



Erdélyi Magyar
Nemzeti Tanács
Hungarian National
Council of Transylvania
No 2
January 2005

Transylvanian Monitor

minority and human rights watch

ROMANIA BANS DOCUMENTARY ON TRIANON

Culture Minister Mona Musca on 10 January banned any further showing in Romania of a Hungarian documentary film on the 1920 Trianon. The 14-part documentary was produced by Hungarian film director Gábor Koltay and is based on the works of Hungarian historian Ernő Raffay. A shorter two-hour version was shown in Cluj/Kolozsvár on 9 January under the auspices of the local Protestant Theological Institute. Recently Dr Tamás Juhász, rector of the Protestant Theological Institute, was interrogated.

It actually was Győző Hajdú, once a high official of the Romanian Communist dictatorship who called the attention of Culture Minister Mona Musca on the 'illegality' of showing a documentary film entitled 'Trianon' by Gábor Koltay in several places of Transylvania.

The minister recognized this in a television programme, confirming that the showing-tour was denounced by Győző Hajdú, who is editor-in-chief of a bilingual magazine called Együtt-Impreuna (ie. Together) in Bucharest. Győző Hajdú had been a member of the Great National Assembly during the Communist dictatorship and had been regarded as one of the most faithful followers of the Ceausescu couple.

Ms Musca said the official procedure to ban the film was not a case of censorship, *the ministry only wanted to stick to the legal regulations of showing a film in Romania*. Eva Maria Barki, international lawyer in Vienna said it was shocking that the Hungarian government and the Hungarian parliament did not protest against the ban of Koltay's film.

"I am being shocked that fifteen years after the East-Central European change of regime someone is banning an artistic production and prohibits further showings in today's world aspiring for democracy" – stated director Koltay. He thinks that *the Bucharest "witch hunt" is due to the content of the film*. "However, 85 years after the Trianon peace treaty we ought to openly speak inside and outside Hungary about it and about its proceeds, there should not be taboos about this" – concluded Koltay.

The organizers of the showing round are obliged to pay huge fines. The leadership of the concerned youth organizations were astonished about this measure of the Ministry of the Interior.

Attila Jakab, president of the Youth Forum of Odorheiu Secuiesc/Székelyudvarhely said, "We organized the showing within the framework of the Laterna Magica Film Club. The Club has been screening art and historic movies for more than 10 years. Nobody has ever objected to our activity. But this time we were showing Koltay's 'Trianon' and we do not understand what the problem with this is. Mr Jakab said that he was not going to pay the fine but will sue for his justice.

The Peace Treaty of Trianon, signed on June 4, 1920, cut Hungary to pieces. Before the war, Hungary had a territory of 125,600 square miles. Under the terms of the Treaty she lost 89,700 square miles, or 71.4% of her former territory. Of her population of almost 21 million 63.6%, including more than 3.5 million Magyars (Hungarians), was detached. The Hungarian Kingdom, a perfect geographical and economic unit, was dismembered on the basis of the "liberation of the nationalities." As a result of this "liberation": 1,702,000 Slovaks together with 1,874,000 persons of other nationalities, including one million Magyars, were "liberated" by being subjected to Czech rule. 2,800,000 Rumanians were "liberated" at the cost of subjecting 2,465,000 persons of other nationalities, including about two million Magyars, to Rumanian rule. 1,029,000 Serbians were "liberated" at the cost of subjecting to Serbian rule 1,727,000 Croatians and 1,366,000 persons of other nationalities, including about 600,000 Magyars. 232,000 Germans were "liberated" at the cost of subjecting to Austrian rule 126,000 persons of other nationalities, including 50,000 Magyars.

Of the 3.5 million Magyars cut off from their motherland, more than 1.5 million were living along the new frontiers in a contiguous ethnic block with their brethren in mutilated Hungary. The heaviest violation of the ethnic principle occurred on the Hungarian-Czechoslovak frontier along the Danube. The 415,000 Magyars in this territory of about 7,000 square kilometres made up about 95% of its population. This territory was annexed to Czechoslovakia simply because the Czechs wanted to have the Danube as their frontier and they wished to be close enough to Budapest so as to be able to bombard it with long-range artillery fire in case of war.

Economically, Hungary was hit just as hard. She lost 61.4% of her arable land, 88% of her timber, 62.2% of her railroads, 64.5% of her hard surface roads, 83.1% of her pig-iron output, 55.7% of her industrial plants, 67% of her credit and banking institutions and her entire gold, silver, copper and salt deposits.

CONFISCATED CHURCH PROPERTY

Between 1945 and 1989 the Hungarian-speaking historical religious Cults were deprived of more than 14,060 ha of agricultural land (including agricultural buildings), more than 9,527 ha of forests (including canton-buildings), 2,091 real estates (of which 43 places of worship, 42 manses, 47 monasteries, 997 institutions of education, 33 hospitals/asylums/orphanages, 743 apartments), archives, incunabulum, religious paintings and relics.



The Lorántffy Zsuzsanna Reformed High School

The Lorántffy Zsuzsanna Reformed High School was returned by a government decree into the legal possession of the Reformed Church in Romania, Királyhágómellék District. When the communist dictatorship confiscated this building, in 1948, they needed to leave it urgently, and there forbid them to take any properties. However, they received back an empty building, and the facility itself was in an extremely bad condition, it needed full restoration.



A classroom as it was restituted

The District was shocked to learn that the sports-ground of the **Lorántffy Zsuzsanna Reformed High School** in Nagyvárad/Oradea was insidiously donated by the city council to the neighbouring **Romanian Orthodox** parish.

Letter of Protest

The Reformed Church in Romania, Királyhágómellék District, was shocked to learn that the sports-ground of the **Lorántffy Zsuzsanna Reformed High School** in Nagyvárad/Oradea, which was recently restituted to our Church as result of a fifteen years struggle, was insidiously donated by the city council to the **Romanian Orthodox** parish of Nagyvárad-Olaszi. This decision brought on the quiet did not allow our Church District the right to appeal. The Hungarian-speaking council members – the fraction of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania – also voted in the favor of this decision.

Our Church had not had any information on this decision for half a year, and when it became public, we tried to peacefully settle this conflict created by the city council and the Orthodox Church. Our efforts seemed to be of no avail; furthermore, the Orthodox Parish has started today a shrill takeover of the plot. They intend to liquidate the sports-ground by demolishing its fences.

We protest against the decision of the city council, because they simply neglected and **discriminated** the Hungarian-speaking Reformed inhabitants of the city when providing favors to the local Orthodox Church.

Due to the **principle of even chances**, we protest against the fact that a Reformed school is deprived of its sports-ground, and that our Reformed pupils and students are deprived of the possibility of physical education.

We hereby ask the **city council** to withdraw this illegal decision, which is discriminating the Hungarian-speaking and Reformed local citizens.

We also ask the local bishopric of the **Romanian Orthodox Church** not to concede to this inequitable decision.

We ask the local, county and national organizations of the **Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania** to urgently intervene in settling this situation.

Our Church District is committed to dialogue instead of confrontation, however, if we are browbeaten into a clash, we will not withdraw.

The Reformed Church in Romania, Királyhágómellék District trusts that the beginning of a new year and the inauguration of a new government in Romania will not be overshadowed by an interethnic and interdenominational conflict in Nagyvárad/Oradea.

5 January 2005

László Tőkés
bishop

Zoltán Kovács
first elder

Communiqué

On behalf of the “Holy Trinity” (Sfânta Treime) Romanian Orthodox Parish in Oradea (Nagyvárad-Olaszi), Reverend Marian Florin Pușcas made a public statement regarding the conflict situation on the sports-ground affiliated to the Lorántffy Zsuzsanna Reformed High School, which institute of education was restituted to our Church following a fifteen year struggle.

First, Reverend Pușcas spoke about the “peaceful settlement” of the issue in the spirit of “mutual understanding” and “loving relationships”, then he mentioned about a “penal denunciation” against Bishop László Tökés on the pretence of “trespassing” (sic!).

Indeed, a “peaceful settlement” would have occurred if the Orthodox Church had not desired to deprive of sporting possibilities the pupils and students of the Lorántffy Zsuzsanna Reformed High School!

This conflict would not start if the City Council of Oradea respected its own decision, No 118/1995, being still in force, which provided free usage for 25 years of the sports-ground to the “Andrei Șaguna” State High School, which operated in our facility before it got restituted to us.

The local government could have avoided this conflict if they had provided the undiminished usage of the sports-ground to the youth of the Reformed high school following the complete secession of the state high school, due to the agreement between church and authority signed on 23 July 2002 and its addendum No 20593/23 December 2002.

Keeping in mind all this, the Reformed Church did not “trespass” but those did who neglecting the rights of our Church as well as of our institute of education arbitrarily smashed our locks and started to liquidate the sports-ground.

It is to be noted otherwise that the disputed plot on which the sports-ground was equipped for education purposes has never belonged to churches – neither to the Reformed, nor to the Orthodox – but it was confiscated as a family property of the Tisza earldom.

Thus, the Open Letter of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania fraction within the City Council, in which they request both the Reformed Church and the Orthodox Church to “keep in mind the principle of Christian love when settling this delicate issue”, feels astonishing.

Our Church is acting due to the principle of unconditional love when protecting the rights of the youth. Those, however, who apply a twofold standard regarding the students of a state school and the students of a denominational school, do not love unconditionally.

We initiated a dialogue on this issue though with our Orthodox brethren in a letter dating 6 January 2005, well before the aforementioned Open Letter was issued. Similarly, we have turned with the same initiative today to the “Holy Trinity” Orthodox Parish.

Our desire is that an “agreement between the concerned churches” will be concluded – as proposed by the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania. However, the equitable and legal settlement of this conflict may not be replaced with the goodwill of the Reformed Church. Consequently, we respectfully ask the members of the City Council and the “Holy Trinity” Orthodox Parish to support our School, to love our Children, and to assist them keeping their sports-ground of what they are entitled by legal, moral and humanity basis.

19 January 2005

On behalf of the
Reformed Church in Romania, Királyhágómellék District:

István Csáry
first-clerk

István Tolnay
councillor on education

European and worldwide church organisations, national churches and church-members expressed their solidarity with the Reformed Church in Romania, and intervened at the local authorities.

Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) – Leuenberg Church Fellowship –

To Mr. Petru Filip
Mayor of Oradea
Romania

Protest of the Reformed Church in Romania, Western District

Dear Mayor Filip,

Bishop Tökés from the Reformed Church in Romania, Western District, informed us that there is a conflict about the sports-ground of the Lorántffy Zsuzsanna Reformed High School in your city. According to the complaint, the sports ground which was restituted to the Reformed Church now has been taken away from them and given to a Romanian Orthodox Parish. Our brothers and sisters in the Reformed Church in Romania see this as a decision which is illegitimate and discriminates the Hungarian-speaking and Reformed citizens.

From Germany we cannot judge about the backgrounds of this conflict. But we are very concerned to learn about the harm done to the Reformed Church in Romania. Through the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe, this church is bound together with more than 100 other Protestant churches all over Europe. According to the word of the Gospel “If one part suffers, every part suffers with it”, we feel the pain of our Reformed brothers and sisters in Romania as our own.

We are all the more affected by the conflict, as a study group of our community was hosted by the Reformed Church in Oradea in May 2004. The 18 delegates from 10 European churches were enthused about the hospitality that they experienced in your beautiful city, and were very impressed by the expressions of a vivid Christian life both in the Lutheran and Reformed parishes in Oradea. It seemed that an era of better cooperation between the national groups and confessions in Romania had already begun. We are worried that the conflict about the sports ground might mark a backlash.

We are well aware of the fact that in the borderlands between Romania and Hungary there has been a long history of mutual injuries. We understand it as belonging to our Christian commitment to work for reconciliation between conflicting groups. Therefore we launched a project “Healing of Memories in Romania”, which shall contribute to overcome the tensions between the Christian churches in Romania and lead them into mutual understanding and cooperation. Among others, the Reformed Church (with both districts) and the Romanian Orthodox Church (Archbishop Bartholomeu, Cluj) are involved in the project. We hope for a positive outcome which may be seen already in 2007, when the Third European Ecumenical Assembly will meet in Sibiu. It is even for this reason that we are worried about a possible damage for this reconciliation project by a local conflict.

Therefore we would like to express our sincere hope that the city council will reconsider the issue and find a solution that is acceptable for the Reformed Church in Romania.

Yours sincerely

Dr Wilhelm Hüffmeier
Director of the CPCE Secretariat

THE PREVIOUS ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT ALLOCATED A HOTEL TO THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

The resigning government gave to the Romanian Orthodox Church the Park Hotel in Târgu Mureş/Marosvásárhely. At their last session the governing social-democrats led by Adiran Năstase adopted a decision on the ownership of the central hotel of the Transylvanian city. The government decree No 2451 states that the hotel-complex – including furniture, park and parking – in Târgu Mureş/Marosvásárhely belongs to the Orthodox Church. The hotel lays on 2,800 square meters and has got 100 rooms. Andrei, Archbishop of Alba Iulia/Gyulafehérvár will use the estate as residence – he stated, that we was going to spend two days weekly in Târgu Mureş/Marosvásárhely to establish a direct contact with the Orthodox believers of the city. The local council of Târgu Mureş/Marosvásárhely has been struggling for years to obtain the property, because they are in shortage of space.

Transylvanian daily Krónika says this act is an obvious example on how the government discriminates between religious denominations and ethnicities: “It would be difficult to imagine, that the Hungarian-speaking historic churches in Romanian would receive a similar gift. Instead of entering into the possession of one-hundred rooms donations they are busy trying to recover their property confiscated by the Romanian state”.



View of the Park Hotel

The Transylvanian Hungarian National and Ecclesiastical Monitoring Service

TRANSYLVANIAN MONITOR

Providing genuine information about the situation of the Transylvanian Hungarian national community and their historic churches is a cardinal issue. Thus, the Initiative Body of the Transylvanian Hungarian National Council decided to establish the Transylvanian Hungarian National and Ecclesiastical Monitoring Service:

‘Daily discrimination and persistent encroachments on the ethnic Hungarians’ rights urge the establishment of the National and Ecclesiastical Monitoring Service to continuously follow up and evaluate the situation of the Transylvanian Hungarian national community as well as to provide genuine information to various inland and international forums.’ (Resolution on establishing the Transylvanian Hungarian National and Ecclesiastical Monitoring Service; March Forum, Kolozsvár/Cluj, 14 March 2003)

The Transylvanian Monitoring will provide continuous information as well as yearly reports on human rights and freedoms in Romania, focusing on the situation of the Hungarian national community.

FOUNDATION for the Transylvanian Hungarian National Council

The Transylvanian Hungarian National Council’s Permanent Committee decided to establish the Foundation for the Transylvanian Hungarian National Council. The Foundation’s main objectives are to protect the interests of Hungarians beyond Hungary’s borders, especially of Hungarians in Transylvania and Moldova, and to support efforts for Transylvanian Hungarian autonomy. The Foundation will also provide financial background to the operation of the Transylvanian Hungarian National Council and the Székely National Council. The registration process of the Foundation is completed.

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ISSN 1841- 0634**

