Soviet Nationality Policy
in Carpatho-Ukraine since World War II:
The Hungarians of Sub-Carpathia

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The land that since World War I has been known variously as “Carpatho-Ruthenia,” “Sub-Carpathia,” “Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia,” and since World War II also as “Carpatho-Ukraine” and “Trans-Carpathia” did not even have a name of its own, let alone a specific identity before the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—and therein historic Hungary—in 1918. For a whole millennium it was simply part of the Kingdom of Hungary, or to be more exact, of the northeastern Hungarian highlands. It had become part of the country in the late 9th century, when the majority of the conquering Hungarians crossed the Carpathian Mountains at the Verecke Pass—the gateway to Carpatho-Ruthenia and to the whole Carpathian Basin.

Following the Hungarian conquest, this mountainous region of less than 5,000 square miles remained part of Hungary right up to the end of World War I, when in consequence of the Treaty of Trianon (June 4, 1920) it was transferred to the newly founded Czechoslovak state. After Hitler’s dismemberment of Czechoslovakia in 1938 and 1939, Carpatho-Ruthenia was reincorporated into Hungary. Then, at the end of World War II, it was lost again, this time to the Soviet Union. The Soviets acquired it on the basis of a Czechoslovak-Soviet agreement (June 29, 1945), one year after effective control had already been taken over by the Soviet Army.

To the Hungarians, the loss of Carpatho-Ruthenia meant basically the loss of an ancient Hungarian land, and—after 1945—the intrusion of the dreaded “Eastern Colossus” into the Carpathian heartland. To the Soviets, on the other hand, this transfer was the “reunion” of an allegedly “ancient Slavic homeland” to the “mother country” that came a thousand years too late, i.e. after a millennium of dominance by the “Hungarian aristocracy and capitalists.” Ever since 1945 this fiction of “reunion” has been the main theme of all Soviet historical and political pronounce-
ments concerning this region notwithstanding the fact that prior to 1918 Carpatho-Ruthenia has never had any connections with any of the earlier Slavonic states. Moreover, the great majority of the local Ruthenians or Rusyns have migrated to the area only between the 14th and 17th centuries. This influx, combined with their natural growth in the hidden and protected valleys of the northeastern Carpathians, gradually made them into the majority nationality in that area. Thus, by 1910 the region's population of 571,488 was composed of 319,361 Rusyns (55.8 percent), 169,434 Hungarians (29.7 percent), 62,182 Germans (10.9 percent), 15,382 Romanians (2.7 percent), 4,067 Slovaks (0.7 percent), and 1,062 others (0.2 percent).²

Given the nature of these nationality statistics and the lack of any historical claims by the Czechs and the Slovaks, Carpatho-Ruthenia’s attachment to Czechoslovakia in 1918–1920 was motivated purely by political considerations, and more specifically by French interests in the area. It certainly violated the Wilsonian principle of national self-determination—both of the largely anational Rusyns whose only perceptible loyalty was to Hungary (their forced identification with the Ukrainians came later), and of the Hungarians who now were forcibly detached from the mother country. Political and administrative power in Carpatho-Ruthenia fell into the hands of Czech “carpetbaggers” who, while bringing elements of modernization to the province, treated its population rather offhandedly. They also introduced land reform at the expense of the Hungarian landowners, but left the landless Hungarian peasantry out of the benefits of this long overdue socio-economic transformation. Thus, of the 260,115 holds (372,000 acres) expropriated and distributed, Hungarians received only 19,000 holds (27,000 acres).³

In addition to offhand treatment by Czech administrators, the Hungarians also had to suffer mistreatment at the hands of the increasingly intolerant and aggressive Slovak and Ukrainian nationalists. Czechs and Rusyns were forcibly settled in pure Hungarian villages, where they were given free lands and funds for building homes and churches. The same villages were also compelled to open Czech, Slovak and Ukrainian schools at the same time when the nearly 200,000 strong Hungarian population of Carpatho-Ruthenia during the 1930s had only a single Hungarian secondary school at BeregszáSZ (Berehovo, Beregovo).

In 1939, after Czechoslovakia’s dismemberment, the Hungarian army reconquered Carpatho-Ruthenia, and did so with Polish approval. At that time Stalin still regarded the views of the Ukrainian nationalists concerning the future of that province as not even worthy of consideration. In the course of World War II, however, Stalin’s views changed, and by 1944 he openly demanded that “Carpatho-Ukraine” (a newly fabricated term) be united with Soviet Ukraine.⁴ It was this demand that found fulfillment on
June 29, 1945, with the already mentioned Czechoslovak-Soviet agreement of that date.

The Soviet Takeover

We know very little about the months and years that followed the Soviet acquisition of Carpatho-Ruthenia, except that the new authorities did everything in their power to clean out all pockets of resistance. The two nationalities who suffered the most were the Hungarians and the Rusyns who refused to be categorized as “Ukrainians.” The new Soviet authorities were unusually harsh with the members of the Greek or Byzantine Catholic clergy, virtually all of whom supported the idea of a distinct Rusyn nationhood. But of all the people of Carpatho-Ruthenia, it was the Hungarians who suffered the most. According to spotty reports that appeared in the contemporary Western press, all manifestations of Hungarian national consciousness were suppressed, including even the speaking of Hungarian. Moreover, a sizable portion of the Hungarian male population was deported to the interior of the Ukraine. Much of this was being done in secret, although reports of the consequences of this deportation did seep across the new Soviet-Hungarian border. There were also reports about the massacre of some of the resisting peasants, e.g. in Nagydobrony (Velikaya Dobron) where allegedly the population was decimated in the summer of 1945 (July 8).5

Most of the repercussions following the Soviet takeover constitute a tightly kept secret. Yet, some of these were alluded to in an article by two Hungarian literati from Carpatho-Ruthenia in 1970 in the Hungarian periodical Tiszatáj.6 Moreover, sections of it were also republished recently in a major compendium of Hungarian literature abroad. Writing very carefully the two authors alleged:

The pseudo-state that came into being on the area of Sub-Carpathia—i.e. Zakarpatska Ukraina—existed from November 1944 until January 1946. The policy of our power structure . . . was dominated only by two considerations: those of Ukrainian nationalism and the personality cult, both of them amplified by the conditions of the war. The unlawful and discrediting measures [of this policy] brought irreparable harm and dealt a powerful blow to the Hungarians of Sub-Carpathia. . . . At the end of 1944 the whole Hungarian adult male population was temporarily deported into the inner regions of the Ukraine, from where they were able to return only after several years . . . Hungarian secondary schools were abolished . . . This policy of discrediting [the Hungarians] continued to a certain degree even after January 1946 when Sub-Carpathia received a new status. Only very slowly and only in certain areas did it gradually begin to approach the norms of Lenin-
Not until 1954–1955 did the initial signs of relaxation appear, when Hungarian secondary schools were gradually reopened, at first in the cities and then also in the villages . . . 7

The history of those bitter transitional years is still largely unwritten and the living witnesses are fast passing away. The latter include also the noted Sub-Carpathian Hungarian poet Vilmos Kovács (1927–1977), one of the authors of the above article, with whom the author of this study was still able to speak one year before his death, at the time when Kovács was desperately trying to emigrate to Hungary.8

**Carpatho-Ruthenia’s Hungarian Population**

According to the Soviet census of 1979, there were 171,000 Hungarians in the Soviet Union, of whom 164,000 lived in Carpatho-Ruthenia.5 Their actual number, however, is probably closer to 200,000, as a sizable portion of them declared themselves “Ukrainians” or “Russians” so as to enhance their career opportunities. This is indicated, among others, by the fact that there are many more who claim Hungarian as a mother tongue, than those who claim to be of the Hungarian nationality. (According to one estimate for the year 1979, the figures are: 200,000 to 220,000 [mother tongue] versus 180,000 [nationality]) 10 If we take 200,000 as a working figure—which is also used by most of the Hungarian newspapers—this still speaks of a sizable population loss since World War II. In 1941 the same province had a Hungarian population of 223,649, which in the meanwhile should have grown to nearly 300,000. While much of this loss is permanent—i.e. the direct result of World War II and its consequences—some of it is only apparent. Given the right circumstances, the number of the Sub-Carpathian Hungarians would undoubtedly go up significantly through the simple process of self-reclassification. Even so, however, they would still constitute only 20 percent of the province’s population of 1,183,000 (1984) as opposed to the 30 percent prior to 1918.

The majority of the Hungarians live on the southern and western fringes of Carpatho-Ruthenia, directly adjacent to today’s Hungary and to their fellow Hungarians in Czechoslovakia. The district of Beregszász, for example is 95 percent Hungarian, and there are also significant and compact Hungarian ethnic islands in the districts of Munkács (Munkachevo), Nagyszőllős (Vinogradovo, Sevliush) and Ungvár (Uzhorod, Uzhgorod). With a few exceptions, these Hungarians keep close to one another and refuse to mix with the Rusyn/Ukrainian and Russian majority. This fact is acknowledged, among others, by a Soviet ethnographic report published in a 1970 issue of the Sovetskaia etnografiya, which reads as follows:

The largest national minority with the longest history of settlement here are the Hungarians (c. 160,000) who live in well-defined settle-
ments on the southern and western lowlands [of Carpatho-Ruthenia]. During the two months of our expedition we have visited twenty-seven Hungarian villages of between 500 and 7,000 inhabitants. The population of the great majority of these villages is almost exclusively Hungarian. From among the many nationalities they live in proximity only with the Ukrainians [i.e. Rusyns] and the Russians, who are employed largely in the local educational and health institutions. In these villages the Hungarians are strongly attached to their national traditions. Even today only a few of them speak Russian or Ukrainian, notwithstanding the fact that these languages are taught in the Hungarian schools. Hungarian-Ukrainian marriages are rare . . . There are also villages of mixed nationality in the region, but in those villages the nationalities are locally segregated . . .

The content of this quotation is most revealing. It tells us both of the Soviet tactics to denationalize the Hungarians by filling their local educational, cultural and health institutions with Ukrainized Rusyns and Russians (who are usually zealous advocates of their respective nationalities), as well as of the Hungarians' strong resistance to this denationalization effort. They simply refuse to learn Russian and Ukrainian, and also decline to marry outside their own nationality. This form of resistance, however, also has its drawbacks. The most significant is that it condemns most of the Hungarians to a perpetually lowly position in society, as any form of social advancement immediately implies both the need to know Ukrainian and Russian, as well as the showing of at least some outward signs of assimilation.

It should be noted here that while official publications identify the two dominant nationalities as “Ukrainians” and “Russians,” the former of these are really Rusyns, although a large number of them did become Ukrainized. As such, there are in effect three East Slavic nationalities in the province of whom the Rusyns—who have remained faithful to their own nationality—are the least influential. The most vocal and intolerant toward Hungarians are the “Ukrainians” who have either fallen under the influence of the unusually emotional and demanding Ukrainian nationalism, or opted to go along with the official line simply for opportunistic reasons. The Russians, on the other hand, are newcomers to the area who were settled there as a result of the conscious effort on the part of the Soviet Government to Russify the cities of Carpatho-Ruthenia. The Rusyns who have remained faithful to their own nationality generally sympathize and fraternize with the Hungarians. They do so not only because of their common traditions, but also because of their commonly shared intense dislike of the intolerant Ukrainian nationalists as the “vostoknichiks” or “Eastern carpetbaggers.” As a matter of fact, many of the Rusyns also speak some Hungarian and—if our sources are right—they often use Hungarian in the presence of the
Russians and the Ukrainians so as to prevent the latter from following their conversations. In this connection it should also be mentioned that, contrary to the overbearing Ukrainian nationalists, the newly settled Russians have no anti-Hungarian feelings. They generally look up to the Hungarians as representatives of the envied Western culture and way of life, and many of their women dream of marrying Hungarian intellectuals. They generally regard a marriage to a Hungarian as a significant step upward; a phenomenon which is also evident from the attitude of the bedazzled Russian tourists in Hungary. Hungarian men, on the other hand, generally enter such marriage primarily for existential reasons, regarding it as the surest way to advance their career opportunities. While perhaps questionable ethically, this attitude is the direct result of the unwritten law which proclaims that only Hungarians with Russian or Ukrainian marriage partners have a chance to rise significantly in Carpatho-Ruthenian society. Of these two partners, however, the Russian wife appears to be preferable. She ties the Hungarian to the first among the two dominant nationalities, and—so we are told—it also saves him from the constant barrage of emotional pressures represented by the insatiable Ukrainian nationalism.

**Education, Ideology and Historical Thinking**

It is one of the unwritten laws of national minority life that the continued existence and future of a national minority depends to a large degree on its ability to cultivate and perpetuate its language. Once it loses its language—i.e. once it becomes linguistically assimilated—it also loses its identity as a separate nationality. And it is in this area, or rather in the area of the cultivation of their language where the Hungarians of Carpatho-Ruthenia are most endangered, despite their well-known resistance to denationalization.

We already know from the cited report by Vilmos Kovács and András Benedek that in the decade between 1944 and 1954 all Hungarian secondary schools were closed, and only in the late 1950s were the Hungarians again given the chance to study in their mother tongue. Even then, however, they faced the problem of not having Hungarian teachers and thus being taught by Rusyns or Ukrainians who could barely speak their language. The reasons behind this shortage of Hungarian teachers were: first, at the end of World War II most Sub-Carpathian Hungarian intellectuals fled or were deported; second, until 1963 there was no institution of higher learning in Carpatho-Ruthenia that was equipped to train Hungarian teachers in their own mother tongue.

As we know from a number of recent reports in Hungarian newspapers and periodicals, in the early 1980s there were about 70–72 Hungarian schools in Carpatho-Ruthenia, which are divided into the following three categories: 1) Hungarian schools where the language of instruction is Hungarian, but often with one day per week being a “Russian Day” when only
Russian is used; 2) bi-lingual schools that have parallel Hungarian and Russian or Hungarian and Ukrainian classes; and 3) amended Hungarian schools where special Russian or Ukrainian speaking classes have been set up for Hungarian children.\textsuperscript{14} Of these three types, it is perhaps the third type that is the most dangerous, for it usually results in the forced enrollment of Hungarian students in Russian or Ukrainian classes in purely Hungarian villages. The parents are usually pressured into enrolling their children in such classes so that the few artificially settled Russians and Ukrainians would have their own school. Such is the case in Nagydobrony, for example, whose 6,550 inhabitants contain only 270 newly settled Ukrainians and Russians (i.e. 4 percent of the population), yet its Hungarian school now has parallel Russian classes. And what is even more meaningful, 99 percent of the students in these Russian classes are Hungarians.\textsuperscript{15}

As opposed to this special treatment of a few newly settled Russians and Ukrainians in purely Hungarian villages, Hungarians in mixed villages are given very few chances to study in their own language—in direct violation of the Soviet Constitution. One of the examples is the town of Rahó which has a Hungarian population of 1,400 (12 percent of the population and equivalent to a medium-size village), yet there are no Hungarian schools. There are many other towns and villages where half of the population is Hungarian, yet they either have no Hungarian schools at all, or at best Hungarian children can study in their own mother tongue only in the first three grades. Then they usually have to transfer to Ukrainian schools, with all the disadvantages this involves. In most instances Hungarian children in these towns are not even permitted to study Hungarian language and literature on an elective basis, even though there are Hungarian teachers who would be willing to teach them.\textsuperscript{16}

The number of the Hungarian schools is on the decline. Thus, whereas in 1968–1969 there were still 93 purely Hungarian schools and only 6 mixed schools, by the following year the former had declined to 68, while the latter increased to 29. During the same timespan there was also a 10 percent decline in the number of students enrolled in Hungarian schools from 22,800 to 20,873.\textsuperscript{17} Of the 70–72 Hungarian schools of the early 1980s, about 31 were ten-year schools, i.e. a combination of primary and secondary schools typical of the Soviet educational system.\textsuperscript{18} There are, however, no Hungarian kindergartens that supply the early foundations of education in the mother tongue. Hungarian children therefore are unable to familiarize themselves with the basic concepts of education in their own language. This generally confuses them and hinders their education once they enter Hungarian schools. To avoid the resulting problems, many parents give in to the relentless pressures from kindergarten teachers and local administrators, and enroll their children in Ukrainian or Russian language schools. Often these pressures are all the more successful as the parents
are given to understand that enrolling their children in Hungarian schools in effect puts them at a disadvantage as compared to those who study in Ukrainian or Russian.\textsuperscript{19}

The results of this policy of discrimination are clearly evident already on the secondary level. As there are no Hungarian technical high schools in the whole province, all children who wish to study one of the technical fields have to enter a Russian or Ukrainian school. Moreover, they also have to take their entrance examinations in one of these languages—with the predictable results.

This also holds true for the entrance examinations at the Uzhorod State University, even though this is a clear violation of the students’ rights as guaranteed by the constitution. As discussed in a special report by a Hungarian literary circle known as the “Forrás Studió,” which after its disbandment in 1971 became a kind of “protest group,” local and university officials always find a way to prevent the graduates of Hungarian schools from competing on an equal basis.\textsuperscript{20} The result is that Hungarians enter the province’s only university in much fewer numbers than do the Ukrainians and the Russians. In 1970, for example, only 9.4 percent of the admitted students at Uzhorod State University was Hungarian, which is barely half their share of the population.\textsuperscript{21} This, in spite of the fact that Hungarians traditionally constituted the most educated segment of Carpatho-Ruthenia’s population. Given this situation, the future of Hungarian education in that province is rather bleak. But what is perhaps even worse, this bleakness also extends to the spirit and content of their education. This is particularly evident from what they are permitted and obliged to read and to study about Hungarian history, literature and culture in general. And it is also evident from the professional difficulties faced by Hungarians enrolled at the 10,000–11,000 student Uzhorod State University.\textsuperscript{22}

First to be noted is that of the nearly 1,000 Hungarians studying at this university only a small fraction can study a few of the subjects in their native tongue, while the rest of them study only in Ukrainian or Russian. These few “privileged” students are those enrolled in the Department of Hungarian Studies established in 1963 for the purposes of training Hungarian teachers for the re-established Hungarian schools of Carpatho-Ruthenia. After an initial annual number of 20 enrollees, today the Department admits only 10 students per year. But as even these ten graduates have difficulties in finding appropriate positions, in 1979 the Department had only two applicants.\textsuperscript{23}

The training of these students is also rather deficient for—as pointed out recently by a member of the faculty—they are only taught Hungarian language, linguistics and literature, but not the technical language of the various disciplines they are obliged to teach in the primary and secondary schools. Thus, these future educators are compelled to acquire the
basic linguistic skills of their disciplines on their own, which is all the more difficult as the acquisition of the appropriate Hungarian books is next to impossible. In the early 1980s the faculty of the Department of Hungarian Studies consisted of three linguists (István Kótyuk, Imre Zékány and Katalin Horváth) and three literary scholars (Vera Vaszócsik, Erzsébet Gertvay and Sándor Fodó). It is chaired, however, by the Rusyn-Ukrainian Linguist Petro Lizanec, who is also the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and is dubbed as a “lover of our language.” It is indicative of the Department’s quality and ideological orientation that—outside of a few courses on Ukrainian-Hungarian and Russian-Hungarian literary connections—the bulk of its literary offerings consists of such courses as “Lenin’s Image in Hungarian Literature,” “Sevchenko and Hungary,” “The Problem of Internationalism and the Critique of Hungarian Bourgeois Nationalism in Hungarian Literature,” “Anti-Religious Motifs in Hungarian Literature,” etc.24

In addition to performing their teaching duties, the faculty members are also engaged in research. But their topics are usually limited to the Hungarian folklore, ethnography, and linguistics of Carpatho-Ruthenia, without any possibility of studying their own people’s history. This is all the more significant as it is precisely in the area of history and historical consciousness where the province’s Hungarians are subjected to the greatest degree of psychological emasculation.

One of the best examples of this phenomenon is the scandalously primitive “prize winning” work with the title: A boldogság felé. Kárpátontól vázlatos története [Towards Happiness. The Outline History of Trans-Carpathia].25 Published in 1975 by the foreign language publishing house of Uzhorod/Ungvár, the Kárpáti Könyvkiadó, this work was authored by a collection of allegedly distinguished academicians. Its quality and tendentious nature, however, is revealed by its very title, which hardly needs any explanation to a Western scholar. The millennial history of this region—which suddenly was renamed Trans-Carpathia, even though it was on “this” side of the Carpathians, i.e. “inside” the Carpathian Basin ever since creation—is depicted as a thousand year long struggle of the “oppressed Ukrainians” to reach eternal happiness inside the “Soviet heaven.” To quote:

For many centuries Trans-Carpathia had been forcibly torn from the motherland, and its working people suffered under the relentless social, economic, political and national oppression of Hungarian aristocrats, Austrian barons, Czech capitalists and their ‘own’ exploiters. Notwithstanding all this, however, the toilers have preserved their language and culture, as well as their feelings of unity with the Ukrainian people and with their common historical traditions. Through many centuries they have sustained themselves with the desire of reunification . . . [Thus] the reunification of Trans-Carpathian Ukraine with Soviet
Ukraine in 1945 was the triumph of historical justice. It was a turning point in the history of the province and a shining example of the implementation of the wise Leninist nationality policy of the Soviet Communist Party and the Soviet Government... The many centuries of heroic struggles of the toilers of Trans-Carpathia... thus came to a [triumphant] end... with the province’s liberation and reunification with its motherland, Soviet Ukraine.26

This type of political oratory, combined with half-truths and conscious misinterpretation of historical facts, makes up much of the content of this volume. And it is being passed off as the first “scientific history” of Carpatho-Ruthenia that is to replace all earlier works produced by “bourgeois falsifiers of history.” This itself could still be passed off as irresponsible pamphleteering were it not for the fact that the book was authored by a dozen Soviet historians based on the “archival sources” of three countries and the “published results of Soviet scholarship;” and were it not that in 1974 it was awarded an “Honorary Diploma” in Moscow as a work of great historical significance, and that its content is basically identical with the type of “history” that the psychologically emaciated Hungarians of the region have been obliged to study and to teach as the “true history” of their more immediate homeland ever since Carpatho-Ruthenia’s incorporation into the Soviet Union.27 Given the above, the content of this work has to be regarded as the true reflection of the mentality that dominates historical thinking and scholarship in Carpatho-Ruthenia.

Journalism and Book Publishing

Nominally the Hungarians of Carpatho-Ruthenia have several Hungarian newspapers. These include the four-page daily Kárpáti Igaz Szó [Carpathian True Word] which appears in about 38,000 copies, as well as several tri-weekly papers and other occasional publications.

Between 1946 and 1965 the Kárpáti Igaz Szó was simply a verbatim translation of the Ukrainian Zakarpatska Pravda, but in the latter year it became an independent paper under the editorship of the poet and novelist László Balla (born in 1927) who is one of the thee Hungarian members of the Soviet Writers’ Union (the other two being Borbála Szalai and Károly D. Balla, László’s son). In actuality, however, the Kárpáti Igaz Szó and its sister papers have no real independence. They are basically Soviet Ukrainian papers in the Hungarian language, with only a small percentage of their space devoted specifically to Carpatho-Hungarian matters. Moreover, they lack all elements of the Hungarian spirit. Nor can they represent the interests of the Hungarian minority against the universal Gleichschaltung represented by the Soviet mentality and Ukrainian nationalism that dominate all aspects of social and intellectual life in the province. This as-
sertion holds true for all Hungarian language papers of Carpatho-Ruthenia, including, in addition to the Kárpáti Igaz Szó, such tri-weekly papers as the Kárpáton túli Ifjúság [Trans-Carpathian Youth] which is the Hungarian translation of the province’s official Komsomol paper; as well as the Vörös Zászló [Red Flag] of Beregszász, the Kommunizmus Fényei [Lights of Communism] of Ungvár, and the Kommunizmus Zászlaja [The Communist Flag] of Nagyszőllős. The very titles of these papers are indicative of their content. Thus, outside of a few original literary pieces by local authors, they are filled with political propaganda reminiscent of the darkest years of Stalinist rule in Hungary (i.e. the age of Rákosi). Most of the articles are written by various party functionaries and deal with the alleged bliss of the workers in the Soviet paradise and with their efforts to outdo themselves for the good of the socialist homeland. The papers are also filled with praises for the Communist Party, with the achievements of the collective farms and factories, and with the allegedly best ways to implement the “Leninist methods of production.” It really takes a person reared in the atmosphere of that Soviet dominated province to be able to endure the content of these papers.28 No wonder that Hungarians of the much more liberal Hungary of today are not given the opportunity to read them, and apparently not even the Hungarian National Library (Széchényi Library) has a complete run of them.29 The only visible bond between Hungary and these “Hungarian papers” of Carpatho-Ruthenia seems to be the daily programme of Hungarian Television, which is printed regularly in the Kárpáti Igaz Szó. The Carpatho-Hungarians’ ability to receive Hungarian radio and T.V. programmes, however, is also a matter of concern to the Soviet Ukrainian masters of the province, for these programmes constitute a perpetual and readily available bond between these “lost” Hungarians and their former mother country. Moreover, they also constitute a basis for comparing the two worlds and two cultures—which usually turns out to be most unfavourable for the Soviets. But they do help the Hungarians of Carpatho-Ruthenia, for they keep the spirit of survival alive among them.

If the picture of Hungarian journalism in Carpatho-Ruthenia is bleak, so is the general picture of book publishing. Hungarian language works are published almost exclusively only by the Kárpáti Könyvvkiadó of Ungvár, which also publishes works in Russian, Ukrainian and Moldavian (i.e. Romanian in Cyrillic alphabet). Founded in 1945 and reorganized in 1964 as one of the seven publishing houses of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, in the early 1980s the Kárpáti Könyvvkiadó published 91–93 titles per year. In 1981 36 of these titles were Hungarian language publications, including 10–12 indigenous works and about two dozen joint publications with various Hungarian publishers. This sounds rather impressive until we look at the titles of these works and examine their content. Our skepticism is also substantiated by some of the recent pronouncements of the Kárpáti
Konyvkiado's director, Boris Gvaradionov. "Our main goal," said he in an interview, "is to make available in sufficient number of copies the necessary political, ideological and sociological works . . . in [minority] languages: such works as those of Vladimir Iliyich Lenin and Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev, the constitutions of our republic and of the Soviet Union, their election laws, the documents of the Five Year Plans and of the Party Congresses, atheist brochures, as well as other works needed for the ideological struggle. On top of this all, we also publish works in three broad areas: Specialized works on industry and agriculture . . . , touristic works . . . , and works of belles lettres." Ultimate, therefore, the majority of the so-called "Hungarian publications" turn out to be Marxist ideological works, Soviet propaganda pamphlets, and various trade books. Only in the category of belles lettres does the Hungarian element finally enter into the picture; although even there a goodly number of them are translated Russian and Ukrainian literary works. The rest are carefully selected Hungarian classics, pieces of modern Hungarian literature, and works by local Carpatho-Hungarian authors.

The first Hungarian work ever published by the Kárpáti Kiadó was a volume of poetry by the already mentioned László Balla, which appeared in 1951 under the title Zengj hangosabb [Sound Off Louder]. Balla was soon joined by Vilmos Kovács (1927–1877) with his Vallani kell [I have to confess] in 1957, and then by several other local authors. The number of the Carpatho-Hungarian literati has reached a point where today there are perhaps two dozen of them working and publishing about the life and problems of that most forgotten Hungarian minority in the Carpathian Basin. We are told that nowadays these authors collectively publish about two or three small volumes per year. Most of these are works of poetry or short stories, but occasionally there are also some anthologies and sociographical or life reports. If we consider that between 1975 and 1981 fourteen of these volumes have appeared in print (including two anthologies), then the two volumes per year, as claimed by Gvaradionov, appears to be correct. The most frequently published authors include László Balla, Magda Füzes, Balázs Balogh, Károly D. Balla, Dezső Csengeri, Borbála Szalai, Károly Lusztig and Csaba Márkus. Their works are usually published in 1,000 to 2,000 copies, but the collective allotted annual space for all of these works is only 8–12 printer's sheets (c. 128–196 regular pages). The remaining 15–19 printer's sheets (c. 240–304 pages) of the 27 printer's sheets allotted to Hungarian belles lettres and scholarly works per year are usually reserved for the Kárpáti Kalendárium [Carpathian Almanach] published annually ever since 1957 in about 15,000 to 19,000 copies. Printed in large format, the Kárpáti Kalendárium usually runs into 130 to 150 pages. It is filled with the usual political and ideological articles, and yet it is still called a "kind of anthology" and an outlet for Carpatho-Hungarian
And in a sense it is a literary outlet, for next to the many ideological exhortations and commemorative articles concerning the various milestones of Soviet and Ukrainian achievements, it also published some belles lettres (i.e. 20 poems, 2-3 short stories, etc.), as well as a few short, popular and timid historical articles by local Hungarian historians.

Another “kind of anthology” is the slender volume that is published every five years by the “József Attila Literary Circle” ("József Attila Irodalmi Studió"). The most recent one is a slight volume of 64 pages entitled Lendület [Impetus]. It appeared in 1982 on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the Soviet Union, and contains contributions by fourteen poets and writers. As emphasized in the introduction to this volume, the goal of the Literary Circle and its almanach is to advance the cause of a “subjectively partisan socialist-realist literature that is imbued with revolutionary romanticism.” Although this work does contain some valuable contributions—most of which are written in the traditional poetical forms—it also has its share of political sloganism. The two most evident examples are Éva Finta’s introductory ode to Lenin (“Leninhez”) and her crude lyrical description of the alleged relationship between an American arms manufacturer and his workers (“Egy amerikai fegyvergyáros meglátogatja a munkásokat” [An American arms manufacturer visits his workers]). The almanach closes with a brief description of the history and activities of the “József Attila Literary Circle,” which appears to be an officially sponsored organization under the guidance of the Kárpáti Igaz Szo and long-time editor, László Balla.

Occasionally the Kárpáti Könyvkiadó also publishes Hungarian works in the so-called “scholarly” category. But the only two that Director Gvardionov was able to mention are a collection of historical studies by János Váradi-Sternberg (Utak és találkozások [Paths and Encounters], 1971; 2nd ed., 1974) and an unnamed atheist work by Aladár Szikszai. The most recent work in this category is Váradi-Sternberg’s Századok öröksége [The Heritage of Centuries], which, published jointly with the Gondolat Kiadó of Budapest in 1981, contains another collection of the author’s historical studies and essays. These studies deal with various aspects of Russian-Hungarian and Ukrainian-Hungarian historical relations, and their tendency is to demonstrate that the influences coming from those “great” Slavic neighbours were usually beneficial to Hungary and the Hungarians.

Historical works—whether in article or book form—all follow the “official line” to a point that they have little credibility with the professional historian either in Hungary or in the United States. The historical interpretations found in these studies are generally disgusting to a Western historian—as is particularly evident from the already mentioned magnum opus of Carpatho-Ukrainian historiography, Boldogság felé [Towards Happiness]. But this is even more true for the textbooks, most of which are ver-
batim translations of Ukrainian originals published by the Radanska Skola of Kiev. A few exceptions are those that deal with Hungarian literature, which are usually prepared by local Hungarian authors, with due attention to the official guidelines concerning literary selections and interpretations. But while literary scholars share a slight leeway, no such opportunities exist for historians. As a matter of fact, no Carpatho-Hungarian historian is permitted even the slightest role in authoring works that deal with the history of Carpatho-Ruthenia as a whole—be these popular works or textbooks. All these historians can do is to “accept” and recite the official version that is being passed off and taught as their nation’s history in that region.

Preservation of Traditions

Although the life of the Hungarians of Carpatho-Ruthenia is far from easy, and although they are constantly subjected to a demeaning interpretation of their history and national traditions, their attachment to the history and those traditions appears to be unbroken. Naturally, they can show this attachment only within certain limits, i.e. by emphasizing the role of those historical personalities who can qualify as “forerunners of socialism.” These include some of the most prominent national heroes of Hungary’s many revolutions against external and internal oppressions, such as Prince Ferenc Rákóczi (1676–1736) and Lajos Kossuth (1802–1894) as well as such local heroes as Rákóczi’s peasant general Tamás Esze (1666–1708). These “acceptable” national heroes are then placed next to the various heroes of Soviet communism, although still remaining in the latter’s shadows.

However timidly, this national spirit is also evident in the renewed interest in Hungarian folk traditions of Carpatho-Ruthenia, even though up to now this interest could only be expressed in publications with “folkloristic characteristics.” It is indicative of the situation, however, that the ethnographic research conducted by the Institute of Ethnography of the Soviet Academy of Sciences—which also dealt with the folklore and folk habits of the Hungarians of Carpatho-Ruthenia—was conducted only by Ukrainians. This was probably done consciously, for it is unlikely that the whole province does not have a single Hungarian ethnographer qualified and willing to do research on the ethnography of his own people.

Religious Life

Ever since the Union of Ungvár of 1646, the dominant religion of Carpatho-Ruthenia was Byzantine Catholicism, better known locally as Greek Catholicism. There is also a small Roman Catholic minority, as well as a similarly small Calvinist (Reformed) religious community, both of which are almost exclusively Hungarian. Moreover, since the early 19th century there was also a growing Jewish community. Most of the immigrant Jews, how-
ever, became Magyarized in the late 19th and early 20th century to a point where during the interwar years—when Carpatho-Ruthenia was part of Czechoslovakia—these Hungarian Jews constituted a significant portion of the most nationally conscious Hungarians in the region. Following the Soviet takeover, the Byzantine Catholic majority (most of whom were Rusyns) was immediately forced into union with the Ukrainian-Russian Orthodox Church. This compelled the Byzantine Catholic Hungarians, and even many Rusyns, to make a choice between Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism. Virtually all of the Hungarians chose the latter alternative, but so did a number of the Rusyns. This in effect means that those Rusyns who opted for Roman Catholicism joined Hungarian Catholic parishes and are attending the mass in Hungarian. But as active membership in these religious bodies involves many disadvantages the number of these Rusyns is relatively small.

Nor do we know much about the fate of the Calvinists, although a recent report in the official papers of the Hungarian Reformed Church, the Reformátusok Lapja (December 14, 1980), speaks of about 80 congregations. In 1979 their bishop, Pál Forgon, was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Reformed Theology of Budapest. Significantly enough, however, Forgon received his degree in company of the Ukrainian Metropolitan of Kiev, who was also awarded a similar doctorate by the Hungarian institution.

Notwithstanding these signs of existence, however, the situation of the Catholic and Calvinist Hungarians in Carpatho-Ruthenia is very difficult. Religious life is frowned upon and both churches suffer from the shortage of clergymen. According to a report dated 1976, a single Catholic priest or Reformed minister is often obliged to take care of as many as five congregations. But at least they are tolerated, which is not true for those of their co-religionists who live on the other side of the Carpathians in Soviet Ukraine proper. But practicing one’s religious beliefs does imply the acceptance of a lowly position in contemporary Soviet society. And this also applies to the priest and the ministers who are prevented from teaching their respective religious beliefs, while at the same time being compelled to praise the alleged virtues of the atheist state even during regular religious services.

**Relationship to Hungary and to the Hungarians of the Mother Country**

As is evident from the above, the situation of the Hungarians of Carpatho-Ruthenia is rather grim, and to many ethnically conscious Hungarian intellectuals there, it probably appears virtually hopeless. To the latter, resettling in Hungary is the ultimate and mostly unattainable dream. Today’s Hungary represents to them the envied world of Western Civilization, and all that it implies in human dignity, personal freedom and cultural achievements. They are convinced—as are most Hungarians of Hungary—that
the real Iron Curtain is not between Hungary and Austria, but rather be-
tween Hungary and the Soviet Union. To cross this formidable barrier
is painful even for a Hungarian from Hungary who knows that he will
shortly return. To the Hungarians from Carpatho-Ruthenia, however, it is
both painful and next to impossible. They view it as an almost impenetrable
wall that—according to one of the resettled Hungarian intellectuals—“locks
them into a culturally and psychologically alien world that gradually suf-
focates them.”

This wall is penetrated regularly only by the Hungarian
radio, television, and some of the Hungarian books and newspapers. But
hearing, seeing and reading about the “world beyond” only whets their
appetite, and—in a sense—makes their life even less bearable. Even so,
virtually every Hungarian in the province is glued to the T.V. set every
night except Monday (the day off for the Hungarian State Television), for
they need the inspiration that these T.V. programmes represent. Naturally,
this “inspiration” is resented by the local authorities who often regard it
as a source of “alienation” from the Soviet way of life and from their
cherished Ukrainization programme. Some Hungarian intellectuals, on the
other hand, occasionally also give vent to their own resentments. Such was
the case in the early 1970s, when a group of young writers, the members
of the banned “Forrás Studió,” drew up a carefully written petition against
the officially-sponsored Ukrainization of the Hungarian schools that vio-
lated the terms and spirit of the Soviet Constitution. But they were soon
silenced, and they were also forced to terminate their studies. In time,
however, some of them were able to resettle in Hungary. This improved
their lives radically, but it also cut them off permanently from their more
immediate homeland.

How do Hungarians, and in particular, Hungarian intellectuals in Hun-
gary view the plight of their brethren in Carpatho-Ruthenia? The average
Hungarian of the early 1980s knew and cared very little about this prob-
lem. Not so the nationally conscious Hungarian intellectuals however, who
were ever more aware of the plight of their Hungarian brethren in most of
the neighbouring states. But while in those days they were permitted to
talk, and occasionally even to write, about the problems of the Hungari-
ans in Transylvania (i.e. Rumania) and Slovakia (i.e. Czechoslovakia), no
one dared to raise openly the difficulties of the Hungarians of Carpatho-
Ruthenia (i.e. the Soviet Union). The weight of the powerful Soviet state
was simply too much, and all attempts at demanding intercession were
quickly silenced.

The reports that appeared in Hungarian newspapers about life in Car-
patho-Ruthenia were almost always one-sided and rosy. But few of the
caring and knowing Hungarians seemed to believe in the veracity of these
reports—be they by local Quislings or by ideologically committed and
thus “unseeing” Hungarian publicists. Some of the Hungarian intellectuals
presented lengthy reports to the Hungarian Party leadership, protesting these unrealistic portrayals. They did so, however, without the hope of success, for no one in Hungary dared to challenge the great Soviet neighbour. Nor could such a challenge be anything but self-defeating at the time, especially in light of Hungary’s disagreements with some of her other neighbours (particularly Romania, and to a lesser degree, Czechoslovakia).

Recent Developments: the late 1980s

From the perspective of the early 1980s—when this study was researched—the fate of the Hungarians of Carpatho-Ruthenia appeared rather grim and hopeless. Their numbers were small, they were cut off from their motherland by the nearly impenetrable wall of the Soviet-Hungarian border, and they were subjected to a relentless process of denationalization.

But those were the years before the age of Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union. With the advent of Gorbachev’s perestroika things began to change for the better. While conditions are still far from what they used to be or ought to be, Hungarians of Carpatho-Ruthenia are now at least able to express their attachment to their culture, learning, and history, and—on a modest level—they are even permitted to give vent to their feelings of Hungarian patriotism.

The improvement in the situation of the Carpatho-Hungarians is best measured by the fact that recently a good number of the Transylvanian-Hungarians who are fleeing Ceausescu’s dictatorial regime in Rumania and who are unable to find their way into Hungary, have chosen to try their luck in Carpatho-Ruthenia. This means that contrary to traditional perceptions about relative freedom in the socialist countries, nowadays even Soviet rule is viewed as preferable to Ceausescu’s unbearably oppressive rule in Rumania. And at least some of the changes in this perception are the direct results of the visibly improved conditions of the Hungarians in Carpatho-Ruthenia, which are manifested in a number of significant developments.

Among these developments is the fact that the number of Hungarian schools seems to have increased. A report, dated January, 1988, speaks of 83 schools, of which 56 are complete ten-year schools (offering high school diplomas, according to the Soviet system of education), and 27 are incomplete, eight-year schools. These numbers by themselves may or may not mean too much, for they do not tell us anything about the “Hungarianness” of these schools. For example: How many of these institutions are “mixed schools” where Hungarian children are compelled to study various subjects in Russian or Ukrainian? What is the “Hungarian” content of the subjects taught in these schools? Is the Hungarian heritage of these children discussed in a positive or in a negative manner? All of these are decisively important considerations.

Similarly positive are the developments connected with the University
of Uzhorod [Ungvár], where the Department of Hungarian Studies appears to have increased its enrollment. According to a recent statement by Vera Vaszocsik, an Associate Professor of Linguistics at that institution, the Department now enrolls about one hundred students in its five-year programme. If this report is true, it means that the Department of Hungarian studies at Uzhorod is back to its original quota of 20 students per year, which is certainly far cry from the situation in 1979 when only two prospective students applied. Vaszocsik also claims that since the Department’s foundation in 1962, they have graduated around 320 students. This works out to about 13 students per year. All this seems to indicate that the nadir in Carpatho-Hungarian university studies reached in 1979 is now a thing of the past. With the increased number of graduates from the Department of Hungarian Studies, Hungarian intellectual and cultural life in Carpatho-Ruthenia is once more assured of some dedicated flagbearers. This somewhat optimistic view is reinforced by another report, also dated January, 1988, according to which students of Hungarian schools in Carpatho-Ruthenia will finally be given the chance to study the history of their nation from the beginnings right up to our own period. If true, this will be a “first” in the region’s history since its annexation by the Soviet Union. The question is: Will this “History of Hungary” offered in the schools of Carpatho-Ruthenia be a reasonably true overview of the nation’s past, or will it simply reflect the primitive interpretation found in the above-mentioned history of Carpatho-Ruthenia, A boldogság felé [Towards Happiness]? In the latter case, the Hungarian children of Carpatho-Ruthenia will have gained very little. Certainly, the most recent anthology of Carpatho-Hungarian literature on the period since World War II (Sugaras utakon [On Illuminated Paths], 1985) does not seem to be very encouraging in this regard. While this work is by far the largest and most comprehensive compendium of the region’s Hungarian literary creativity of the period since World War II—published on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of Carpatho-Ruthenia’s annexation by the Soviet Union—its introductory study still reflects the officially-sponsored historical myth of “reunification.” But as this claim of “reunification” appears under the name of the regional party secretary, Mikola Semenyuk, it may no longer reflect the views of the current “reform scholarship” encouraged by Gorbachev. Thus, one can still hope that—given the new openness advocated by the Party leadership—Soviet historians will have the moral courage and the intellectual strength to cleanse their professional works and their history textbooks from such officially-sponsored falsifications of history. Other important signs of change for the better include: The increasing number of joint publications by the Kárpáti Könyvkiadó [Carpathian Publisher] of Uzhorod and various Hungarian publishing houses of Budapest; the significantly increased opportunities for Carpatho-Hungarian authors to
publish their works in Hungary; and the fact that since May of 1988 the only Hungarian newspapers of the province, the *Kárpáti Igaz Szó* [Carpathian True Word] can also be purchased in Hungary. The latter change is all the more meaningful as during the 1970s not even the National Széchényi Library in Budapest was able to subscribe to this newspaper.

Although some things have changed for the better, many of the negative trends mentioned in connection with the 1960s and 1970s are still present in the mid- and late-1980s. Thus, according to some sources the number of Hungarians in the province continues to decrease. While this may simply be the result of self-reclassification for reasons of social mobility, it is still a dangerous sign. Moreover, Hungarian churches—which are among the most important preservers of Hungarian nationality—are still suffering from state intervention. Because of their inability to train priests or ministers, they are chronically undermanned, and face the possibility of total extinction. This is best demonstrated by the fact that the 31 functioning Catholic parishes—during World War II there were 41—are kept in existence by a total of only 10 priests, whose average age is around 70 years. How long will they be able to continue their pastoral work without replacements? The situation is equally critical among the Hungarian Calvinists. While we do not know the ages of their ministers, we are told that their 81 congregations are kept going by a total of only 21 “clergymen”—including 13 ministers, 4 assistants, and 4 students of theology. Without some significant changes in the attitude of the state, they too face gradual extinction.

Problems still abound. But the positive changes of recent years are such that they may yet result in breaking down the formerly impenetrable walls that ever since 1945 had separated the Hungarians of Carpatho-Ruthenia from their motherland. Should these changes continue, the lives of these Hungarians will undoubtedly improve. These reforms will certainly lessen—although never fully eliminate—their feelings of isolation, and their belief that they were forcibly torn from their nation and from the intellectual and spiritual world of Western Civilization to which they had belonged for over a millennium.

An important manifestation of this feeling is the fact that psychologically they still view themselves as being part of Hungary and of the West in general. This is demonstrated in a multitude of different ways, including the way they keep time. Thus in Carpatho-Ruthenia if anyone inquires in Hungarian as to what time it is, he is automatically told only the Budapest time. Moreover, even though their whole life cycle is perforce geared to Moscow time—which is two hours ahead of Budapest—“most of their wrist-watches are still running according to Budapest time.” Along the same lines, the region’s Hungarians also tend to adjust their life styles to radio and television broadcasts from Hungary, with little attention to broadcasts from Kiev or Moscow. They also pay more attention to the goings-on in the Hungarian
Parliament than to events taking place in the Supreme Soviets of the Russian or Ukrainian capitals. They likewise read only Hungarian newspapers on a regular basis (e.g. Szabad Föld [Free Land], Új Tükör [New Mirror], Nők Lapja [Ladies’ Journal], Élet és Irodalom [Life and Literature], etc.) and—except for official announcements in the party papers—they pay little attention to Russian and Ukrainian periodicals. For this very reason, most Carpatho-Hungarians are more familiar with intellectual and cultural developments in Hungary, than with similar trends in the Soviet Union. All this makes it amply clear that the Hungarians of Carpatho-Ruthenia cannot accept their intellectual-spiritual separation from Hungary as final, nor acquiesce to their forced “transplantation” to the Byzantine-Slavic world of the Eastern Slavs.

In the course of the past four decades, Carpatho-Hungarians were saved from total assimilation and denationalization by a number of factors, including self-isolation, rural existence, lack of geographical mobility, and resistance to intermarriage. With the rise of industrialization and urbanization the role of these methods of self-preservation are bound to decline. But should the current reforms continue, the Hungarians’ resolve to survive will undoubtedly be strengthened by their increased contacts with the cultural and intellectual life of Hungary. And as we read the tacit profession of faith in their nationality by the youngest members of the Carpatho-Hungarian poets, we also have to profess our belief in the certain survival of this small segment of the Hungarian nation in the Carpathian Basin.

Notes


5 While some of the claims concerning Nagydobrony (Velikaya Dobron) appear to be far fetched, there is no doubt that atrocities did take place. On the extreme claims see László Árkay, “Helye a térképen üres. Rekiem Nagydobronyért” [Its Place is Empty on the Map. Requiem for Nagydobrony], in A XVI. Magyar Találkozó Krónikája, ed. János Nádas and Ferenc Somogyi (Cleveland, 1978), pp. 67–70; and György Stirling, “Nagydobrony, a magyar szuper-Lidice”
[Nagydobrony, the Hungarian Super-Lidice], in *Katolikus Magyarok Vasárnapja* (Youngstown), October 1, 1978.


8 The conversation took place in the summer of 1976 in Budapest.


10 See *A határon túli magyarság olvasáskultúrája* [The Reading Habits of Hungarians beyond our Frontiers] (Budapest: Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, 1985), p. 38. For the year 1959, the *United Nations Demographic Handbook* (New York, 1964), p. 319, gives the figures as 154,733 (H. nationality) and 164,033 (H. mother tongue). On this question of “mother tongue” versus “nationality” see Alfred Bohmann, “Russians and Russification in the Soviet Union,” *AussenPolitik* (English Edition), XXXII, 3 (1981), pp. 252–262. This work was brought to my attention by Professor Andrew Ludanyi of Ohio Northern University.


12 Skultéty, pp. 126–127.

13 Kovács-Benedek, pp. 1144–1150.

14 See for example Miklós Zelei, “Magyar művelődési élet Kárpát-Ukrajnában. Interjú Fodó Sándorral, az Ungvári Állami Egyetem tanárával” [Hungarian Cultural Life in Carpatho-Ukraine. Interview with Sándor Fódo, Professor at the Uzhhorod State University], *Magyar Hírlap*, September 29, 1979. For some of the earlier reports see Ölvedi, pp. 342–344.

15 “Részlet a Forrás Studió 1971 szeptember-októberi beadványából” [Selections from the September-October 1971 Petition of the Forrás Studió], typescript, p. 5. This is a petition sent to Moscow by the soon after disbanded circle of young poets and writers. Hereafter quoted as “Forrás Studió.” It was later published in the *Nemzetőr* [National Guardian] (Munich), 28/402–404 (Sept., Oct., Nov., 1983), under the title: “A tűz nem alszik ki” [The Flame Will Not Go Out].


18 Zelei, “Magyar művelődés,” and other recent sources. In contradiction to the information found in the above sources, a recent representative work still uses the unrealistically high figure of 100 Hungarian schools, among them 20 high schools. Cf. Peter Lizanec, “A magyar nyelv és irodalom oktatása az uzsгорodi Állami Egyetemen” [The Teaching of Hungarian Language and Culture at the Uzhgorod State University], in *Hungarológiai oktatás régen és ma* [Hungarian studies formerly and now], ed. M. Judit Róna (Budapest, 1983), pp. 36–40. One of my sources, who is most knowledgeable in Carpatho-Ruthenian affairs, claims that today there is only one Hungarian high school in the whole province, namely at Péterfalva.

20 The disbanded “Forrás Studió” was replaced in 1971 by the officially sponsored “József Attila Irodalmi Studió” (JAIS), which unites some of the younger literati who behave. Occasionally it also publishes small anthologies of its members’ works. On the disbandment I rely on the oral reports of some of the local literati, as well as on an unpublished report that mentions this affair. Concerning the JAIS see the summary of its foundation and history by GyörgyDupka, “Visszatekintés alkotóközösséggünk tiz esztendéjére” [Remembering the Ten Years of our Creative Circle], in Lendület. Ifjúsági Almanach [Impetus. Youth Almanach] (Uzhorod, 1982), pp. 60–62.


22 While all of the other sources speak of 10,000 students, Lízanec’s recent study (note 18) mentions 11,000.

23 On the foundation and achievements of the Department of Hungarian Studies see Lízanec, pp. 36–40. Concerning the lack of applicants see Zelei, “Magyar művelődés.”

24 Lízanec, p. 37.


26 Ibid., pp. 3–4, 182.

27 Ibid., p. 4. The authors include: M.V. Arsentyev, E.A. Balahuri, I.M. Hrachak, O.D. Dovhanich, V.I. Ilko, V.M. Kerenchani, K.O. Kutsenko, S.O. Mishchenko (editor-in-chief), N.P. Mishchenko, V.V. Palyok, M.V. Troyan, and I.H. Shulha. It was approved by Professor I.I. Kompanijets.


29 The National Széchenyi Library’s incomplete collection of the Kárpáti Igaz Szó was put together from the private collections of a number of Hungarian literati.

30 “Testvérikiadók: Pozsony, Ungvár, Újvidék, Bukarest” [Sister Publishers: Bratislava, Uzhorod, Novi Sad, Bucharest], Kritika, 5 (May 1981), pp. 3–7, quotations pp. 4–5. This general picture was reinforced by a more recent interview with Boris Gvardionov, “40 éves a Kárpáti Kiadó” [The Carpathian Publisher is 40 Years Old], Könyvvilág, 30/8 (August 1985), p. 3.

31 Ibid., p. 5. I have examined the 1976 and 1980 issues of the Kárpáti Kalendárium.

32 “Testvérikiadók,” p. 5.


34 Lendület, p. 3
38 This work also appeared in a Russian edition (Uzhgorod, 1979). It contains 29 short, mostly popular articles, stretching from the early 18th century to the post-World War II Years.
39 See for example the following two textbooks: Gizella Dravai, Magyar irodalom az Ukrán SZSZK magyar tanítási nyelvű középiskoláinak 9. osztálya számára [Hungarian literature for the 9th grade of the Hungarian language secondary schools of the Ukrainian SSR], 4th rev. ed. (Kiev-Uzhgorod, 1971), 472 p.; and László Balla, Irodalom az Ukrán SZSZK magyar tanítási nyelvű középiskoláinak 10. osztálya számára [Literature for the 10th grade of the Hungarian language secondary schools of the Ukrainian SSR] (Kiev-Uzhgorod, 1975), 487 p. Dravai’s work covers Hungarian literature in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries, while Balla’s book covers 20th century Hungarian literature up to 1945. They also cover contemporary Ukrainian literature, with about two-fifths to one-third of the text devoted to the latter. The selections and interpretations all are geared to demonstrating the ever presence of class struggle in Hungarian society.
41 “Magyar néprajzi kutatás a szomszédos országokban” [Hungarian Ethnographic Research in the Neighboring States], Válóság, XVIII, 6 (June 1975), pp. 29–44, especially 39–40.
43 Skultéty, pp. 138–139.
44 “A Kárpátontúli Református Egház életéből” [Concerning the Life of the Trans-Carpathian Reformed Church], Reformátusok Lapja, XXIV, 50 (December 14, 1980).
45 In the course of the 1970s and the early 1980s I have spoken with half a dozen Hungarian intellectuals from Carpatho-Ruthenia, including the now deceased Vilmos Kovács, as well as with several others who monitor developments in that province. The views presented here are based on these conversations.
46 Based on a “Special Report” (typescript) prepared by one of the intellectuals who monitor the position of Hungarians in Carpatho-Ruthenia.
47 I was told that examples of such one-sided reports include those by László Balla, the editor of the Kárpáti Igaz Szó (KISz): “A nagy szovjet család kis magyar közössége” [The small Hungarian community of the great Soviet family], KISz, March 28, 1971; idem, “Elidegenedés?” [Alienation?], KISz, August 21, 1971; and idem, “Visszapillantás” [Reflections], KISz, August 14, 1975. Of similar nature are also the following reports; János Siklós “Barangolás a Kárpátok
alatt” [Wanderings under the Carpathians], Népszava, February 6, 1972; idem, “Nézelődés a világban” [Looking around in the World], Délmagyarország, July 4, 1972; János Komlós, “Meg kell mondnom” [I have to tell you], Népszabadság, October 10, 1971; and Miklós Róman, “Új idők harsonája” [Trumpets of the New Age], KISz, March 8, 1975. I was also warned on the use of statistics concerning Hungarian schools and publications, which usually present a much brighter picture than reality.

I was able to consult one of these 160-page reports written by a literary scholar in the late 1970s, wherein the anonymous author complained bitterly about the unfair portrayal of Hungarian reality in Carpatho-Ruthenia by the authors of the above-cited newspaper articles.

The flight of Hungarians from Transylvania (Rumania) to Carpatho-Ruthenia was revealed on July 16, 1988 on the Budapest Radio, when György Márvány interviewed two prominent Carpatho-Hungarian intellectuals, György Dubka, an editor of the Kárpáti Könyvkiadó [Carpathian Publishers] and Sándor Horváth, a staff member of the daily Kárpáti Igaz Szó. Cf. “Hungarians from the USSR Interviewed in Budapest,” in The British Broadcasting Corporation, Summary of World Broadcasts, July 19, 1988, Tuesday. Page: EE/0207/A2/1.


Ibid.

Magyar Hírek, XLI, 12 (June 24, 1988), p. 4.


Cf. Mikola Semenyuk’s introduction to Sugaras utakon.


60 Ibid.

61 While much of this information is based on personal conversations with Carpatho-Hungarian intellectuals, some of it can also be found in Szaniszló and Sándor, “Lajos Lajosovics,” pp. 4–5; Halász, “Magyar kultúra Kárpátalján,” pp. 14–15; Takács, “A kárpát-ukrajnai magyarság irodalmi életéről,” pp. 86–87; and Benedek, “A kárpát-ukrajnai magyar lakosság és a könyv,” pp. 38–44.

62 See the literary anthologies cited in footnotes 33 and 54 above.