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Immigration and Re-migration: The Changing Urban-Rural Distribution of Hungarian Canadians, 1886-1986

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The settlement of Hungarians in Canada is traditionally dated from 1885-86 when *Magyar* and Slavic peasants from Hungary established the earliest Hungarian colonies on the Prairies. The first such colony came about near Minnedosa, Manitoba, and the second, near the site of Esterhazy, Saskatchewan. These early Hungarian settlers in the Canadian West were transmigrants from the United States, in particular, from the mining and smelting towns of Pennsylvania. In the 1890s they were followed by more of their countrymen, most of them coming directly from Hungary. Although by this time a few immigrants from that country were showing up in Canadian cities, the vast majority of Hungarians in Canada were rural residents. Even two decades after the turn of the century, in 1921, when Canada's population was divided equally between rural and urban inhabitants, nearly 74 per cent of Hungarians in the country still resided in rural districts. In fact, 68 per cent of them lived in largely agricultural Saskatchewan.[1]

Sixty years later, in 1981, the census results spoke of a very different Hungarian-Canadian ethnic group. First of all, it was no longer based in Saskatchewan or even in the Canadian West. According to the census data of that year, a little more than half of Canada's Hungarian population (51 per cent to be exact), resided in Ontario. At the same time Saskatchewan's share declined to 9.5 per cent.[2] Second, even greater changes had taken place in the group's urban-rural distribution. At the time of the 1981 census, 82 per cent of Hungarian Canadians were urban residents. Farm population (as distinct from non-farm rural people) among them had declined to a mere 6.4 per cent of the total.[3]

This paper will outline this dramatic transformation and will try to determine its probable causes. It will suggest that the changes

wrought in the urban-rural distribution of the Hungarian-Canadian community were caused not only by evolving economic and social conditions in Canada, but also by the changing nature of the immigration from Hungary. In arguing this, the paper wishes to highlight the close relationship that exists between immigration (or, more precisely, the nature or characteristics of a wave of immigrants) and the newcomers' choice of destination in Canada, as well as the re-migrations that they often undertake after arrival.

This essay will also try to determine the main stages and most important turning-points of the transformation of the Hungarian-Canadian community from a largely rural society to a predominantly urban one. It will also pay some attention to regional trends in the urbanization of Canada's Hungarian population, and will note major local deviations from regional and provincial tendencies displayed by Hungarian-Canadian communities. While it is evident that the foresaking of a predominantly rural lifestyle for an urban one has wrought extensive and significant changes in the Hungarian-Canadian community's economic, social and cultural circumstances, the details of this transformation, and its impact on the lives of individual Hungarian Canadians, can not be examined here as an exhaustive treatment of these themes would require more space than is available in this volume. In fact, such a treatise might well constitute a series of future papers or even a book.

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Although, as has been noted, the vast majority of early Hungarian newcomers to Canada settled in farming districts, there always were a few *Magyar* immigrants who preferred to work and live in cities or other non-agricultural settlements. The very first of these were the people who took employment in the coal mines of Lethbridge in the District of Alberta during the second half of the 1880s. They were followed by other Hungarians who sought work in other mining towns of the Canadian West.

At the turn of the century, Hungarians began to appear in Canada's industrial centres as well. There are records of their presence in Niagara Falls, Ontario, and North Sydney, Nova Scotia. In the former location they were being employed in the construction of hydro-electric generating stations, while in the latter community they worked in iron foundries. In both locations it seems, they were brought in from the United States.[4]

Soon after the turn of the century, Hungarians began to appear in other Canadian industrial centres as well, for instance, in Windsor,

Galt, Welland, Brantford, and Hamilton. In the latter two centres they even established several lay and religious organizations.[5] In the meantime, the urbanization of Hungarians began — continued, if we consider turn-of-the-century Lethbridge an urban centre — in Western Canada as well. There, the largest colony of *Magyar*s grew up in Winnipeg. It started around 1900 and became a colony of several hundred people in a few years. By about 1910 it had become one of the most advanced Hungarian colonies in Canada in terms of the number, variety and size of its immigrant institutions.[6]

The First World War brought important changes in the life of Canada's Hungarian community and, in particular, in the process of its urbanization. In many respects, the war caused setbacks in the development of the Hungarian ethnic group's institutional life. The restrictions placed on organizations of "enemy aliens," and the general climate of public opinion which made life for Hungarians in Canada unpleasant, resulted in a decline of community life in many Hungarian colonies. At the same time, the internal migrations that the war induced, resulted in the emergence of new concentrations of Hungarians in the country, mainly in industrialized Central Canada. As a result of wartime migration to manufacturing centres, the Hungarian colonies in cities such as Hamilton and Brantford continued to grow, and Hungarians began appearing in several Ontario centres where they had not lived before. The largest growth was recorded by the Hungarian colony in Welland. By the time of the 1921 census, Welland would have over two hundred Hungarian residents, with hundreds of other Hungarians living in adjacent industrial centres.[7]

The decade of the 1920s was to bring even more dramatic changes in the development of Canada's Hungarian community, and especially in its urban-rural distribution. The most important general cause of these changes has to be sought in the evolution of Canada's economy in this period. The continued development of manufacturing, the rapid growth of the cities of Central Canada, and the existence of major public works programmes such as the construction of the Welland Canal, help to explain the influx of Hungarians into the urban centres from Windsor to Montreal. The more specific cause of the drastic transformation of the group in the 1920s was the arrival in Canada of over 27,000 new Hungarian immigrants mainly during the second half of the decade. Since this development constituted the immediate cause of the beginning of rapid urbanization for the Hungarian-Canadian ethnic group, it must be examined in some detail.

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Two external factors should be mentioned in order to make clear the historical context of the influx of Hungarians into Canada during the 1920s. One of these was the imposition of "quota laws" on immigration into the United States. The other development that was to have a profound effect on the movement of Hungarians out of East Central Europe in the 1920s, was the dismemberment of the Kingdom of Hungary after the war.

The overall effect of the introduction of the "quota system" in the United States was the stimulation of the immigration of Hungarians to Canada. Prior to 1914, the destination of most overseas emigrants from Hungary was the American Republic. With the "quota," the door became shut to the vast majority of *Magyar*s seeking to start life anew in "America." Increasingly, people wishing to leave Hungary and settle overseas looked to Canada as a possible place of emigration.

The dismemberment of Hungary in the wake of World War I had a similar effect. It should be explained that the peace settlement with Hungary awarded two-thirds of the old Hungarian Kingdom's territory to the so-called successor states: Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia (the states that arose mainly in the place of the dissolved Habsburg Empire). Much of this territory was inhabited by non-Hungarians; however, some of it had mixed population, or even largely Hungarian population. The overall result was that, as a consequence of the peace settlement, well over three million Hungarians found themselves under alien rule. Some of them were forced to leave their native villages or cities. Most of these tried first to start life anew in what was left of Hungary, but found economic conditions there unattractive and, as a result, decided to emigrate overseas. Some among those who stayed under Czech, Romanian or Yugoslav administration, found life in their new country of residence, and especially service in their armed forces, unpleasant. Many of these people, too, eventually decided on emigration to the New World. Their decision was made easier by the local authorities. Apparently, the Yugoslav and Romanian governments of the time, while discouraging the emigration of South Slav and Romanian elements respectively, were quite happy to see the Hungarians leave.[8]

While the post-war peace settlements were in a large part responsible for the immigration to Canada of those Hungarians whose homelands were transferred to the successor states, they also

created conditions that tended to induce more residents of Hungary itself to contemplate emigration than would have been the case without the imposition of an onerous peace settlement. By creating severe economic dislocations in the country (through disrupting internal trade patterns, transportation, labour supply etc), the peace treaty with Hungary caused much hardship for the people of that country, and encouraged some of them to emigrate.

The influx of Hungarians to Canada that started in 1924 — after restrictions on their entry were relaxed by Ottawa — differed in some respects from that which had taken place before 1914. An important difference from our point of view was the fact that the social composition of the new wave of Hungarian immigrants was somewhat different from that of the old. While a large majority of the newcomers hailed from Hungary's villages, there were hundreds among them who were not agricultural workers, but middle-class elements whose jobs or lands were lost when Hungary was dismembered. At the same time, the members of the new immigration tended to be people with better education than their pre-1914 equivalents. Most of them were people who had some familiarity with city life.

There were important Canadian conditions that contributed to the flight of the new Hungarian immigrants away from agricultural work during the 1920s, and at the same time, their migration from the prairie provinces (where most new arrivals were directed by Canadian immigration authorities), to the cities of Central Canada. One of these was the growing dearth of good agricultural land available for homesteading. The result was that by the second half of the 1920s, immigrants to the prairie provinces were being settled mainly in northern districts with lands that could only be described as marginal. In the meantime, farms with better land, in regions with more hospitable climates, went up in price and were beyond the reach of impoverished newcomers. At the same time, there was also a decline in the demand for most types of farm-work. Increased mechanization of farm operations in the West reduced the need for farm labour. At certain stages of the agricultural season, such as at harvest-time, help was still needed, but this type of employment was not conducive to the permanent settlement of newcomers on the prairies. Employment conditions for agricultural workers began deteriorating even before the economic crash in 1929 and became very bad with the onset of the Great Depression in the fall of that year.[9]

The coming of thousands of Hungarian immigrants who were not so strongly inclined toward farm-work as their pre-1914 counter-

parts had been, and the increasingly unfavourable conditions for agricultural pursuits on the prairies resulted in a near-wholesale transformation of Hungarian-Canadian society during the 1920s.[10] From an ethnic group that was predominantly rural-based and centred on the prairie provinces, within a decade the Hungarian-Canadian community became a group characterized by a nearly even distribution between rural and urban residents, and between residents of the largely agricultural prairie provinces and those living elsewhere, especially in Central Canada.

A brief look at the group's census statistics will illustrate the magnitude of its transformation in the 1920s. Despite the great influx of Hungarians, between the censuses of 1921 and 1931, Saskatchewan's Hungarian population increased by only 48 per cent. At the same time, Ontario's underwent an eight-fold increase, and Quebec's (more precisely, that of the City of Montreal) increased from a few hundred to over four thousand.[11] The change in the group's urban-rural ratios in this period is equally impressive. As it has been mentioned, in 1921 three out of every four Hungarian Canadians were rural residents. Ten years later, almost half had become urban dwellers. In 1921, only 11 per cent of them lived in cities (as opposed to towns and other non-rural communities); by 1931, this figure had grown to 30 per cent. From being the 25th-most-urbanized Canadian ethnic group in 1921, Hungarians moved to the rank of 12th within the course of a decade.[12]

This transformation resulted in a large growth of individual urban colonies of Hungarians in Canada. Existing urban concentrations doubled, trebled and quadrupled in size as a result of the influx of Hungarians into Canada's cities. Remarkable was the growth of the size of the Hungarian colonies in medium-sized cities such as Windsor, Welland, and Niagara Falls. Among larger industrial centres, Winnipeg and Hamilton experienced a large increase in the size of their Hungarian colonies. The former had the largest and most influential urban Hungarian community in the West, while the latter was called the "Hungarian capital of Eastern Canada" by a visiting journalist from Hungary.[13] But the most remarkable growth took place in the Hungarian colonies of Canada's two largest cities, Montreal and Toronto.

The beginnings of Montreal's Hungarian community go back to before 1914. There is even evidence that the few score of Hungarian-speaking Jewish residents of that city had a synagogue of their own prior to 1914.[14] Nevertheless, substantial growth in the size of the city's Hungarian colony had to await the second half of the 1920s. Once this growth started, it was very rapid. Within a few

years, the number of Montreal's Hungarians grew from a few hundred to several thousand. With the increase in numbers came the establishment of immigrant institutions. The first to get started were the ethnic churches: a United Church congregation and then a Roman Catholic parish. These were followed by lay organizations, serving social purposes or acting as meeting grounds for special groups of Hungarians or other immigrants from Hungary. For example, the late 1920s saw the establishment of the Székely Cultural Society, for Hungarians from the Székely counties of eastern Transylvania; and also the German-Hungarian Club for German-speaking newcomers from Hungary.[15] There can be no doubt that the beginning of religious and lay ethnic community life in the city played a role in attracting additional Hungarian immigrants.

The story of Toronto's Hungarian community is similar. Many of the early Hungarian-speaking settlers in the city were Jews. The mass influx of Hungarians into Toronto did not start until the second half of the 1920s. The increase of the colony's size was followed by the establishment of Hungarian congregations and social clubs.[16] It is interesting that, while by the end of the decade, Toronto's Hungarian colony had become one of the largest in Ontario, nevertheless many of the leading immigrant institutions of Hungarians in the province remained in smaller cities with older Hungarian colonies. Two of the largest Hungarian sick-benefit associations in Ontario, for example, continued to operate out of Hamilton and Brantford long after Toronto's Hungarian colony surpassed those of these two cities in size.[17]

Census statistics reveal that the group that led this flow of Hungarians into the urban centres of Canada during the 1920s was the latest wave of arrivals. By the time of the 1931 census, 62.4 per cent of those Hungarians who had entered Canada after 1925 were now urban residents. For the groups that came in the previous five years, the figure was 54 per cent. For the pre-war generations, the figures were much lower. Only 39 per cent of those who came between 1911 and 1920 were city dwellers in 1931. For those who came before 1910, the figure was 29 per cent.[18]

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One of the consequences of the Great Depression for the Hungarian-Canadian community was the interruption of the group's rapid urbanization that had started in the 1920s. A reason for the termination of the mass influx into the cities was the decline

in the immigration of Hungarians. Still another reason was the fact that, in the 1930s, many immigrants' search for a place to eke out a living led them to a rural setting, in parts of Canada other than the prairies.

Immigration of agricultural labourers into Canada did not cease immediately with the onset of the Depression in the fall of 1929. During the following spring and summer, newcomers continued to arrive, only to swell the ranks of the unemployed in the country. Even after a ban was placed by Ottawa on the entry of additional masses of farm-workers, a trickle of Hungarian immigration proceeded as wives and children continued to join young men who had arrived in Canada before the Depression.[19] No doubt many of these also ended up in Canada's cities.

The historical evidence regarding the internal migrations of minority groups in Canada is meagre. The standard source that helps historians to gauge the results of these migrations is the Canadian census. Unfortunately, the censuses rarely coincided with the main stages of Canada's demographic and economic evolution. Had a census been taken in the fall of 1929, we would have a more accurate record of the state of the Hungarian-Canadian group's demographic evolution both during the 1920s and during the Depression years. Unfortunately, the census was taken in the summer of 1931, and its statistics incorporate in them not only the demographic trends of the 1920s, but also the impact of the first year-and-a-half of the Depression period.

There can be little doubt that the initial impact of the Depression on the Hungarian-Canadian community was to accentuate its rapid urbanization. As economic conditions became very bad on the prairies, the traditionally wheat-growing area of the Canadian West, Hungarian agricultural workers, as well as families driven off their homesteads, headed for the cities in search of employment. Not finding any means of livelihood there either, they continued their search for months, and in some cases, for years. In the end, some Hungarian immigrants were able to find work in parts of Canada where little or no concentrations of Hungarians had existed before. In the West, Hungarians found employment or farming opportunities in the agricultural districts of the Lower Fraser and Okanagan valleys of British Columbia, and in the sugar-beet growing regions of Southern Alberta. In Ontario, they found a livelihood in the so-called "tobacco-belt," in the vicinity of the towns of Delhi and Tillsonburg.[20]

The overall result of these migrations was a slight setback to the process of the Hungarian group's urbanization. The census statistics

confirm this fact and reflect the demographic transformation that the Depression wrought in Canada.[21] Although the Depression gradually began to lift during the late 1930s, there was no dramatic improvement in the employment prospects of Hungarian Canadians until the second or third year of the Second World War. It is reasonable to suppose then, that the results of the June 1941 census reflect predominantly the changes in Hungarian-Canadian urban-rural distribution that had been caused by the Depression. It may be useful to look at some of the 1941 census results not already mentioned earlier.

The 1941 census is particularly useful to the student of Hungarian-Canadian history. It prompted many questions and, more important from our point of view, it avoided the practice, all too prevalent in later censuses, of lumping Hungarians together with "other Europeans" when reporting the answers to these questions. The overall result is that the 1941 census tells more about Hungarian-Canadian urban colonies than most other censuses.

The 1941 data reveal remarkable similarities and dissimilarities about the various Hungarian-Canadian residential concentrations in Canada's cities. It shows, for example, that many of them were very much the products of the "new" (i.e. post-1924) immigration, while a few others were obviously communities of the pre-1914 wave of immigrants and their descendants. The best example of the former was the largest grouping of Hungarians in Canada, the *Magyar* colony of Montreal. About 80 per cent of its membership was made up of immigrants (as opposed to Hungarian Canadians born in this country). It may be assumed that the remainder was made up mainly of these newcomers' children. Moreover, the census data also tell that a vast majority (94 per cent) of the immigrant members of this colony, came to Canada after 1921. In this respect, the Hungarian colonies of Toronto, Windsor, Calgary, and even to some extent that of Hamilton, were similar to Montreal's. All were made up largely of immigrants. Three out of every four Hungarian Canadians in Toronto, and two out of every three in Windsor and Hamilton, were immigrants rather than Canadian-born. Much like in Montreal, post-1921 arrivals predominated in all of these cities' Hungarian colonies.[22]

At the opposite extreme was the Hungarian colony of Regina. Though it did not appear a very important centre of Hungarian community life in 1941, that city had the largest Hungarian community west of Ontario. It was very much a concentration of the early immigrants and their descendants. First of all, nearly

two-thirds of its members were Canadian — more precisely, Saskatchewan-born. Furthermore, even among the city's immigrant Hungarian population, pre-1921 arrivals predominated, though only by a narrow margin.[23]

Between the extremes of the "new" Hungarian-Canadian urban settlements (Montreal, Calgary, Toronto), and the archetype of the "old" (Regina), stood the Hungarian colonies of Winnipeg and Vancouver. Almost half the Hungarian population of each was made up of the Canadian-born, while the predominance of the post-1921 arrivals was not so sharp among the immigrant population as it was in the case of the "new" settlements (a little more than 70 per cent, as opposed to over 90 per cent).[24]

Some of the data in the 1941 census allow us to speculate where some Canadian-born members of Canada's Hungarian urban colonies came from. For each Hungarian-Canadian metropolitan colony, it is possible to establish what proportion of its second- and third-generation ethnic population were born outside of the province of their 1941 residence. In this regard, too, the census reveals extreme differences among the various Hungarian-Canadian urban groupings. The data reveals, for example, that over 98 per cent of Regina's Canadian-born Hungarian population was from Saskatchewan. The extreme opposite case was the Hungarian-Canadian colony of Vancouver: nearly two-thirds of its Canadian-born members were from outside of the "home province." These figures might suggest that Vancouver's Hungarian colony was the product not only of immigrant Hungarians from Europe, but of Canadian-born Hungarians from various parts of Canada. At the same time, Regina's *Magyar* colony was hardly touched by the interprovincial migration of second- and third-generation Hungarian Canadians. It is quite interesting that in this respect, Montreal's Hungarian colony, which differed so much from Regina's in the "vintage" of its members, was also one that had been quite unaffected by the in-migration of Canadian-born Hungarians from provinces other than Quebec. Only one per cent of the Montreal colony's population was made up of such transmigrants. Toronto's colony differed in this respect considerably; 6.2 per cent of its members were born in Canada outside of Ontario.[25]

The 1941 census offers some concrete data on the place of last permanent residence of Canada's immigrant population.[26] These statistics help us in determining to what extent the urban colonies of immigrant Hungarian Canadians were made up of transmigrants (i.e. of people who previous to the time of the census had resided in

another province of Canada). More important, these data also reveal in which province these people had lived prior to their settlement in their 1941 place of residence.

As has been mentioned earlier, Vancouver was the home of the largest proportion of the Canadian-born Hungarian-Canadian transmigrants in the country. The statistics regarding the last permanent place of residence of Hungarian immigrants confirm that this city was also the home of the largest proportion of immigrant Hungarian transmigrants. Nearly 60 per cent of the city's immigrant *Magyar* population had resided, prior to settling in Vancouver, in a province other than British Columbia. Two other Hungarian-Canadian urban colonies had a fair number of transmigrants among their immigrant population: Toronto and Windsor. In both places, one out of every four Hungarian immigrants had lived outside of Ontario since their arrival in Canada. The Hungarian-Canadian immigrant urban colony with the smallest portion of interprovincial transmigrants was, as might be expected, Regina. Apparently, only people who had not tasted life in any other part of Canada but Saskatchewan tended to settle in that city.

In talking about Saskatchewan, it should be mentioned that that province was the single most important source of Hungarian immigrant transmigrants for every major Hungarian-Canadian urban colony. Every one of these groupings of Hungarians received more interprovincial transmigrants from Saskatchewan than from any other single province, although in the case of Vancouver those coming from Alberta, and in the case of Toronto those coming from Manitoba, were a very close second. Toronto, Hamilton and Windsor among them accounted for more than four hundred of these Hungarian transmigrants from Saskatchewan. There can be little doubt that, as the Canadian economy continued to gear up for war production during the second half of 1941 and thereafter, even more Hungarian Canadians in general, and more Hungarian Saskatchewanians in particular, were attracted to industrial centres such as Vancouver, Windsor, Hamilton and Toronto.

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1941 brought a turnabout in Canada's economic development. Jobs became plentiful in the country's growing war-time industries, and men could work to their hearts' content. Historians are fortunate to have a detailed and probably quite accurate account of the impact of these new economic conditions on Hungarian Canadians. During 1942, as part of the federal government's efforts

to improve relations with Canada's immigrant ethnic community, a few individuals were commissioned to report on the state of affairs of a small number of Canadian ethnic groups. Probably the best of these reports was done on the Hungarians.[27] Its author was a certain "Dr." Béla Eisner, a leading figure of Montreal's Hungarian community. His report depicts not only the economic conditions of Hungarians in Canada at the time, but also their state of attitudes. Both lent themselves to feverish economic activity on their part. Most members of this group were very anxious to make up for the missed economic opportunities of the 1930s, and worked as much as they could, in order to save as much money as possible. Many of them seemed to have been certain that the abundance of jobs was a temporary, wartime phenomenon and that, come the end of the war, devaluation and depression would follow, and immigrants would lose their jobs in the factories. This attitude tended to reinforce the immigrants' determination to earn as much as they possibly could while the special conditions lasted, and to save or invest the money they had earned. In southern Ontario's cities especially, Eisner saw unparalleled efforts by Hungarians to make the most of the economic upturn.

In the West, the situation was somewhat different. Gradually, better economic conditions were returning to the farms, but with wages having gone up, it was not possible to attract agricultural workers to the farms. In the cities of the West, job opportunities for Hungarians were not as plentiful as they were in Ontario, for example. Although Eisner does not discuss the issue of transmigrations, it is evident from his report that conditions were ripe for the continued influx of Hungarian Canadians from the prairies to the manufacturing centres of Canada, and it was undoubtedly taking place. Unfortunately, once again we have to say that census statistics do not show this wartime migration accurately. As it has been mentioned, the 1941 census came too early to indicate this trend, and the next census incorporates into its results the impact of six post-war years, and the beginning of a new wave of Hungarian immigration to Canada. Nevertheless, the 1951 census data are interesting, and they document the transformation that the Hungarian-Canadian group's urban-rural distribution had undergone in the decade after 1941.

The 1951 census, despite its annoying practice of frequently lumping Hungarians together with "other Europeans," still allows us to get glimpses of some aspects of the transformation wrought by the war in Hungarian-Canadian society. This can be done by looking at the statistics regarding the pre-1941 arrivals, i.e. the members of

the "old" (as opposed to the post-1945) immigration, wherever such figures can be found. These figures indicate that during the war, another massive shift had taken place in the geographic distribution of Hungarian Canadians, on the whole in favour of Ontario. Among cities that made substantial gains were Toronto, Hamilton, Vancouver and Calgary. In fact, in 1951 the city with the largest concentration of pre-1945 Hungarian immigrants was Hamilton. The second was Toronto. For this category of Hungarian Canadians, the City of Montreal in 1951 stood only third.[28]

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On the eve of the 1950s, Hungarian-Canadian society was on the threshold of a transformation even greater than that caused by the war years. This was the coming of a new wave of immigrants during 1948-52, only to be followed by still another, a much larger wave half a decade later. The movement of the post-World War II refugees began in the 1948-49 fiscal year, when 1,400 Hungarians arrived in the country. They were followed by 1,600 in the following year, and about 2,000 in 1950-51. In the 1951-52 fiscal year a total of about 4,500 Hungarians entered Canada. While Canadian officials directed many members of the new immigration to various parts of Canada, including the West, by the time of the 1951 census most of them were living in Central Canada's cities. Nearly 1,100 of them seem to have settled in Toronto alone. Montreal was the second most desirable place of settlement for them; 800 of them chose it as their home. Hamilton was selected by some 250. In the West, only Winnipeg attracted more than 200 of the newcomers.[29]

The above statistics deal either with the pre-1941 immigrants or the post-Second World War arrivals. Despite the deficiencies of the 1951 census, much interesting information can be gleaned from its data on Hungarian-Canadian society as a whole, the Canadian-born as well as the "old" and the "new" immigrants, all included. The first fact that should be mentioned in connection with this census is that it marked the point of no return in the movement of Hungarian Canadians to Central Canada and to Canada's cities. In 1951, 53.4 per cent of Hungarian Canadians, that is, 32,309 out of 60,460, lived in Central Canada, predominantly in Ontario.[30] The province with the second largest *Magyar* population (12,470) however, continued to be Saskatchewan. The urban-rural ratio for the whole group had also shifted irreversibly in favour of the cities. The 1951 census showed that 33,217 Hungarians, or 54.9 per cent of them, lived in Canada's towns and cities.[31]

For Hungarian-Canadian society, Quebec remained the most urbanized province. There, 95.6 per cent of Hungarian Canadians lived in cities, i.e. in Montreal and sister municipalities. For Ontario, the figure was 68.4 per cent. Saskatchewan remained the "least urbanized" province, with only 17.9 per cent of its Hungarians living in urban centres.[32]

The three largest Hungarian-Canadian urban colonies in 1951 were in Hamilton, Montreal and Toronto. They each numbered somewhat in excess of 3,000 members, more if we count neighbouring municipalities or suburbs. Other large centres were: Windsor (2,044), Welland (1,456), Calgary (1,204), Regina (1,157), Vancouver (1,054), Winnipeg (943), Brantford (900) and Lethbridge (832).[33]

The census figures also permit us to establish which sections or parts of Hungarian-Canadian society were most urbanized and which were the least. While only 48.1 per cent of Canadian-born Hungarians were urbanized, 61.4 per cent of immigrant Hungarians lived in cities by 1951. For those who had come before 1911, the urban-rural ratio was quite low, only 42.3 per cent. For later arrivals, the ratios were much higher: for the very numerous 1921-30 group for example, it was 61.1 per cent, and for the latest (post-1945) newcomers, it was just over 70 per cent.[34] The trend was evident: every new wave of immigrants from Hungary was more likely to settle in cities than the previous one. It is not surprising then, that the arrival of still another, even larger, wave of Hungarian immigrants during the second half of the 1950s would reinforce the demographic trends set in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s.

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There can be no doubt that one of the most important events in the evolution of the Hungarian-Canadian ethnic group was the arrival, in the wake of the 1956 events in Hungary, of some 37,000 refugees. This group represented the largest wave of Hungarians ever to come to Canada. Its arrival had an impact on every aspect of Hungarian-Canadian evolution, including urban-rural distribution.[35] The fact is that the coming of the refugees reinforced the long-standing trend of increasing concentration of Hungarians in Canada's industrialized provinces and in particular, in large cities.

The 1961 census confirms this observation. It indicates that 47 per cent of the newcomers had settled in Ontario. Quebec became the home of nearly 23 per cent, and British Columbia, of 12 per cent.

Alberta received 9 per cent of the refugees, while Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the Atlantic provinces received the remainder.[36]

What is even more interesting from our point of view, is that nine out of ten refugees had settled in cities. The metropolitan area that received the largest group of them was Toronto. Nearly 8,700 refugees had settled in that city by 1961. Montreal, whose cosmopolitan atmosphere must have been a great attraction to many Hungarians, became the home of well over 7,000 of the newcomers. Vancouver received about 2,200 of them, and Winnipeg 1,740. The next most popular cities for the refugees were Calgary and Hamilton. A good number of them chose Edmonton and Ottawa as places for settlement. The influx of refugees to these and other urban centres helped to increase the urban-rural ratio of Hungarian Canadians to nearly 75 per cent.[37]

With the arrival of the refugees in 1956-57, large-scale immigration from Hungary came to an end. Hungarians continued to come to Canada in small numbers, in part as a result of family unification programmes throughout the 1960s and even later. Hungarians have continued to leave Hungary — legally or illegally — to our days, and many of these more recent emigrants have made their way to Canada. Occasionally, Hungarians have come to Canada from countries other than Hungary. For example, in the wake of the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia, hundreds of Hungarian citizens of that country came to Canada as refugees.

While new immigration had little influence over urban-rural distribution after 1960, natural population growth (or the lack of it) and internal migrations continued to influence the geographic distribution of Hungarian Canadians. Their distribution throughout Canada kept changing. The changes were recorded by the censuses. From 1961 to 1981 three of Canada's provinces (and here we ignore Atlantic Canada which was never the home of much more than one per cent of the total Hungarian-Canadian population) had a declining Hungarian population. The province that experienced the steepest relative decline was Quebec, whose 12.3 per cent share of the total in 1961 had declined to 8.4 by 1981. The causes of this trend have not been studied in detail. In part, they may have been economic; however, Quebec's "quiet revolution" and the rise of French-Canadian nationalism might have been a contributing factor in the obvious exodus of Hungarians from the province. Almost as steep a decline as Quebec's was experienced by Saskatchewan. The third province to experience a decline in the size of its Hungarian population (from 5,443 in 1961 to 4,160 twenty years later) was Manitoba.[38]

The provinces that have experienced a relative if not always absolute increase in the size of their Hungarian-Canadian populations were Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia. After 1971 the growth recorded by the census is only relative, as in 1981 the census for the first time accepted "multiple ancestries" with the result that the number of people in Canada who gave Hungarian as their only ancestry declined considerably.[39] In the case of Ontario, and to a lesser extent Alberta, this "relative" growth was very gradual, while in the case of B.C., it was a little steeper. In 1961 that province was home to just about one in ten Hungarian Canadians. By 1981, the figure was close to one in seven. Incidentally, by that year, Ontario's share of the total Hungarian-Canadian population exceeded 50 per cent for the first time, although by a narrow margin only (0.8 per cent).[40]

Urban ratios (i.e. percentage of the urbanized) also kept changing, although rather slowly. For the group as a whole, that ratio had reached 80.8 per cent by 1971. For 1981, the figure was 82.1 per cent. Furthermore, by then, nearly half (49.1 per cent) of Hungarian Canadians were living in centres of over 500,000 inhabitants.[41] Urban ratios for the provinces ranged from 94.5 per cent for Quebec, to 50.1 per cent for Saskatchewan. For those living in centres of half-a-million or over, it went as high as 89 per cent (Quebec).[42]

Conclusion

From being one of the least urbanized groups in Canada at the end of the nineteenth century, Hungarian Canadians have become one of the most urbanized today. Even in 1921, when for the first time half of all Canadians were found living in cities, three-quarters of Hungarian Canadians were rural residents. Today, when three out of four Canadians live in cities, the figure for Hungarians is greater than four out of five. The explanation for this transformation does not lie entirely in the changes that Canada has undergone in the past several decades. Definitely, the evolution of the Canadian economy has had an important impact on the movement of Hungarians from the farms to the cities. Such developments as the increasing mechanization of agriculture, the decline of the West's wheat economy, the advent of large-scale manufacturing, and then the rise of an economy based largely on service industries, all helped to propel Hungarian Canadians from rural to urban settings, or to prompt newcomers to head straight for metropolitan centres. Had these been the only factors though, Hungarian-Canadian society's

urbanization would not have proceeded at the pace it did, and certainly not at a much greater speed than that of the Canadian population at large.

It has been suggested in this paper that an important factor in the rapid urbanization of Hungarians in this country has been the coming of newer waves of Hungarian immigrants whose social and occupational composition varied, and whose members' propensity for rural or urban life differed — in some cases considerably. The periods of extensive re-migration of Hungarian immigrants, and of rapid growth in Hungarian-Canadian urban colonies coincided with, or followed in the wake of, the arrival of a new wave of *Magyar* immigrants. This trend has been confirmed in the census results of 1931 and 1961. It has also been demonstrated that those who flocked to the cities in ever increasing numbers, since the turn of the century, were the members of the most recent stream of Hungarian immigrants.

It has been pointed out that the first group to give a massive boost to the urbanization of Hungarian Canadians was the immigration influx of the 1920s, and that the social composition of this group of new arrivals differed to some extent from that of the pre-1914 wave. The desire of Canada's immigration officials to exclude non-agrarian elements notwithstanding, many Hungarians entered the country who were not entirely or even primarily "agricultural" types. Some of them were *declasse* middle-class elements, former members of Hungary's bureaucracy or nobility, whose jobs or lands were lost when Hungary was dismembered. Others were people with rural backgrounds who had had a taste of city life acquired, in many cases during the war when peasant soldiers took their leaves in cities or were stationed in or near them. The overall consequence of their coming to Canada was an increased likelihood for their eventual settlement in urban areas.

The argument that the social and occupational makeup of the 1920s immigration differed from its pre-1914 counterpart should not be over-stressed. Despite the presence of many hundreds of non-agricultural types among these newcomers, the overwhelming majority was of peasant stock. Most of these people probably would have preferred to settle on Canadian farms, had economic conditions in the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s been favourable to such a lifestyle. However, in the case of the post-1945 Hungarian newcomers, the argument concerning the differing nature of each new immigration stream reinforcing the trend toward urbanization becomes stronger.

According to Canadian immigration records, the majority of the

postwar Hungarian immigrants (or "displaced persons") were agricultural workers or labourers who were expected to find employment on Canada's farming, mining, or lumbering frontier. But the records are misleading. Many people denied their schooling and training if they felt that doing so would improve their chances of admission into the country.[43] Though it is not possible to make an accurate guess, it is probable that a large portion of displaced persons were well-educated or highly trained workers or professionals unlikely to settle permanently in rural areas. In fact, it is well known that such people were disproportionately represented among the masses of people who fled from Hungary at the end of the war and after. It was these people who had the most to lose as the result of a Russian occupation of their country, and they were the most likely to flee. Poor peasants and workers, unless they had been officers in Hungary's armed forces or police during the war, had fewer reasons to leave.

While the conditions that governed the departure of the displaced persons from Hungary had little to do with the exodus of the refugees in 1956, research has revealed that the refugees also constituted a special element in Hungarian society. The social, occupational and even religious composition of this group tended to make for the rapid urbanization of its members once they began settling in Canada. One of the most remarkable features of the refugees as a group was the predominance of young people among them. Of the 37,565 Hungarians who entered Canada in 1956-57, almost a third were under the age of twenty-four, while only about 5,000 were over forty-five.[44] Thousands of them were university students, intent on careers as professionals and on urban life. Among the refugees, Jews were disproportionately represented. It has been estimated that almost 7,000 Hungarian Jews entered Canada after the revolution.[45] Hungary's Jews were highly urbanized, and there is every reason to believe that the overwhelming majority of those that came to Canada settled in the main centres of Jewish-Canadian culture: Montreal and Toronto. But it is the occupational composition of the refugees that helps to explain best why they headed for and remained in Canada's urban centres.

According to well-informed sources, professional and intellectual elements were over-represented among the refugees. Nearly a quarter of refugee men and more than a third of refugee women belonged to this category.[46] A great many of them were engineers, medical doctors and technicians. A large portion of the refugees, especially refugee men, were skilled workers: mechanics, metal workers, electricians, pipe fitters and so on. Apparently, agricultural

workers were hardly to be found among the mass exodus from Hungary.[47] The majority of the refugees came from Hungarian cities — in particular, Budapest. In view of these facts, it is not surprising that the vast majority of these newcomers settled in Canada's metropolitan centres — despite the fact that on arrival they tended to be directed elsewhere by immigration officials.

Once the large, active Hungarian communities were established in major Canadian cities, as they were in Montreal and Toronto in the 1920s and in Vancouver in the late 1950s, they tended to serve as magnets for Hungarians who had settled elsewhere in Canada. Thus, the movement to the cities, quite heavy during and immediately after the arrival of a new wave of Hungarian newcomers to the country, continued — albeit somewhat more gradually — even after the new arrivals had established themselves in their new Canadian environment.

During the mid- and late 1930s, the Depression thwarted, and in some regions even reversed, this trend toward increasing urbanization. In the 1960s and the 1970s, however, there were no major economic or political developments that would have had similar results. The main exception was the Province of Quebec — in particular, Montreal — where the political atmosphere of the time resulted in an outmigration of Hungarians. Elsewhere in Canada, the growth of Hungarian Canadian urban communities continued, even in these decades, partly at the expense of rural settlements. As a result of these processes, Hungarian Canadians, at one time comprising one of the least urbanized groups in the country, have become one of the most urbanized. As it has been outlined in this paper, the explanation lies only partly in the changing economic and social conditions of Canada. Of course, the general trend to an increasingly urban life in North America was an important determinant. The fact that by 1921 only half of Canada's population was living in the cities, while by the 1980s a little over three-quarters were, had a definite impact on Hungarian-Canadian lifestyles as well. As it has been mentioned, however, the re-settlement of Hungarian Canadians in Canada's cities took place at a much more rapid pace than that of the Canadian population as a whole. This paper has attempted to show that an important cause of this phenomenon has been the post-World War I arrival of three new waves of Hungarian immigrants, each with a social and occupational composition that differed from that of the previous one, and each made up of people with social and educational backgrounds that varied from those of the previous waves.

The propensity of Hungarian immigrants for country or city

living should not be seen as a factor that worked independently from or contrary to other economic and social forces that prompted newcomers to re-migrate after their initial settlement in Canada. In most cases, the various factors resulting in re-migration undoubtedly reinforced each other. This had also been the case over hundred years ago when bad economic conditions in the mining and iron-producing towns of Pennsylvania, along with a nostalgic longing for the agricultural way of life, induced the first Hungarian-Canadian pioneers to abandon their urban lifestyle and return to that of their peasant forefathers.[48] During the century that followed, the Hungarian immigrants' preference for city life combined with economic and other forces and resulted in a population flow in the opposite direction: from the countryside to the cities. It remains to be seen whether the second century of Hungarian-Canadian evolution, in an age that promises to bring ever more rapid technological and societal change, will reinforce the trends of the first, or reverse them.

Notes

My research on the history of Hungarians in Canada has been supported through the years by grants from the Multiculturalism Sector of the Secretary of State of Canada, for which I am thankful. An earlier and shorter version of this paper was read at the meeting of the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association in 1985. Graphs and pie-charts illustrating that presentation are available on request; their publication would have driven the cost of printing this volume sky high. I am indebted for comments on this paper to Professor M.L. Kovacs and two anonymous readers. Perhaps I should add that the paper I prepared for the 1986 meeting of the Hungarian Studies Association of Canada could not be printed in this volume as it had been accepted for publication elsewhere prior to the conference.

1. *Census of Canada, 1921,* Vol. I. Table 24.
2. Canada, Statistics Canada, *Update from the 1981 Census, Highlights on Ethnicitiy...* (Ottawa, 1983), pp. 1-3.
3. 1981 Census of Canada, Population: Ethnic Origins (Ottawa, 1984), Table 2. These figures are based on people with Hungarian only (as opposed to Hungarian and other) ethnic origin.
4. N.F. Dreisziger *et al.* (eds.) *Struggle and Hope: The Hungarian-Canadian Experience* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), pp. 94f. Unless otherwise noted, references are to the chapters written by myself; and, unless otherwise noted, references to my works are to various parts of this book.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 95f.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 95 and 105.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
8. Information from Robert England, personal interview, Victoria, October 1984. England was the Canadian National Railways' immigration agent in these countries during the late 1920s.
9. For detailed descriptions of these conditions, especially as they pertained to Hungarian newcomers to Canada, see the reports of Hungarian Vice-Consul for

Winnipeg, István Schefbeck Petényi, to the Hungarian Foreign Office in Budapest. Cited in Dreisziger, note 62, p. 134. See also *ibid.*, pp. 139f.
10. Dreisziger, chapter 5 "A Deacade of Setbacks: The 1930s."
11. Dreisziger, pp. 101-03.
12. For more details see *ibid.*, pp. 108f.
13. Ödön Paizs, *Magyarok Kanadaban* [Hungarians in Canada] (Budapest, 1928). Hamilton's Hungarian colony is described in fair detail; see pp. 198-206.
14. Dreisziger, p. 103. Much useful information is available on Montreal's early Hungarian community in Mihály Fehér, *Jubilee Album, Magyar Reformed Church, 1926-1966* (Montreal, 1966).
15. Dreisziger, pp. 103f.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
17. *Ibid.*
18. N.F. Dreisziger, "Aspects of Hungarian Settlement in Canada, 1921-1931," in M.L. Kovacs (ed.) *Hungarian-Canadian Perspectives, Selected Papers* (Ottawa, 1980), special issue of the *Canadian-American Review of Hungarian Studies* Vol. VII, No. 1 (Spring, 1980), pp. 51f.
19. Dreisziger, *Struggle*, p. 144.
20. *Ibid.* Also: Linda Degh, *People in the Tobacco Belt: Four Lives* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1975).
21. Dreisziger, *Struggle*, p. 146. In 1931 almost a half of Hungarians in Canada (49.5 per cent), were urban residents. Ten years later, only 47 per cent were. Regional or, more precisely, provincial trends are also interesting. In Alberta, urban-rural ratios declined during the decade from 31.4 per cent, to 24.7 per cent. In Manitoba, a similar trend prevailed. In the prairie region, only Saskatchewan experienced a slight increase in the urban-rural ratio of its Hungarian residents: it went up from 18.6 per cent to 20.7. Elsewhere in the country, Ontario saw the decline of the urban-rural distribution of its Hungarian population from 73 per cent to 63 per cent.
22. Calculations based on figures provided in the *Census of Canada, 1941*, Vol. IV, Table 22: "Population by birthplace, racial origin..." and Table 27, "Immigrant population by period of immigration..."
23. Calculations based on data provided *ibid.* Many of Regina's Hungarian-speaking residents were Székelys from the former Austro-Hungarian province of Bukovina. They formed the backbone of the Regina Hungarian Cultural Club. Information from Professor Kovacs.
24. Calculations based on figures provided in the *Census of Canada, 1941*, Vol. IV, Table 22.
25. Calculations based on data provided in Table 21, *ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*, Table 25 "Migrant population by place of last permanent residence,..."
27. Béla Eisner, "Report of my Good-Will Visit to the Communities of Hungarian Origin..." ms. Most of the Eisner papers are in my possession.
28. *Census of Canada, 1951* Vol. II (Ottawa, 1953), Table 60.
29. *Ibid.*, Table 61. Dreisziger, pp. 195f. Also: Susan M. Papp, "Hungarian Immigration After 1945," in Susan M. Papp (ed.), *Hungarians in Ontario*: special double issue of *Polyphony*, Vol. II, Nos. 2-3 (1979-80), pp. 45ff.
30. *Census of Canada, 1951,* Vol. I, Table 32, "Population by origin and sex, for provinces and territories,..."
31. *Ibid.*, Table 33. The ratio of those living in "big cities", those with populations of over 100,000, was only 25.6 per cent.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*, Table 35.
34. *Ibid.*, Vol. II. Table 40.
35. For a detailed treatment of the impact of 1956 and the coming of the refugees on Hungarian-Canadian society see N.F. Dreisziger, "The Impact of the Revolution on Hungarians Abroad: The Case of the Hungarian Canadians," in B.K. Kiraly, B. Lotze, and N.F. Dreisziger (eds.) *The First War Between Socialist States: The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and Its Impact* (New York: Social Science Monographs, Brooklyn

College Press, 1984), pp. 411-25. Also: S.M. Papp, "Flight and Settlement: the '56ers," in Papp, pp. 63-70.
36. Dreisziger, *Struggle*, p. 210.
37. *Ibid.* For these data see *Census of Canada, 1961*, Vol. I, Part 3, Table 125.
38. For a brief discussion of post-1961 demographic trends see Dreisziger, pp., 221f.
39. The complete picture became clear late in 1983 when, in response to a request by the staff of the Multiculturalism Directorate, the data on Hungarians of all origins were released by Statistics Canada. Still later these data were published. The figures are:

Persons of Hungarian and British origin:	14,325
Persons of Hungarian and French origin:	2,680
Persons of Hungarian and other origin:	9,375
Persons of Hungarian, British, French and other origin:	1,425
All Hungarian categories (including "Hungarian only")	144,195

I am indebted to John Kralt and Judy Young, both of the Multiculturalism Directorate, for passing this information on to me.
40. 1981 Census of Canada, Population, Ethnic Origin, Table 1, "Population by Ethnic origin..."
41. *Ibid.*, Table 2.
42. *Ibid.* The data for the whole of the country are:

Province:	% urbanized	% in cities with 500.000 or more
Quebec	94.5	89.0
Ontario	86.0	50.1
Manitoba	81.9	67.3
Saskatchewan	51.7	n.a.
Alberta	82.6	57.0
British Columbia	81.2	46.2

43. Papp, "Hungarian Immigration," pp. 45 and 47. Also, Dreisziger, p. 196.
44. Gerald S. Dirks, *Canada's Refugee Policy: Indifference or Opportunism?* (Montreal: McGill Queen's Press, 1977), p. 203.
45. B.L. Vigod, *The Jews in Canada* (Ottawa, Canadian Historical Association, 1984), p. 6.
46. Miklós Szántó, "Kivándorlás, emigráció, emigrációs politika" [Emigration, The Emigration, Emigrant Politics], *Társadalmi Szemle* (Budapest), Vol. 37, No. 5, p. 95.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 96. The exception to this generalization is the people who fled from the villages along the Austrian, and to a lesser extent, the Yugoslav border. Many among these were agricultural types.
48. Martin L. Kovacs, "From Industries to Farming," *Hungarian Studies Review*, Vol. VIII, No. 1 (Spring 1981), pp. 45-60.