

## HUNGARIAN TEENAGER BEATEN UNCONSCIOUS

March 15 is the national holiday of all Hungarians in remembrance of the 1848 freedom fight. The festive commemorations in Cluj/Kolozsvár were held this year in the main square Roman Catholic Saint Michael Cathedral, with the participation of the high hierarchy of the Hungarian historic churches of Transylvania.

High school student, Lehel Lészai, was to join the commemorations when a group attacked him. He was cruelly beaten, because he had a cockade (ribbon) and was carrying a Hungarian flag to the festivity. The aggressors had a Romanian tricolor on themselves. His sister, who witnessed the assault, reported that Lehel Lészai's face was full of blood, when he fell unconscious. However, the Romanian youngsters kept on kicking him, while he was on the ground.



The neo-fascist gathering



their provocative poster



and their victim.

The Hungarian teenager was attacked by a group of Romanian youngsters who attended the anti-Hungarian demonstration held near the Saint Michael Cathedral by the extremist New Right organization (Noua Dreapta).

It is difficult to understand why the Mayor of Cluj would authorize an anti-Hungarian demonstration in the city where almost 20% of the inhabitants are Hungarian-speaking. But it is a clear provocation to authorize an anti-Hungarian hate-meeting on the national holiday of Hungarians.

The Mayor of Cluj, Emil Boc, also happens to be the President the Democratic Liberal Party, which is the strongest opposition party.

**Transylvania's Hungarian community is deeply concerned about this assault because it brings back memories of the March 1990 anti-Hungarian pogrom and its terrorist atmosphere; along with, the growing number of physical assaults against ethnic Hungarians in Romania.**

## ANTI-HUNGARIAN POGROM IN ROMANIA

**20 March 1990**

On 20 March 1990, serious incidents happened in the streets of Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureş, when Romanians attacked silently protesting ethnic Hungarians. The events had a negative impact upon the inter-ethnic relations in Romania. Transylvania's Hungarians are still waiting for that jurisdiction to reveal: Who was behind the bloody events? The incident broke out when the ethnic Hungarian inhabitants of Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureş held a candle-light protest to draw the attention of the new government to the promised restoration of their banned institutes of education.

*"A journalist in the square prior to the attack describes noticing on the Romanian side a young woman, maybe 19 or 20, hoisted on someone's shoulders. She was always looking to the rear. He heard her shout: "They have arrived, they're here." The young woman jumped down and ran to the side, and suddenly the square was a sea of axes.*



Hungarians in a silent demonstration with candles and books in defence of mother-tongue schooling.



"They have broken through!"  
The first Romanian charge, 20 March 1990, early evening.



A survivor, stabbed in the stomach.



Romanian villagers with iron bars arrive in Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureş, in the main square.

*... Control over the square ebbed and flowed during this time, with the Hungarians facing the difficulty of confronting the Romanians sheltering behind the armoured vehicles of the army. The Romanians began to advance again. Then, at about 20:00, small parties of young men began to arrive with silent steps behind the Hungarian lines'. They wore white so that they would identify each other, and they were well armed. The Hungarian-speaking Gypsies of Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureş had arrived. ... One of the Gypsy leaders told me: "Mr. Kincses, should we not come to help the Hungarians, when we are Hungarian Gypsies, and it hurts us if the Hungarians are being beaten!" He added: "Today you, tomorrow us ..."*

The violent clash resulted in more than 100 serious injuries and three ethnic-Hungarian victims: Antal Csipor, István Gémes and Zoltán Kiss. The offenders have never been prosecuted. 40 Hungarians and 2 Gypsies were sentenced for their participation in the clashes. Two Romanians were sentenced but the instigators were never brought to trial.

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## Recent Anti-Hungarian Assault I

### STABBED IN THE HEAD FROM BEHIND

“Happy Easter, you stateless!” – two young men shouted this in Romanian (“*Paste fericit, bozgorule!*”) when attacking an ethnic Hungarian in Kolozsvár/Cluj in the dawn of the second day of Easter, 2005 – reported Transylvanian daily, the *Krónika*. “Bozgor /stateless/” is the hostile Romanian term referring to the native ethnic Hungarian population of Romania.

Twenty-seven year old Z. T. was closing down a club in the city center, while his colleague was trying to catch a taxi, when he was hit, then stabbed in the head from behind. A patch of hair, on the back of his head, saved his life.

His colleague and he started to chase the 17-20 year-old aggressors, when a police patrol appeared. Both Hungarians were stopped and their identities checked. When the victim tried to tell what had happened, one of the policemen suggested that he go to the hospital (emergency room). When trying to explain the situation again, one of the policemen harshly pushed off Z. T.’s colleague, shouting: “Get out of here!” Then, the two left the spot, heading in the direction of the emergency room, while the police were talking to the aggressors.

“They did not draw up any report or citation; they did not even listen to me. I do not know what happened after that,” said the victim.

A *Krónika* reporter inquired if the local police recorded the incident, in front of the downtown club, on 27 March to 28 March 2005. Police spokesman, Adrian Marian, asked if the reporter had asked of the “homicide attempt”? Then, he added that they knew about the incident, but he could not tell any details because the file had been forwarded to the prosecution. However, prosecution spokeswoman, Violeta Treistaru, could not find the file.

On a second inquiry, police spokesman, Adrian Marian, surprisingly asked if the newspaper reporter was sure that something had happened on the aforementioned date. When the reporter referred to the declarations of the victim and the eyewitness, the spokesman requested written questions, regarding the inquiry.

Police commander Marcel Bontidean did not know about the incident. “If there was such an incident, I would know about it.” – declared the commander.

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## Recent Anti-Hungarian Assault II

### A PENSIONER SEVERELY BEATEN BY TWO POLICEMEN

Amnesty International called on the European Union to keep up pressure on Romania on some crucial outstanding human rights concerns. There have been countless police abuses against the ethnic Hungarian minority in Romania.

A pensioner was severely beaten by two policemen in the Síkszentgyörgy village of Hargita/Harghita county on 5 September 2005, reported Hargita Népe daily newspaper. The ethnic Hungarian aged man, Elemér János received a citation because he had been in conflict about a pasture with his neighbour. He went to the police station, and when he asked for a translation because he did not speak proper Romanian, policeman, Vlad Urzica, hit him several times. After the victim fell down, another policeman joined Urzica, kicking Elemér on the floor.

The victim succeeded in escaping from inside the police station, and he cried for help outside it.

Urzica ran after him, knocked the pensioner down, and pulled him back to the police station. The two continued to beat and kick him, shout verbal insults, curse Hungarians, and curse the Hungarian language.

Some villagers heard the desperate cries for help of the defenceless aged person, but no one dared to intervene. Witness Imre Halmágyi declared: “I passed by the police station, and I saw Elemér coming out and shouting ‘Help me, please. They are killing me.’ Vlad Urzica came out and he knocked Elemér down and took him back inside. I was afraid to go inside the police station... I am old, and Urzica is a savage policeman. He has beaten up many villagers before.”

The victim has been medically registered with a heart disease since 1978.

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### Recent Anti-Hungarian Assault III

#### GENDARMERIE OFFICERS CRUELLY BEAT TWO YOUNG COUPLES

Twenty-five gendarmerie officers attacked and cruelly beat four ethnic Hungarian young people on 17 June 2006, in a club in Gyergyószentmiklós/Gheorgheni.

The young people stated that the aggression started when one of them accidentally bumped a gendarme on the dance floor. Immediately, the two couples were attacked and unable to defend themselves. Questioned by *Objective TV*, victim, M.V., declared, "We did not stand a chance against the 25 officers."

The boys were kicked onto the floor. The girls were smacked. Victim, L. E., lost his consciousness. Victim, A. J., had two teeth knocked out, attesting to the severity of the beating.

Medical-legal reports stated that all four ethnic Hungarian young people suffered serious injuries.

Questioned by *Objective TV*, Gendarmerie Commander of Gyergyószentmiklós, Lazar Laurentiu, declared that he had heard about the case, but the off-duty gendarmes did not actually belong to the local command.

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### Recent Anti-Hungarian Assault IV

#### POLICEMEN AND MASKED SQUAD TROOP BEAT SEVEN YOUNG ADULTS

There is no acceptable explanation yet, for either the ethnic Hungarian community or for the Romanian general public, regarding the aggressive force employed by Romanian policemen against seven young adults.

The employees of the Police Headquarter Centre of Harghita County, Szekler Land, East Transylvania confirm that they "acted according the current Romanian Home Law," when they applied compulsory force against seven peaceful motorcyclist tourists. This event occurred on 29 July 2006.



The group of seven motorcyclists from Kézdivásárhely, East Transylvania, set out for a journey to the marvellous Carpathian lake of Szent Anna. They were directed by an obviously drunken Romanian policeman who affirmed that they should stop by a nearby parking station. According to one injured victim, the tourists followed the instructions of the policeman. But they were coldly received by an unexpected troop of four more policemen and a squad of ten masked policemen. The masked squad of policemen started to brutally beat them.

The spokesman of the Central Headquarter of the Police Department of Harghita County affirmed that no excessive action occurred at lake Szent Anna, all that happened were just "arrangements"... An eye-witness recorded every phase of the brutal commando attack on digital camera, but he was also severely beaten for his action. Fortunately, the memory card of the photo camera preserved four pictures as evidence.

The bizarre physiognomy of the case is that the young people finally were not asked to pay the penalty; nobody compiled a Record of Evidence. In spite of that, the Press and general public continue to wonder about the case, since no acceptable explanation was given as to why the police exerted such a level of terrorist aggression. The young people claimed to be seeking legal recourse against the policemen at the County Court, reported Transylvanian daily, the *Krónika*.

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## **Recent Anti-Hungarian Assault V**

### **PUBLIC SERVANT HIT YOUNG MAN IN THE FACE**

István Csomortányi, a member of the Transylvanian Hungarian Youth's (THY) presidium, reported to the police that an unknown aggressor attacked him; he reported charges of bodily harm.

THY, a Oradea/Nagyvárad organization, determined that no progress had been made in placing the Hungarian names on the street-tables. Furthermore, the local council passed a resolution which obliges the local authority to carry out this task. Subsequently, the Transylvanian Hungarian Youth decided, voluntarily, to put four Hungarian street tables onto private properties. Although their endeavor did not violate any law, the City Hall sent the authorities in order to remove the tables.

On Wednesday, 19 September 2007, at 11 o'clock they placed the four tables. The employees of the City Avenue Joint-stock Company removed the tables four hours later. As István Csomortányi arrived at the scene, he asked the workers not to remove the bilingual tables, since they were the property of THY. After a heated dispute, one of the employees of the company hit Csomortányi's face. Then, the employee left, taking the four tables with him.

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## **Recent Anti-Hungarian Assault VI**

### **GIRLS BEATEN, WHILE BOYFRIENDS HELD BY KNIFE, TO WITNESS ASSAULT**

On 9 January 2008, young Hungarian girls were beaten for merely speaking in their mother tongue. The victim's report published in the Cluj/Kolozsvár daily entitled *Szabadság* stated that the Romanian-speaking aggressors outnumbered the girls' acquaintances, and kept them from intervening, by threatening them with a knife. Meanwhile, the boyfriends were forced to witness the full brutal beating of their girlfriends, unable to do anything. The attackers kept on repeating: "This is what happens to people who speak Hungarian on the streets."

The incident began as two Hungarian student girls and two of their friends entered a store, on their way home from a party. The two girls were waiting for their colleagues outside the store, while they "spoke in Hungarian, since they were Hungarians." "In a short while, we observed that two guys, who had been standing at the front door of the entertainment store rushed inside the store. They started to pick a quarrel with our friends. The watchman rebuked them and asked them to leave the facility. He did not do anything else," reported the girls to the daily.

The girls outside the store recounted that they were paying attention to the events inside the store and were not aware of the reason for the squabble. "Suddenly, two Romanian individuals angrily rushed out of the store. One of them held my friend down, while the other one blocked my way. I told him in Romanian to leave me alone. Then he spit on my face and slapped me. After that, four more boys appeared, two of them stood at my back, while the other two started to hit my friend," added one of the victims.

They asked us whether we were Romanians or not. I answered that we were not. Next, they began to cruelly beat us. Our friends stood at the door facing a Romanian boy holding a pocketknife in his hand against them, forcing them to watch the events. "This is what happens when somebody speaks Hungarian on the streets." The aggressors threatened our friends not to get involved; otherwise, they would get into big trouble.

Meanwhile, a girl cried for help, and although the street was not deserted, no one would come to her assistance or check on the situation. "When they finally stopped hitting us, they warned us to watch out next time what language we speak on the streets," said one of the beaten girls.

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