

## Minority Politics and Minorities Rights

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## Assimilation processes in Csolnok

## 1. Introduction

Csolnok lies in County Komárom- Esztergom in the coal-basin of Dorog; it is 5 km away from the town of Dorog, 13 km from Esztergom, in the valley of the stream Janza, surrounded by hills.<sup>1</sup> Built on the hillsides its system of streets developed accordingly. It is characteristic of a village built in a valley: the streets are running along the boat-shaped valley after branching off at a y-form, they run parallel to the main street and the stream of Janza cutting along the valley. Owing to its geological situation it has been suitable for wine growing, but lacking in flat areas agriculture could offer livelihood only to a few. Livelihood meant working in the mines from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. till 1979. The shafts, however, were inundated by karstwater and had to be closed in the early 1970s. There are still coal reserves left unexploited. Tunnels of the former mines connect Csolnok and Dorog. Since transport over ground was difficult, during the working period of the mines coal was transported underground to the train-station in Dorog and frequently the inhabitants also used these means to get to the town. Since there are hardly any work places in the village nowadays most of the people commute to the towns nearby.

Csolnok is a German village, or Swabian as the inhabitants prefer to be called; as there were no deportations in the area the saying has it: 'who is from Csolnok is a Swabian.' The census data of the last 20 years confirm the statement only partially.<sup>2</sup>

	P	N	M	MH	C
1980	3,668	14 0.4%	396 11%		
1990	3,350	605 18%	794 14%		
2001	3,406	1,041 31%	671 20%	858 25%	1290 38%

<sup>1</sup> Getehegy, Magoshegy (Hochberg), Kálváriahegy (Kalvarienberg), Leégett hegy (Abgebrannter Berg), Kecshegy (Kasperk).

<sup>2</sup> P = Population; N = Nationality; M = Mother tongue; MH =uses mother tongue among friends, relatives; C = adherence to national culture.

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The population of Csolnok decreased since 1980, but considerably increased the number of those who declared their mother tongue and origins. Notwithstanding Csolnok being a German settlement, the number of declarations is few in comparison to the total of the inhabitants. According to Hoóz<sup>3</sup> and colleagues 52% of the inhabitants were German. The research of the Minorities Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 2002 revealed that the claims and the actual situation did not tally.<sup>4</sup> 70% of the inhabitants of Csolnok are still German in spite of all forces driving towards assimilation not even mixed marriages influence it; it is an exceptionally high proportion.

What do the data tell? Do they reflect the compulsion of taking Hungarian family names in the 1930s? The memories of the 1941 census? What do they tell about the times of socialist oppression of identity when they carrying 'dangerous' sounding names meant to confess being different? In 2001 when the declaration was anonymous only 31% of the inhabitants declared to be German. Is Csolnok a German settlement? If we open the telephone directory, there are more Hungarian than German names. Did the number of Germans decrease so much? Is assimilation that forceful? What does Swabian identity mean? How far have the Swabian inhabitants of the village preserved their identity? What does it mean to be Swabian? What has the mine signified? The present paper tries to find the answer to these questions.

### 2. Historical overview

Csolnok was first mentioned in documents from 1232 as Vathacholnuka belonging to the Csolt family; then it appears as Kolnuk between 1263-1531 as the property of the convent on the Isle of the Rabbits (today Margaret Island in Budapest).<sup>5</sup> During its history it changed hands several times, it belonged to the pasha of Buda, then to Esztergom, then again to the nuns of the Margaret Island; sometimes it was completely depopulated, than again resettled.

<sup>3</sup> Hoóz, I.–Kepecs, J.–Klinger, A. 1985 *A Baranya megyében élő nemzetiségek demográfiai helyzete 1980-ban*. Pécs: MTA Regionális Kutatások Központja.

<sup>4</sup> Ethnic affiliation was verified by local indigenous Germans, the members of the local minority governments and as control by one Hungarian person who assessed families. No other data were recorded and they were anonymous.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Fekete, Tibor 1977 *Den Janzaback entlang*. Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó.

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In 1685 the Treasury commissioner reported that they found hardly any persons in County Esztergom. The area was totally destroyed and only after the recapturing of Buda did life restart. First Hungarians arrived from Upper Northern Hungary, who followed the Reformed faith. According to some sources it was Graf Antal Grassalkovich who invited in the German settlers in 1714, others claim (Fekete 1977) that they already had been arrived to Csolnok at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> c. 8 families out of 34 were described as Germans in 1715. According to their social status 13 heads of families were serfs, 21 smallholders. Among the typically agrarian population there was one blacksmith, one tailor, one boot maker and one shoemaker.

The German settlers were Roman Catholic by faith. The Roman Catholic parish was founded with the help of Graf Antal Grassalkovich.<sup>6</sup> The church dedicated to St. John of Nepomuk was also built by Graf Antal Grassalkovich in 1767–75, from the stones of an earlier late 17<sup>th</sup> c. church. The altarpiece depicts the patron saint St. John of Nepomuk. The other Roman Catholic church dedicated to the patron saint of miners, St. Barbara, was built in the miners' colony in 1932.

Grassalkovich settled down 400 persons coming from Alsace to Csolnok and neighbouring villages: to Keszölc, Csév, Dág, and Slovaks to Sárísáp. Though these families have preserved their Slav names: Szkle-nár, Klimó, Micsán, Janosek, Sztoján, Janositz, Dlabik, they became Germanized within a generation. Their names still indicate their origins, in spite of their Slav names the persons declare to be Swabians and their mother tongue as Swabian. The third wave of settlers arrived in 1785–86.

The origin of the inhabitant of Csolnok is not clear. The groups arriving in different times from various regions, speaking different dialects were integrated in Csolnok; they became Swabians of Csolnok, speaking one dialect. This unity can be explained as the result of an acculturation process during which the participants had adjusted to one another, borrowed each other's customs, married each other. The share Roman Catholic faith probably made this process smoother, resulting in a community with homogeneous culture, of strong Swabian identity speaking the same dialect.

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<sup>6</sup> Till then the registers were at Dorog. During World War II some of the registers were destroyed, thus about forty years are missing from the history of Csolnok.

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Minority Politics and Minorities Rights**3. The intra-ethnic relationships of miners and peasants**

In Csolnok the coal found under the village supported several generations of miners. The occupation was handed down from father to son. 'There was no family with at least one miner in it.' The mine was the source of livelihood, offering work place locally; it saved the village men from conscription, it was a safe hiding place during the war, it was the reason that the Germans of Csolnok were not deported after the war. On the parallel of 'mother earth' one could say, it could be called 'mother mine' for the people of Csolnok. The miners' life and the mine is preserved in memories, songs, poems. Here the first word mentioned is not deportation but mine. Though it had been closed 20 years ago, it is still alive especially in the life of those men who spent all their lives there.

The traditional peasant life changed in Csolnok at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. The Rükschuss brothers from Germany were carrying out geological explorations and found brown coal in the Anna-valley near Sárissáp in 1781. Mining started in Csolnok around 1810.<sup>7</sup> It was discovered that the whole village is sitting above coalfields. The people of Csolnok first participated in transporting coal and other above ground works, later they accompanied the miners coming from abroad or other nearer settlements and started working under the ground too.

Of the shafts belonging to the mining company those under Csolnok were the most profitable. There were 12 shafts within the village directly leading underground. 'There is coal under the whole village, if it were not there, open mining would be possible. It happened that the walls of the church cracked from the detonation; it had to be reinforced. In the houses you could hear the hammering.' – people remembered.

Except of some bigger farmers, practically the whole village lived off the mine. There was not enough land to be owned; for the newly weds the opening of the mine meant their livelihood had been secured. From peasants they turned into miners; most of the Csolnok peasants became cutters; but since other craftsmen were also needed, they were employed

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<sup>7</sup> According to Miksa Hantken, who was the first director of the Hungarian Royal Geographical Society founded in 1869, that every cadastral yoke of land contains 40 thousand tons of coal. Economically mining was not lucrative at first because the coal was embedded in dolomite and limestone, mining rights were unsettled, there were no roads and railways and there was the constant danger of rising karstwater, making necessary the filling of the disused shafts with sand.

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as carpenters, locksmiths, blacksmith and electricians by the mines. But there were also master miners, charge-hands and other specialists among the men of Csolnok.

The mine needed work force; the population grew considerably during the development of coal mining. When news about the opening of the mine went around Hungarians, Slovaks, Germans, Krajnians<sup>8</sup> arrived to the village. In 1905 Augusta-pit was opened, in 1910 Teresia-pit, then Reiman-pit; in 1918 the tunnel was finished to Dorog and the underground small-gauge train *Népe* started running, which transported not only coal but passengers as well.

Apart from mining the people of Csolnok continued wine growing and have making their own wine each year. 'Daytime in the vineyard – night time in the mine' has the saying. The greater part of the agricultural work was done by the miners' wives: they cultivated the garden crops, the vineyards, half acre potato or maize fields – as they did not own more, they worked on leased land. They also worked as day labourers on the land of rich peasants. There were many women who worked along the men by the coal tubs. The sons went to the shaft with their fathers.

Memory has it there was trade union in the mine; they also organised strikes because after 12 hour shifts they had to work on Sundays too. The social democrats campaigned and once the gendarmes surprised the meeting and beat up the participants; but no one remembers serious actions of the labour movement. Many of the inhabitants took out the newspaper in German language published by the Berg Verein, but the Swabians of Csolnok were not interested in the movement. Though they voted Peyer for Member of Parliament in 1922 and 1926, instead of politics they were interested in their everyday livelihood. The well-known rate of work and industry of the Swabians did not lose in intensity in the mine either. The Independent Small-holders' Party kept trying in vain, they could convince only one middle peasant.

After the great flooding in 1927, Reiman-pit was closed. After the great depression, in the 1930s the miners left to find work in French, German and Belgian mines. From the 1930s the owner of the mine<sup>9</sup> required of the people to change their German names to Hungarian ones. 'This is Great-Hungary – they said – where only Hungarians are living.' The Germans

<sup>8</sup> They were referred to as *oberkrémitzlers*.

<sup>9</sup> The Salgótarján Coal-mining Company of shareholders took over the mine after the fall of the Republic of Councils in 1919.

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were threatened to lose their jobs, thus they did change their names. The members of the first and second generation still around think back with anger to the Magyarization of names. The peasants kept their names; they did not depend on anyone. This is how the pseudo-Hungarian names as Parti, Tarkövi, Marosvári, Sajtosi, Honosi, Hűsvéti, Hercegfalvi, Havasi, Halas, Kalocsai, Selmeçi, Bércecs, Kerti, Mezősi, Mártai, Mécsei, Mosolygó, Vájó, Barlangi; this is why there are so many Hungarian names in the telephone directory.<sup>10</sup>

Csolnok was a homogeneous village concerning religion. Ethnically there were Germans, Slovaks and Hungarians. 'There was just one Jew in the village, the baker but he married into a Swabian family.' The mine attracted many people; notwithstanding how many of them arrived and wherever they came from the majority of the population remained Swabian. As a local inhabitant put it: 'They assimilated to us.' At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. not only miners but farmers, farm hands also came to Csolnok, as well as trades people: butcher, barber, shoemaker, boot-maker, shopkeeper, joiner, tailor, merchant, brick-layer, road-labourer, watchmaker, etc.<sup>11</sup> Most of the new comers were single German and Slovak men who got married, settled down and became people of Csolnok.

The richest peasant families had 30–50 cadastral yochs of land, the middle peasants 15–25. The average was 12 cadastral yochs; with two cows, 3 pigs, vineyard and press shed it was already something. If there were several sons, one had to become a miner. Many of the miners hoed in the peasants' fields on a third part basis. The girls went into service when they were 12–14 years of age to Rákospalota near Budapest.

One third of the population was peasant, 2 thirds miners or tradesmen working for the mines. Among the tradesmen there were local artisans. The three strata were divided not only by their occupation but also by their domicile, clothing and pastime. The fourth stratum was the intelligentsia of the village: the leading members of the village, the priest, teachers, the doctor, the postmaster, mining-engineers. The members of this group came from outside the village and could be Hungarian or German.

<sup>10</sup> The first instance for Magyarization of a name occurs in the register for birth in 1896: a person from Csolnok changed his name Binder to Báti. Up to the time of the forced Magyarization there were one or two changes per year.

<sup>11</sup> They came from the nearby settlements: Dorog, Dág, Tarján, Bata, Epöl, Zsámbék, Nyerges, Zsámbék, Esztergom, Üröm, Piliscsaba, Sárissáp, Perbál, Leányvár, Pilisborosjenő.

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The peasants lived in the present Petőfi Street, formerly Bauergasse; this is the longest street in Csolnok. In the József and Rákóczi colonies only miners were living. There was constantly strife between peasants and miners. The miners kept goats that were nicknamed 'miners' cow' by the peasants. Older men can remember more serious quarrels in the taverns. Before the war a peasant girl was not allowed to marry a miner. A woman from a mining family told: 'A young peasant man wanted to court me. His mother let me know if I would inherit a 'langer acker' her son would have been allowed to marry me.' In spite of their disagreements, they depended on each other. When the miners were given coal as their due, the peasants carted it home for them. The fare than was paid in work because the miners had no cash. The peasants leased land to the miners who again paid by work.

The village and the miners' colonies were separated from one another. The colony originally consisted of two parts, Augusztá-colony was built between 1907 and 1912, Reiman-colony in 1922–23. The buildings housed four or eight apartments consisting of one room, kitchen and pantry, no comfort. There was a small garden belonging to each of the flats. The inhabitants of the colony were not only Hungarians; Swabians also went to live there because the rent was cheap. The Hungarians of the colony married Swabian girls; this was the other way how Swabians got to the colony; marriage between those from the colony and the village was unavoidable, however great the opposition was to it. The Swabians in the village looked down at the Swabians living in the colony.

There were men who served in the Hungarian army, in the Wehrmacht as well as in the SS, but because of the mine they were mostly exempt from service. 'We did not want to go but were conscripted. I would have liked to go to the Hunyadi panzer division. Maybe because we are not that kind of Germans. We are Hungarian Germans; or Germans feeling Hungarian?' But nobody asked where did you want to go. When I came back after the war, I was told if I went down the mine to push trolleys I would avoid trouble. As if I had wanted to become a soldier of the Wehrmacht.' There were about 12–20 persons who joined the SS voluntarily. The Volkbund had a lot of members but it was popular mainly among the peasants, as memory has it.

Concerning the period under discussion we did not find assimilation tendencies. The community of the village was unified in spite of the inner controversies. The children attended school for six years; they were not educated any further because their work was needed in the farms, or fol-

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lowed their fathers to the mine. It was not to make further education easier for them why they Magyarized their names, they did it for stronger reasons, for fear of losing their work. The Hungarians the people of Csolnok met did not offer them any patterns of behaviour or way of life they would have wished to follow and assimilate.

One means of assimilation was the compulsory drills of the paramilitary youth organisation 'Ievente', introduced by two teachers at the end of the 1920s. The boys were instructed in Hungarian. Maybe this is why they preferred to join the Hungarian army to the German.

We cannot talk about linguistic assimilation. Hungarian was exclusively used at school, they did not speak it either at home or in the village. In the 1960s if the old people could speak in Hungarian at all, their pronunciation was not correct and could not write it at all. 'My father always asked me how to write his name. He had a Magyarized one and he could not even pronounce it.'

### 4. After the war till the change of regime

The front reached Csolnok by December 1944 and remained stationary for three months; sometimes the Germans occupied it, sometimes the Russians. The inhabitants hid in the cellars, or in the mine. After the war the village was destroyed and robbed of everything. Deportation was prepared in Csolnok too; the German population packed their belongings and waited for the orders; it did not come; someone had remembered if the Germans are deported there would be no one to work in the mine. Thus only seven Hungarian families were settled over from Szimő in Slovakia.

'Before the war the peasants cared only for their land, but after the war more and more members of the peasant families went to the mine. They were declared kulaks, and their property confiscated. When the agricultural cooperatives were formed and the remaining land would have been taken away, they became miners to avoid joining the co-op.'

As the peasants worked in the mine too, the strong controversy between the two groups lessened. 'Our family was rich before the war, rich enough for my parents to stop me marrying my husband who was a locksmith in the mine and had only some land. There were several such cases then.' The marriages between Swabians belonging to different groups of occupation earlier became more and more frequent, however ethnically mixed marriages became more frequent only from the 1970s.

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Though there were no deportations from Csolnok, the inhabitants were considered guilty. New leadership was appointed, none of them were from Csolnok. Chairman of the council, president of the executive committee, party secretary, personnel man came from Esztergom, Dág, Sárissáp. The new management, the 'communists', were intimidating the inhabitants by their mere presence. 'In 1950

no one dared declare to be Swabian, though everybody was. They did not know Hungarian, they could not properly pronounce it but everybody said they were 'matyar', so great was the pressure.'

The mine was reopened, and attracted even more work force to the neighbourhood and the village. In its golden days the mine had 14 thousand workers. It was closed down in 1979 after continuous reductions of the work force. Mining became unprofitable because of the constant flooding.

The agricultural cooperative and its subsidiary lines gave work to many. The centre of the coop was not in Csolnok and less men were members than worked earlier in the mine; it were mostly the women who worked in the coop.

The image of the village started changing in the 1960s. The one-window houses got another window, bathrooms were attached to them, and open corridors were also glazed in. Around 1963 there were changes in clothing as well when the women started going to Dorog, Esztergom and Budapest. The children who were born after the war were not dressed in traditional costumes any more.

Mixed marriages started in the 1960s; for 125 homogeneous marriages there were 98 mixed ones; and there were 59 homogeneous marriages between Hungarians. Between 1970 and 1981 the number of mixed marriages increased while that of the homogeneous German ones stagnated. There were 125 homogeneous Swabian marriages, 115 mixed ones and 68 homogeneous Hungarian marriages. Between 1982 and 1990 the trend changes and there were 43 homogeneous Swabian marriages, 82 mixed marriages and 47 homogeneous Hungarian marriages. The data indicate that the total of the marriages decreased. Between 1990 and 2000 there were 25 homogeneous Swabian, 45 mixed and 28 homogeneous Hungarian marriages. This is the year when there were marriages where both of the spouses were born in mixed ones.

The people of Csolnok count the children in mixed marriages as Swabians; statistic may register decrease in proportion but the group consciousness overrides it. '80% of the children are Swabian' says a man

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belonging to the first generation. Those born in mixed families declare to be Swabian. Linguistic assimilation started late in Csolnok but then grew rapidly. Members of the first two generations were still competent in their mother tongue. The third generation, however, shows a sudden change. They claim Hungarian to be their mother tongue and their competence in speaking German is not as good as their parents'. The language used upwards is Swabian but downward Hungarian is the language of communication. According to scholarly literature the mother tongue withdraws first from public domain and remains within the family. In Csolnok it has happened the other way round it withdrew earlier from the family than from the public domain where Swabian is still spoken.

Assimilation was slowed down by other factors as well; the present generation is the first one with learning. There were persons who participated in higher education earlier too, but it was in the 1970s when they were on the increase.

### 5. National revival after the change of regime

The local government of the village has declared to be a minority government for the last two cycles. The affiliation to nationality is not expressed only in change in the local government. There is special care taken of the teaching of the language and maintaining identity consciousness. 'There is excellent language teaching for our children starting in the kindergarten and this is the root of our cultural life' explains the mayor. 'There are dedicated teachers at all levels, from the kindergarten, in the primary school and the music school; German ethnic traditions and the German language receive special stress.' The director of the primary school, teaching the pupils in eight grades is József Taffner. He was the first to found a German ethnic music school in Hungary. The school has 90 pupils who learn to play the clarinet, brass instruments, piano, flute, accordion, percussions, and also has jazz ballet and folk dance sections.

There are two kindergartens in Csolnok. Most of the children have been born in mixed families, they did not learn the language at home, nor ethnic culture, it became the task of the schools. There are two primary schools too, one in the village, the other in Rákóczi colony. In the school six teachers of German teach the children five hours per week. The pupils can practice the language in the drama group. There are special interest groups for those who aspire to further education. The pupils can enter the German grammar school of Vörösvár and Csepel, or go to school to Esztergom and

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Dorog. 'The school used to have two languages of instruction. When the decree appeared that only subject teachers are allowed to teach we had to give it up because we could not find teachers to teach geography, mathematics, biology in German.' While in the socialist times only the language was taught, now handing over traditions and maintaining identity is very important. 'Elderly persons come to tell the children about the past. It is a pity it has to be in Hungarian. For lent we bake doughnuts. Auntie Halas came in traditional costume, taught the children how to put it on, how to handle them, they learnt how to put up their hair in the old way.'

According to the statistical data adherence to the ethnic culture represents a higher value than the proportion of people admitting it and the value appearing for the self image of the group. It means that cultural traditions have strong appeal and people cannot and will not pull themselves out of the emotional influence. The returns of the census of 2001 prove that adherence to the cultural traditions and the appeal of the Swabian culture can be a stronger force than origins and mother tongue.

The director of the Lajos Kossuth Community Centre is responsible for the organisation of the cultural life. Beside the religious holidays and church festivals (18–19<sup>th</sup> May), there are dances on the village day when the various cultural groups also perform. Following traditions, there is a Maypole erected in May; there is street dancing on the 19<sup>th</sup> August; the miners' feasts are also celebrated and there are commemorations of the victims of the labour camps of the 1950s. There are vintage processions, the Elizabeth and Catherine-day balls, Christmas concerts and inviting in together the New Year. On 4<sup>th</sup> December, St. Barbara's day, wreaths are laid at commemorative tablets. The Pensioners' Club organises exhibitions to show the traditional costumes. There are choir and folk dance performances together with visitors coming from other villages.

The community centre houses the groups of the German Ethnic Cultural Association: the brass band, choir and folk dance group. The jazz ballet group of the music school has its rehearsals in the building just as the pensioners' club, the club of diabetics and club of Mums and Babies have their meetings.

Tradition has it that the Miners' Brass Band of Csolnok of national fame was founded in 1860. Under János Fódi who has been directing the band since 1961, they had much success. Beside the young people of Csolnok there are musicians coming from other nearby settlements. They play popular Swabian songs as well rock music, 'this is what the audience wants,' they say.

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The German Ethnic Choir was formed in 1951. They did not sing constantly, the choir fell apart several times; it was formed again in 1986. Primarily they sing German folksongs collected in the area. It is a pity that the majority of the members is over 60 years old and they keep leaving the choir one after the other because of ill health. New blood is difficult to find. Though there is a school choir, the children who have not learnt the language at home pronounce the German words with heavy Hungarian accent. In the choir the youngest is of 58 years of age. 'Everything goes if we go' they say.

There is a church choir as well and the so-called Wagenhoffer choir. At school the children have a concert in German at Christmas. There are Nativity plays in the church and the Wagenhoffer choir sings German songs before the midnight mass.

The German Ethnic Youth Dance group was formed in 1990 on the initiative of some enthusiastic young persons. Their aim was to resuscitate the tradition broken in 1951. Their repertoire consists of folk dances of the region and also dances with special choreography. They have received a bronze medal at the national festival German ethnic groups. In the dance group there are young people from Szár, Sárísáp, Vörösvár, Leányvár, Esztergomi, even from Budapest. As I have learned, there are 'echte Hungarians' among them.

There are two dance groups for children. New performers are needed as the fluctuation is great in the big group. 'We are getting older, get married, have children and do not have any more time for the rehearsals.'

Everybody calls József Klinger the 'Mundartautor'. He writes sketches that are performed by the members of the pensioners' club. At the yearly needlework exhibition the dolls dressed in traditional costumes have the greatest acclaim.

There is the Miners' Club in the Miners' Community Centre in the colony and the Miners' Museum. At the beginning of September there is a festive meeting organised by the Miners' Union and the Pensioners' Association of Csolnok.

'Lots of things have got lost. There is no more greeting in the New Year, no initiation ceremony for the young men. Hardly any pig killings. We still have the procession on Corpus Christi day, but only around the church; we still go to the pilgrimage; we travel by bus organised by the pensioners' club. The church festival is still held and occasionally the vintage procession. The decline of our culture started when television came in. We have forgotten a lot and now try to revive some.'

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Minority Politics and Minorities Rights**6. Origins, group membership and language use – a summary**

The Germans of Csolnok who arrived from diverse areas at various dates cannot be certain where their ancestors had come from. The 'somewhere' from Alsace, Bavaria, Frankland, the Rhine region does not offer any definite starting points. If we add to the new comers through marriages, the migrants attracted by the mine, the settlers from Slovakia, the miners coming from Austria, Germany in the 19<sup>th</sup> c., the present German speaking population has indeed a colourful mixture of people as their ancestry.

The inhabitants of the village spoke Hungarian and German and for a while also Slovakian. The unifying factor was the shared Roman Catholic faith. The church preserved the settlers language since the chaplain was required to be able to speak German in addition to Hungarian.

According to Károly Manherz the *Mundart* of Csolnok developed out of the language of the first and second wave of settlers' Rhine-Frankish and the third wave of settlers' Bavarian dialect.<sup>12</sup> Linguists observed Alsatian features brought along by the second wave in the vocabulary of the Csolnok *Mundart*. Though it is difficult to prove the Alsatian origin, the only indicator remaining is the family name Quintz, the locals insist on it, maybe because it is a smaller, more easily definable area; as well known, the place of origin, the starting point is very important in the forming of the identity.

Certain customs, e.g. the rattling at Easter, the shape of the rattle, the way it is made points toward Bavarian origins. The existing place-names do not help as they were alternatively used with the Hungarian equivalents or the Hungarian names were pronounced conforming to the *Mundart*.<sup>13</sup>

The people of Csolnok are proud of their mother tongue. Fekete (1988:26) writes that the people of Csolnok never felt that their language differed considerably from the written language. They prided in that they

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<sup>12</sup> Károly Manherz calls the dialect a *Sprachinsel*. The dialect is at the edge of the German dialects, which had been levelled regionally (cf 1983. *Die Ungarndeutschen und ihre Wissenschaft*. Budapest: TIT. p. 9.) He includes the varieties exclusively spoken in Zebegény, Dunabogdány, Kismaros, Nagymaros and Csolnok; these are dialects which were levelled locally out of a mixture of Rhine-Frankish and Danube-Bavarian dialects having lexical characteristics and certain features of pronunciation, e.g. of the initial clusters.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Fekete 1977:29.

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could understand each other in writing. Some of the grown ups told, when they were in Germany speaking in their mother tongue, the Germans there could not believe they came from Hungary. 'It happened in Cottbus. In a shop we were asked where we came from, From Hungary. How come we speak German so well? Because we are Ungardeutsch. Ungardeutsch? The man came out to look at our licence plate. Ungardeutsch, Germans living in Hungary. Because of the licence plate we were Hungarians for him and he could not understand it. They never heard about us, did not know we exist.'

'In my generation everybody started speaking in German. Those who went to kindergarten learnt Hungarian there but at home we spoke Swabian with our grandparents even with our parents.' – told one of the informants. Before the grandchildren were born, we spoke only swabian at home. But the children are not interested any more. We hardly noticed and were talking in Hungarian. The young people cannot understand the dialect properly; those who learn the language are learning German not the dialect. In the street, when I meet friends I talk in the dialect; I could not use any other language than that of my youth.'- explained a woman of the first generation. 'Our parents could not speak Hungarian nor German only the dialect of Csolnok. After the war life and school taught us Hungarian.' 'The 18 years olds do not want to know the dialect. My grandchild tells me to speak 'properly' 'Our 20 year olds understand the dialect but do not want to speak it. What for? It is unnecessary – they say.' Notwithstanding, they declare to be Swabians, they are self-conscious, but their mother tongue is Hungarian. 'We brought up our children to be Swabians. We sang and danced at home. They still feel strongly about it that but the grandchildren are not keen any more.'

The ambiguity of the place of origin does not cause any problems of identity in Csolnok. Wherever the ancestors came from they were united in this settlement, became Swabians sharing one mother tongue; the group-membership, the loyalty to the group is a strong bond for all three generations analysed. The late linguistic assimilation has strengthened it. The members of the first and second generation are still speaking the dialect in the streets and at home every day, this is what they consider their mother tongue. If we presume that the 31%, which declared to be Swabian, also contains the 25% who uses the mother tongue regularly when talking to family and friends, we can say that 83% of the population who declared to be Swabian actually adheres to their mother tongue. The third generation considers Hungarian to be their mother tongue but it

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does not mean the exclusion of the use of the dialect. 'We are linguistically assimilated we speak the dialect only with our grandparents but we are strongly attached to the folk culture, music, dances of the village.' 'I can hardly wait for Friday to come home and go to the dance rehearsal.'

Home is Csolnok and the home country is Hungary. The members of the choir sing Hungarian songs too, not only on stage but also for themselves while drinking wine. The concept of the native land connects them to Hungary in spite of the fact that they would never claim to be Hungarians. 'In Germany I am a stranger, here I am at home.' 'Our culture is German, our origins too, but this is our native country, this is where we should prosper. This is the only place I feel well.' 'Csolnok is my home, I would not go away from here. Since Csolnok is in Hungary, we belong to this country, to this nation. I like Hungarian jokes. My uncle who went away because he wanted to be German, suffers from homesickness so much he almost became seriously ill.' 'I am proud of the many Hungarian persons who became famous worldwide. I believe what is Hungarian belongs to us too.'

The people of Csolnok cannot avoid the pressure of assimilation. It appears mostly in the changes of the language use, mixed marriages and structural assimilation. Swabians are proud of their origins, their culture and whoever can, tries to keep the dialect. They maintain their culture and try to hand it over to their descendants. It is to the future to show with what success.