörigkeit zum Dienst in der Waffen-SS. In *Gutachten des Instituts für Zeitgeschichte*. Munich: Institut für Zeitgeschichte, 1958, p. 414.

33 BArch Berlin, ehem. BDC, SSO-Akte Heinz Riegler. Berger’s memorandum to W. Schmitt from 15 Oct 1941. Nageler’s personal evaluation from 25 Sept 1942. Memorandum from VoMi to the Central Personnel Office of the SS from 17 June 1943. Lorenz’s letter to Querner from 31 Dec 1943.

34 SNA, f. 116-40-3/70. Karmasin’s letter to Berger from 23 Dec 1939.

35 BArch Berlin, NS 19/3520, Bl. 229. Berger’s memorandum to Himmler from 30 Jan 1940.

36 BArch Berlin, NS 19/3888, Bl. 152. Berger’s memorandum to Himmler from 21 Feb 1940.

37 IfZ, Nürnberger Dokumente, NO-3364. Telegram from the Vienna Recruiting Office of the Waffen-SS 4. „*SS-Totenkopfstandarte*“ in Prague from 30 March 1940.

38 BArch Berlin, NS 19/3888, Bl. 132. Berger’s report to Himmler from 16 April 1940.

39 KLIETMANN, Kurt-Gerhard. *Die Waffen-SS. Eine Dokumentation*. Osnabrück: Verlag „Der Freiwillige“, 1965, pp. 499–501.

40 See Archiv bezpečnostních složek (Archive of Security Forces) Praha (hereinafter ABS), Z-10-P-15/1/21. Karmasin’s memorandum to Berger from 1 March 1940.

41 See BArch Berlin, NS 19/3521, Bl. 271. Berger’s memorandum to H. Himmler from 20 April 1940.

42 SNA, f. 116-40-3/69. Karmasin’s declaration to Berger from 15 May 1940; f. 116-4-1/170.

reaching consequences.⁴³ These steps were pre-determined by its mission as a reserve formation to supplement the Waffen-SS. They were precisely in harmony with Berger's proposals from the beginning of August 1940, to draw more on the German minorities not only in South-East Europe, but also in other continents.⁴⁴ Therefore, it is necessary to see the further growth in the number of Germans from Slovakia serving in the armed SS units in this context. By the end of September 1940 there were 93 of them in the basic units of the Waffen-SS. Apart from them, 117 members of the ET had completed two month training courses with the SS reserve units in Prague, Vienna and Brno. Another 24 students had trained in Kraków. A further 30 ET men were preparing to join the volunteer Waffen-SS rather than the Slovak army,⁴⁵ because apart from their own "units" Germans in the Slovak army were also assigned to unpopular military labour service or to units mostly drawn from the majority population.⁴⁶

The ever increasing number of citizens of Slovakia of German nationality serving in the Waffen-SS caused ever more problems. Perhaps the most pressing was the illegal departure of men of draftable age across the frontiers of the state. According to the valid provisions especially of the Defence Act,⁴⁷ they were regarded as deserters and threatened with the highest penalty. For this reasons, Berger pressed indirectly through his contacts at the German Embassy, to obtain the tacit agreement of Bratislava to the recruitment and to get service in the Waffen-SS considered equivalent to service in the Slovak army.⁴⁸ After a series of meetings, minister Ferdinand Čatloš finally agreed to the SS demands, and declared a "general pardon" for the men who had left. However, after returning

Order of the regional command of the FS F/1-40 from 23 Aug 1940. BArch Berlin, ehem. BDC, SSO-Akte Ernst Fuß. Memorandum of the Central Personnel Office of the to the Central Command Office of the SS from 14 Dec 1940.

43 KAISER, Johann. *Die Politik des Dritten Reiches gegenüber der Slowakei 1939–1945. Ein Beitrag zu Erforschung der nationalsozialistischen Satellitenpolitik in Südosteuropa*. Dissertation. Bochum 1969, p. 437.

44 WEGNER, ref. 6, p. 311; LONGERICH, ref. 20, p. 516.

45 SNA, f. Alexandrijský archív, microfilm II. C. 982, 9 401 965. Fuß's report to the extraordinary representative of the Reich leader of the SS and chief of German police to the German ambassador in Bratislava Ludwig Hahn from 25 Sept 1940.

46 BAKA, Igor. Vznik a výstavba slovenskej armády (Origin and construction of the Slovak army) (marec 1939 – október 1940). In PEKÁR, Martin – PAVLOVIČ, Richard (eds.). *Slovensko medzi 14. marcom 1939 a salzburskými rokovaniami*. Prešov: Univerzum, 2007, pp. 216–217. ISBN 9788080686697; BAKA Igor. *Politický systém a režim Slovenskej republiky v rokoch 1939 – 1940*. (The political system and regime of the Slovak Republic 1939–1940). Bratislava: Vojenský historický ústav, 2010, p. 212. ISBN 9788096937592.

47 Branný zákon (Defence Act) Slovenskej republiky no. 20/1940 Sl. z. from 18 Jan 1940.

48 KAISER, ref. 43, p. 437.

to Slovakia, they still had to serve an additional four months in the army.⁴⁹ This agreement served as a basis for recruiting until the end of October 1942.

The second, no less serious problem proved to be relation with the Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt). The Foreign Minister of the Reich Joachim von Ribbentrop regarded illegal recruitment activities in the allied countries of South-Eastern Europe as deliberate by-passing of his ministry. The gradual infiltration of the ministry by the SS, the lack of respect for defined responsibilities and the arbitrary activities of Himmler's extensive organization abroad visibly disturbed mutual cooperation.⁵⁰ The tension culminated especially around the turn of the years 1940/1941, when the SS played a significant role in the attempt of Horia Sima's Iron Guard to seize power in Rumania.⁵¹ Conflicting interests also appeared in Slovakia. The Foreign Office repeatedly made clear to the SS who was the leading actor of German policy in the "defended" state. Although von Ribbentrop reacted very sensitively to intervention in his field of activity, he did not dare to get into an open conflict with Himmler's obviously more influential empire.⁵²

Karmasin's stubborn position, also held by the regional FS commander Walter Donath, also complicated the situation. Both saw in the ET a dangerous precedent starting the process of disintegration of the armed force of the Deutsche Partei. They also feared that they could entirely lose control over the development of the battalion, and they endeavoured to use the proliferating complaints about violation of discipline by its members to weaken the influence of the SS. The leader of the Germans in Slovakia did not hesitate to threaten to dissolve the ET,⁵³ which led to extraordinarily sharp criticism from the chief of the central office of the SS. According to Berger, Karmasin had unambiguously sabotaged the effort to build up the ET as a basic unit of the Waffen-SS.⁵⁴ Foreseeing the possibility from sharpening the dispute, Karmasin adopted the same position towards Himmler's actual highest subordinate as in the summer of 1939. On one

49 ŠA Banská Bystrica, f. Štátny policajný úrad (State Police Office) Zvolen, c. 3, Vec 407/2578/40 prez.

50 WEITKAMP, Sebastian. *Braune Diplomaten. Horst Wagner und Eberhard von Thadden als Fuktionäre der »Endlösung«*. Bonn: Dietz Verlag, 2008, p. 121. ISBN 9783801241780.

51 ANGRICK Andrej. V závětrí 11. armády. Operační skupina D. (In the lee of the 11th army. Operation group D). In PAUL, Gerhard – MALLMANN, Klaus-Michael (eds.). *Gestapo za druhé světové války. „Domáci fronta“ a okupovaná Evropa*. Prague: Academia, 2010, pp. 520–523; WILDT, Michael. *Generation des Unbedingten. Das Führungskorps des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes*. Hamburg: Hamburger Edition HIS Verlag, 2008 (2nd edition), pp. 398–399. ISBN 3930908751.

52 WEITKAMP, ref. 50, pp. 129–132.

53 SNA, f. 116-4-1/76. Karmasin's record from 21 Oct 1940 intended for W. Donath.

54 IfZ, MA 306, 2 593 718. Berger's memorandum to Himmler from 12 Dec 1940.

side, he approved the training and recruitment of people for the SS, but on the other he regarded Berger's plan as a sensitive limitation of the sovereignty of Bratislava.⁵⁵ It did not really matter to him in principle, he only used it as shield he could hide behind when necessary. In the end, the fight had no winner. In relation to the conflict with the Foreign Office, the Reich leader of the SS had to accept the status quo.⁵⁶ Only the commander of the ET changed. The energetic Fuß was replaced from 1 January 1941 by the even more vigorous Riegler.⁵⁷ The young Austrian, a member of the illegal NSDAP since 1929 and of the SS since November 1932,⁵⁸ had to be a guarantee of the preservation of the autonomous position of the unit and of overcoming Karmasin's obstruction.

As soon as he came to Slovakia, Riegler put great energy into fulfilling his task. He skilfully outmanoeuvred Karmasin and subordinated the ET to the interests of the SS. The obligatory "Verlobungs- und Heiratsbefehl" was already introduced for members of the ET in January 1941.⁵⁹ In practice, this meant that from this moment their engagements and marriages were decided by Himmler or the RuSHA.⁶⁰ Strict racial criteria began to be applied to recruitment to the ET and Waffen-SS. Recruitment was done quarterly. Politically reliable men aged 17 – 32 or later 35, at least 168 – 170 cm tall, without any health handicaps were sought. Screening did not have to be limited to members of the FS, but had to cover the whole male population of German nationality and the required age.⁶¹ The recruitment effort brought gains: In the second half of 1941, 127 volunteers joined the Waffen-SS, while a further 117 candidates satisfied the racial and health requirements and were awaiting call up.⁶² People employed in the Reich were not left out. By the end of February 1942, 932 Germans from Slovakia were serving

55 KRÁL, Václav (ed.). *Die Deutschen in der Tschechoslowakei 1933–1947. Dokumentensammlung. Acta occupationis Bohemiae et Moraviae*. Prague: Nakladatelství ČSAV, 1964, document 330, pp. 435–436.

56 KAISER, ref. 43, pp. 439–440.

57 BArch Berlin, ehem. BDC, SSO-Akte Ernst Fuß. Berger's memorandum to the Central Personnel Office of the SS 12 Dec 1940; SSO-Akte Heinz Riegler. Kaltenbrunner's memorandum to Schmitt from 23 Dec 1940.

58 BArch Berlin, ehem. BDC, RuSHA-Akte Heinz Riegler. Biography from 9 Oct 1938.

59 BArch Berlin, R 142/2a. Riegler's request to the RuSHA from 18 Jan 1941.

60 On »Verlobungs- und Heiratsbefehl« see SCHWARZ, Gudrun. Das SS-Herrenmenschenpaar. In KRAMER, Helgard (ed.). *Die Gegenwart der NS-Vergangenheit*. Berlin: Philo, 2000, pp. 304–313; HEINEMANN, Isabel. »Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut«. *Das Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS und die rassenpolitische Neuordnung Europas*. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2003, pp. 50–59. ISBN 9783892446231; LONGERICH, ref. 20, pp. 371–378.

61 SNA, f. 125-27-4/43. Donath's memorandum to Gross from 18 Feb 1941; f. 116-5-2/304-305. Battalion order ET 5/41 from 20 Feb 1941; f. 116-5-2/259-260. Battalion order ET 12/41 from 28 July 1941; f. 116-5-3/62-63. Battalion order ET 19/41 from 17 Dec 1941.

62 SNA, f. 116-16-2/204-211. Riegler's report on the 2nd half of 1941.

in the Waffen-SS, including 532 members of the ET and 400 volunteers recruited directly in Germany. The statistics also already include negative numbers: 23 dead and 51 injured.⁶³ According to Berger, Riegler deserved recognition for his actions, and his promotion was proposed.⁶⁴ He entirely fulfilled the expectations of his superiors and he was expected to show his ability again in the recruitment actions at the end of 1942.

The failure of lightning war and the transition to a prolonged resource-draining war around the turn of the years 1941/1942 forced the leaders of the National Socialist regime to mobilize ever larger human reserves. This applied especially to the Waffen-SS, which suffered heavy losses during the first phase of the attack on the Soviet Union.⁶⁵ Therefore, Himmler's attention was ever more concentrated on the German minorities of Central and South-Eastern Europe. The framework of preparations for the wider recruitment in this region were indicated by their leader in rough outlines probably at the beginning of November 1941.⁶⁶ Further details in relation to the required 60,000 volunteers with foreign citizenship had to be agreed with Ribbentrop's Foreign Ministry, whether they liked it or not. They preliminarily agreed on the following modalities: persons serving in the Waffen-SS had to be assigned to an established unit, new volunteers did not have to lose their original citizenship, Germany had to provide support payments for family members, the leaders of minorities had to be responsible for recruitment, but recruitment belonged to the SS, and an agreement on recruitment in an individual country needed to have the character of an inter-state treaty.⁶⁷

The Foreign Office, or specifically the Undersecretary of state Martin Luther, did not see any great obstacles to making these demands in talks with the governments of the countries of the Danubian and Carpathian region. The possibility of applying more diplomatic pressure was expected only in the cases

63 SNA, f. 116-37-3/59. Statistical review of persons of German nationality doing active military service from 23 Feb 1942.

64 BArch Berlin, ehem. BDC, SSO-Akte Heinz Riegler. Berger's memorandum to Schmitt from 15 Oct 1941. Riegler himself could state with satisfaction after a year of activity with the ET: "*Although we have experienced many unpleasant disputes, we have successfully created a firm organization for the attack battalion. We have removed all substantial obstacles and our position is, as it appears, firm. Uncompromising pursuit of our aims ... has paid off.*" (SNA, f. NS, Tn Iud 13/1946 – Otomar Kubala, microfilm II. A 922. Riegler's diary entry from 3 Jan 1942).

65 WEGNER, ref. 6, p. 283.

66 WITTE, Peter – WILDT, Michael – VOIGT, Martina – POHL, Dieter – KLEIN, Peter – GERLACH, Christian – DIECKMANN, Christopf – ANGRICK, Andrej (eds.). *Der Dienstkalender Heinrich Himmlers 1941/42*. Hamburg: Hamburger Edition HIS Verlag, 1999, entry from 6 Nov 1941, p. 256. ISBN 9783767213296.

67 SPANNENBERGER, ref. 25, p. 315; MELZER, Rudolf. Wehrdienst der Karpatendeutschen in der Waffen-SS von 1939 bis 1945. In *Karpaten Jahrbuch*, 1995, vol. 46, pp. 60–61.

of Hungary and Rumania, which had the largest numbers of ethnic Germans. The question of granting citizenship of the Reich would be definitively solved after the war. He expected support for families at the level valid in the Reich, a condition that complicated talks with Hungary and Slovakia. Berlin expected to obtain the largest numbers of future soldiers from Hungary and Rumania, with Croatia and the occupied Serbian Banat coming next. Luther saw “*nothing in the way*” of recruitment in Slovakia, as he wrote in a paper for Minister von Ribbentrop.⁶⁸

At the beginning of 1942, recruiting in Slovakia was still happening on the basis of the tacit agreement with the state authorities from the second half of November 1940. The tacit tolerance of service in the Waffen-SS by Tuka’s cabinet meant that the ET could continue to fulfil its role as a reserve unit. However, at the turn of the years 1941/1942 it began to strike against its limits. This was also a reason why H. Himmler decided to extend his great recruiting activity also in Slovakia. The leader of the Deutsche Partei was no longer overflowing with enthusiasm for this idea, and inclined more to the alternative of limited recruitment. He feared that otherwise there would be a serious “*weakening of the national group*”,⁶⁹ which would essentially play into the hands of the strongly nationally coloured Ludák regime. The Foreign Office with its continuing policy of supporting and maintaining individual German minorities in South-Eastern Europe⁷⁰ initially placed itself on Karmasin’s side. It not only approved maintenance of the existing status quo, but in conflict with the plans of the SS,⁷¹ it did not support the recruiting of Germans from Slovakia employed in the Third Reich.⁷²

However, the position of Ribbentrop’s ministry gradually changed in the course of 1942. A decision of the OKW from May 1942 had a substantial influence on the thinking of the Wilhelmstrasse. From this moment, recruiting of Germans from South-Eastern Europe was exclusively the responsibility of the Waffen-SS.⁷³ Starting from military orders, there was nothing to stop Himmler using the centre for directing the activities of German minorities – the Volksdeutsche

68 Politisches Archiv Auswärtigen Amtes Berlin (hereinafter PAAA), R 100981. Luther’s record from 2 Jan 1942.

69 PAAA, R 101 012. Ludin’s telegram AA from 21 Jan 1942.

70 ADAP, Serie E, Band V, document 19, p. 36.

71 BArch Berlin, NS 31/154, Bl. 379. Memorandum of the Recruiting Office of the Waffen-SS concerning the assignment of ethnic Germans to the Waffen-SS from 4 Feb 1942.

72 PAAA, R 101012. Luther’s telegram to the German Embassy in Bratislava from 29 Jan 1942.

73 SUNDHAUSSEN, Holm. Zur Geschichte der Waffen-SS in Kroatien 1941–1945. In *Südost-Forschungen*, 1971, year 30, p. 182; CASAGRANDE, Thomas. *Die volksdeutsche SS-Division »Prinz Eugen«*. *Die Banater Schwaben und die nationalsozialistischen Kriegsverbrechen*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2003, p. 199. ISBN 9783593372341.

Mittelstelle (VoMi) to force the individual leaders to actually introduce military service in the SS from July 1942: “*It must be clear to the German national groups in the south-east as a whole that the obligation to undertake military service does not derive from legislative norms, but from the iron rule of national allegiance, and from the age of 17 to 50, and when necessary to 55.*”⁷⁴ This opened the way to extensive recruiting also in Slovakia. As the cited text shows, the proclaimed voluntary nature of recruitment remained as an empty pretext. The Foreign Office undertook all the necessary diplomatic steps to ensure the success of the recruitment. However, at first it stood aside because Berger started preparations without the knowledge of the Foreign Ministry of the Reich.

The plan of the SS leadership to recruit 5,000 Germans from Slovakia aged 18–40⁷⁵ during August and September 1942 could be obstructed again by Karmasin. Although the VoMi passed on Himmler’s order to him, he remained clearly surprised by the planned extent of the recruitment. He immediately informed the embassy, German military mission and VoMi, pointing to the threat of the “*total dismantling*”⁷⁶ of the economic position of the German minority at the expense of the Slovaks⁷⁷ as a possible result of the action. The soldiers of German nationality actively serving in the Slovak army should be taken into account first, with the justification that “*even with the strictest combing of the national group*”⁷⁸ the SS recruiting commission would not achieve the expected result. These basic comments forced the relevant authorities in Berlin to seek the most practical solution. The Foreign Office, SS Main Office and VoMi finally accepted his proposal and decided to extend it to conscripts and reserves aged 17–40.⁷⁹

As in the cases of Croatia and Hungary, the task of sounding out the position of the Slovak authorities fell to the diplomatic service of the Reich. However, this did not mean that G. Berger remained inactive. On the contrary, through his various channels, he put pressure on Ribbentrop’s ministry,⁸⁰ demanding

74 SUNDHAUSSEN, ref. 73, p. 184. See also MELZER, ref. 67, p. 61.

75 PA AA, R 101 012. Besendorfer’s record from 1 Aug 1942.

76 SNA, f. NS, Tn ľud 17/1947 – F. Karmasin, microfilm II. A 946. Karmasin’s memorandum to VoMi from 4 Aug 1942.

77 LIPTÁK, Lubomír. *Franz Karmasin opät’ na scéne*. (Franz Karmasin again on the scene). Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo politickej literatúry, 1962, pp. 43–44; KOVÁČ, Dušan. *Nemecko a nemecká menšina na Slovensku*. (Germany and the German minority in Slovakia) (1871–1945). Bratislava: Veda, 1991, p. 180. ISBN 9788022401555.

78 SNA, f. NS, Tn ľud 17/1947 – F. Karmasin, microfilm II. A 946. Karmasin’s memorandum to VoMi from 4 Aug 1942.

79 SNA, f. NS, Tn ľud 17/1947 – F. Karmasin, microfilm II. A 946. Memorandum from VoMi to F. Karmasin from 6 Aug 1942.

80 PA AA, R 101012. Luther’s record intended for von Ribbentrop from 17 Aug 1942.

the quickest possible implementation of the recruitment plan. He counted on it being launched in mid August.⁸¹ When things moved in the wrong direction, and the latest deadline of 1 September 1942 for the recruitment irresistibly came closer, he again urged, intervened and threatened.⁸² However, he achieved the opposite effect. The foreign minister of the Reich unexpectedly entirely stopped the work of the recruiting machinery of the SS Main Office, also in connection with Berger's arbitrary actions in Croatia.^{83 84} The highest representative of the VoMi Werner Lorenz also very probably had a share in Ribbentrop's decision. Lorenz perceived Berger's activity among the "Volksdeutsche" as weakening the position of his own office, so he strove to regain the initiative he had lost.⁸⁵ The brief episode ended with an agreement concluded on 29 August 1942 between Berger and Lorenz on the modalities of recruiting members of the German minorities in South-East Europe into the Waffen-SS.⁸⁶ The chiefs of the VoMi and the diplomats were promised better control over the activities of the Waffen-SS.

The agreement also formed a platform for Slovakia. Soon after, the Foreign Office mediated talks with Tuka's cabinet through its representatives in Bratislava. To achieve better coordination between the Wilhelmstrasse and the SS Main Office, the two institutions chose extraordinary representatives. The Foreign Office of the Reich chose Hans Gmelin, right hand man of Ambassador Hanns Elard Ludin, while Berger selected his protégé, head of the Waffen-SS South-

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- 81 BArch Berlin, NS 19/1629, Bl. 23-24. Berger's telegram to Himmler's personal staff from 14 Aug 1942.
- 82 PA AA, R 100993. Berger's memorandum to Luther from 25 Aug 1942. BArch Berlin, NS 19/1629, Bl. 43. Berger's telegram to Wolff from 21 Aug 1942; Bl. 44. Berger's memorandum to Himmler from 26 Aug 1942.
- 83 SUNDHAUSSEN, ref. 73, p. 185.
- 84 SNA, f. NS, Tn ľud 17/1947 – F. Karmasin, microfilm II. A 946. Gmelin's record from 28 Aug 1942. See also SNA, f. 116-7-4/159. Decree of the Central Organizational Office of the DP from 29 Aug 1942. On 26 Aug 1942 Berger instructed Nageler "to discuss and prepare all recruiting measures with the leaders of the German national group in Hungary and Slovakia, so that when agreement is reached, they can start immediately and volunteers can travel to the Reich as soon as possible". (PA AA, R 100993.)
- 85 SUNDHAUSSEN, ref. 73, p. 185. Compare IfZ, ZS-1181/1. Lorenz's interrogation at Nuremberg from 2 March 1948.
- 86 According to it the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle was authorized to order the beginning of recruiting. The actual recruiting had to be done by the leadership of the minority and the Recruiting Command of the Waffen-SS South-East. The leader of the relevant minority had the right to prepare lists of "irreplaceable" persons. The volunteers recruited according to the agreement would be subject to the command of the Head Office of the SS. The conclusion states that "the leader of the national group bears full responsibility for providing as many volunteers as possible". (PA AA, R 100993. Compare LIPTÁK, ref. 77, p. 43.)

East Recruitment Command and adviser to the Hlinka Guard Viktor Nageler.⁸⁷ Their framework agreement from 7 September⁸⁸ became the basis for the German proposal, according to which Berlin asked Bratislava to release almost five year groups of ethnic Germans, those born 1918–1922, from service in the Slovak army, whether they were already at the front or in the rear, so that they could join the Waffen-SS, and for recruiting of volunteers among the ethnic German male population aged 17–35. Germany committed itself to pay support to the family members of men recruited into the Waffen-SS. However, the Slovak side had to secure the necessary exchangeable currency.⁸⁹

On 10 September 1942, when Ambassador Ludin left for Trlinok to meet Vojtech Tuka, he did not guess that the talks would drag on for six weeks. The point concerning care and support for family members became a subject of dispute. The prime minister opposed the Reich financing it. The reason was simple: the German rates were much higher than those paid by the Slovak military authorities. Tuka's position was dictated by fear that this substantial difference, in some cases as much as ten-fold, could provoke social discontent and give the impression that Slovaks "*are degraded to second class citizens*" in their own state.⁹⁰ He was not persuaded by Ambassador Ludin or by Karmasin, who was included in the German group. Nageler's expectation that the project would be launched by 21 September⁹¹ proved to be unrealistic under the influence of the circumstances.

Tuka's "No" also caused complications in Berlin. Himmler and Berger finally retreated from their original plan to take the members of the Slovak army of German nationality into the Waffen-SS, and apply the voluntary principle instead. This meant preserving the rates of payment valid in the Reich.⁹² Tuka accepted this German counter-proposal. Further talks only clarified individual points in the bi-lateral agreement. It contained the following points: 1. The Slovak government agreed to the voluntary recruiting of Slovak citizens of German nationality aged 17–35 into the Waffen-SS. 2. Bodies of the Deutsche Partei and a commission of the Recruitment Command of the Waffen-SS South-East were authorized to carry out the recruiting. 3. The German Reich would take responsibility for social security. 4. The Slovak government promised to pay

87 MELZER, ref. 67, p. 62.

88 PAAA, R 100993. Nageler's record from 7 Sept 1942.

89 PA AA, R 29738, R 101 012. Ludin's telegram to the AA from 10 Sept 1942.

90 SNA, f. NS, Tn Iud 17/1947 – F. Karmasin, microfilm II. A 946. Dollmann's record of the talks with Tuka from 16 Sept 1942.

91 PA AA, R 100993. Nageler's memorandum to Berger from 7 Sept 1942.

92 BArch Berlin, NS 19/1629, Bl. 52. Berger's memorandum to Himmler from 14 Oct 1942. See also PA AA, R 101012. Luther's telegram to Ludin from 15 Oct 1942.

expenses of 697,680 crowns each month for each 500 volunteers.⁹³ The embassy sent the agreement to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 5 November 1942 in the form of a verbal note. The Foreign Ministry sent a positive reply 15 days later, namely on 20 November.⁹⁴ The recruiting project was launched three days later.⁹⁵

It was preceded by a propaganda offensive from the DP. An appeal from Karmasin was read at party meetings and published in the German language press. The appeal represented a mixture of threats and half-truths. The “Volksgruppenführer” endeavoured to convince his compatriots that the main aim of the recruitment was to gain “*an overview of the armed strength of our national group*”. He urged all men aged 17–35 “*to appear before the commission without being invited*”.⁹⁶ The speakers at recruiting assemblies repeated the same ideas. While the newspapers emphasized that Himmler was allowing voluntary enlistment in the Waffen-SS at the request of the leadership of the DP,⁹⁷ the party agitators on the ground appealed to an order from Adolf Hitler.⁹⁸ Confidential instructions were also sent to the leaders of the local organizations of the DP and units of the FS. They had to ensure that the year groups 1907–1925 were entirely subjected to military recruitment. Voluntary application for front-line service was automatically expected from members of the FS and ET. “*Epileptics and criminal convicts*”⁹⁹ excluded from the construct of the national socialist “*Volksgemeinschaft*” were not considered as potential volunteers.

The SS started its long awaited recruiting project in the early hours of 23 November 1942. Two recruiting commissions of the Recruitment Command of the Waffen-SS South-East were expected to travel through almost the whole of Slovakia in the course of a little less than a month.¹⁰⁰ The first worked in Bratislava, where 1025 men came for recruiting up to 28 November 1942.¹⁰¹ The second, operating in central and south-eastern Slovakia considered 1390 persons from whom 767 were classified as suitable between 29 November and

93 PA AA, R 29738, R 101012. Ludin’s telegram to the AA from 29 Oct 1942.

94 SNA, f. NS, Tn řud 56/1946 – H. E. Ludin, microfilm II. A 934. Undated record under the title *Citizens of Slovakia – recruitment to the Waffen-SS*.

95 PA AA, R 101012. Ludin’s telegram to the AA from 25 Nov 1942. ABS Prague, Z-10-P-15/4. Riegler’s report on the activity of the ET in the 2nd half of 1942. See also SNA, f. NS, 13/1946 – O. Kubala, microfilm II. A 923. Riegler’s diary entry from 17 Nov 1942.

96 SNA, f. 125-3-7/112. Appeal of the leader of the national group for recruiting to the Waffen-SS from 20 Nov 1942.

97 BArch Berlin, NS 19/3397, Bl. 6. Press notice from Bratislava from 21 Nov 1942.

98 SNA, f. 116-19-4/19-21. Notes for speakers at recruiting assemblies.

99 ŠA Bratislava, f. Ludový súd v Bratislave, (People’s Court in Bratislava), Ls 283/1948. Decree of Central Organizational Office of the DP no. O-19/42 from 20 Nov 1942.

100 SNA, f. Deutsche Partei 1935–1945, c. 40. Plan for recruiting from 23 Nov to 19 Dec 1942.

101 SNA, f. NS, 13/1946 – O. Kubala, microfilm II. A 923. Riegler’s diary entry from 27 Nov 1942.

18 December 1942.¹⁰² About 7,000 Germans from Slovakia of the required age went before the recruiting commissions in the first phase.¹⁰³ How many of them finally satisfied the criteria of the Waffen-SS or Wehrmacht cannot be determined because of the lack of information on the results of the first commission. The calculations of the organizers, namely 2,700 according to Berger¹⁰⁴ and 1,800 according to Ludin,¹⁰⁵ were very probably accurate. In January / February 1943 the recruiting continued. The number considered by the commission constantly grew, reaching 9,200 by the time of a pause at the end of February.¹⁰⁶ By this time, there were already 6,464 men recorded as volunteers. The rest had to be released for the needs of the Waffen-SS in the course of 1943. The leadership of the DP identified only 1,264 people as "irreplaceable" (*Uk-gestellt*).¹⁰⁷ Additional recruiting brought another 633 candidates into the field uniform of the SS.¹⁰⁸

When enough men had been recruited, transport to Waffen-SS training units could be organized. The first 329 men left Bratislava on 15 January 1943.¹⁰⁹ By the middle of the same year, the number grew to 4,688, by January 1944 to 4,907 and by the beginning of June 1944 to 5,450. Together with those joining through the ET, 6,331 men served in the Waffen-SS as volunteers by that date.¹¹⁰ However, in relative terms, in comparison with other German ethnic minorities, Slovakia fell behind other countries in south-eastern Europe apart from Hungary.¹¹¹ This was another reason for the leadership of the SS to seek other possibilities to draw on the existing reserves as comprehensively as possible. The result of these efforts was a bilateral German – Slovak agreement on "*the military service of citizens of Slovakia in the German armed force – the Waffen-SS*" signed in Bratislava on 7 June 1944.¹¹²

102 SNA, f. NS, 13/1946 – O. Kubala, microfilm II. A 923. Riegler's reports from 9 and 19 Dec. 12. 1942. Riegler's diary entry from 18 Dec 1942.

103 ABS Prague, Z-10-P-15/4. Riegler's report on the activities of the ET in the 2nd half of 1942.

104 BArch Berlin, NS 19/3397, Bl. 4. Berger's report to Himmler from 1 Dec 1942.

105 PA AA, R 101012. Ludin's telegram to the AA from 16 Oct 1942.

106 SNA, f. NS, Tn l'ud 17/1947 – F. Karmasin, microfilm II. A 945. Karmasin's report to the VoMi from 3 March 1943. If we take into account that there 30–32 thousand men aged 17–50, then 28.75% of this group in the German population of Slovakia participated in recruiting.

107 SNA, f. NS, Tn l'ud 17/1947 – F. Karmasin, microfilm II. A 945. Record of the Central Organization Office of the DP from 26 Feb 1943 prepared for Karmasin.

108 SNA, f. NS, Tn l'ud 17/1947 – F. Karmasin, microfilm II. A 945. Karmasin's report to the VoMi from 3 March 1943.

109 MELZER, ref. 67, p. 64

110 PA AA, R 101012. Ludin's reports to the AA from 16 Aug 1943, 26 Jan and 1 Aug 1944. SNA, f. 116-5-3/104. Declaration of the Office of the DP for Military Assistance from 3 June 1944.

111 IfZ, Nürnberger Dokumente, NO-2015. Ethnic Germans in the Waffen-SS, 28 Dec 1943.

112 For more details see MELZER, ref. 67, pp. 73–75.

The recruiting did not happen entirely without obstacles. The enthusiasm of the Germans in Slovakia was far from being as “extraordinary” as Karmasin had described it in reports to his highest superiors Himmler and Lorenz.¹¹³ While in June 1942 soldiers of German nationality in the Slovak army still expressed interest in service in the Waffen-SS,¹¹⁴ less than half a year later, the situation began to change under the impact of developments on the Eastern and North African fronts. Oral spreading of news from soldiers at home on leave about the far from ideal relations prevailing in the SS also had a significant influence on public opinion. Although “Volksdeutsche” had a privileged position among foreigners serving in the German armed forces at least on paper,¹¹⁵ the practical reality often looked rather different. Reich Germans often regarded them as racially inferior “*unbalanced half-breeds*”,¹¹⁶ “*second class Germans*”. The superior attitude led to various forms of discrimination by commanding officers and non-commissioned officers.¹¹⁷ The problem acquired such huge dimensions that Himmler himself had to intervene with a threat of harsh sanctions.¹¹⁸

DP propaganda could not eliminate the impact of these factors effectively enough. This appeared especially during the first phase of recruitment. In contrast to the party leaders, people interpreted volunteering as their own free decision. As a result of events on the battlefields, willingness to be recruited was not very high. Men directly faced with being recruited to some degree ignored calls on them. Only a few people came before the commissions in various places.¹¹⁹ Tendencies appeared to leave the DP or to change nationality.¹²⁰ Since a fiasco threatened, the competent functionaries of the party and the FS progressed to the use of psychological pressure. However, apart from a few municipalities,

113 SNA, f. S-426-9/58-60. Karmasin’s report to Himmler from 1 Dec 1942; f. 116-17-6-/67-68. Karmasin’s letter to Lorenz from 2 Dec 1942.

114 IfZ, MA 209, 5 504 263 – 268. Report from the military attaché H. Becker to the General Staff of Land Forces from 30 June 1942.

115 IfZ, Fd 33/I, Bl. 9-10. Memorandum from OKW on the treatment of ethnic Germans from 15 July 1941.

116 BArch Berlin, NS 2/57, Bl. 187-189. Hofmann’s record of an inspection of the Waffen-SS units in Prague from 23 May 1941.

117 CÜPPERS, Martin. *Wegbereiter der Shoah. Die Waffen-SS, der Kommandostab Reichsführer-SS und die Judenvernichtung 1939–1945*. Darmstadt: WBG, 2005 (2nd edition), p. 89. ISBN 9783896787583.

118 SNA, f. 116-5-3/115. Himmler’s order on treatment of ethnic Germans from 6 Dec 1942.

119 SNA, f. NS, 13/1946 – O. Kubala, microfilm II. A 923. Riegler’s report from 19 Dec 1942; f. 209-761-3. Report of the district chief in Prievidza on national groups from 5 Jan 1943; f. NS, Tn fud 49/1945 – P. Starinský, microfilm II. A 873. General political report for November 1942; f. Ministerstvo hospodárstva (Ministry of the Economy) 1938–1945 (hereinafter MH), c. 25, Prez-P-dôv-944. IfZ, MA 652/3, 9 427 715-717. SD report from 28 Dec 1942.

120 KOVÁČ, ref. 77, pp. 180–181.

the January recruitment did not bring a significant improvement,¹²¹ although Karmasin threatened people with concentration camp if they did not do their duty.¹²²

Pressure from the DP continued to increase. The results included breaking the windows of men who were reluctant to participate in recruiting, psychological terror against hesitating parts of the population, economic blackmail and so on. Communities were sometimes divided into two camps, and quarrels leading to violence were an everyday occurrence.¹²³ Karmasin's closest associates went even further: They used Goebbels proclamation of total war and threatened everybody who refused to join the Waffen-SS with physical assault.¹²⁴ Massive pressure finally worked and a large proportion of the men submitted to the will of the party.¹²⁵ Additional recruiting brought the sort of numbers the DP had originally expected. By the end of 1943, party bodies recorded almost 12 thousand participants in recruiting.¹²⁶

In fact not all the men considered capable of military service in the SS units accepted the call up orders. Their passive resistance could not be broken even by repression from the DP. The party produced exact records of so-called shirkers, counting about 1,500 of them by April 1944.¹²⁷ Such views also emboldened a handful of small opposition groups. The German National Committee distributed illegal leaflets, demanding that men who had not volunteered should not join the Waffen-SS but the Wehrmacht.¹²⁸ Some sought refuge in the mountains,¹²⁹ where they joined the growing partisan movement.

121 ŠA Nitra, pracovisko Bojnice (Bojnice Branch), f. Okresný úrad v Prievidzi (Prievidza District Office) 1923 – 1945 (hereinafter OÚ Prievidza), c. 77, 1671/1942 prez. SNA, f. NS, Tn ľud 49/1945 – P. Starinský, microfilm II. A 873. General political report for January 1943 1943. BArch Berlin, R 142/122, Bl. 102, 110. Weekly reports from the secretary of the Nemecké Pravno branch of the DP from 4 and 19 Jan 1943.

122 IfZ, MA 652/3, 9 427 844. SD report on the mood of the population from 12 Jan 1943.

123 ŠA Nitra, pracovisko Bojnice, f. OÚ Prievidza, c. 24, 215/1943 prez. ŠA Banská Bystrica, f. Pohronská župa 1940 – 1945 (hereinafter PŽ II), c. 41, I. g 71/1944 prez.; c. 32, III. d 682/1943 prez. SNA, f. NS, Tn ľud 49/1945 – P. Starinský, microfilm II. A 873. General political report for February 1943; f. 209-761-4. Report of the district chief in Prievidza on national groups from 5 March 1943. BArch Berlin, R 142/122, Bl. 112. Weekly report from the secretary of Nemecké Pravno DP 1 Feb 1943.

124 ŠA Banská Bystrica, f. PŽ II, c. 32, III. d 682/1943 prez.

125 SNA, f. NS, Tn ľud 49/1945 – P. Starinský, microfilm II. A 873. General political report for March 1943.

126 SNA, f. 125-26-6/1-3. Report of the Central Organizational Office of the DP for 1943.

127 MELZER, ref. 67, p. 72.

128 SNA, f. Alexandrijský archív, microfilm II. C 995, 9 417 250. Text of a leaflet from the German National Committee.

129 PREČAN, Vilém (ed.). *Slovenské národné povstanie. Nemci a Slovensko. Dokumenty.* (The

The pressurized form of recruiting provoked unease in the German community of Slovakia. Sharp criticism fell on the leadership of the DP, especially in relation to the fact that the majority of functionaries of the party and associated organizations, as well as people from the higher social groups stayed at home. This was pointed out not only by family members, but also by the soldiers themselves in letters secretly smuggled home.¹³⁰ The tension was increased by men on leave sharing their negative experiences in the SS with the people closest to them. In conflict with Himmler's instructions, bullying, contempt and verbal abuse towards "stupid Slovaks" did not stop.¹³¹ Therefore, dissatisfaction logically turned against the DP with some soldiers not hiding their inclination "to settle accounts with Karmasin and the other party bosses".¹³² That they really meant it is shown by an incident in Handlová, where nine men broke into the flat of the leader of the local DP group and forced him to either enlist or resign from his function. He later stepped down at a public assembly.¹³³ In spite of these unpleasant and certainly not marginal incidents, satisfaction with the course of the second phase of recruiting more or less prevailed among its organizers, who considered it an "undeniable political success".¹³⁴

The only more serious remaining open question was the recruiting of officers of German nationality serving in the Slovak army. Paradoxically, Tuka's government itself came up with an offer to transfer them to the Waffen-SS.¹³⁵ The

Slovak National Uprising. Germans and Slovaks. Documents). Bratislava: Epoque, 1970, document 65, p. 152.

- 130 BArch Berlin, R 70 Slowakei/354. SD report on the mood of the population from 26 April 1943. SNA, f. 116-35-3/102-103. Undated (probably July 1943) report of the Head Office of the SS on the mood of members of the German minorities in the Waffen-SS; f. Alexandrijský archív, microfilm II. C 995, 9 417 133-134. SD report on the departure of Germans from Slovakia to join the Waffen-SS from 11 March 1943.
- 131 SNA, f. 116-11-4/23. Karmasin's memorandum to the VoMi from 16 Oct 1943; f. 116-21-2/163. Declaration of the Trnava organization of the DP from 28. 9. 1943. BArch Berlin, R 70 Slowakei/249, Bl. 42-43. Letter from Hans D. to the regional office of the DP in Bratislava from 13 May 1943.
- 132 SNA, f. Alexandrijský archív, II. C 995, 9 417 260-261. Wahl's report for the Vienna SD on the views of members of the Waffen-SS from 24 March 1944.
- 133 ŠA Nitra, f. Župa Nitrianska III (1940 – 1945), c. 62, 361/I-ŠB-1943. Report of the district chief in Prievidza on national groups from 2 Nov 1943. Compare LIPTÁK, Ľubomír. Nemec-ká a maďarská menšina v slovenskej politike a odbojovom hnutí. (The German and Hungarian minorities in Slovak politics and the resistance movement). In BRANDES, Detlef – IVANIČ-KOVÁ, Edita – PEŠEK, Jiří (eds.). *Vynútený rozchod. Vyhnanie a vysídlenie z Československa 1938-1947 v porovnaní s Poľskom, Maďarskom a Južosláviou*. Bratislava: Veda, 1999, p. 90. ISBN 9788022405868
- 134 AAA, R 100388. Preliminary draft of Ludin's letter to Berger from 11 Dec 1943.
- 135 PA AA, R 101012. Verbal note from the Foreign Ministry to the German Embassy from 27 Nov 1942.

proposal from Bratislava rather surprised the German side, which did not give a prompt reply because the relevant people in the Reich did not have a unified view on the matter. Already in October 1942, the military mission expressed a very critical view on the original recruitment plan, expecting it to “*significantly weaken the fighting strength and training*”¹³⁶ of the Slovak army.

Although the Wehrmacht stuck to its position,¹³⁷ also in relation to the prepared regrouping of the Fast and Security divisions,¹³⁸ the Ministry of National Defense (MND), leadership of the DP, SS Main Office and Foreign Office did everything to ensure that as many officers as possible could transfer to the Waffen-SS.¹³⁹ While the German side was mainly interested in “*human material*”, the motivation of the Slovak actors was entirely different: getting rid of unwanted “*informers*”.¹⁴⁰ The whole problem was finally solved by the bilateral agreement of 7 June 1944.

Around the turn of the years 1943/44, the reservoir of the second recruitment action gradually began to be exhausted. This was clear not only to the chief of the SS Main Office, who emphasized the need to more intensively use the German minority for the Waffen-SS,¹⁴¹ but also to DP leadership and the German embassy. All the participating parties intensively sought ways to achieve increased quotas for the needs of the SS. The primary aim of Berger’s apparatus was to secure compulsory military service for men of German nationality born in 1908 or later, and in an extreme case to raise the age limit to 45. The chief of

136 MELZER, ref. 67, p. 69.

137 PA AA, R 101012. Memorandum of OKW to the AA from 24 Feb 1942. Memorandum of the Germanische Leitstelle to the AA from 18 March 1943. SNA, f. 116-39-3/98-99. Gmelin’s record from 14 July 1943. Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv Freiburg (hereinafter BA-MA), RW 5/447. Schlieper’s memorandum to OKW/Ausland from 18 July 1943. Vojenský historický archív v Bratislave (hereinafter VHA), f. Ministerstvo národnej obrany (Ministry of National Defence) 1939–1945, dôverné spisy (confidential papers) (hereinafter MNO dôverné), c. 405, inv. no. 200, no. 266016/dôv.I-1943.

138 See BAKA, Igor. *Generál Čatloš a slovenská armáda na frontoch druhej svetovej vojny v rokoch 1943 – 1944*. (General Čatloš and the Slovak army on the fronts of the Second World War, 1943–1944). In BAKA, Igor – CSÉFALVAY, František – KRALČÁK, Peter a kol. *Ferdinand Čatloš – vojak a politik (1895 – 1972)*. Bratislava: Vojenský historický ústav, 2011, pp. 167–207. ISBN 9788097076801

139 PA AA, R 101012. Memorandum of the SS Main Office to the AA from 11 Jan 1943. Memorandum of the VoMi to the AA from 5 Feb 1943. SNA, f. 116-38-1/45. Memorandum of the MNO no. 263.219dôvI/3-1943 from 17 June 1943. VHA, f. MNO dôverné, c. 405, inv. no. 200, no. 266016/dôv.I-1943.

140 SNA, f. Alexandrijský archív, microfilm II. C 995, 9 417 274. Declaration intended for the Vienna SD from 17 May 1944. The head of the German military mission to Slovakia General Schliepper expressed himself in a similar spirit in his report from the end of March 1944. (PREČAN, ref. 129, document 23, p. 85.)

141 PA AA, R 100954. Berger’s memorandum to Ludin from 3 Jan 1944.

the SS Main Office and his subordinates calculated that in this way they could also catch people avoiding call up and bring into the Waffen-SS units a further 8–9 thousand men.¹⁴² The diplomatic representatives of the Reich in Bratislava essentially agreed with the proposal, but pointed to possible problems connected with employing the Slovak security organs in the process of capturing shirkers. However, they added that the introduction of compulsory military service in the Waffen-SS could bring serious financial and political complications.¹⁴³ At this time, the German debt to Slovakia was approaching five billion crowns. Equally, Berlin could not be entirely sure of the willingness of Tuka's cabinet to accept a relatively extensive intervention in the still at least formally accepted sovereignty of a "protected" state. There were also Karmasin's fears that increased recruitment would weaken the position of the German minority or deprive its leadership of influence on determining who did or did not have to undertake military service.¹⁴⁴ However, these obstacles did not prevent Berger acting quickly. He soon gained Himmler's agreement in principle, and as in summer 1942 he urged the Foreign Office to quickly negotiate with the Slovak representatives. He wanted to have an agreement on the table by the middle of March 1944 and start the widened recruiting.¹⁴⁵ In the end, this option failed. The Slovak government and its effort to achieve the ethnic homogeneity of its own armed forces, which included 2,388 ethnic Germans at the end of 1942, came into the game.¹⁴⁶

The tendency of the Slovak army to get rid of at least its officers of German nationality by means of their "voluntary" transfer to the Waffen-SS strengthened from the summer of 1943. The Ministry of National Defence (MND) presented its initiative in the statement: "*to enable officers of German nationality [...] to fight under German command in the ranks of their own tribe, and to show their solidarity with the German national community as clearly as possible*".¹⁴⁷ From 36 active officers, who declared German origin¹⁴⁸ only one used this alternative

142 MELZER, ref. 67, p. 70.

143 PA AA, R 100954. Ludin's reply to Berger from 18 Jan 1944.

144 PA AA, R 100954. Gmelin's memorandum to the AA from 19 Jan 1944; Ludin's telegram to the AA from 10 Feb 1944. SNA, f. 116-40-3/258. Karmasin's declaration to the VoMí from 12 Feb 1944.

145 IfZ, Nürnberger Dokumente, NO-3066. Telegram from Himmler's personal staff to Berger from 21 Feb 1944; NO-2757. Berger's report to Himmler from 3 March 1944; PA AA, R 100 954. Berger's memorandum to the AA from 11 Feb 1944.

146 VHA, f. MNO dôverné, c. 405, inv. no. 200, no. 110996/dôv.III/15-1942.

147 VHA, f. MNO dôverné, c. 405, inv. no. 200, no. 266016/dôv.I/1943.

148 ŠIMUNIČ, Pavel. Národnostná otázka v slovenskej armáde a česko-slovenských zahraničných jednotkách 1939 – 1945. (The nationality question in the Slovak army and in the Czecho-Slovak units abroad 1939–1945). In *Z vojenskej histórie Slovenska 1918 – 1948*.

up to the beginning of 1944. However, the army did not allow him to leave because he had done specialized training. The rest showed minimal interest in joining the Waffen-SS.¹⁴⁹ The view of the German Military Mission, which unambiguously opposed the aim of the MND, gave their position some degree of support.¹⁵⁰ A new impulse eventually came at the end of October 1943 in the form of a request from Karmasin to Minister Ferdinand Čatloš to allow recruiting to the Waffen-SS among the members (officers, non-commissioned officers and ordinary soldiers) of the field units, labour units and the former Security Division.¹⁵¹ After considering the situation the Supreme Council for Defence of the State decided to accept Karmasin's proposal and even to go beyond it. All Germans actively serving in the army would be able to transfer to the Waffen-SS.¹⁵² The agreement in principle by the Slovak government brought great advantages to all the interested German offices with the exception of the German Military Mission, and the inter-penetration of the interests of the two sides became an advantageous basis for talks on the future agreement.

They began in mid March 1944, when Berlin turned to Bratislava with an official verbal note. Apart from the Slovak proposal, it included Berger's original request to introduce compulsory military service for men born in 1908 or later. Widening the range of persons to be recruited presupposed an increase in the cost of supporting their family members from 90 million Ks to 200 million Ks each year. It also demanded passing of legal norms to allow citizens of Slovakia to undertake military service in the Waffen-SS for the duration of the war. Recruiting of men actively serving in the Slovak army was expected to happen by 15 May, and of those born in 1908 or later by 15 June 1944.¹⁵³ The Slovak representatives agreed with the points and the first proposed agreement was produced at the end of March. It was based on the above mentioned provisions supplemented by a demand from Bratislava that a clause on reciprocity be included.¹⁵⁴ The agreement had to at least theoretically allow citizens of Germany of Slovak nationality to serve in the Slovak army. The Germans were rather surprised. After getting over the initial shock, the relevant authorities, namely the OKW and the Reich leader

Trenčín: Ministerstvo obrany SR, 1994, p. 93.

149 BArch Berlin, R 142/38. Hofer's report from 26 June 1943.

150 VHA, f. MNO, dôverné, c. 405, inv. no. 200, 266016/dôv.I/1943.

151 KOVÁČ, ref. 79, p. 187-188.

152 SNA, f. 116-44-5/53. Memorandum from the MNO to Karmasin) from 8 Jan 1944; VHA, f. MNO, dôverné, c. 432, inv. no. 231, 455411/dôv.I/1944; BArch Berlin, R 142/15, Bl. 79.

153 BArch Berlin, R 142/15, Bl. 82-83; PA AA, R 100954. Verbal note of the German Embassy from 15 March 1944.

154 PA AA, R 100954. AA record of a telephone conversation with Gmelin from 27 March 1944. Ludin's letter to von Ribbentrop from 15 May 1944.

of the SS with his apparatus, agreed to this untraditional insertion.¹⁵⁵ The only exception was Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop, who did everything possible to sabotage the inclusion of the principle of reciprocity, seeing it as an impudent gesture from a German satellite. After repeated positive expressions from the OKW and an assurance from the Bratislava embassy that the Slovak side would not claim its application in practice, he finally agreed. This happened three days after¹⁵⁶ Tuka's cabinet approved the text of the inter-state agreement on 10 May 1944.¹⁵⁷

There was not a complete consensus on the Slovak side. The Ministry of Justice produced the most comments on the prepared document. It saw the agreement as an unconstitutional step because it forced citizens of Slovakia, to serve in the armed forces of a foreign state, even though they were of German nationality. Apart from this, according to the Minister of Justice Gejza Fritz, the agreement meant a substantial violation of Slovak sovereignty. *“By forcing its citizens into a foreign state, the state not only gives up part of its sovereignty, but also, precisely in the present time of war, valuable material, namely soldiers.”*¹⁵⁸ as the ministry argued entirely logically. It also cast doubt on the reciprocity clause and its practical application on the German side. Possible problems with dual citizenship were also pointed out. Taking into account also the ethical dimension of the agreement, which was analysed as an instrument of pressure, the ministry did not recommend its acceptance.

In spite of the clear criticism in the expert report, the government only accepted the reservation concerning dual citizenship.¹⁵⁹ The others were left without consideration. At the same time, legislation was prepared to enable the signing of the existing text of the inter-state agreement. To be exact, it was a constitutional statute on concluding international agreements during military mobilization of the state. The government considered its immediate adoption necessary. According to the explanatory text of the proposal: *“cooperation with the friendly German Reich demands some deviations from the valid legal norms concerning the legal position of the armed forces and their members”*.¹⁶⁰

155 MELZER, ref. 67, p. 72

156 PA AA, R 100954. Altenburg's record for Wagner from 13 May 1944.

157 SNA, f. Tn ľud 8/1946 – Alexander Mach, microfilm II. A 898. Partial copy of the minutes of a government meeting from 10 May 1944.

158 SNA, f. Ministerstvo pravosúdia (Ministry of Justice) 1938–1945 (hereinafter MP), c. 123, 18491/44-9. Expert report from the Ministry of Justice intended for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 21 April 1944.

159 SNA, f. NS, Tn ľud 8/1946 – Alexander Mach, microfilm II. A 898. Partial copy of the minutes of a government meeting from 26 April 1944.

160 SNA, f. S-424-6/31-33. Proposed act from 28 April 1944.

Parliament passed the act on 11 May 1944,¹⁶¹ and there was no longer anything in the way of concluding the agreement. Working out the exact form of the final protocol was the subject of a further series of talks. The government approved its text on 6 June 1944,¹⁶² and on the next day in Bratislava, the representatives of the two countries signed the agreement on obligatory military service by citizens of Slovakia of German nationality in a German armed force – the Waffen-SS.¹⁶³ However, it became valid only after the exchange of ratification documents on 4 October 1944. The text of the agreement was published in the Slovak Statute Book only in the second half of October.¹⁶⁴

The newly signed document immediately in its first article actually satisfied Berger's demand, and even went beyond it. According to the agreement, Germans from Slovakia with no upper age limit had to fulfil their "*defence duty for the duration of this war*"¹⁶⁵ in the Waffen-SS. A person of German nationality was defined as a person who had declared German nationality in the December 1940 census.

The concluding protocol, subject to secrecy, was more extensive than the actual agreement. The agreement had five articles while the concluding protocol had ten.¹⁶⁶ It regulated various questions of an organizational or technical nature concerning the recruiting or transfer to the units of the Waffen-SS. It concerned retention of rank, maintaining the Slovak citizenship of enlisted persons, organization of call up or delay of military service.

Although the agreement only came into force with the exchange of ratification documents, the recruiting machinery began to move practically from the signing. The timing of the launch of recruiting a few days after the landing of the British and American armies in Normandy was not a very far-sighted step. Such considerations did not have much importance from the point of view of the SS. The order of the day was to quickly supplement the hard to replace losses suffered by the German armed forces. The need to quickly mobilize new human reserves from the Balkan and Danubian region is also shown by the lowering of

161 Slovenský zákonník (Slovak Statutebook) 1944, ústavný zákon (Constitution act) no. 49 from 11 May 1944, p. 234-235. According to SD reports the act was not passed unanim by parliament.

162 SNA, f. NS, Tn řud 8/1946 – Alexander Mach, microfilm II. A 898. Partial copy of the minutes of a government meeting from 6 June 1944.

163 KOVÁČ, ref. 77, s. 188; MELZER, ref. 67, p. 72.

164 Slovenský zákonník 1944, Declaration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs no. 197 from 14 Oct 1944, pp. 450–453. The agreement was not published in the Statutebook of the Reich!

165 Slovenský zákonník 1944, Declaration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs no. 197 from 14 Oct 1944, p. 452.

166 PA AA, R 100954. The agreement from 7 June 1944 with concluding protocol.

the strict criteria applied to SS recruiting. Men with weak evaluations for racial suitability, scoring III – IV, which meant limited or unsatisfactory as a result of racial mixing, also had to be assigned to units.¹⁶⁷ It was similar with height. The recruiting commissions were instructed to accept men with at least 160 cm, in exceptional cases even 158 cm.¹⁶⁸

These circumstances are enough to explain why they quickly started the transfer to the Waffen-SS of ethnic Germans actively serving in the Slovak army. Berger's structures could count on strong support from the Bratislava government. Representatives of the Ministry of Defence and the "SS-Ersatzkommando Slowakei" already agreed on 9 June on a preliminary timetable for transferring members of the Slovak army of German nationality, 1,715 of whom had been identified up to 3 June 1944,¹⁶⁹ to training or combat units of the Waffen-SS. It was to happen in three stages from 22 June to 20 July 1944, and both sides expected about 1,150 men to be involved in this "transaction".¹⁷⁰ The reservists – 5,651 men and persons still not enlisted in the army – 4,603 men were not going to be exceptions.¹⁷¹ Only experts such as physicians, of whom there was an acute shortage as the Ministry of Defence was well aware, were to remain in the Slovak army.¹⁷² According to Karmasin's ideas, these officers had to fulfil the function of supervising or guaranteeing the maintenance of German influence in the Slovak army.¹⁷³ Men serving in the field units of the army did not avoid forcible transfer either. This is shown by the case of 300–350 Germans from Slovakia in the I. Technical Division, located in the territory of Rumania around the turn of August and September 1944. The German 8th Army immediately took them from their unit against their will and assigned them to the newly formed "Siebenburgen" regiment in the framework of the 8th SS "Florian Geyer" Cavalry Division.¹⁷⁴

167 IfZ, Fd 33/II. Memorandum from the Racial Office of the SS Race and Settlement Main Office from 17 July 1944. For more details on this problem see HEINEMANN, ref. 60, pp. 235–236; STRIPPEL, Andreas. *NS-Völkstumspolitik und die Neuordnung Europas. Rassenpolitische Selektion der Einwandererzentralstelle des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD (1939–1945)*. Paderborn: Schöningh, 2011, pp. 112–114. ISBN 9783506771704.

168 IfZ, Fd 33/II. Memorandum from the Racial Office of the SS Race and Settlement Main Office from 19 July 1944.

169 SNA, f. 116-5-3/104. Report on the number of persons of German nationality serving in the army up to 3 June 1944.

170 BArch Berlin, R 142/15, Bl. 144-147. Hofer's report from 22 June 1944.

171 SNA, f. 116-41-4/32. Report of the Central Organizational Office of the DP for July 1944 from 5 Aug 1944.

172 VHA, f. MNO dôverné, c. 432, inv. no. 231, 467428/dôv.II/11/1944.

173 BArch Berlin, R 70 Slowakei/3, Bl. 118. Böhrsch's record of a discussion with Karmasin from 23 May 1944.

174 ŠA Banská Bystrica, f. Okresný ľudový súd (District People's Court) (hereinafter OLS) at Kremnica 1945–1947, T ľud 287/1946. Interrogation of Vojtech D.-D. from 20 March

If the recruiting effort around the turn of 1942/1943 had provoked the first signs of indignation among the Germans of Slovakia, the actual introduction of conscription into the Waffen-SS in June 1944 already brought expressions of opposition, growing into open protests in some places. The new wave of recruiting happened at a time when the Wehrmacht was retreating on all fronts and the defeat of National Socialist Germany already appeared to be only a matter of time. In these circumstances, Germans from Slovakia refused to shed their blood for a cause they had willingly supported three years before. Most of them were led to this position mainly by motives of personal survival. Those whose protest expressed a civil or political position of opposition were in a definite minority.

Reports about the talks on the inter-state agreement did not remain secret. They quickly filtered through to the public, and spread especially in the circles they directly concerned. The German population, which was gradually losing its hope of victory for the Third Reich,¹⁷⁵ reacted to rumours that the age limit for recruiting would be raised to 45 with considerable dissatisfaction.

The results included efforts to leave the DP and declare Slovak or Hungarian nationality. People also stated that as citizens of the Slovak state, they were willing to undertake military service in the ranks of the Slovak army but not in the Waffen-SS. For this reason, they also refused to accept citizenship of the Reich.¹⁷⁶

The publication of Karmasin's appeal for the "*possibility of being even more closely tied to the community of destiny of our mother nation*"¹⁷⁷ in the form of military service in SS units further worsened the declining mood in the German community. Enthusiasm could not be found even among the officers of German nationality themselves,¹⁷⁸ although in the end they fulfilled their "duty" towards the homeland of their ancestors. From 36 recorded officers either professional or reserve, 35 applied for transfer. The personnel office of the SS accepted 28 of them and gradually assigned them to combat, training or reserve units of the Waffen-SS. Most of them found themselves either in the training centre

1946. Biography of V. D.-D. from 26 June 1945. Supplement to the protocol from 8 Nov 1945. On the regiment see MILATA, ref. 6, p. 294.

175 SNA, f. 209-752-5/16-17. Report of the district chief in Gelnica for April 1944.

176 ŠA Banská Bystrica, f. PŽ II, c. 46, III d 1559/1944 prez. Report of the district chief in Kremnica for April 1944; III d 1886/1944 prez. Report of the district chief in Kremnica for May 1944; SNA, f. 209-755-13. Report from the district chief in Kežmarok on national groups for April 1944); BArch Berlin, R 142/81. Hofer's memorandum to the office of the leader of the nationality group from 9 June 1944.

177 *Deutsche Stimmen*, 1944, 24, p. 1.

178 SNA, f. Alexandrijský archív, microfilm II. C 995, 9 417 330. Böhrsch's record of a conversation with H. Gmelin from 8 July 1944. 9 417 275-276. Hlásenie dôverníka 116 (Report of secretary 116) from 11 July 1944.

for Panzergrenadiers at Kienschlag (Prosečnice in Moravia) or in the artillery training and reserve SS regiment in Prague.¹⁷⁹ From there, they were transferred either to the 14th Division Waffen-SS “Galizien”, moved at the end of September 1944 to Slovakia,¹⁸⁰ to the 23rd Mountain Division “Kama” or to the 22nd Cavalry Division “Maria Theresa”.¹⁸¹ Some were transferred to administrative posts in the central command structures of the Waffen-SS.¹⁸²

The non-commissioned officers, ordinary soldiers and persons who had avoided being caught by the recruiting machinery for a year and a half reacted to “transfer” to the Waffen-SS units with much greater vigour. Their position attracted the attention of the German public, and in some places found support. Expressions of opposition took various forms, but rarely went beyond the local level. The most frequent form of protest was not accepting the call up order, tearing it up or mass returning by post to the district recruiting command. Men subject to military service according to the concluded agreement, openly criticized the agreement, and publicly proclaimed their unwillingness to join the Waffen-SS. They did not obey calls from the Slovak police authorities and let themselves be escorted in handcuffs, for example, at Janova Lehota, to a place of concentration, pointing to their “free decision”. After arriving at barracks in Bratislava or Kežmarok, some succeeded in slipping away unnoticed. Some sought a way out of their dilemma by escaping to the forests, while some committed suicide. Small illegal groups such as the German National Committee became active, and called for men to ignore calls to join the SS. In some places, Church representatives joined the agitation against enlisting. They described the Waffen-SS as a “*pagan society*”.¹⁸³

179 VHA, f. MNO dôverné, c. 432, inv. no. 231, 465164/dôv.II/4-1944. BArch Berlin, NS 33/483. Memorandum of the Chief SS Personnel Main Office from 5 Sept 1944.

180 On the activity of the division in Slovakia see: ŠMIGEL, Michal. 14. divízia SS „Galizien“ na Slovensku (1944 – 1945): bojová a protipartizánska činnosť a represálie. (The 14th SS Division “Galizien” in Slovakia (1944–1945): combat and anti-partisan activity and repression). In SOKOLOVIČ, Peter (ed.). *Prezekúcie na Slovensku v rokoch 1938 – 1945*. Bratislava: Ústav pamäti národa, 2008, p. 213-214. ISBN 3930908751.

181 BArch Berlin, ehem BDC, SSO-Akte Ludwig K., Emil-Johann S., Edmund-Karl S., Karl S., Karl Wildner, Ludwig, L., Johann Rudolf P., Franz C., Gustav H. (14th Division) Robert S., Ladislaus S., Michael A., Anton D., Friedrich H., Stefan N., Franz Gustav S. (23rd Division) Ladislaus R., Johann Wilhelm S., Julius T. (22nd Division).

182 BArch Berlin, ehem. BDC, SSO-Akte Wilhelm G., Ludwig W., Rudolf Z.

183 BArch Berlin, R 142/15, Bl. 177. Anton’s declaration from 14 July 1944; Bl. 181-184. Hofer’s report from 19 July 1944; Bl. 188-191. Böhrsch’s record from 28 July 1944; Bl. 192-196. Vogl’s report from 8 Aug 1944; Bl. 198-199. Vogl’s report from 14 Aug 1944; R 142/90, Bl. 87. Copy of a leaflet of the German National Committee from 13 June 1944. SNA, f. Alexandrijský archív, microfilm II. C 1007. Report from the chief for press and propaganda at Janová Lehota from 12 July 1944; f. 116-20-2/209. Declaration of the DP secretary for Lower Spiš

Local offices of the state administration strove to calm enflamed public opinion, but they did not always succeed. On the other hand, interventions by gendarmes only poured oil on the fire. Reports from district chiefs point to growing tension, escalating into conflicts, but they only rarely intervened in favour of the German people. Only the district chief in Kremnica was not afraid to describe the conscription as illegal with the observation that the agreement had not been published in the Statute Book.¹⁸⁴ The Defence Ministry and bodies subordinate to it willingly cooperated with the DP, while the Ministry of Justice remained silent after critical comments.¹⁸⁵ The top politicians were more or less indifferent to the fate of ordinary citizens. This is shown by the attitude of the Office of the President of the Republic to the anonymous letter from “German mothers” erroneously thanking President Jozef Tiso for protecting their sons by not signing the agreement.¹⁸⁶ However, Tiso did not consider it at all, and he signed the ratification documents on 21 July 1944.¹⁸⁷ His office deposited the letter as a matter considered settled. The aim – to produce an ethnically homogeneous army – was largely achieved by this route.

The leadership of the DP confronted the situation by strengthened propaganda associated with the use of means of coercion. In this, it gratefully cooperated with the Ministry of Defence, as well as the Ministry of the Interior and its apparatus. The circumstances required firm, radical action, because the issue concerned the prestige of the party and in the end also maintenance of the authority of the German Reich.¹⁸⁸ However, in relation to the delayed ratification of the agreement, it was not simple. Karmasin found himself between two millstones. On one side there was justified fear of weakening of the German minority, while on the other, there was Himmler’s categorical order not to consider temporary “loss of substance”.¹⁸⁹ In the given circumstances, the Reich leader of the SS

from 15 July 1944; f. 209-752-5/35. Declaration of the district chief in Gelnica on the situation in June 1944; ŠA Banská Bystrica, f. PŽ II, c. 46, III d 2462/1944 prez. Declaration of the district chief in Kremnica on the situation in July 1944. ŠA Banská Bystrica, pracovisko Kremnica, f. Okresný úrad Nová Baňa 1923 – 1945, c. 37, D1-651/1944. LACKO, Martin (ed.). *Situačné hlásenia okresných náčelníkov január – august 1944*. (The situation reports of district chiefs, January – August 1944). Trnava: Katedra histórie Filozofickej fakulty UCM, 2005, p. 226, 239–240, 244, 246–248. ISBN 8089220010.

184 ŠA Banská Bystrica, f. PŽ II, c. 46, III d 2462/1944 prez. Declaration of the district chief in Kremnica on the situation in July 1944. LACKO, ref. 183, p. 240.

185 VHA, f. MNO dôverné, c. 432, inv. no. 231, 474872/dôv.II/4-1944. SNA, f. MP, c. 123, 18491/44-9. Record of the Ministry of Justice from 22 July 1944.

186 SNA, f. S-424-3/17. Anonymous petition from 9 June 1944.

187 Slovenský zákonník 1944, Declaration of the Minister of Foreign Affairs no. 197 from 14 Oct 1944, p. 450.

188 BArch Berlin, R 142/15, Bl. 188-191. Böhrsch’s record from 28 July 1944.

189 KOVÁČ, ref. 77, pp. 188–189.

noticed that Karmasin had particular problems and did not have matters entirely under control. In reply, he tried to play down the statements of the head of the SS. He stated in his defence: *“It is at most a matter of 25–30 men... In the immediate future, the majority will be captured and made available to the Waffen-SS.”*¹⁹⁰ This statement satisfied Himmler.

However, the actual balance of the conscription process looked entirely different. Its final phase did not fulfil the original expectations as a result of the growing unwillingness of the German population. If the leadership of the SS Main Office reckoned on a further 8–9 thousand men, it must have been really dissatisfied with the actual result. Up to 3 June 1944, four days before the conclusion of the inter-state agreement, the number of Germans from Slovakia in the Waffen-SS reached 6,631 persons,¹⁹¹ and by 1 September it had grown to 7,824 men. With great probability it was a matter of former soldiers from the Slovak army, where 665 of them remained on that date.¹⁹² In areas where the influence of the DP remained sufficiently strong, its bodies recorded relatively solid success of recruiting.¹⁹³ But with increasing distance from Bratislava, the number of conscripts declined.¹⁹⁴ The Slovak security forces intervened in cases of refusal to obey call up orders. By the beginning of August, about 400 persons were forcibly escorted to the departure places.¹⁹⁵ This significantly damaged the trust of the Germans in their own leaders.

The rate of recruiting significantly slowed after the outbreak of the Slovak National Uprising. A large proportion of the conscripted men had to be assigned to the newly formed Heimatschutz. A further 398 men left them for the Waffen-SS by mid January 1945. A third recruiting effort up to 15 January 1945 brought 1,591 persons,¹⁹⁶ significantly fewer than expected by its promoters: Berger, Karmasin and Ludin. However, this number is certainly not final. In mid January Himmler ordered the release of men born in 1910 or later for the needs of the Waffen-SS.¹⁹⁷ Men and teenagers evacuated to the territory of the

190 PREČAN, ref. 129, document 65, p. 152.

191 SNA, f. 116-5-3/104. Report on the number of persons of German nationality in military service up to 3 June 1944.

192 SNA, f. 116-5-39/185. Report on the number of persons of German nationality in military service up to 1 Sept 1944.

193 SNA, f. 116-29-9/42-45. Report of the leader of the DP in the District of Bratislava-Land from 18 Aug 1944.

194 BArch Berlin, R 142/15, Bl. 181-184. Hofer's report from 19 July 1944.

195 SNA, f. 116-41-4/32. Report of the Central Organizational Office of the DP for July 1944 from 5 August 1944.

196 BArch Berlin, R 142/15, Bl. 205-206. Undated summary of the number of persons of German nationality doing military service (mid January 1945).

197 BArch Berlin, R 142/15, Bl. 204. Copy of a telegram from the Personal Staff of the Reich leader of the SS to Höfle from 11 Jan 1945.

Third Reich from autumn 1944 also did not avoid being recruited. The apparatus of the “Reich Commissioner for Strengthening of Germanism” introduced the necessary measures to ensure that persons aged 16–48 were caught in the net of the SS recruiting command. Men born in 1919 or later, who fulfilled the racial criteria of the SS and were at least 166 cm tall, had to be immediately assigned to units of the Waffen-SS. Others were expected to be active reserves, who would be assigned according to current needs. Men with less than 166 cm in height would be assigned to police units.¹⁹⁸ How many people got into the formations of the Waffen-SS or police in this way cannot be ascertained because of the incompleteness of the sources. However, one thing is certain, the recruiting of Germans from Slovakia ended with the recruiting in the territory of Germany and the release of members of the Heimatschutz younger than 25 in January 1945.

The surviving archive documents enable quite a detailed reconstructions and analysis of the mechanisms of recruitment. The situation is worse with the assignment of the Germans from Slovakia to specific units of the Waffen-SS, police and guard units at individual concentration camps. Some individuals could be found in the first “elite” divisions of the Waffen-SS, such as “SS-Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler”, “Das Reich”, “Totenkopf” or “Wiking”.¹⁹⁹ The initial illegal phase of recruiting mainly concerned the “Totenkopf” regiment, the SS infantry brigade and the SS cavalry brigade. For example, in May 1941, five 18–19 men from central Slovakia joined the 2nd Cavalry Regiment of the SS.²⁰⁰ Less than two months later, they participated as part of this unit in the mass killing of Jewish communities in the area of the Pripet marshes in the Soviet Union.²⁰¹ One of its members became an eye-witness of the liquidation of Jews in the small town of Davidgrodek in Bielorussia.²⁰² Another man joined the unit at the end of 1941.²⁰³ Precisely at that time, the Soviet army broke through the front near Rzhev and the cavalry brigade in cooperation with Wehrmacht units had to help to fill the gap at the cost of huge losses.²⁰⁴

198 IfZ, Fd 33/II. Memorandum of the VDA from 4 Nov 1944. Memorandum of the Einsatzführung VoMi Munich – Upper Bavaria from 12 Feb 1945.

199 NA Praha, MV-L, c. 119, 2-11-18b. “Volksdeutsche” from the Slovakia, 22 Feb 1945. SNA, f. 116-11-4/25. Karmasin’s letter to the VoMi from 14 July 1943. ŠA Bratislava, f. OLS Bratislava, T řud 284/1946. ŠA Bratislava, f. OLS Bratislava, T řud 380/1945. Staatsarchiv (StA) München, Staatsanwaltschaften 34835/4, Bl. 879-800. Interrogation witness K. S. 26 May 1967. BArch Ludwigsburg, B 162/1836, Bl. 1-7. Interrogation of S. W. 27 July 1959.

200 BArch Berlin, ehem. BDC, RuSHA-Akte Adolf M. Letter from A. M. to the 2nd SS cavalry regiment from 9 May 1941.

201 CÜPPERS, ref. 117, pp. 151–165.

202 BArch Ludwigsburg, B 162/2328, Bl. 1242-1305. Case of the state representatives in Braunschweig against Franz Magill from 13 May 1963.

203 BArch Ludwigsburg, B 162/5544, Bl. 272-273. Interrogation of witness O. B. 18 Feb 1968.

204 CÜPPERS, ref. 117, p. 240.

Germans from Slovakia were not assigned only to Waffen-SS units. Even during the first phase, the Reich Main Security Office recruited about 60 drivers in May 1941, just before the invasion of the Soviet Union.²⁰⁵ We can find at least two of them in the "Einsatzgruppen" of the Security Police in the Soviet Union,²⁰⁶ where they had on their consciences tens of thousands of victims. Another served in a not definitely specified order police unit at Rivne in Ukraine, where it was involved in conflict with partisans.²⁰⁷ Some persons were assigned to the Prague Central Agency for Jewish Emigration. Gejza T. and Mathias S. held positions that involved active participation in the persecution and deportation of Jews in Greece and Hungary.²⁰⁸

The recruits of the first phase also occasionally got into guard units at concentration camps. They were mostly men who suffered serious injuries during training, which led to them being re-assigned to a lower level of assignment. This was the case for Franz Marko from Handlová. After healing, he was assigned to the Auschwitz concentration camp at the end of December 1941. At first he served in the first guard unit, and later in the political section of the camp (Gestapo). During interrogations he thrashed prisoners. Twenty years later, in connection with preparation of the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial, he defended himself with the claim that he was acting on orders from his superiors,²⁰⁹ but it did not sound very convincing from his mouth.

The number of concentration camp guards from Slovakia increased significantly during the second phase of recruiting. Robert Schwantzer, convicted by the Bratislava district people's court for a murder in Edlgasse, stated in his testimony that in February 1943 about 175 men went from Bratislava to Auschwitz with him.²¹⁰ How many stayed there and how many were transferred elsewhere by the SS Main Economic and Administrative Office is unknown. The Polish historian Aleksander Lasik has written about 80 persons assigned to various concentration camps including Auschwitz in March and April 1943.²¹¹ They did not serve only

205 SNA, f. Alexandrijský archív, microfilm II. C 1007, 9 431 612-622. Report of the high command of the FS from 9 June 1941.

206 IfZ, NSG-Datenbank (Finger, Noßke).

207 ŠA Bratislava, f. OLS Bratislava, T ľud 225/1945.

208 ŠA Bratislava, f. OLS Bratislava, T ľud 360/1945; f. OLS Pezinok, T ľud 63/1946.

209 Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Wiesbaden (hereinafter HHStAW), Bestand 461, Nr. 37638/51, B. 8982-8990. Interrogation of F. Marko from 26 May 1961. See also KLEE, Ernst (ed.). *Täter, Gehilfen, Opfer und was aus ihnen wurde. Ein Personalexikon*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuchverlag, 2018 (2nd edition), p. 269. ISBN 9783596197859.

210 ŠINDELÁŘOVÁ, Lenka. *Finale der Vernichtung. Die Einsatzgruppe H in der Slowakei 1944/1945*. Darmstadt: WBG, 2013, p. 161. ISBN 9783534259731.

211 LASIK, Aleksander. *Sztafety ochronne w systemie niemieckich obozów koncentracyjnych. Rozwój organizacyjny, ewolucja zadań i struktur oraz socjologiczny obraz obozowych załóg*

in the main camp designated I, but also in the extermination section at Birkenau (II) or in the Monowitz camp (III),²¹² where prisoners worked in inhuman conditions in a factory for synthetic rubber and liquid fuel. In the Auschwitz – Birkenau camp complex, they could come into contact with the small number of survivors from the Jews deported from Slovakia in 1942. One female witness, later assigned to the central camp administration, soon after the war remembered two SS men from Bratislava, one of whom had participated in selections.²¹³ Another more numerous group went to the Stutthof concentration camp near Gdansk. Men from Slovakia came to this concentration camp on two dates: 2 March and 15 April 1943.²¹⁴ Apart from Stutthof, Germans from Slovakia could be found at the Neuengamme concentration camp near Hamburg,²¹⁵ and in the camp complexes at Dachau,²¹⁶ Buchenwald,²¹⁷ Flossenbürg,²¹⁸ Groß Rosen,²¹⁹ Mauthausen²²⁰ and the special camp at Hinzert.²²¹

Men with a lower classification were assigned to police units. Most of them were trained at Dortmund or at Gumbinnen in East Prussia. Then they were assigned to units at various places in occupied Europe. For example, L.W. from Bratislava served in the occupied southern zone of France.²²² At least 18 young

SS. Osvienčim: Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau w Oświęcimiu, 2007, p. 382. ISBN 9788360210321.

212 ŠA Bratislava, f. OLS Bratislava, T I'ud 142/1946, T I'ud 228/1946. ŠA Banská Bystrica, f. OLS Kremnica, T I'ud 195/1946, T I'ud 135/1946, T I'ud 120/1946, 133/1946. SNA, f. 125-36-4/61-68. List of members of the SS in the district of the NB command in Spišská Nová Ves from 25 March 1946.

213 Yad Vashem Archive (hereinafter YVA), M 5/127. Testimony of E. B. from 4 July 1945.

214 BArch Berlin, NS 4 – ST/6 – 38.

215 KOVÁČ, ref. 77, pp. 175–176; ŠA Bratislava, f. OLS Bratislava, T I'ud 348/1945. SNA, f. 125-31-3/53. Letter from guards at the Neuengamme concentration camp on *Grenzbote* from 11 April 1943.

216 SNA, f. 125-30-9/35, 48-49. Letters from guards at the Dachau concentration camp on *Grenzbote* from 17 Feb and 22 Feb 1943.

217 SNA, f. 125-30-9/68-69. Letter from guards at the Buchenwald concentration camp on *Grenzbote* from 6 March 1943. BArch Berlin, NS 3/392, Bl. 17. Telegram from Buchenwald concentration camp on the WVHA/D from 6 Dec 1944.

218 SNA, f. 125-31-1/1. Letter from guards at the Flossenbürg concentration camp on *Grenzbote* from 23 April 1943.

219 SNA, f. 125-31-1/61. Letter from guards at the Groß Rosen concentration camp on *Grenzbote* from 6 May 1943.

220 SNA, f. 125-31-3/64. Letter from guards at the Mauthausen concentration camp on *Grenzbote* from 29 March 1943. F. 125-31-5/47. Letter from guards at the Mauthausen concentration camp on *Grenzbote* from 1 April 1943. ŠA Bratislava, f. OLS Bratislava T I'ud 157/1945.

221 SNA, f. 125-31-2/67. Letter from guards at the Hinzert special camp on *Grenzbote* from 25 May 1943.

222 ŠA Bratislava, f. OLS Bratislava, T I'ud 204/1946.

men aged 17–23 were assigned to the I. battalion of the SS police regiment. In the second half of August 1943 they participated in the liquidation of the Białystok ghetto and the deportation of its Jewish inhabitants to the extermination camps at Treblinka and Auschwitz-Birkenau.²²³ At least 12 men in the same age group became members of the II. battalion of the 26th SS police regiment, which participated in the killing of 3,000 Jews in the ghetto of the town of Hlybokaye (*Głębokie*) in Bielarus on 20 August 1943.²²⁴

Men with inadequate height were assigned, along with many Germans from Rumania, to the 7th SS division “*Prinz Eugen*”.²²⁵ Under the pretext of fighting partisans, this unit became notorious for its war crimes against most civilian inhabitants of former Yugoslavia. At the end of 1943, 662 men from Slovakia served in this unit.²²⁶ The elite divisions included dozens of recruits from Slovakia. After June 1944, former members of the Slovak army of German nationality were mostly assigned to forming, often incomplete divisions of the Waffen-SS.

Recruitment into and service in the Waffen-SS had its sequel after the end of the Second World War in the field of criminal law. Not only the organizers of recruiting such as Karmasin, Ludin and Berger, but also hundreds of former soldiers, policemen and concentration camp guards found themselves facing the courts. The Czechoslovak security authorities pursued them zealously. Some members of the Waffen-SS were captured in the territory of the revived republic, others were sent back to their old homeland from Allied prisoner of war camps. Around the turn of 1945/1946, the Czechoslovak authorities established a special internment camp at Malacky for former members of the Waffen-SS. There were 209 persons in it by the beginning of January 1946.²²⁷ Meanwhile, the Slovak people’s judiciary considered the question of how to solve the problem of the military service of Slovak citizens of German nationality in the Waffen-SS. Judgements were directed by the verdict of the Command of the 4th district in Bratislava from the beginning of August 1945. The soldiers already recommended

223 IfZ, NSG-Datenbank (Rehdantz). On the liquidation of the ghetto see STOLL, Katrin. *Die Herstellung der Wahrheit. Strafverfahren gegen ehemalige Angehörige der Sicherheitspolizei für den Bezirk Białystok*. Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2012. See also KLEMP, Stefan. „Nicht ermittelt.“ *Polizeibataillone und die Nachkriegsjustiz. Ein Handbuch*. Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2011 (2nd edition), pp. 41–42. ISBN 9783837506631

224 IfZ, NSG-Datenbank (Thiermann). See also KLEMP, ref. 223, pp. 42–43.

225 MILATA, ref. 6, p. 258.

226 CASAGRANDE, ref. 73, p. 211.

227 SNA, f. Úrad predsedníctva Slovenskej národnej rady (The Office of the Presidium of the Slovak National Council, sign. Šmidke-36, c. 128. Report of a representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross on a visit to the camp at Malacky 6 Jan 1946.

a distinction between the three phases of recruiting, with the final, third phase defined as defence obligation.²²⁸ The relevant district and local people's courts generally took this recommendation into account.

Former members of the Waffen-SS came before the courts on the basis of decree of the Slovak National Council 33/1945, § 5. They were mostly men recruited into the SS in the framework of the second and third phases of recruiting. When charging members of the first group, the courts imposed penalties of one year or more on the basis of the proven facts. In especially serious cases, they gave sentences of 10 years or more in prison. In the case of the second group, trials ended with the men either freed or subject to public reprimand, if they had not been proved guilty of war crimes or crimes against humanity.

A large proportion of those convicted and of those freed by the Czechoslovak authorities were assigned to forcible resettlement, the terminology of the time for deportation.²²⁹ How many of the total of 1,095 persons of German nationality convicted by the people's courts²³⁰ were former members of the Waffen-SS remains a subject of research. However, one thing is certain: the Czechoslovak security authorities remained interested even after the end of immediate retribution.²³¹

Where the main organizers of recruiting were concerned, most of them went before Czechoslovak or Allied courts. An exception was the former leader of the Deutsche Partei Karmasin, who succeeded in hiding in the post-war chaos and living under a false identity. The National Court sentenced him to death for his recruiting activity, but this was never carried out. The former ambassador of National Socialist Germany to Slovakia Ludin was sentenced to death in his presence by the same court for his recruiting activities among other things. Himmler's chief organizer of recruiting Berger fell into the hands of the Allies and was placed before the Nuremberg military tribunal. In the eleventh trial, that of highly placed representatives of the German administration, known as the *Wilhelmstrasse-Prozess*, the American judges sentenced him to 25 years in prison. However, at the end of 1951 he was released as a result of the worsening international political situation. West German justice took no further action against him. The same applied to almost all the former members of the Waffen-

228 ŠA Bratislava, f. OLS Bratislava, Prez. ľud 3/1945.

229 ŠA Bratislava, f. OLS Prievidza, Prez. ľud 10/1947.

230 GABZDILOVÁ-OLEJNÍKOVÁ, Soňa – OLEJNÍK, Milan. *Karpatskí Nemci na Slovensku od druhej svetovej vojny do roku 1953*. (The Carpathian Germans in Slovakia from the Second World War to 1953). Bratislava: SNM-Múzeum kultúry karpatských Nemcov, 2004, p. 88. ISBN 8096762192.

231 ABS, f. 325-62-5. List of wanted persons of German nationality from Slovakia 31 Dec 1948.

SS from Slovakia, who lived in the Federal Republic of Germany after 1949. Only the Demjanjuk case brought a substantial change in judicial practice.

* This study was worked out in the framework of the projects VEGA č. 2/0110/16 *Nábor a vojenská služba slovenských Nemcov vo Waffen-SS 1939 – 1945. Predpoklady, priebeh, zaradenie do jednotlivých formácií a trestno-právne dôsledky po roku 1945* (The recruiting and military service of Germans from Slovakia in the Waffen-SS, 1939–1945. The pre-conditions, course of recruiting, assignment to individual units and criminal legal consequences after 1945) and APVV-15-0349 *Individuum a spoločnosť – ich vzájomná reflexia v historickom procese* (The individual and society – their mutual reflection in the historical process) researched at the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences riešených na Historickom ústave SAV.

„JEDER DEUTSCHE DIESER JAHRGÄNGE HAT SICH UNAUFGEFORDERT
DEN KOMMISSIONEN ZU STELLEN.“

WERBUNG UND DIENST DER SLOWAKEIDEUTSCHEN
IN DER WAFFEN-SS 1939–1945


MICHAL S C H V A R C

Als 2012 der Fall des ehemaligen KZ-Wachmanns in Auschwitz, Johann Breyer, publik gemacht wurde, tauchten in den Medien zahlreiche Artikel über Hintergründe seines Waffen-SS-Werdegangs sowie seiner Beteiligung am Mord an ungarischen Juden 1944 auf. Allerdings nur wenige setzten sich mit dem breiteren Kontext seiner SS-Laufbahn auseinander. Werbung und Dienst der Karpatendeutschen in der Waffen-SS während des Zweiten Weltkriegs stellen bis dahin einen der wenig erforschten Fragenkomplexe der Geschichte dieser Bevölkerungsgruppe in der Slowakei im 20. Jahrhundert dar. Mehr als 8 200 Männer wurden in die bewaffnete Truppe der SS insgesamt in drei Phasen herangezogen: illegalen, scheinbar freiwilligen und schließlich als Zwangspflicht. Nicht alle betroffenen Personen meldeten sich aufgrund ihrer eigenen Überzeugung, ein Teil der Männer befand sich an den Orten der Schreckensherrschaft der Nationalsozialisten gegen ihren Willen. Der Aufsatz behandelt den Mechanismus der Werbung und analysiert die Motivation des Waffen-SS-Beitritts männlicher Angehöriger deutscher Volkszugehörigkeit in der Slowakei. Darüber hinaus fokussiert er den Dienst sowohl in einigen Waffen-SS-Einheiten als auch in Konzentrationslagern. Dies alles in einer vergleichenden Perspektive. Dennoch zu ähnlichen Vorgängen kam es fast in allen Staaten des Donau-Karpatenraumes – Ungarn, Rumänien, ehemaliges Jugoslawien. Zum Schluss

Michal Schvarc *The Recruitment and Service of Germans from Slovakia...*

bietet der Aufsatz einen kurzen Ausblick auf die Frage strafrechtlicher Verfolgung ehemaliger Waffen-SS-Männer in der NachkriegsTschechoslowakei an.

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minulosť ako supermarket?

spôsoby reprezentácie a aktualizácie
dejín Slovenska

elena mannová

“I NEVER NEGOTIATED WITH THE JEW”.
ON THE ARYANIZATIONS OF SLOVAK WRITER ĽUDOVÍT
MISTRÍK-ONDREJOV

JÁN HLAVINKA

HLAVINKA, Ján. *“I never negotiated with the Jew.”* On the Aryanizations of Slovak writer Ľudovít Mistrík-Ondrejov. *Historický časopis*, 2020, 68, 6, pp. 1029–1048, Bratislava.

The study is devoted to the participation of the notable Slovak writer Ľudovít Mistrík-Ondrejov in the Aryanization of Jewish property in Slovakia in the period 1939–1945. The fact that Ľudovít Mistrík-Ondrejov profited from the Aryanization of Jewish firms is relatively well-known and was already publicized in connection with the bookshop owning Steiner family, whose business Mistrík-Ondrejov Aryanized. The present study is a comprehensive study of the Aryanizing activities of Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov, covering not only the Aryanization of the Steiner bookshop, but also of the Känzler Brothers firm in Bratislava from which Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov personally profited. The study provides hitherto unknown fact about both Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov’s Aryanizations.

Key words: Holocaust. Aryanization. Bratislava. Ľudo Mistrík-Ondrejov. Jews.

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The life story of the notable Slovak writer Ľudovít Mistrík, who published under the artistic pseudonym Ľudo Ondrejov, can serve as a convincing example for the view that every person has various biographies. There is a “public” biography directed towards the general public, and a “private” biography directed towards the circle of the closest people. Both versions are updated over time. This also clearly applies to “textbook” writers, whose lives become known to many only in the form of selected facts in literature textbooks or brief biographical texts in their works.

Today the Slovak public does not know the writer Ľudovít Mistrík-Ondrejov only as the author of the novel *Outlaw Youth (Zbojnická mladost’)*, the travel book *African Notes (Africký zápisník)* and other works, but also as a person whose “private biography” was uncovered after many years. It is known that during the Slovak Republic of 1939–1945 Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov participated in the forcible expropriation and transfer of Jewish property, described at the time

as “Aryanization”. The fact that he Aryanized the important Bratislava bookshop and printed music business of the Steiner family appeared long-ago not only in historical works,¹ but also on the pages of Slovak newspapers and magazines.²

To some degree it is possible to say that Ľudo Mistrík-Ondrejov is one of the most publicized Slovak Aryanizers. Publication of surviving documents in which he described the original owners of the firm and their relations – the Steiner family – as unnecessary for the bookshop after its Aryanization in 1942, also contributed to this. He wrote that the bookshop and the Slovak state would not be harmed by their deportation.³ However, this information does not give the whole picture of the Aryanizing activities of Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov. In this study, I will try to give a more comprehensive picture of the Aryanization activities of this well-known Slovak writer, while also considering how he saw them in this period.

The process of Aryanizing Jewish firms in Slovakia, from which Ľudovít Mistrík-Ondrejov also profited, was relatively complicated and full of twists. In practice, it started in 1939, developed against the background of the political struggle between the conservative and radical wings of the ruling Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party (HSĽS) through 1940, culminated in 1941 and continued more slowly until the fall of the Ľudák regime.

Discussions of Aryanization and how it should be done, which already started in the period of Slovak autonomy (6 October 1938 – 14 March 1939), led, after the declaration of the independent Slovak state, to the introduction of various preparatory measures such as the introduction of temporary administrators and trustees of Jewish businesses.

In April 1940, the Parliament of the Slovak Republic passed the so-called First Aryanization Act, written by officials at the Ministry of the Economy to

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- 1 TRANČÍK, Martin. *Medzi starým a novým. História kníhkupeckej rodiny Steinerovcov v Bratislave*. (Between old and new. A history of the Steiner bookselling family of Bratislava.). Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo PT, 1997. ISBN 8096702696.
 - 2 GLEVICKÁ, Marcela. “Dedička antikvariátu Steinerovcov prežila vojnu vďaka pestúnke, keď arizátor Ondrejov poslal jej rodičov do Osvienčimu”. (“The heiress of the Steiner Bookshop survived the war thanks to a foster-mother, when Aryanizer Ondrejov sent her parents to Auschwitz”). In *Denník N* [online]. Accessible on-line: <<https://dennikn.sk/531876/dedicka-antikvariatu-steinerovcov-prezila-vojnu-vdaka-pestunke-ked-arizator-ondrejov-poslal-jej-rodicov-do-osviencimu/>> [cit 2019-01-10]; SIVÝ, Rudolf. “V detstve ju Tiso hladkal po vlasoch. Matku roztrhali psy v Osvienčime.” (“In childhood Tiso stroked her hair, her mother was torn to pieces by dogs in Auschwitz”). In *Aktuality.sk* [online]. Dostupné online: <https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/365047/v-detstve-ju-tiso-hladkal-po-vlasoch-matku-roztrhali-psy-v-osviencime/> [cit 2019-01-10].
 - 3 TRANČÍK, ref 1, s. 208, NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard (eds.). *Holokaust na Slovensku 6. Deportácie v roku 1942. Dokumenty*. (The Holocaust in Slovakia 6. The deportations of 1942. Documents.). Bratislava: Nadácia Milana Šimečku, 2005, Dokument no. 321, p. 406.

regulate the whole process for the first time.⁴ It appeared that the Aryanization of firms would follow the course set by Tiso's conservative wing of the HSĽS. Only firms of Jewish owners with fewer than 20 employees were to be included in the Aryanization of firms. The First Aryanization Act gave county offices and the Ministry of the Economy the power to decide whether firms of Jewish owners would be liquidated or Aryanized, that is sold to new non-Jewish owners. Aryanizers had to be qualified to Aryanize particular firms or their majority shareholdings. They needed to have enough capital to pay for the property they acquired by Aryanization. Apparently because of the economic caution of the conservative wing of HSĽS, the First Aryanization Act gave the Jewish owners of firms in Slovakia the possibility to select and propose Aryanizers for their firms. This was described at the time as "voluntary Aryanization". The original owner of the firm could propose a particular Aryanizer to be the majority shareholder of his firm.⁵ However, everything had to be approved by the Ministry of the Economy. Otherwise, the regime already gave the original owners no official space to influence the Aryanization process, and they could only helplessly watch as official decisions took away their source of income. The First Aryanization Act became valid on 1 June 1940.⁶

The story of the Aryanization of Zigmund Steiner's Bookshop at Ventúrska 22 in Bratislava, later Aryanized by the writer L. Mistrík-Ondrejov, began to be written at around this time. What was this firm?

Around 1940 Zigmund (or Sigmund) Steiner's Bookshop was one of the most important firms in its field in Slovakia. It already had a history of almost 100 years behind it. In 1848 the Jewish tradesman Sigmund Steiner married the widow Jozefína König and acquired the small second hand bookshop, which J. König had established only recently, in 1847. Sigmund Steiner enlarged the shop, and in 1867 his eldest son Hermann joined the business. Hermann went to Leipzig for training in the book trade, and in 1878 he fully took over the business from his father, although it continued to bear the name Sigmund Steiner. It was precisely Hermann Steiner who moved the bookshop to a better address in Bratislava, on

4 Zákon (Act) no. 113/1940 Sl. z. o židovských podnikoch a Židoch zamestnaných v podnikoch. (On Jewish businesses and Jews employed in businesses.). *Slovenský zákonník* (Slovak Statute Book), year 1940, pp. 163–172; HALLON, Ludovít. Arizácia na Slovensku 1939 – 1945. In *Acta Oeconomica Pragensia*, 2007, vol. 15, no. 7, p. 151. ISSN 0572-3043.

5 For more details on the First Aryanization Act see HLAVINKA, Ján. Sklamanie „umierenených“ Ľudákov: Prvý arizačný zákon a jeho výsledky. (The disappointment of the "moderate" Ľudáks: The First Aryanization Act and its results). In *Historik a dejiny : v česko-slovenskom storočí osudových dátumov. Jubileum Ivana Kamenca*. Bratislava: Historický ústav SAV vo Vede, vydavateľstve SAV, 2018, pp. 87–102. ISBN 9788022416535.

6 KAMENEC, Ivan. *Po stopách tragédie*. (On the trail of tragedy). Bratislava: Archa, 1991, p. 67, ISBN 8071150150.

Ventúrska Street, where he and his wife bought a house in 1880.⁷ After Hermann Steiner and his wife Selma, the bookshop was taken over by their two sons: Max Steiner and Jakub Jozef Steiner. From 1 January 1930, it was the Zigmund Steiner public commercial company with two partners Max Steiner and Jakub J. Steiner.⁸ The annual turnover of the company was 411,797 Kč in 1938.⁹ In comparison with other firms in this field, the Zigmund Steiner Bookshop was one of the most important in Bratislava on the eve of Aryanization.

After passing of the First Aryanization Act, the owners of the bookshop Max Steiner and Jakub J. Steiner like hundreds of other Jewish businessmen understood that they were faced with two possibilities: either to let the Ľudák regime decide on the liquidation or Aryanization of their business, or enter the process of so-called voluntary Aryanization themselves by proposing an Aryanizer of a majority share in their business and its profit. The second possibility offered the chance to keep at least some income from the firm. It was a logical but certainly not a voluntary decision.

The sources show that in the summer months of 1940, the Steiner brothers agreed on the partial Aryanization of their firm with Jozef Ján Csákos, who is mentioned in the documents as an “artistic writer”. In August 1940 in harmony with the practice of the time, the Steiner brothers and J.J. Csákos signed a Company Agreement, according to which J.J. Csákos would enter the Zigmund Steiner company as a third “Aryan partner”. After his entry, he would gain a 60% share of the property of the company and its profit. The company’s name would change to “*Zigmund Steiner, successor J. Csákos and co., seller of books and music*”.¹⁰ The Company Agreement between the Steiner brothers as partners in the Zigmund Steiner firm and J.J. Csákos was submitted to the City Notary’s Office, which had to pass it on to higher offices for approval. If they gave it and the County Office in Bratislava could get the approval of the Ministry of the Economy, an Aryanization decision in harmony with the contract would be issued and the company of the Steiner brothers would be Aryanized by J.J. Csákos.

However, other people also applied to Aryanize the bookshop without declaring an interest in agreement with the Steiners. In their case it would be

7 TRANČÍK, ref 1, p. 71.

8 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives (hereinafter USHMMA), Record Group 57.001M Slovak Documents Related to the Holocaust (hereinafter RG-57001M), Reel 972, File 219 (hereinafter 972/219).

9 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/212, Oznámenie Daňovej správy Bratislava-mesto (Declaration to the Bratislava city tax office) no. 23.531/1940 from 15 Oct 1940.

10 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/210-211, Spoločenská zmluva (Company agreement) from 15 Aug 1940.

forcible Aryanization decreed by the authorities. The applicants included a certain Karol Maukš, who stated in his application that he was a technical writer by profession, a retired post office official, and of Slovak nationality.¹¹ There was an application from Emil Natali, who had worked as an account keeper and office workers in various commercial companies in Graz and later in Bratislava. He had experience of the book trade and declared German nationality.¹² The offices began to verify all the applicants. The correspondence between the City Notary's Office and the County Office in Bratislava shows that the decision makers were inclined to select Emil Natali to undertake the forced Aryanization of the Steiner business.

Meanwhile, however, the overall development of the anti-Jewish policy of the Ľudák regime prevented Aryanization according to the First Aryanization Act. After the German – Slovak talks on the highest level at the end of July 1940 in Salzburg, and the strengthening of the radical wing of HSĽS on the internal political stage in Slovakia, the conception of the anti-Jewish policy including Aryanization began to change in September 1940. On 3 September 1940, only a few days after the Steiners and Csákos, the Parliament of the Slovak Republic passed a constitutional act by which it empowered the government to enact decrees that would exclude the Jews from the economic and social life of Slovakia, and carry out the Aryanization of their property.¹³ The cabinet headed by Vojtech Tuka, leading personality in the radical wing of HSĽS, became the decisive factor in the anti-Jewish policy after this step. It was generally known that Tuka and his supporters did not agree with the First Aryanization Act and especially so-called voluntary Aryanization, which they attacked in the press. Prime Minister Tuka and other radicals had their own ideas about the faster and more vigorous Aryanization of firms. On 11 September 1940, the Ministry of the Economy had to stop the already prolonged Aryanization process according to the First Aryanization Act. A few days later, the Central Economic Office (Ústredný hospodársky úrad) was established by decree of the government. It was given exclusive responsibility for the Aryanization of Jewish firms, and later for the Aryanization of all other types of property with the exception of agricultural property.¹⁴

11 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/264, Žiadosť Karola Maukša o nariadenie arizácie žid. podniku. (Application from Karol Maukš to Aryanize a Jewish business.)

12 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/256, 259, Žiadosť Emila Nataliho o nariadenie arizácie žid. podniku, Životopis E. Nataliho, (Application from Emil Natali to Aryanize a Jewish business. Curriculum vitae of E. Natali.)

13 Ústavný zákon (Constitutional Statute) no. 210/1940 Sl. z., ktorým sa vláda splnomocňuje, aby činila opatrenia vo veciach arizácie. (By which the government is empowered to enact measures concerning Aryanization). *Slovenský zákonník*, year 1940, p. 343.

14 For more details see HLAVINKA, Ján. Vznik Ústredného hospodárskeho úradu a určenie

The regional state offices, which had been really flooded with various Aryanization applications and company contracts like that concluded between the Steiner brothers and J.J. Csákos, had to gradually hand over the whole agenda to the newly established Central Economic Office. This also happened in the case of the documents connected with the Aryanization of the Steiner Bookshop, which came to the Central Economic Office in the middle of December 1940. Meanwhile, in November 1940, the government issued the government decree with force of law, also known to historiography as the Second Aryanization Act, which radically changed the mechanism for the Aryanization of “Jewish businesses”.¹⁵ Voluntary Aryanization was no longer possible. Aryanization was decided with final validity exclusively by the Central Economic Office, which had the exclusive right to decide who would obtain a particular “Jewish business” and under what conditions. Augustín Morávek had the decisive position at the CEO as its chairman. Before the establishment of the office he was adviser to Prime Minister V. Tuka on Aryanization.¹⁶

After taking over the documents, the CEO did not act for a relatively long time, as was typical for the initial period of its activity, which was filled with the process of establishing the office, appointing personnel, working out new Aryanization norms and so on. Meanwhile, however, the number of people interested in Aryanizing the Steiner Bookshop increased. Karol Terebessy submitted an Aryanization application in February 1941. He had completed his studies at a commercial academy, but not at the higher commercial college, and on the day of submitting the application had no proper employment. He declared Hungarian nationality. In contrast to Karol Maukš and Emil Natali, who declared themselves propertyless, Karol Terebessy stated that he had capital of 30,000

jeho kompetencií do leta 1942. (The Central Economic Office and the setting of its powers up to summer 1942.). In SOKOLOVIČ, Peter (eds.). *Od Salzburgu do vypuknutia Povstania : Slovenská republika 1939 – 1945 očami mladých historikov VIII*. Bratislava: Ústav pamäti národa, 2009, pp. 63–92. ISBN 9788089335213; FIAMOVÁ, Martina. “*Slovenská zem patrí do slovenských rúk*”. *Arizácia pozemkového vlastníctva židovského obyvateľstva na Slovensku v rokoch 1939 – 1945*. (“Slovak land belongs in Slovak hands”. The Aryanization of land ownership in Slovakia, 1939–1945). Bratislava: Veda: Historický ústav SAV, 2015. ISBN 9788022414463.

- 15 Nariadenie vlády s mocou zákona (Government decree with force of law) no. 303/1940 Sl. z. o židovských podnikoch. (On Jewish businesses). *Slovenský zákonník*, year 1940, pp. 472–476. The provisions of this decree were later incorporated in decree no. 198/1941 Sl. z. o právnom postavení Židov, (On the legal position of Jews), also known as the Židovský kódex (Jewish Code).
- 16 A. Morávek advised the prime minister from the position of head of the Hospodárska úradovňa predsedníctva vlády, (Economic Office of the Prime Minister), which V. Tuka created for the purpose of intervening in the Aryanization process in January 1940. For more details see: HLAVINKA, ref. 14.

Ks.¹⁷ In February 1941, the CEO received an application from Maria Rosewatsch, a German living in Bratislava, stating that she had capital of 70,000 Ks and had completed study at commercial school. She was recommended for Aryanization by the Deutsche Partei.¹⁸ The writer Ľudo Mistrík-Ondrejov submitted his application to Aryanize the bookshop in June 1941. He stated in his application that he had no capital, only a guarantee of access to credit of 50,000 Ks. He wrote that from the point of view of education he was a qualified notary and he would submit a notary's diploma later.¹⁹ The final Aryanization application came in August 1941 from Oľga Lukáčová, an office worker of Slovak nationality, who had completed study at the commercial academy and had capital of 4,000 Ks.²⁰

After recording the applications, the Central Economic Office started its usual administrative procedure, the first step of which was to ascertain the opinion of the power structures of the Ľudák regime on the individual applicants. The office asked the General Secretariat of HSLŠ, the appropriate district commands of the Hlinka Guard and the State Secretariat for the Affairs of the German National Group for their written positions on the individual applicants. Police investigations of the affairs of each applicant were carried out at the same time. On the basis of these reports and of the decision of the chairman of the CEO, the office usually decided on the appointment of a temporary administrator for a firm. The temporary administrator was not the owner of the firm, but had the legal authority to represent the firm and act in its name. For this, he received a monthly salary at the expense of the original owner. The principle was to enable practice in running the business at the expense of the original owner before the final transfer of the firm. Morávek himself justified the appointment of temporary administrators with the argument that specific persons had to get the opportunity to work in a firm.²¹ The actual Aryanization decision was the next step, and it was rather exceptional for the serving temporary administrator not to be chosen as the final Aryanizer.

In the case of the Zigmund Steiner firm, the above mentioned Maria Rosewatsch was chosen as the temporary administrator, even before Ľ. Mistrík-

17 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/272, Žiadosť o vymenovanie za dočasného správcu. (Request for appointment of a temporary administrator.).

18 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/276-278, Dotazník o osobe a pomeroch uchádzača. (Questionnaire about the person and situation of the applicant.).

19 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/296, Dotazník o osobe a pomeroch uchádzača.

20 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/307-308, Dotazník o osobe a pomeroch uchádzača.

21 Slovenský národný archív (Slovak National Archives) (hereinafter SNA), archívny fond (archive fund) (hereinafter f.) Povereníctvo priemyslu a obchodu–VII. odbor, (Commission for Industry and Trade – VII Department), carton number 100 (hereinafter c.), VII-1224 Dávid Grauberd, výroba dreveného uhlia, Humenné. Vyjadrenie predsedu ÚHÚ. (Dávid Grauberd, production of charcoal, Humanné. Statement by the chairman of the CEO.).

Ondrejov and Oľga Lukáčová applied to Aryanize it. The chairman of the CEO set Maria Rosewatsch's monthly salary at 2,500 Ks, which was the pay of a high state official at the time.²²

The fact that the applicants to Aryanize the business included people of Slovak and German nationality meant that the question of the future Aryanizer moved from the Central Economic Office to talks by the so-called "Mixed Commission" of representatives of HSLŠ and the Deutsche Partei. Andrej Germuška and Jozef Kosorín from the General Secretariat of HSLŠ formed the Slovak side of the commission, while the German side comprised Eugen Reisinger head of the Main Economic Office of the Deutsche Partei and Karl Bloudek (later Karl Blondel) head of the Aryanization Department at the Main Economic Office.²³

On 5 September 1941, the commission decided that it had "to find out whether L. Mistrík-Ondrejov had Aryanized anything, and if not he would get this business".²⁴ A few days later, on 8 September 1941, the staff of the III Department of the CEO, responsible for Aryanizing and liquidating "Jewish businesses" with various fields of activity, wrote and signed the following text: "I confirm that Ludovít Mistrík (Ondrejov) writer of Bratislava has not Aryanized any business from our department."²⁵ The final decision on who would Aryanize the business had to be taken by the chairman of the CEO A. Morávek.

Morávek decided that Z. Steiner Bookshop and music business would not go to the existing temporary administrator M. Rosewatsch, but to the writer L. Mistrík-Ondrejov. It happened on 9 September 1941, when the chairman of the CEO signed the "Decision on the complete transfer of the business (type B) to Ludovít Mistrík-Ondrejov."²⁶

As the characteristics of the applicants show, Mistrík-Ondrejov was not either the most qualified or the richest applicant. On the contrary, he had dug deep into his pockets in this period. He had recently moved from Turčiansky Sv. Martin to Bratislava and had not been successful in earning his living. He drank in the pubs, and was always short of money.²⁷ Where the decision of the chairman of

22 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/391. Revízná správa Slovenskej revíznej a dôverníckej spoločnosti (Report on an audit by the Slovak Auditing and Trustee Society) from 6 Sept 1943.

23 HLAVINKA, Ján. „Kapitál má slúžiť národu...“. Korupcia v arizácii podnikového majetku na Slovensku. ("Capital has to serve the nation..." Corruption in the Aryanization of business property in Slovakia.). In ŠOLTÉS, Peter – VÖRÖS, László (eds.). *Korupcia*. Bratislava: Historický ústav SAV; Veda, 2015, pp. 374–421.

24 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/430, Záznam „Židovský podnik“ (The record "Jewish business") from 5 Sept 1941.

25 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/431, Úradný záznam (Official record) from 8 Sept 1941.

26 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/411-414, Rozhodnutie o prevode židovského podniku (Decision on transfer of a Jewish business) no. 37182/III/7/1941.

27 MAŤOVČÍK, Augustín. *Čiri a čistý rozprávač Ludo Ondrejov. Život a dielo v dokumentoch*. (The clear and pure story-teller Ludo Ondrejov. His life and work in documents). Martin:

the CEO to select him from among the applicants is concerned, we have available only the very brief record from the above-mentioned mixed commission, where no reasons for his selection are given. Was the decision of this commission the only reason for Morávek's signature at the bottom of the Aryanization decision?

There is a theory that Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov's wife Oľga Harmanová had a decisive influence on the awarding of the Steiner Bookshop to him.²⁸ The journalist Peter Getting discovered that O. Harmanová was the sister of Viktor Harman, one of the leading officials at the Central Economic Office. Therefore, he thinks that the reason for the awarding of the Steiner Bookshop to Ľudovít Mistrík-Ondrejov must be sought precisely here.²⁹ From the beginning of the existence of the CEO until the middle of 1942, Viktor Harman was the head of its Legislative Department and had an important position in the hierarchy of this special office. It was not only that he helped to create the office, but also that together with chairman A. Morávek, he participated in writing the legislation on Aryanization according to which the office acted. He was also co-author of a publication giving a legal explanation of the legislation.³⁰ According to the German adviser on the Jewish question Dieter Wisliceny, Viktor Harman was an especially influential and important person at the CEO, and was absolutely trusted by chairman Morávek.³¹ Thus, it could have been a matter of protection, and it would not have been the first case of protection at the CEO.³²

Vydavateľstvo Osveta, 1986, pp. 159–161.

- 28 Oľga Harmanová (1907–1950) devoted her life to writing stories. In the period 1928–1941 she worked as a teacher at an elementary school in Bratislava. Her first book: *Cupinôžka* appeared in 1941. MAŤOVČÍK, Augustín et al. (eds.). *Slovník slovenských spisovateľov 20. storočia*. (A dictionary of Slovak writers of the 20th century). Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo spolku slovenských spisovateľov; Martin: Slovenská národná knižnica, 2001, p. 138. ISBN 808061122X.
- 29 GETTING, Peter. “*Temná minulosť slovenského spisovateľa: Poslal Židov do koncentrákov kvôli majetkom?*” (“The dark past of a Slovak writer: Did he send Jews to concentration camps because of property?”) In *Plus 7 dní*. Accessible on-line: <<https://plus7dni.pluska.sk/historia/temna-minulost-slovenskeho-spisovateľa-poslal-zidov-koncentrakov-kvoli-majetkom>> .
- 30 HAMMER, Oskar – HARMAN, Viktor – ZIMAN, Ladislav (eds.). *Komentovaná zbierka najnovších právnych predpisov upravujúcich arizáciu a právne postavenie Židov na Slovensku*. (Collection of the latest legal norms regulating Aryanization and the legal position of Jews in Slovakia with comments). Second edition. Bratislava: C.F.Wigand, 1941. The first edition of this publication appeared in 1940.
- 31 NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard. Arizácie a problémy majetku Židov na Slovensku v hláseniach predstaviteľov nacistického Nemecka (Aryanization and the problems of Jewish property in Slovakia in the statements of representatives of Nazi Germany) (1939 – 1943). In NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard – HLAVINKA, Ján (eds.) *Arizácie*. Bratislava: FiF UK; Dokumentačné stredisko holokaustu, 2010, Dokument no. 8, Správa D. Wislicenyho z 18. 7. 1941 o A. Morávkovi a Ústrednom hospodárskom úrade, (Report of D. Wisliceny from 18 July 1941 on A. Morávek and the Central Economic Office), p. 174.
- 32 SNA, f. 209, 209-927-1, Zápisnica (Record) from 15 June 1942. On the various forms of corruption in the decision-making of the Central Economic Office see HLAVINKA, ref. 23.

Information about the influence of O. Harmanová on the whole case already appeared in 1986, when Augustín Maťovčík wrote very inaccurately from the point of view of the nature of the case in a biography of Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov: “*He consented after agreement with his wife to take over the administration (sic!) of the well-known Steiner second hand bookshop.*”³³ The theory of the influence of Oľga Harmonová is also supported by the statement of a personal friend of Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov, the writer Ivan Kupec, who wrote in his diary that Mistrík-Ondrejov had been pushed to Aryanize by his wife.³⁴

It is necessary to say here that Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov was single when he applied to Aryanize the Steiner Bookshop. He married Oľga Harmanová in November 1941, two months after he was granted possession of the firm.³⁵ This obviously does not exclude the possibility that O. Harmanová and her brother Viktor influenced the decision of A. Morávek in favour of the writer Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov.

However, it is also possible that Morávek relied only on the decision of the already mentioned mixed commission, which included representatives of Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party and represented the view of the powerful elements of the regime on Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov’s Aryanization application.

Whatever the motivation of A. Morávek to decide in favour of Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov, the fact remains that in September 1941 he became the Aryanizer and so the new owner of the Z. Steiner Bookshop and music business in Bratislava, and this did not happen by agreement with the original owners.

It is not well-known that the Aryanization of the Steiner Bookshop was not the only case in which the Ľudovít Mistrík-Ondrejov figured as an Aryanizer and it was not the first. On 8 July 1941, on the basis of a decision of the same chairman of the Central Economic Office, he gained a share in the ownership and profit of a much larger Bratislava firm: the Känzler Brothers wholesale business in woven, fashion and textile goods located at Klobučnícka street 4 in Bratislava.³⁶ The original firm owned by Bernát Känzler was Aryanized by Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov and Štefan Cenknér. The Central Economic Office imposed on the owner of the firm Bernát Känzler a so-called partial Aryanization (type

33 MAŤOVČÍK, ref. 27. p. 169.

34 KUPEC, Ivan. *Denník*. (Diary). Bratislava: Slovenský spisovateľ, 1999, p. 33. ISBN 9788022010207.

35 MAŤOVČÍK, Augustín. *Život a dielo Ľuda Ondrejova v dátach (Pramene a dokumenty)*. (The life and work of Ľudo Ondrejov in dates (Sources and documents)). In VALENTOVIČ, Štefan (eds.). *Biografické štúdie 9*. Martin: Matica slovenská, Biografický ústav, 1980, p. 58. ISSN 1338-0354.

36 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 876/1907, Rozhodnutie o zrušení prevodu 50% účasti (Decision on cancellation of transfer of a 50% share) II/B/-4579/5-44.

C) involving the creation of a public commercial company with Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov and Štefan Cenknér. The shares were divided as follows: 35% each for Ľudovít Mistrík-Ondrejov and Štefan Cenknér, with 30% left to the original owner Bernát Känzler.³⁷ However, the final division of the company gave the Aryanizers 38% each, while B. Känzler kept only 24%.³⁸ Before Aryanization, this firm was much larger than that of the Steiner brothers. Its annual turnover in 1938 was 2,374,000.50 Ks.³⁹

Bernát Känzler's shop also originated in the 19th century. It was initially established by his parents at Horný Kamenec. After the father of the family died, Bernát Känzler's older brother ran the shop with their mother, while Bernát was an apprentice at a similar shop in Nitra. Later he worked in Vienna and he was called up for service at the front in the First World War. After the return of both Känzler brothers from military service at the end of 1918, they transferred the shop to Bratislava, where they worked together until the older brother Mór Känzler died in 1935.

There were also various applications to Aryanize this business, starting after the passing of the First Aryanization Act. Anton Cseh, Johann Hatváni, Hermína Bezáková. Hermína Jusková and the above mentioned Štefan Cenknér applied to the County Office in Bratislava to Aryanize it. The original owner B. Känzler agreed on "voluntary Aryanization" with Hermína Jusková, wife of the Bratislava police chief, just as the Steiner brothers did with Ján J. Csákos.⁴⁰ However, the effort of the original owner was also unsuccessful here. Ľudovít Mistrík-Ondrejov was one of the last to submit an application, four days after he applied to Aryanize the Steiner Bookshop. However, it was an entirely different type of shop.

It is interesting that in his application to Aryanize the Känzler Brothers wholesale business, Mistrík-Ondrejov gave different data about his assets. In the space of four days, apart from a loan of 50,000 Ks, he put in the column "other financial facts and rights" a sum of 100,000 Ks, which he completed with the note: "*authorship rights of one publication of literary works published up to now*".⁴¹ At the same time, he replied to the question in the application to Aryanize the Känzler business to the question of whether he could prove that

37 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 876/1918, 1921, Evidenčný hárok, Rozhodnutie ÚHÚ (Record sheet. Decision of the CEO) C3 from 8 July 1941.

38 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 876/1986, Revízná správa (Report on and audit) SRDS, p. 2.

39 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 876/1985, Revízná správa SRDS, p. 1.

40 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 876/2174, Oznámenie Mestského notárskeho úradu. (Notification by the City Notary's Office).

41 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 876/2053, Dotazník o osobe a pomeroch uchádzača.

“he would not just cover up the illegal economic activity of the Jew” with the statement: *“I never negotiated with the Jew.”*⁴²

Ľudovít Mistrík-Ondrejov was not the richest or the best qualified also in this case either. As in the case of the Steiner Bookshop, a temporary administrator, namely Štefan Cenker, was appointed even before Mistrík-Ondrejov had applied.

However, there is another more important factor. It is clear that the above-mentioned decision of the mixed commission of representatives of HSES and the Deutsche Partei that Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov had to get the Z. Steiner Bookshop and music business if he did not get another Aryanization, had not been observed by the CEO. On the contrary, Mistrík-Ondrejov got the Steiner shop in spite of the fact that he had already Aryanized a majority share in the Bernát Kändler shop in July 1941.

Where this Aryanization by Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov is concerned, we do not know why the Central Economic Office decided to divide the Kändler Brothers wholesale business between two applicants with the original Jewish owner still involved. It is possible that since both Š. Cenker and Mistrík-Ondrejov were entirely unqualified, they wanted to avoid the rapid decline of this large wholesale business.

Aryanization always had a serious impact on the running of a firm and on its original owners. In better cases they retained minority shares or became employees of the Aryanizer. In worse cases they were immediately excluded and remained unemployed. The regime presented allowing the original owners to keep property shares or employment as a necessary evil. Permission to keep a property share or employment in a firm depended on decisions of the Central Economic Office.

Relatively little information has survived about the situation at the Z. Steiner Bookshop after Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov became its new owner. A member of the Steiner family said this about: *“Our Aryanizer Mistrík immediately told us that he was intelligent and not anti-Semitic. He was a great drinker, he showed himself here once a month, sometimes twice, pocketed the profits and went away. On the other hand, however, management of the shop remained in the hands of the Steiner family. Three uncles worked in the shop with my father. Four members of the Steiner family were employed there. There were also other Jewish employees. At first, Mistrík left them all.”*⁴³

There is even less information about how Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov acted in his other Aryanized firm, which became “CE-KA – Ľudo Mistrík and Co.” public

42 USHMM, RG-57.001M, 972/2057, Žiadosť o nariadenie prevodu podniku.

43 TRANČÍK, ref 1, p. 204.

commercial company.⁴⁴ We only know that Bernát Känzler continued to work in the firm for several months. However, already in autumn 1941, the Aryanizers L. Mistrík-Ondrejov and Š. Cenková began to make an effort to eliminate B. Känzler from the firm. On 11 November 1941 Mistrík-Ondrejov and Š. Cenkner the “Aryan partners” wrote an application to the Central Economic Office “to divide the share of the Jewish partner (24%) between the two undersigned Aryan partners (12% each) because the Jewish partner Bernát Känzler is no longer needed for the successful running of the firm. The undersigned partners can run the business successfully without him”.⁴⁵ On the other side of the document is a note by an official of the CEO stating that L. Mistrík-Ondrejov had intervened personally with the CEO about this matter on 25 November 1941.⁴⁶ Less than a month later, on 20 December 1941, the two partners informed the CEO by letter that they were taking over Känzler’s share.⁴⁷ According to the letter of the law this was illegal because only the Central Economic Office could award the property share. The office later granted the Aryanizers their wish. In March 1942, the CEO officially deprived B. Känzler of his share of the firm, and divided it between Mistrík-Ondrejov and Cenkner, who became the owners of 50% each from 15 March 1942.⁴⁸

Thus in mid March 1942 Ludovít Mistrík-Ondrejov was joint owner of a large Bratislava company concerned with wholesale trade in textiles under the name CE-KA Ludo Mistrík and co. public commercial company as well as being exclusive owner of a large bookshop called the Mistrík Bookshop. With some simplification, it is possible to say that by filling in several forms, the writer Ludovít Mistrík-Ondrejov had gained possession of two large Bratislava commercial companies, which had been built up over generations by their Jewish owners.

The deportation of Jews from Slovakia began at the end of March 1942. The HSEŠ regime used it to get rid of the socially dependent Jews, who had been deprived of their property by Aryanization. Deportation trains left Slovakia almost every day carrying Jews to the Nazi concentration and extermination camp at Auschwitz or to the Lublin district, where Operation Reinhardt was happening. During the deportations members of the Hlinka Guard, Freiwillige Schutzstaffel and gendarmerie violently seized first young Jewish men and women and later

44 Some documents use the name: „CEKA“, public commercial company.

45 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 876/2013, Letter from 11 Nov 1941.

46 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 876/2013, Letter from 11 Nov 1941.

47 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 876/2012, Letter from 20 Dec 1941.

48 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 876/1991, Rozhodnutie o prevode židovskej účasti (Decision on the transfer of a Jewish share) no. 71710/III-4/41.

whole Jewish families in Bratislava and other places so that they could be put in cattle wagons and deported. Then the possessions of the deportees were publicly auctioned in the street.

In June 1942 during the deportation of Jews from Slovakia, Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov also attempted to get rid of the original owners of the bookshop and other Jewish employees. He wrote and sent to the authorities a declaration stating: *“I declare that I do not need in my bookshop at Ventúrska Street 22 in Bratislava the following Jews: Max Steiner, Jozef Steiner, Regina Lebensfeldová, Žigmund Steiner and Viliam Steiner. The arrest and deportation of these Jews will not harm the shop in any way or harm the economy of the Slovak state, because I have found a replacement in the person of the Aryan Mr. Viliam Fábry from Turčiansky Svätý Martin. I still need for the business Max Wimer, Cecilia Gelbová and perhaps for one more month also Leopold Mendlinger. Bratislava, 12 June 1942. Na stráž (On Guard). Ludo Mistrík, owner of the bookshop at Ventúrska Street 22 by my own hand”*⁴⁹

Max Steiner and Jozef J. Steiner illegally supported themselves as building workers in Bratislava for a few weeks after this step by Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov. However, Max Steiner was arrested in summer 1942 and deported. Jozef Jakub Steiner was also arrested and deported in July 1942. His wife insisted on going with him, although the policeman, who arrested him, tried to talk her out of it.⁵⁰ None of them survived the Holocaust.

The process of Aryanizing firms was formally conditional on the Aryanizers paying for the property they had Aryanized. However, what A. Morávek called “revolutionary Aryanization” included the principle that property was transferred before its value and the amount to be paid by the Aryanizer had been worked out. In the case of the two firms from which Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov profited, this question was considered by the authorities for months, as was typical in the Aryanization process. The Central Economic Office simply did not manage to determine the value of businesses, so it made the Aryanizers promise to estimate the value of their businesses themselves, and submit their subjective estimates within ten days of receiving property.⁵¹ After an official valuation there would be a settlement.

In the case of complete Aryanization, the Aryanizer was supposed to pay the so-called liquidation value of the business, which essentially meant the value of all its assets. In the case of a so-called partial Aryanization with the continued

49 TRANČÍK, ref 1, p. 208.

50 TRANČÍK, ref 1, p. 207.

51 SNA, f. Ministerstvo hospodárstva (Ministry of the Economy) (hereinafter MH), c. 404, Dokument „Rozdelenie podnikov“.(Document “Division of businesses”).

participation of the original owner, the basic value was determined by deducting all the liabilities of the firm from the liquidation value.

L. Mistrík-Ondrejov physically took possession of the Z. Steiner Bookshop and Music business on 30 September 1941 and informed the Central Economic Office of this on 1 October 1941. The record of the state of the business on 30 September 1941 signed on 20 October by L. Mistrík-Ondrejov, the original owners Max Steiner and Jozef Jakub Steiner and two witnesses, stated that the business had assets worth a total of 363,900.55 Ks and liabilities of 146,559.80 Ks.⁵² Then Mistrík-Ondrejov took a skilful step: He declared that he was taking over the liabilities of the firm, which enabled him to deduct the liabilities from the assets also in the case of a complete Aryanization. Thus, the liquidation value of the business that he had to pay was 217,340.75 Ks and the claims of creditors could be solved separately.⁵³

However, a few months later, on 23 March 1942, L. Mistrík Ondrejov sent a letter to the Central Economic Office withdrawing his signature under the record of the state of the business agreed with the original owners with the following justification: *“This record was signed by me, but I was seriously ill at the time, I had only a few days available, and did not have the physical possibility to study the record and especially its extensive supplements in detail. I wrote my signature only ‘in good faith’, and now, after detailed study of the materials, I reject the validity of this signature. I urgently ask that the respected office consider the record in question to be invalid.”*⁵⁴ He reported an entirely different calculation of the assets and liabilities of the business, making the assets lower and the liabilities higher, so that he theoretically had to pay only 26,173.50 Ks for the firm.⁵⁵ He asked the Central Economic Office to set payments based on this sum, but the payments were not approved.⁵⁶

Definitive setting of the value each Aryanizer had to pay was exclusively the responsibility of the Central Economic Office. It determined the value of businesses on the basis of reports from the auditors of the Slovak Auditors’ and Trustees’ Society (Slovenská revízna a dôvernícka spoločnosť – SRDS),

52 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/486-487, Zápisnica o majetkovom stave (Record of state of property from 20 Oct 1941).

53 HAMMER – HARMAN– ZIMAN, ref 30, p. 39.

54 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/456, Letter from 23 March 1942.

55 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/457, Bilancia podniku. (Company balance sheet) This document was dated 1 Oct 1941, but at the CEO it was recorded only on 25 March 1942 together with the letter in which L. Mistrík-Ondrejov withdrew his signature under the balance from 20 Oct 1941.

56 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/459, Žiadosť o povolenie splátok likvidačnej hodnoty. (Application for approval of instalments towards the liquidation value.).

which was inundated with valuations of hundreds of Aryanized firms throughout Slovakia, so that it took years to deal with these firms. It was no different in the case of Mistrík's bookshop. The auditors from the SRDS came only on 18 January 1943. By this time, Augustín Morávek and Viktor Harman no longer worked at the Central Economic Office. The situation at the CEO and the decisions of its chairman A. Morávek were investigated by a special commission in spring 1942. As a result, Morávek resigned on 1 July 1942 and the whole original leadership of the office left with him.

The audit by the SRDS took four days, Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov did not physically participate and the liquidation value of the firm that he had to pay as Aryanizer, was finally estimated at a sum of 248,180.30 Ks. The auditors stated that up to the day of the audit, Mistrík-Ondrejov had paid only 11,000 Ks.⁵⁷ However, determination of the liquidation value of a firm was not official until the CEO issued an official decision. The Central Economic Office definitively determined the liquidation value of the Aryanized book and music business on 8 May 1944, fully accepting the estimate of the Slovak Auditors' and Trustees' Society. Up to 25 August 1944, 40,771.10 Ks was paid towards the liquidation value.⁵⁸

The auditors from the SRDS came to the firm that had originally belonged to B. Känzler, to determine its value on 19 June 1942.⁵⁹ They reported that the firm had no liabilities. They finally determined its value as 958,158.20 Ks.,⁶⁰ from which Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov was supposed to pay: 494,381.05 Ks.⁶¹ Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov was not present at this audit either, with only the other Aryanizer participating. The auditors wrote in their report: "*Ludovít Mistrík was not present in the business premises during the audit and nobody knew where he was. As a result, it was not possible to ascertain his property position.*"⁶² The report does not say whether Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov had paid anything towards the liquidation value of the firm up to the day of the audit.

Everything suggests that both firms functioned after their Aryanization without Mistrík-Ondrejov actively leading them. After getting rid of the owners, the writer still employed a chief manager of the bookshop. For some time Viliam Žingor held this position.⁶³ Mistrík-Ondrejov lived with his family in Turčiansky

57 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/397, Revízná správa (Auditor's report) SRDS, p. 7.

58 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/156, Oznámenie Mestskej sporiteľne (Notification from the City Savings Bank) from 25 Aug 1944.

59 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 876/1985, Revízná správa SRDS, p. 1.

60 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 876/1987, Revízná správa SRDS, p. 4.

61 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 876/1987, Revízná správa SRDS, p. 4.

62 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 876/1989, Revízná správa SRDS, p. 5.

63 Viliam Žingor participated in the SRDS audit as chief manager of the shop. The report on the audit gives his monthly salary as 2,000 Ks. USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/392, Revízná

Svätý Martin and sometimes travelled to Bratislava. The size of his total profit from the two firms cannot be ascertained from the documents studied. We can get some idea from the official declarations of the firms from 1943. He gradually took 57,054 Ks from the CE-KA firm in 1943,⁶⁴ and he took 41,000 Ks from the Mistrík Bookshop in 1943.⁶⁵

It is necessary to say that, where the question of obtaining the value of an Aryanized property was concerned, Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov's Aryanizations were similar to other Aryanization cases. Payment of the value in the case of the Mistrík Bookshop occurred gradually, although the Aryanizer had no official authorization for this. The approved liquidation value of 248,180.30 Ks was never paid.⁶⁶ In the case of the CE-KA firm, only 297,041 Ks was paid from a total of 958,158.20 Ks.⁶⁷ The amounts paid in both cases went to blocked accounts belonging only theoretically to the original owners, or to judicial deposits.

However, the case of the Aryanizer Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov is special in another way, namely that the Ľudák regime itself deprived him of both his Aryanized firms. This has not appeared in the literature up to now. It appears that the basic factor leading to this was Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov's participation in the Slovak National Uprising, which broke out on 29 August 1944, when the Nazi German units began to occupy Slovakia.

The Einsatzgruppe H der Sipo und des SD began to operate in Bratislava and gradually also in other parts of western and central Slovakia. Its main task was to pacify everybody who participated in or supported the uprising, while also liquidating all Jews who still lived in Slovakia. On 28 September 1944, Department III B of the staff of Einsatzgruppe H in Bratislava produced an official record describing Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov as "*one of the leading persons in the uprising movement at [Turčiansky] Sv[ätý] Martin*".⁶⁸ The document states that Mistrík-Ondrejov had Aryanized two firms in Bratislava, and it would be a good idea to investigate these firms in detail and arrest all their employees. The Nazis devoted special attention in the document to Mistrík-Ondrejov's partner in the

správa SRDS, p. 2.

64 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 876/2239-2240, Podrobný výkaz o výberoch spoločníka Ľ. Mistríka. (Detailed statement about the withdrawals of the partner Ľ. Mistrík.)

65 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/164, Hlásenie podľa vyhlášky ÚHÚ (Report according to the declaration of the CEO) from 19 Jan 1944, no. 30.

66 SNA, f. MH, k. 404, Zoznam arizovaných firiem s vykázanými platbami, položka č. 923. (List of Aryanized firms with received payments, item no. 923).

67 SNA, f. MH, k. 404, Zoznam arizovaných firiem s vykázanými platbami, položka č. 1639.

68 Archiv bezpečnostních složek (Archives of the security services) (hereinafter ABS), f. Různé německé bezpečnostní složky (f. Various German security services) (135), 135-1-1/38, Vermerk.

CE-KA firm: Štefan Cenkner. According to the document, Cenkner had studied in Vienna and was described as a Czechoslovakist – Pan-Slavist inclined.⁶⁹

It is not clear whether this document got things moving, but on 29 September 1944 German soldiers and members of the Hlinka Guard closed the Mistrík Bookshop. On 10 October 1944, an official at the Central Economic Office on orders from the leadership of the office, checked up on the bookshop and stated that “*Mistrík has not been seen in Bratislava for 3 months, and is probably with the partisans*”. On the next day, the General Secretariat of HSEŠ proposed the cancellation of the transfer of the bookshop to Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov “*because he has openly joined the partisan movement*”.⁷⁰ A few days later, on 20 October, the Central Economic Office put a lead seal on the shop.⁷¹ HSEŠ proposed to place the bookshop under a temporary administration, and Prof. Belo Polla became the temporary administrator.⁷² On 30 November 1944, the Central Economic Office cancelled the Aryanization transfer to Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov.⁷³ The shop was then awarded by another decision to the personal secretary of the head of the Propaganda Office Otto Kaušitz and to Štefan Burčák.⁷⁴

In the case of the firm CEKA-Ľudo Mistrík public commercial company, on 20 October the General Secretariat of HSEŠ proposed that the CEO should place the firm under temporary administration because of the 50% participation of “*Ľudovít Mistrík, who has joined the partisans and still not reported his position*”.⁷⁵ After further urging on this matter, the CEO began to act, and on 9 November 1944, it appointed Anton Špalek as temporary administrator of the firm “CEKA”.⁷⁶ A few weeks later, on 5 December 1944, the Central Economic Office cancelled the transfer of 50% of the Känzler Brothers’ firm to Ľudovít Mistrík-Ondrejov. On the same day, it transferred 50% of the public commercial company “CEKA” to Ladislav Müller.⁷⁷ Meanwhile, the Ľudák press reported

69 ABS, f. Různé německé bezpečnostní složky (135), 135-1-1/38. Vermerk.

70 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/119, Návrh GS HSEŠ (Proposal from the General Secretariat of HSPP) no. 17.614/DJ/R/1944 from 11 Oct 1944.

71 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/111, 124, Úradné záznamy (Official records) from 10 Oct 1944 and 20 Oct 1944.

72 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/117, Úradný záznam from 31 Oct 1944.

73 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/115, Rozhodnutie o zrušení prevodu podniku (Decision to cancel the transfer of a business) no. II/F/597/10/44 from 30 Nov 1944.

74 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/139, Rozhodnutie o prevode podniku (Decision on transfer of a business) no. II/F/597/10/44 from 30 Nov 1944.

75 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 876/1915, Návrh GS HSEŠ č. 17.449/Dr.Mi/R/1944 from 20 Oct 1944.

76 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 876/1906, Rozhodnutie II-B-4579/4-1944.

77 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 876/1909, 1900, Rozhodnutie o zrušení doč. správy, Rozhodnutie o prevode 50% účasti Ľ. Mistríka. (Decision to cancel temporary administration. Decision on

on Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov. On 25 November, the daily *Gardista* named him as an Aryanizer among the writers who had joined the partisans.⁷⁸

At the beginning of December Ľudo Mistrík-Ondrejov's reaction came to the Central Economic Office. He wrote in a letter addressed to the chairman of the CEO: "*Most honoured Chairman, It has come to my attention that the CEO has cancelled the transfer of the bookshop at Ventúrska Street 22 (the Mistrík Bookshop, formerly the Z. Steiner Bookshop) Aryanized by me, and the CEKA shop at Klobučnická Street 4, in which I had a share. These steps have happened on the basis of some newspaper articles in which an unknown writer has accused me of participating in the Slovak uprising, or of participation in the partisan movement.*

As a result of illness (pneumonia) I cannot come in person to refute these untrue claims, so I am writing that I played no role in the uprising movement, either among the partisans or apart from them. As an inhabitant of Turčiansky Svätý Martin, after evacuation from Bratislava, I had enough concern with moving before the advancing front with my family including two small children, who were entirely dependent on me. It is also unthinkable that the uprising movement would have ignored a person, who had Aryanized, so that he was marked as person who harmed the Jews and supported the idea of the Slovak state.

Nobody has investigated these accusations against me, but I hope that everything will soon be clear, and I will be able to prosecute the malicious person, who wrote such stupid and untrue things about me.

I ask the CEO to wait for the result of this investigation which I will ask for. Regards, Na stráž! (On guard!) Ľudo Mistrík."⁷⁹

This letter from the writer Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov has not been published and considered by historians up to now. It evokes at least questions about how Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov saw the situation at the time, the position and future of the Ľudák regime, and what was his view of the uprising at the time.

The Aryanization of Jewish property is a painful theme in 20th century Slovak history. As the case of Ľudovít Mistrík-Ondrejov also shows, the documents capturing the course of Aryanization in Slovakia often uncover unknown recesses of the human character, not only among ordinary people, but also among publicly known figures from cultural and public life.⁸⁰ By participating

transfer of the 50% share of Ľ. Mistrík.).

78 „Vývraždiť spisovateľov?“ (“To kill writers?”). In *Gardista*, year 6, no. 263, p. 1.

79 USHMMA, RG-57.001M, 972/96, Letter from 7 Dec 1944.

80 The study was produced in the framework of the projects: APVV-15-0349 *Individuum a spoločnosť – ich vzájomná reflexia v historickom procese* (The individual and society – their mutual reflection in the historical process) and VEGA 2/0043/16 *Vzostup a pád hospodárske-*

in the Aryanization process, Ľudovít Mistrík-Ondrejov placed himself among the writers, who profited in various ways from the totalitarian Ľudák regime in Slovakia.

„MIT EINEM JUDEN VERHANDELTE ICH NICHT.“ ZUR ARISIERUNGEN
DES SCHRIFTSTELLERS ĽUDOVÍT MISTRÍK-ONDREJOV

JÁN HLAVINKA

Die vorgelegte Studie widmet sich der Partizipation des bekannten slowakischen Schriftstellers, Ľudovít Mistrík-Ondrejov, an der Arisierung des jüdischen Eigentums in den Jahren 1939–1945 in der Slowakei. Die Partizipation Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejovs an der Arisierung der jüdischen Firmen in Bratislava ist schon längst bekannt, aber bislang schrieb man darüber nur ausschließlich im Zusammenhang mit einer konkreten Gesellschaft: mit der Buchhandlung von Žigmund Steiner, welche Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov gerade durch Arisierung in seinen Besitz im September 1941 brachte. Dieser Arisierung widmeten auch slowakische Medien mehrmals ihre Aufmerksamkeit.

Die Studie bietet einen komplexen Blick auf Arisierungsaktivitäten des Schriftstellers Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov, der, wie es aus der Forschung hervorgeht, nicht nur die Buchhandlung Žigmund Steiners, sondern auch bei 50% Beteiligung an noch größerem Unternehmen in Bratislava – Firma Bratia Känzler (Brüder Känzler) profitierte, die ihm noch im Juli 1941 in der Arisierung zugeteilt wurde.

Der Gegenstand der Studie ist die Analyse der Gründe, für welche Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov als (vollständiger, bzw. teilweiser) „Arisator“ dieser Bratislavaer Firmen benannt wurde, sowie die Analyse der finanziellen Aspekte der beiden Arisierungen. Sie widmet sich ebenso der Frage der Beziehungen zwischen Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov und den ursprünglichen Eigentümern der beiden betroffenen Unternehmen, genauer den erfolgreichen Bemühungen des Schriftstellers um ihre Beseitigung aus den genannten Gesellschaften nach der Arisierung.

Zur Studie gehören auch die bisher nicht veröffentlichten und praktisch unbekanntesten Feststellungen über beide arisierten Fälle, welche die Auflösung beider arisierten Übertragungen auf Ľ. Mistrík-Ondrejov noch vor dem Ende 1944 dokumentieren und seine Reaktion auf diesen Schritt des Regimes der Volkspartei beinhalten.

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ho vývoja Slovenska 1942 – 1945 (The rise and fall of the Slovak economy 1942–1945).

REVIEWS

MANNOVÁ, Elena. *MINULOSŤ AKO SUPERMARKET? Spôsoby reprezentácie a aktualizácie dejín Slovenska. [THE PAST AS A SUPERMARKET? Ways of presenting and up-dating the history of Slovakia]*. Bratislava: Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences; VEDA, vydavateľstvo SAV, 2019, 463 pages. ISBN 978-80-224-1706-8.

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This academic publication with a rather untraditional, even explicitly provocative title, presents themes that are not very frequently considered in Slovak historiography. Individual chapters of the book represent modified versions of texts already published by the author. The introduction initiates us into the “mysteries” of individual phenomena and concepts such as historical consciousness and historical knowledge, tradition, historical memory or place of memory (*lieux de mémoires*) of the French historian Pierre Nora. The author acknowledges that personally she is close to the conception of memory as a social palimpsest, for which it is characteristic that it is constantly being rewritten, or provided with new layers for events, personalities, evaluations and meanings. However, in the book she also works with the concept of cultural representation. It is concerned with collectively shared social and cultural knowledge – especially the shaping and communication of an image of the past that is presented as real. Under this summarized concept, it is possible to include social categorization, stereotypes, images and mythical stories. They are associated with elites that have the power to classify, name and promote their visions of the world in all or part of society.

The following chapters consider the role of myths in the formation of modern nationally defined communities, for example, the political myth and national memory. The second part of the publication is devoted to analysis of the “second” lives of two female personalities, who are not authentic members of the Slovak national pantheon: St. Elizabeth of Hungary and the Empress and Queen Maria Theresa. The author not only points to the changes of image and story with their social, political and ideological functions, but also analyses the concrete mechanisms, media, relevant elites or social and confessional groups, which identified with these personalities. In connection with Maria Theresa, she points not only to the state propaganda of her time, but also, for example, to the gender context.

In the third part of the book, attention is directed to the phenomenon of celebrations. The author explains the conceptual and terminological ambiguity in Slovak and other languages, using the words “slávnosť” and “oslava”, which both mean “celebration”. She seeks an answer to the question of how celebration and remembering of the revolutionary year 1848 helps to shape collective identification in the Slovak and Hungarian environment. She states that the Hungarian memory of the revolution is more intensive and widespread, celebrations in the Hungarian environment, including among the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, have a more spontaneous character and connection with

folk and popular culture. While the historical personalities – Lajos Kossuth and Sándor Petőfi – associated with the revolution still have an important place in the Hungarian historical memory, in Slovakia it is not so. Jozef Miloslav Hurban leader of the Slovak volunteers is not very intensively present in oral folklore.

The chapter on the Slovak National Uprising of 1944 concentrates on anniversary celebrations and changes of view of this historical phenomenon. The author points to connections with the ruling political regime. From 1945 to 1948, before the communist regime came to power, there was pluralism in the memories of activists. After 1948, the Communist Party monopolized the explanation and interpretation of the uprising. In the end this meant an emphasis on the uprising as the beginning of the project to modernize or industrialize Slovakia and the beginning of the road to communism. Today, the official narrative emphasizes the pro-European dimension of the Slovak National Uprising, but counter-narratives persist in society, and part of the Slovak population still identifies with the Ľudák regime. The author also devotes considerable attention to the artistic representation of this phenomenon, for example, in sculpture, monuments and films. She points to the fact that in the course of historical development there has been a transition from remembering heroes to commemorating victims.

The fourth part includes two chapters devoted to the discovery of medieval and modern Bratislava or Prešporok from the 19th to 21st centuries. This does not serve only the shaping of collective identity or memory, but also the tourist industry, as in the case of re-enactment of coronation ceremonies in present-day Bratislava.

Part five of the book is also oriented towards local memory, this time extending beyond Bratislava. Chapters concentrate on Komárno, a town on the Slovak – Hungarian frontier, notable as the cultural centre of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, and Levoča, from the Middle Ages, the traditional centre of the Spiš Germans. In the broad complex of identities, memories and loyalties, the author interprets the development and changes of such phenomena, covering celebrations and rituals, (self)-images and narratives, symbols and monuments. The situation in present-day Komárno, where the national Hungarian or Slovak pasts are represented in the public space especially by monuments, shows the rivalry and competition between Slovak and Hungarian nationalism. For example, there have been conflicts over the placing of a “Slovak” monument to Sts. Cyril and Methodius or a “Hungarian” monument to the King and Saint Stephen of Hungary.

The book is on a high expert level in cultivated language. Its graphic design and choice of illustrations are equally high quality. It is a pity that the text includes some small mistakes, although they do not really lower the author’s high standard. They include calling Zita Bourbon-Parma “Empress of Austria-Hungary” (p. 209), describing Philip Melanchthon as Martin Luther’s successor (p. 255), and using inadequate terms, for example, stating that services were celebrated in German in the Evangelical church in Levoča (p. 364). The reviewed publication is one of the best to be published on this theme in Slovakia. It provides theoretical and methodological insight into this problem.

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DUDEKOVÁ KOVÁČOVÁ, Gabriela. *ČLOVEK VO VOJNE. Stratégie prežitia a sociálne dôsledky prvej svetovej vojny na Slovensku*. [PEOPLE AT WAR. *Survival Strategies and the Social Consequences of the First World War in Slovakia*]. Bratislava: VEDA; Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, 2019, 326 pages. ISBN 978-80-224-1786-0.

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Reflecting on a publication¹ devoted to the social consequences of the First World War, I will quote a statement by Jacques le Goff: “*The First World War gave rise to a new militarist culture of hatred and barbarism.*”² From many points of view, this world conflict is regarded as an event that at the time and in the years after its “official” end irreversibly changed all aspects of the lives of individuals and whole societies. It was also the beginning of the accelerated 20th century, in which unprecedented development of technology was one of many characteristics. A huge number of expert and artistic works devoted to the causes, course and consequences, the political and military aspects of the Great War both in the world and in Slovakia. The so-called greater history has prevailed in historiographic work, but folklore studies, where the object of research was and is the ordinary person and everyday life also recorded memories of participants in the Great War, both from the battlefields and the home front. They involve narratives forming part of the historical memory either of contemporaries of the war, who may or may not have been direct participants, or of narratives passed down by oral tradition. The strength of this theme also overlapped with the expert development of Slovak folklore studies. To put it simply, it is possible to state that folklore studies “discovered” narratives with the theme of personal history when its interest shifted from the group to the individual. Living but tied to the person of the story-teller and a situational context and so apparently unstable narratives or memoirs were outlined in the group model of the story-telling repertoire, alongside the traditional genres of folktale and legend. Memoirs as a dynamic phenomenon of story-telling culture became a living part of it perhaps because of their connection to a more intimate social framework. The traditional genres spoke of group ambitions, actions or defeats. Memoirs individualize these themes. While in the traditional version, the group is the hero and the individual hero symbolizes the group, in the memoir, the individual struggles with destiny and the conditions of life, and this is the core of the story or its basis. Ján Michálek presents basic work in the history of Slovak folklore studies from the point of view of the theory of the memoir.³ His research is concerned mainly with the district below Bradlo and Javorina. He attempted to study

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- 1 The work originated in the framework of the grant project VEGA 2/0107/19 “*Folklór, folkloristika a ideológia*” (“*Folklore, Folklore Studies and Ideology*”), (chief researcher of the project: Mgr. Zuzana Panczová, PhD.).
 - 2 Le GOFF, Jacques. *Předmluva*. (Foreword). In ORTIZ, Izabel (ed.). *První světová válka*. Praha: Nakladatelství Sun, 2010, p. 6 [Italian original *Storia Illustrata della Prima Guerra Mondiale*. Firenze-Milano: Giunti Editore S.p.a., 1999].
 - 3 MICHÁLEK, Ján. *Spomienkové rozprávania s historickou tematikou*. (Memory Narratives with Historical Themes.). Bratislava: Veda, 1971.

natural story-telling situations, appealing to the need to have “*numerous and reliable materials*”.⁴ The narrators were people born in the second half of the 19th century, and the research done around 1970 showed that: “*the number of these stories is still [up to the date of publication – note HH] relatively large and very varied in subject*”.⁵ The author, an innovator for the time, states that the memoirs concerned with the First World War can also be used as reliable sociological material for knowledge of views of the First World War and war in general among ordinary people,⁶ which folklore studies of the time designates as *historiosophy*. J. Michálek also looks from the point of view of the ecology of folklore at the important circumstance of the “revival” of story-telling represented by so-called commemorative occasions such as anniversaries. The presentation of the war theme in literature, film and drama often contributed to shaping the content and form of the narratives. From the point of view of the theory and poetics of the memoir, the contribution of J. Michálek’s work lay in more precise terminology and definition of the characteristics of sub-groups of memoir: *story-telling from life and memory story-telling*. The latter is a memoir that does not create a picture of the direct experience of the story-teller, the relationship to the depicted reality is mediated by at least one and sometimes more degrees. Thus it represents the stage of folklorization – in time and in space, which has results for the content and form of the narratives, when, for example, “*the historical figure becomes in the thinking of the people, as the oral transmission makes him*”.⁷ This critical excursion into the recent history of Slovak folklore studies is also confirmed by the reviewed publication, which analyses these memoirs as one of its sources.⁸ As the author states: “*The aim of the book is describe the most important social consequences of the First World War in the territory of Slovakia as a part of the wider context of the Kingdom of Hungary and Habsburg Monarchy.*” (p. 10), and the so-called ego-documents enable fulfilment of this aim by means of the “view from below”, namely through the facts and views of ordinary participants in the First World War at the front and at home. G. Dudeková Kováčová has published various expert contributions to individual parts of this field, so that the reviewed publication, which connects with and continues these contributions, is an extensive, mature and comprehensive study of this problem.

Since the author has studied the theme in a way that is to some degree innovative in the framework of Slovak historiography, starting from less used sources, including

4 MICHÁLEK, ref. 3, p. 9-10.

5 MICHÁLEK, ref. 3, p. 67.

6 MICHÁLEK, ref. 3, p. 59.

7 MICHÁLEK, ref. 3, p. 110.

8 Scientific collections of the Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava, Archives of the Ethnographic Society of Slovakia. SMATANA, Miloslav – BALLEKOVÁ, Katarína – HLŔŠKOVÁ, Hana – HOLEC, Roman. *Rozpamätávanie. Prvá svetová vojna jazykom prastarých otcov a materi.* (Remembering the First World War in the Language of our Great-Grandparents.). Bratislava: Veda, 2015. ISBN 978-80-224-1495-1.

the propaganda of the time, as well as ego-documents, she has expressed her views on their usability from the point of view of the objectivity of recorded facts and pointed to the limits of this type of source, considering, for example, the varying degrees of self-censorship and self-stylization in the oral and written memoirs. Although the work does not verify or even formulate a specific theory, it works productively with the concept of *survival strategy*, and inspired by social psychology, also with the concept of *feeling threatened* and not only in the immediate physical sense, but also of subjective expression of fear of loss of a secure existence in the sort of crisis situation that every military conflict represents. The author also takes an interest in the problems of weakening of loyalty to the regime and factors promoting radicalization.

G. Dudeková Kováčová has divided the publication into four main chapters, extensive introductory and concluding essays, a summary in English, structured list of sources and literature, and index of names. The individual chapters deal with the specific sub-themes that have received attention from the author: The problem of loyalty – from war hysteria to protests; In an extraordinary regime; Survival strategies on the home front; War as an experience. The chronological aspect of the individual sub-themes offers a picture of the changes and development of the theme before, during and in the years after the war. This gives the reader a well-rounded and exhaustive picture of the analysed phenomena.

The introduction to the publication describes the thematic and methodological orientation of European and Czecho-Slovak historiography on the Great War, mentioning the three main paradigms for constructing pictures of it applied up to now, as formulated by J. Winter and A. Prost (pp. 15–16). I consider it helpful that the author emphasizes the fact that in Czechoslovak and Slovak historiography up to 1989, various significant personalities of the Great War, and the phenomena of everyday life did not receive attention from researchers. In the first chapter (pp. 25–81) devoted to the problem of loyalty, G. Dudeková Kováčová applies detailed consideration of the social, ethnic and family background of people (p. 28 etc.) using the comparative approach, for example, of data from Tyrol and Slovakia, when analysing and interpreting sources of a personal nature and the local press. On the basis of study of these sources, the author has attempted to produce a typology of the motivations and factors determining changes of attitude to the war among ordinary soldiers. She points to the processual nature of attitudes and loyalty, which is justified by the soldiers' real experience of war rather than the officially promoted ideal of the soldier in the army, which had an important role in the state power apparatus of the time. The author points to the strength of ethnic stereotypes and prejudices in the official rhetoric of the time on loyalty.

The second chapter (pp. 81–155) approaches the character of the security measures in the extraordinary war period, and the strategies by which people dealt with these limiting circumstances both at the front and at home. The material of the censorship offices of the Ministry of War have proved to be a very interesting source of information here. The paradoxical nature of the wartime situation is documented by the activity of representatives of the Slovak political elite (K. Stodola, I. Dérer, M. Hodža) in the Slovak section of the censorship office, which they could use for specific political steps. The influence of propaganda on the formation of public opinion was intensified

by the developing media of the time: the press, film and photography, which enabled manipulation of the image of the war in propagandist stereotyping, leading, for example, to shifting of the boundaries of the perception of violence.

The third chapter (pp. 155–213) considers the strategies by which the home front with its essential supply function reacted to wartime regulations. The author again proceeds chronologically so that the political and military matrix is filled in with data about research themes: supply problems, spread of illnesses, state of the labour force, black market, pricing policy, war invalids, limitation of consumption and so on. Case studies of wartime everyday life in Prešporok (Bratislava) bring detailed data about creativity and improvisation to secure the survival of the urban community using legal and illegal means. These continued into the years after the end of the Great War as shown by memory narratives, where motifs of austerity and suffering predominate.

The fourth chapter (pp. 213–269) uses analyses of correspondence, memory narratives and diaries to approach the thoughts of ordinary people and show how social status also played a role in the war. It also brings a new view, that of prisoners of war in prison camps in Slovakia. The author also looks at the position of women, who were identified with the so-called home front in the propaganda of the Great War. G. Dudeková Kováčová also devotes detailed attention to the activation of women, their inclusion in the work process outside the home, and their rising level of education. One of the factors pushing this was the phenomenon of “replacing” men, who joined the armed forces or did not return from the battlefield. She also describes the survival strategies of soldiers and civilians through the drawings of children and data from surveys of the time. Information about the massive influence on children and young people in the framework of promotion of patriotism, from toys with a military theme, through literature and film to the orientation of societies and courses stimulates thought. The author mentions types of survival strategy (p. 235 and following). She regards the social position of the individual or group as the determining factor, but the situational dynamic and boundaries of decision making were defined by the wartime regime in which the state had the decisive influence. In the conclusion (p. 269–283), the author formulates the dominant and specific characteristics, which define the First World War – the Great War as a unique and cataclysmic historic event.

If in the introduction, I perceived the aim that the author set herself, I will state here that she successfully achieved it with a wide range of themes and their minute analysis. Apart from the importance of this work for Slovak historiography, it can also be considered an excellent instructive text for teachers, journalists and artists. The quality of the publication would be considerably increased by illustrations, which would be entirely relevant in this case. If such sources as printed materials, posters, correspondence, photographs, drawings and other visual materials were subjects for analysis, their use would at least increase the attractiveness of this excellent publication for readers.⁹ Perhaps it would be worth considering dividing the extensive text according

9 An inspiration could be a work such as: ORTIZ, Izabel (ed.). *První světová válka*. (The First World War.). Praha: Nakladatelství Sun, 2010, p. 6 [Italian original *Storia Illustrata della Prima Guerra Mondiale*. Firenze-Milano: Giunti Editore S.p.a., 1999].

to chapters and adding high quality illustrative material to produce a multi-volume work, and perhaps adding a DVD with contemporary film and sound recordings.

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THREE PUBLICATIONS ON THE THEME OF ŠTEFÁNIK FROM THE
INSTITUTE OF HISTORY OF THE SLOVAK ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

KŠIŇAN, Michal. *L'HOMME QUI PARLAIT AVEC LES ÉTOILES. Milan Rastislav Štefánik, héros franco-slovaque de la Grande Guerre*. Paris: Eur'ORBEM Éditions, Collectuoin Histoire(s) – Europe centrale sous la direction d'Antoine Marès, 2019. ISBN 979-10-96982-08-0.

MACHO, Peter. *MILAN RASTISLAV ŠTEFÁNIK AKO SYMBOL*. [*Milan Rastislav Štefánik as a Symbol*]. Bratislava: VEDA vydavateľstvo SAV; Historický ústav SAV, 2019. ISBN 978-80-224-1785-3.

MICHÁLEK, Slavomír. *MILAN RASTISLAV ŠTEFÁNIK AND THOSE WHO FOLLOWED HIM*. Berlin: Peter Lang, Spectrum Slovakia Series Volume 23; Bratislava: VEDA, 2019. ISBN 978-3-631-80316-5; 978-80-224-1788-4.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31577/histcaso.2020.68.6.8>

From May 2019 to July 2020, that is from the centenary of his tragic death to the 140th anniversary of his birth, was declared the “long” year of Milan Rastislav Štefánik in Slovakia. As one of the leading creators of the Czecho-Slovak state, Štefánik was one of the key personalities, who shaped the modern history of Slovakia and the Slovaks. Many books and articles, both academic and popular, documentary films and theatre plays, were produced in Slovakia on this occasion. They include several books published by the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. Especially the books by Michal Kšiňan, Peter Macho and Slavomír Michálek have the ambition to also address the academic community, bringing new information about Štefánik or shifting interpretations of him.

Kšiňan's historical biography represents a conceptually reconsidered academic work, lacking in Slovakia up to now, although this may be surprising in relation to the importance of Štefánik in Slovak history. The Slovak public is impatiently awaiting a Slovak language version. Kšiňan's work is based on a multitude of archive sources, published sources and an extensive bibliography. No work on Štefánik published up to now has such a rich and firm factual research background. This basis has enabled the author to bring to Štefánik's biography various new facts, and to correct old often repeated stereotypes.

It is necessary to state that historical biography represents an extraordinarily demanding genre, clearly the most demanding for analysis and explanation. Knowledge

of the period and circumstances in which a person acted is a pre-condition for a high quality biography. We often encounter statements that important personalities “outgrew” or “were ahead of” their time, but it is also true that all personalities are marked or influenced by the period in which they lived. Nobody lives “outside time”. For successful historical biography, it is not enough to only know the facts about a person’s life, the author must also know something about psychology, because a person’s psychological character also determines his public activity. Michal Kšíňan conceived his book with a theoretical preparation, which enabled him to find a balance, but also connection between Štefánik’s private and public lives.

Kšíňan’s book is not conceptually based on the chronological – linear method, but on solid thematic studies. The introductory chapter is devoted to the history of Slovakia in the “fin de siècle” period. Although this chapter is brief, it assists understanding of the starting points from which the personality Štefánik emerged as a son of “his time”. In the following chapters, the author devotes attention to the remarkable rise of a person from an area of small rural settlements. This is Štefánik’s dominant story line: from poor village parsonage to the salons of Paris. The third chapter endeavours to depict Štefánik as a visionary and charismatic personality – another feature that accompanied his whole life. The fourth chapter is devoted to more extensive consideration of Štefánik’s main work: creation of the Czecho-Slovak state. The final chapter is devoted to the question of Štefánik’s identity and connected questions including that of the use or misuse of his tragic death. The chapter actually forms an independent discourse on this theme.

When considering Štefánik’s identity, the author leaves various questions open or only outlined. Štefánik’s identity was undoubtedly complex and so was the period that influenced it. It is clear that he had a Slovak identity, which can be documented by various facts. Among other things, when he gave his nationality on going to university in Prague, he unambiguously stated: “slovač”. There are also the memories of his contemporaries. However, for Štefánik, Slovak identity merged with Czechoslovak identity, which had a political character. The Czecho-Slovak state was definitely Štefánik’s most important life’s work. His French identity also appears definite, although the fact that for Štefánik French citizenship was an important practical factor also played a role here. Other potential identities mentioned by the author: namely Italian or relating to the historic Kingdom of Hungary, supposedly expressed in his ostentatious gallantry, probably do not fulfil the criteria required for national or ethnic identity. There were some expressions of sympathy or life style, but that is on a different level from identity. When describing the relations between the so-called Big Three (Masaryk, Štefánik, Beneš), the author expresses doubts about the unambiguously positive relationship between Masaryk and Štefánik, but does not document his doubts with relevant arguments. As far as it is about differences of views on the so-called Washington Declaration, which those who want to see a Masaryk – Štefánik split like to mention, these are well documented in telegrams between the two, which clarified the matter. It is the same with Masaryk’s refusal to answer the question from Marchioness Benzoni on whether he liked Štefánik. It is necessary to know Masaryk and his rejection of strongly emotional statements, if we are to understand his relations with Štefánik. The two men were opposites in this respect. Štefánik spoke almost as if he was Masaryk’s son from his student days to the

end of his life. Such openly emotional expressions were unpleasant for Masaryk, and he avoided them. However, this does not change his evaluation of Štefánik as a successful and extraordinarily useful representative of the struggle in exile. This was how Masaryk saw him and described him in the book *Světová revoluce* (*The Making of the State*) and many other documents.

It is necessary to value the author's effort to achieve impartial evaluation of the existing literature and various views on the causes of the air disaster in which he died. However, it is questionable whether it is possible to have a reasonable discussion of the awkward, unargued views of ideologues and doubtful publicists. These views penetrate into discourse without clear rejection because they cannot be argued again, and are only "shots in the dark", which raise writings to the level of serious works.

Peter Macho's book already attracts attention with its design and cover, where we find an entirely untraditional portrait of Štefánik by the artist Jozef Dablár Gertli. We find Štefánik surrounded by the symbolic attributes through which Slovak society perceives him: the general's hat, blue eyes in an unshaven face, his life motto: Believe, love, work (there are naturally more such mottos), military stamp with the number of the asteroid named after Štefánik, the design for the Czecho-Slovak flag on a glove and so on. Peter Macho's book is less about Štefánik as a person and more about Štefánik as a symbol. This is connected with the author's expert orientation, which is directed towards historical memory, its changes and its place in social consciousness.

Peter Macho has studied the memory of Štefánik for a long time. Numerous studies published in various magazines and journals became the basis on which he could conceive this relatively extensive monograph. In the introduction, we find a relatively brief biography of Štefánik, which serves only as a starting point to enable the reader to understand the subjects of the following chapters. Peter Macho argues with the widespread view that Štefánik was an unknown person in Slovakia before his death. On the other hand, the facts he mentions show that Štefánik was present in part of the Slovak press and in the circles of the Slovak intelligentsia, which was so small that they all knew each other. The truth lies mainly in how we perceive this knowledge or ignorance. From the time of his studies in Prague, Štefánik came to Slovakia only for more or less occasional holidays. The circle of his acquaintances was not large, and the community of readers of the *Hlas (Voice)* and other publications where he sometimes appeared was not wide. He was known mainly to his immediate and extended family and to some leading members of the Evangelical intelligentsia. He only really became known to the whole of Slovakia after his death and ostentatious funeral, which is also a subject of Macho's book. The author also devoted a relatively extensive chapter to the history of Štefánik's possessions, which last received attention in Eva Králiková's book.

Peter Macho's book also contains an account of how the Štefánik cult began to develop in the years of the First Republic and in Czech as well as Slovak society. He devotes relatively detailed attention to the origin and reception of Jan Sviták's film from 1935. In the responses to the film, we can trace how the Štefánik cult influenced the reception of the film by the public and film critics already in the years of threat to the Czechoslovak Republic.

“Štefánik in the public space” is the theme of another extensive chapter, which also speaks of the period and its relationship to Štefánik more than about Milan Rastislav himself. Statues and busts of Štefánik, streets and squares named after him have their extraordinarily varied fates. Consideration of Štefánik Slavism is interesting. It is generally known that Štefánik was a globetrotter, free-thinker and free mason. While travelling to Turkestan, he visited his favourite writer Lev Nikolajevich Tolstoy, but otherwise we do not find much Slavism in his life. His Slavism was shifted in an unusual direction – towards the south, where it would be based on his military activity on the Serbian front and other pro-Yugoslav activities. Paradoxically, after 1939, Štefánik, an Evangelical by baptism, became an object of veneration by the mainly Catholic Slovak Ludáks, and his Slavism was emphasized in connection with the Catholic Croats.

There is also an interesting chapter on Bradlo as a symbol – a “national sacrosanctum” as Peter Macho calls it in his book. The fates of Bradlo through the decades, especially during the fateful events of 1938/39 and 1968 are also dramatic testimony to the fate of the country. Peter Macho’s book gives many interesting details, which the author has “dug up” from various published and archive sources during many years of study.

Slavomír Michálek’s book contains seven biographies of Slovak diplomats. It begins with Milan Rastislav Štefánik, who is also a dominant and inspiring personality in this field. In Austria-Hungary ethnic Slovaks had no chance to apply themselves as diplomats. For many decades, this profession was a privilege of the nobility, and although in the last decades of the existence of the Habsburg Monarchy, members of the middle class gradually and timidly began to apply themselves in diplomacy, there were no Slovaks among them. Štefánik was an astronomer by profession, a field far from diplomacy. He did not have a military education either, but he became a general, and as a soldier he applied himself especially in the field of military diplomacy. While still a civilian he showed his diplomatic ability especially during his mission in Ecuador, for which he gained a French state award. During the First World War he also gained attention from his diplomatic activities during his mission in Russia, where he was able to unite the quarrelling Czechs and Slovaks in Russia, and push them into joint participation in the struggle led by the Czechoslovak National Council. Another extraordinary success was winning the support of Italian politicians for the Czecho-Slovak exile struggle. In this way, Štefánik showed natural diplomatic talent by convincing people and winning their support. He always knew what arguments he had to use in a given situation.

Štefánik stood at the head of a whole series of other Slovaks, who were able to apply themselves in diplomacy mainly after the origin of the Czechoslovak Republic. The first in the series is Štefan Osuský. He was followed by Vladimír Hurban, Vladimír Martin Palic, Juraj Slávik, Ivan Krno and Ján Papánek. It is interesting that half of them came from Štefánik’s district. Štefan Osuský and Ján Papánek were born in Brezová, to which Štefánik’s home village of Košariská was administratively subordinate. Ivan Krno was born in Myjava. Vladimír Hurban was born in Turčiansky Sv. Martin, but his grandfather, a famous leader of the Slovaks in the revolutionary year 1848–1849, was Evangelical pastor at Hlboké. If we add that Vladimír Martin Palic was born in a village of the foot

of the Biele Karpáty, it appears that the district below Bradlo and Veľká Javorina gave Slovakia and the world some important diplomats.

Štefan Osuský, whose signature we find on the Treaty of Trianon, and Ján Papánek, one of the 14 diplomats, who formulated the final text of the United Nations Charter, are undoubtedly the first class stars in this Slovak “diplomatic pantheon”. Vladimír Hurban also participated in the founding assembly of the UN in San Francisco as a member of the Czechoslovak delegation. Ivan Krno was Deputy General Secretary of the UN. Juraj Slávik participated in the Paris Peace Conference of 1946 as a member of the Czechoslovak delegation. The gains from Michálek’s book include the fact that apart from these best known diplomats, he presents another important but less known diplomat: Vladimír Martin Palic, first secretary of the Czechoslovak Embassy in Washington, who had worked as a leading specialist at the Library of Congress in Washington for twenty years, after emigrating to the USA.

The three books in three languages from the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences are important contributions to spreading knowledge of Milan Rastislav Štefánik, and in the last case also of his successors in the field of diplomacy. It is necessary to hope that after the end of Štefánik’s Year research on him will continue, because these three important publications also show that many aspects of this important personality are still not sufficiently known.

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KÁZMEROVÁ, Ľubica. *PRÍBEH UČITEĽA. Jozef Sivák v školských službách 1918 – 1944*. [THE STORY OF A TEACHER. Jozef Sivák in the Educational Service 1918 – 1944]. Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo Veda, 2019, 108 pages, ISBN 978-80-224-1745-5.

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The author Ľ. Kázmerová has long devoted her publishing activity to the problem of schools, education and spreading of information in Slovakia during the period of great changes from 1918 to 1945. Numerous books and studies are evidence of this. Her latest publication is also a contribution to the history of education, schools and teaching in Slovakia. By sharpening our view of the teacher, school inspector, publicist, Member of Parliament for the Slovak People’s Party (SPP, from 1925 Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party – HSPP) and Minister of Education Jozef Sivák, the publication reviewed here has the potential to interest not only historians and experts on education, but also the wider teaching community. The author presents Jozef Sivák as a person who devoted the greater part of his working life to educational and cultural activities. From his many sided activities, she devotes attention to that which appears to have been his dominant concern in the period 1918–1944. This was questions of education in the political context of the People’s Party, although Jozef Sivák recast them according to his own ideas and made them more specific in practice. In this spirit, Ľ. Kázmerová has mapped the views and activities of J. Sivák in the context of their social significance. By presenting a

selection of the facts, she offers the reader the possibility to compare the statements of the participants with the actually applied education policy and its subsequent evaluation.

The publication is structured into three chapters with internal divisions into sub-chapters. Chapter 1: ***In the service of education and politics (1918–1938)*** with sub-chapters: *The beginnings of a teacher, To be or not to be a teacher, In the post of school inspector, Crisis of the intelligentsia? For Slovak technology.* Chapter 2: ***Education in the Slovak state under Sivák's leadership*** with sub-chapters: *In the autonomous Slovak region, At the inauguration celebrations of Pope Pius XII, In the Slovak state, Personnel changes in Slovak schools, Reform of the school system, Jewish education in a period of structural change, Higher education and Minister Sivák, The international contacts of the Ministry of Education and Public Information.* Chapter 3: ***Culture and enlightenment or the education of the people*** with sub-chapter: *The Ministry of Education as mediator of information and culture, The Slovak National Theatre under the supervision of the Ministry, The last school year in the service of the Ministry.* The choice of conception for grouping facts from the sources, mostly archive materials is a good guide for deeper penetration into the justification for Sivák's decisions and assessment of his career in the education system. Jozef Sivák was active in politics until 4 September 1944. After the end of the Second World War, he was put before the National Court. The documents of the National Court, judicial proceedings, speeches of the prosecution and defence can be put into context with Sivák's practical actions and published views. The reviewed publication can also be assessed from the point of view of the significance of the participation of an individual in historic events.

In the reviewer's opinion, the selection of facts and their analysis according to the structure stated above did not avoid frequent repetition of information. This repetition may be too much for some readers, while for others it may serve as an appropriate reminder of the already said or a more specific explanation of a problem.

The text of the publication is supplemented by pictorial material and an extensive note apparatus. Apart from citing sources, this is extensively supplemented by significant characteristics of personalities mentioned by the author in the context of the time, but without further information. Such notes are justified and are part of the description of the social conditions in which the life and political decisions of Sivák.

When mapping Sivák's teaching career, the author emphasizes his rightist Christian – national orientation and position as a moderate member of Hlinka's Slovak People's Party (HSPP). She also emphasizes Sivák's critical views on some questions in educational policy. The publication provides enough facts to create a more concrete picture, but also enough stimuli for further research.

The reader will find information about Sivák's systematic work in the 1920s directed towards regenerating the administration of the school system and connecting the schools with the everyday life of the population. His publishing activity and rich public information activities associated with party activities got him nominated for a seat in the National Assembly for the Slovak People's Party. From the second half of the 1920s, he did not deviate in high politics from the aim of deeper Slovakization of the School system in Slovakia, support from Roman Catholic church schools and improving the school system in Slovakia in the fields of lacking expertise and a university with a technical orientation.

Sivák did not abandon the field of schooling and education in his public writing when he became the responsible editor of the People's Party daily newspaper *Slovák*. A frequent theme of his articles and of his statements in the National Assembly was the question of the use of the Slovak language in education and especially in secondary schools. After an appeal from A. Hlinka, he also participated in the preparation of Slovak textbooks. He was also aware of the need for public information, educational and cultural activities outside the school system, which led to theatre, lecture and organizational activities. He was chairman of the Society of Slovak Artists and active in Matica Slovenská and the Society of St. Vojtech. His teaching vocation and prevailing orientation towards schooling were combined with political activity over more than 25 years.

In the function of Minister of Education and Public Information of the Slovak state, he implemented various ideas to change the Slovak school system, which he advocated already during the First Czechoslovak Republic. In that period, he supported an autonomous position for Slovakia within Czechoslovakia. Under his management, the school system was reorganized and supplemented, new universities opened and a scientific institution, the Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts established, all in the framework of the totalitarian ideology of HSPP.

Sivák held a critical view of schools without authorities, since in his view it suppressed the authority of the Church. He rejected non-confessional "*free schools*" subordinated to the "*complete service of free thought*". He supported the idea that: "*Where a feeling for authority is not taught, there also ceases to be obedience, decency, politeness and so on.*" He continued with his own understanding of obedience as an expression of the "*higher intellectual qualities*" characteristic of the intelligentsia. This was also the reason why teaching of religion was placed among the compulsory subjects in Slovak elementary and secondary schools. This changed the ideological content of teaching in the direction of supporting Christianity. Access to teaching of religion was one of the issues on which the People's Party had most criticized the policies of the First Czechoslovak Republic. Sivák did not agree with the structure of the school system, in which, according to him, state schools predominated over church schools. Sivák was also dissatisfied with the incomplete structure of the highest level of education in Slovakia during the First Czechoslovak Republic. Slovakia had no top level universities, faculties or colleges for natural science, technology, the economy, trade and pharmacy. Minister Sivák presented to the Culture Committee of the Slovak Parliament proposed reforms to the school system, which he saw as a correction of the preceding policy of the Czechoslovak state. He associated the reform first of all with changing the values as well as the knowledge content of education. He considered it necessary to harmonize education with the ideology of the People's Party. Under his leadership, the Slovak schools had to fulfil "*a dual role: to educate and re-educate*". He also expressed his conservative positions on the questions of the employment of married women and on ending co-education of pupils and students. Act no. 246/1939 in the Slovak Statute Book on regulation of the working conditions of married women teachers (passed on 28 September 1939) led to the dismissal of married women teachers. Evaluation of the remaining married women teachers was not favourable. Women teachers were thought to be incapable of work more often than their male colleagues, and they were a problem for the running of the

school. In Sivák's view, this caused the still unsolved question of determining priorities in the position of the female teaching population, which society forced on them. For the regime, dismissing married women teachers in the spirit of the ideology of the People's Party became one of the ways to put women back into the family and so support the quality of family upbringing.

From the opening of the school year 1939/1940, it was obligatory classrooms to contain the Christian symbol of the cross and portraits of national figures. The greeting "Na stráž" (On Guard) had to be used in schools. The selection of values and facts according to which the educational curriculum was shaped had the same implicit conceptual concept as the programme for the activities of the Hlinka Youth (HY). Teachers were expected to provide the ideological influence on the HY youth organizations. They became functionaries with many roles. The Ministry of Education required the directors and administrators of all schools to ensure that teachers and professors devote appropriate attention to work in the HY, which the ministry recognized as extra-curricular activities. In spite of this, as the author notes, during Sivák's time as minister, the ministry only rarely spoke openly about the connection of school education with the activity of the HY. The chief commander of the HY Alojz Macek criticized him for the inadequate number of teachers and their low level of engagement in the activities of the youth organization. Macek also criticized the content of the public information and value shaping activities of the Ministry of Education among school age people. National values seemed to remain weak among young people.

J. Sivák came more frequently into confrontation with the political positions and steps of the radicals. At the time of the reconstruction of the government in October 1940, Vojtech Tuka urged President J. Tiso to dismiss Sivák from the leadership of the Ministry of Education and Public Information. According to Tuka, Sivák lacked the "revolutionary spirit". When asked by the National Court in 1946, Sivák declared: "*I did not show an interest in Slovak independence, and I was restrained in proclaiming the national socialist programme.*" During Sivák's period of more than five years as minister, elements of national socialism did not get directly into the teaching process. According to the author, expression of the ideas of national socialism remained rare in Sivák's statements, and he did not return to them or clarify them.

An attitude of sympathy with the Jewish population was characteristic of Minister Sivák. He was able to find ways to exploit loopholes in the law in favour of Jewish teachers and pupils. When the Jewish Code was supposed to be implemented, Sivák opposed this political step. He declared that if such a government decree came into force, he would resign from his position as Minister of Education. In the end, he did not actually resign because of requests from Jewish rabbis. Prime Minister V. Tuka pointed out to Minister Sivák the interpretation of the decree on excluding Jews from school education. However, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Economy had the right to grant exceptions. The last head of the Jewish Centre Oskar Neumann addressed a letter to J. Sivák on 17 February 1946 mentioning his efforts in favour of Slovak Jews.

The tension between the minister of education and the radical wing of HSPP was also expressed in the field of higher education. After Slovakia became independent on 14 March 1939, Czech teachers in Slovak universities could keep their jobs only if

the Slovak Ministry of Education could not find replacements among Slovak teachers. According to Sivák, 16 professors of Czech nationality were employed at the Slovak University in January 1939. That is the number mentioned in his testimony from 1946, in the preparatory phase of his trial by the National Court. However, interest in retaining the expertise by keeping Czech professors in their teaching positions had an impact on Prime Minister and University Rector V. Tuka's view of the minister of education. Tuka addressed to Sivák the following words: "*I thought that you were a Slovak, but now I see that you are a Czechoslovak.*" At a session of the Presidium of the People's Party at the beginning of March 1943, President J. Tiso expressed dissatisfaction with the inadequate promotion of national values in higher education, and with the political unreliability of the teachers in both secondary and higher education. The continuation of the session was concerned with accusing the Ministry of Education and Minister Sivák of inactivity on these problems.

After the outbreak of the Slovak National Uprising, V. Tuka's government offered its resignation and Sivák never returned to politics, but since he had been a leading political personality during the Slovak Republic, he was arrested on 4 May 1945 and placed before the National Court for retribution.

For Sivák, the school year 1943/1944, which brought reversal on the fronts of the Second World War, became a year for balancing the five year of existence and activity of the Ministry of Education and Public Information of the Slovak state and his own activity at the head of that ministry. Under his editorial supervision, the ministry published a book *Pát rokov slovenského školstva (Five Years of Slovak Education)*. The evaluation of the ministry in the book is largely pragmatic to reserved in relation to political events in the Slovak state, as if the compilers understood from the military maps and information about the "successes" of the Third Reich at the front, the possibility of a change in the position of the Slovak state in the event of the defeat of Nazi Germany.

The method of writing the individual chapters of the book *Príbeh učiteľa. Jozef Sivák v školských službách 1918 – 1944* will interest both experts and the wider reading public. Approaching historical reality through the story of an individual can lead to deeper interest in the position of the teacher and his role in the "force-field of time", in changing socio-political conditions. In the context of analysing themes, it is possible to apply the view that history as a story is not shaped only by big events, but also by subjective experience.

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