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Towards the History of Hungarians in Alberta

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Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek

Abstract: In his article "Towards the History of Hungarians in Alberta," Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek describes in the context of Hungarian immigration to the Canadian province of Alberta the structure, administration, ideological and political expressions, and other aspects the history of the Edmonton Hungarian Cultural Society from its inception in 1944 to 1986. Tötösy claims that the history of the Edmonton Hungarian Cultural Society demonstrates some exceptional features. While the Society is not out-of-the-ordinary in its general ideology or organizational structure or in the activities it provides for its members and the general public, in comparison with other Canadian-Hungarian cultural societies the exceptionality of the Society begins with the circumstances of its founding and its difference with regard to its membership base in a working-class culture.

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Introduction

Jenő Ruzsa, in his *A kanadai magyarság története* (History of Canadian Hungarians), writes in 1940 that the Hungarian settlements in the Canadian Province of Alberta are among the oldest ethnic minority communities (17). This perception is also evident among Canadian Hungarians who were interviewed for an oral history project in 1984 (see Hussein, Van den Born, Dimovics). For example, Gyula Mráz tells of the early immigration of Hungarians to Alberta in an interview in 1984: the first Mráz family member, János Mráz, immigrated to Canada in 1895 and settled on a homestead near Bashaw, Alberta (Bashaw is about 100 kms. south of Edmonton, capital of the Province of Alberta) and that his spouse and children followed him eighteen months later. Mráz recalls that at this time there were already about twenty-five other Hungarian families settled around Bashaw, each family farming a homestead and he recounts some names: István and János Dubitz, István Fillinger, Mihály Föld, János Kérik and his family (they immigrated in 1890), János Meiser, Ferenc Orom, János Pullai, Gyula Rózsa, Joe Tóth, and the Bor, Czinger, Gallai, Pék, and Pinter families. Mráz also notes that these families had between four to eight children each (see Hussein, Van den Born, Dimovics). Community life and social interaction was maintained among these settlers in a church they built and maintained themselves. The origin of the settlers at Bashaw is unknown but it has been established that farmers and miners came from Esterhazy in Saskatchewan and from Pennsylvania in the period from 1886 to 1910 to Lethbridge and other Alberta mining sites such as Brooks, Coalhurst, Dewberry, Diamond City, East Coulee, Hardisty, Milk River, Provost, Raymond, Shaughnessy, Taber, and Warburg (see Gugyelka 7-17; Tötösy de Zepetnek, "Alberta-i magyarság," "Pál Oszkár Esterházy"). The information provided by Mráz and the history of Hungarian immigration to the Lethbridge area of Alberta suggest that the 1901 Census, when 167 Hungarians were enumerated in the province of Alberta, may be inaccurate (see Dreisziger, "Research Note" 437); rather, it is likely that the majority of the early settlers in the period 1890 to 1914 came both via Saskatchewan from Québec and from Saskatchewan proper to Alberta. Further research of the period before 1900 but particularly the period between 1900 and 1914 could bring interesting results. The suggestion that in the period between 1900 and 1914 some immigration must have occurred to Alberta rests on information obtained from John Tuttosi (Tüttösi) in Punnichy, Saskatchewan, in 1983: Tuttosi's father and uncle immigrated from Hungary to Saskatchewan in 1910 and he recalled several families who immigrated to the Canadian West around the same time and who continued their travel to Alberta, while his own family remained in Saskatchewan (see Tötösy de Zepetnek, *A Zepetneki Tötösy*). Importantly, the census records do not corroborate either Mráz's or Tuttosi's statements.

A larger influx of immigrants to Alberta is recorded by Ruzsa for the year of 1914 or 1915, when 300 Hungarian labourers arrived to work on the sugar beet fields of an American company in Raymond and again after the First World War until the early 1930s, when Hungarians in larger numbers immigrated to Alberta (34). N.F. Dreisziger's demographic study of census records shows that the Canadian-Hungarian population of Alberta increased fourfold from 1,045 in 1921 to 5,502 in 1931 ("Research Note" 437). The immigrants of the 1920s and 1930s to Alberta, according to Ruzsa, were mainly miners from the Hungarian counties of Hont and Nógrád and who found work in the coal mines of the southern regions of Alberta (17). M.L. Kovács in his study on early Hungarian immigration to the Canadian West confirms Ruzsa's finding as to the professional origin of these settlers with the qualification that the miners were actually secondary immigrants: they came to Canada from the mining and smelting towns of Pennsylvania (48-50). Many of these miners do not seem to have stayed permanently in Alberta, at least there is no clear documentary or oral evidence available to this effect. On the other hand, it has been suggested that the reason for the migration of Canadian-Hungarians from Alberta was owing to the unstable employment conditions of the province at large (see Paizs 25; Ruzsa 18-19, 29; Dreisziger, Kovács, Bödy, Kovrig 106). A more continuous and established Hungarian presence in Alberta began with their immigration in the late 1920s. Ödön Paizs, a contemporary Hungarian journalist visiting Canada, writes in 1928 that in the areas around of and in Bruderheim, Calgary, Champion, Coleman, Diamond City, Edmonton, Graunn, Hardieville, Hussar, Lethbridge, Lake St. Vincent, Medicine Hat, Morinville, Mannville, Mille River, Raymond, Taber, Vermillion, Bostok, and Wrentham about 130 families settled (14). He also mentions that there were a large number of single males among the immigrants although otherwise Paizs's data is rudimentary as he mentions the number of Hungarian families only in the cases of Edmonton (15-20), Lethbridge (80-100), and Taber (8-10, 14). Ruzsa writes that in the 1920s there were two larger waves of immigration, one in 1924-26 and one in 1928-29 (18, 27, 29; see also Madzsar 153-54). Lethbridge and Calgary, besides Edmonton, were the two most important cities where many of the new arrivals settled. Particularly the Lethbridge Canadian-Hungarian community was numerous and active, largely because it had, before the

influx of the 1920s, an incipient Canadian-Hungarian community (see Palmer and Palmer 297-314; Gugyelka; Kovács).

The social and professional background of the immigrants at this time seem to be homogeneous. Ruzsa and the Palmers point out that the overwhelming majority of Hungarians coming to Alberta were of farming or mining background (see also Borbándi 73-74). While this is true, it is of some interest that some "gentleman farmers" -- immigrants somewhat akin to the "supernumerary gentlemen" of nineteenth-century English Canada (see Harrison) -- also immigrated from Hungary and thus it is evident that the pre-Second World War Hungarian immigration when compared with the post-war immigration was not as homogeneous as it is apparent in most secondary sources. These "gentleman farmers" came to Alberta in the 1920s and a newspaper item in the *Edmonton Bulletin* is an indication of the interest such "gentleman farmers" generated (24 December 1925). Although it was not possible to establish the veracity of the *Edmonton Bulletin* item or the existence of a Hungarian "Baron Brigir Balamasha, lord of the Hungarian plains," more tangible information was recorded by Paizs. He describes in some detail the ranch of the Barons Csávossy de Csávos et Bobda, in the vicinity of Cochrane (*Edmonton Bulletin*, 1925, 126). The Palmers too find the Csávossy "gentleman farmer"-story interesting and point out that their farming operation was exemplary and successful (316-17). Here, it should be noted that while in the cited sources the Csávossys are represented as an old aristocratic family of Hungary, in reality they belonged to the new, entrepreneurial class emerging in Hungary in the latter part of the nineteenth century which, in turn, would explain their farming success in Canada (the Csávossys were ennobled in 1867 and elevated to barons -- which made them members of the aristocracy -- in 1904 and in 1911; see Kempelen 3, 75; Birk 38).

Although the most outstanding success story of Canadian Hungarians in Alberta before the Second World War occurred in the area of agriculture (i.e., the Csávossys), there was at least one case of an urban-industrial business success. Gyula Koronghy -- a cousin of the Csávossys, Koronghy's mother was Baroness Alice Csávossy (see Lendvai 3, 57-58) -- established and operated with the help of his English-speaking spouse Jolánka née Bucsin between 1929 and 1934 as "Koronghy Transport." In 1940 the company had ten employees and serviced five moving trucks (see Ruzsa 25-26). These cases of financial success, particularly in the area of urban business, are significant not only because of economic success but because of the social environment in which they occurred. As Palmer and Palmer suggest, the reluctance of the white English-speaking population to integrate Central and East European immigrants was perhaps the main obstacle: "Albertans continued to regard the Hungarians in their midst as enemy aliens" (Palmer and Palmer 304).

Hungarian immigration to Alberta during the 1920s and 1930s is characterized -- in addition to the immigrants working in mining -- by farming settlements: in 1931, 69% of the Hungarian immigrants to Alberta lived in rural areas (Palmer and Palmer 306). At the same time, Edmonton's Canadian-Hungarian population consolidated in the interwar period. Not only did many former farmers and miners begin to migrate to the city but a limited amount of Hungarian immigration from other provinces as well as from overseas added to the city's Canadian-Hungarian population.

Edmonton and the Interwar Period

Until the 1920s the capital city of the Province of Alberta, Edmonton, had a negligible number of Canadian-Hungarian population although there existed "incipient colonies of Hungarians" (Dreisziger, "Research Note" 438). However, starting with the late 1920s this changed and with the increase in population came social interaction. The new immigrants from Hungary were mainly of farming and working-class background and Ruzsa writes that their reason to immigrate and settle in Edmonton was to find work in Alberta mines. Most of these new arrivals came from the Hungarian counties of Abauj, Hont, Nógrád, and Zemplén (see Ruzsa 29-30; Kovács, "From Industries" 114). This information is corroborated by Julianna Puskás, who discusses emigration from the adjacent counties of Abaúj-Torna, Sáros, Szepes, Ung, and Zemplén, where in comparison with other regions of Hungary a large number of overseas and pre-1914 Hungarian immigration originates from in both the U.S. and in Alberta (see Puskás 98-105). However, some of these immigrants remained in Edmonton as they found work as labourers. Thus, by the early-1930s Edmonton had a small but relatively stable Canadian-Hungarian community and the members of the community began to interact in a more cohesive manner. János Markó, who settled in Edmonton in 1930, recalls in his interview that they "spent their evenings and money in the Empire Hotel" (see Hussein, Van den Born, Dimovics). A few years later, the Canadian-Hungarian community congregated frequently in the club of the Canadian Slovaks, a building that later became the Clover Bar Saddlery. According to Markó by about 1935 Edmonton's Canadian-Hungarian population amounted to about 400 individuals (see Hussein, Van den Born, Dimovics). Many of these newcomers to Edmonton were not recent immigrants from Hungary, but were older Hungarian-Canadians forced off farms in Alberta and other Prairie provinces, or lost their employment in Alberta mines (see Hussein Van den Born, Dimovics; Dóka 65-66). In Alberta in the period between the 1930s to the late-1940s, the Canadian-Hungarian population actually declined (Palmer and Palmer 319) and as there is evidence that many Canadian Hungarians moved from rural areas to Edmonton,

this influx resulted in the formation of the Canadian-Hungarian community of Edmonton. This formation of the community, in turn, resulted in the founding of the cultural and social association *Magyar Kultúrkör* ("Circle of Hungarian Culture").

The Hungarian Cultural Society of Edmonton 1944-1946

The above-mentioned influx of Hungarians to Edmonton, while it did not at first result in organised activity, later it became the foundation of the "Hungarian Cultural Circle of Edmonton" (the official English name of the Society was at first "Hungarian Cultural Circle," in Hungarian *Magyar Kultúrkör*. While the name of the Society remained the same in Hungarian, its name was later changed to "Hungarian Cultural Society" in English). Mike Hundza, who immigrated to Canada in 1926 and settled in Edmonton in 1943, describes the founding of the Society as follows:

It took us a little while but in time we became acquainted with some other Hungarian families. A few families that already lived here subscribed to the *Kanadai Magyar Munkás* and were interested in forming a club. So in 1944 I helped organise the Hungarian Club. A Hungarian trade union already existed in Toronto and wanted to expand all across Canada. They sent us different membership forms for perusal. We kept them for a week but decided against joining for various reasons. However, about 40 Hungarian families and I still felt strongly about forming a Hungarian Club or Circle where we could speak our native language. I planned a meeting for a Sunday afternoon and rented a room at a lawn bowling club. At the meeting about 40 families were present. I chaired the meeting and presented a proposal to form a Hungarian club. All but two families agreed to the proposal but they were overruled by the majority. We received permission to form a Hungarian Circle and four of us signed a charter (Joe Ada, Frank Piri, Joe Ercse, and myself) ... We found a Ukrainian lawyer who helped us establish club rules which were accepted by everyone at another meeting. In 1945 the "Hungarian Cultural Circle" ("Magyar Kultúrkör") was officially formed and we rented community halls for dancing. We made enough money to cover only our expenses. Later, the Workers' Party gave us free use of a hall for our Sunday meetings. We usually held an event each month and mostly 40 people attended, mostly labourers from the city and miners. (Hussein, Van den Born, Dimovics)

The above-quoted account of the formation of the Society is consistent with the recollections of one of its members and its later president, Károly Szél. As far as the activities of the Society are concerned, Szél adds that the Society collected funds "to support the Hungarians [in Hungary]" (Hussein, Van den Born, Dimovics). Szél also recalls that the membership fee was 10 cents per year. Meetings were held in the "Union Hall," presumably the same facility Hundza recalls as the hall of the Workers' Party (Hussein, Van den Born, Dimovics). Hundza's account of the Society's formation indicates that the desire to organize community life in Edmonton arose from two sources, a political-ideological and a linguistic-cultural one. The political-ideological reason is to be found in the pronounced political awareness of the founding members, consistent with the general attitude and ideological position of the interwar immigrants. Hundza's recollection that some families who were interested in the forming of a club were subscribers to the *Kanadai Magyar Munkás* (Canadian-Hungarian Worker) indicates their political orientation to the left. The linguistic-cultural reason for the formation of the club arose from the desire to maintain a link with national background through language. The reference to the *Kanadai Magyar Munkás*, the subscription to it by a majority of the founding families, is interesting for another reason as well. The *Kanadai Magyar Munkás*, founded in 1929 in Hamilton, Ontario, was affiliated the Communist Party of Canada (see Patrias 5; Dreisziger, Kovács, Bödy, Bennett Kovrig 126). However, while the Palmers contend that in Alberta, generally, "by the end of the war, Hungarian left wing political activity and commitment ebbed" (319), in the case of Edmonton's Canadian Hungarians, interestingly, it appears that by the end of the war it was exactly their leftist orientation that initiated the will to organize community life. Consequently, after the two formative years -- from 1944 to 1946 -- approximately forty Canadian-Hungarian families formed the "Hungarian Cultural Circle," and it was incorporated under the Province of Alberta Societies Act on 5 February 1946 (Hussein, Van den Born, Dimovics). Ruzsa's list, since most names mean a family rather than one individual, allows for an estimate of the number of Hungarians in Edmonton in 1940-1946 to have been between 400 to 500 (29). His list consists of the following: Barcs, Bolló, Boray (2), Bury, Csitray, Csonka, Halassy, Heller, Hojcska, Hoskó, Korenda, Kovács, Lukács, Márton, Meszlényi, Novák (2), Páczés, Prezsing, Strifler, Struck, Szeman, Szlabély, Szladik, Turcsányi, Vad, Vajda, and Varga. This list includes only those Hungarians who, according to Ruzsa, rose to some eminence financially or socially, i.e., who contributed financially to help Hungarians in the regions of former Upper Hungary where most of these families originate from or who were active in Hungarian events in Edmonton. Thus it is safe to assume that the community was larger.

The Hungarian Cultural Society of Edmonton 1946 to 1956

The period between 1946 and 1956 -- before the 1956 Hungarian Revolution against Soviet occupation and communist rule -- shows a significant growth in immigration of Hungarians to Canada and to Alberta. In the ten years from the end of the Second World War until the 1956 Revolution, approximately 800 individuals and families immigrate to Alberta (Palmer and Palmer 320). The social and educational background of the immigrants is now more varied than previously. In addition to some for-

mer farmers and industrial workers, a substantial number of former government bureaucrats, middle-class professionals, and former members of the Royal Hungarian Army's officer corps constitute the immigrants, now more accurately called refugees (see Kósa; Palmer and Palmer 320; Borbándi 73-74). With the more varied educational and social background of the post-war refugees and their participation in community life come also certain changes in the life of the Society.

Although there is no evidence -- either documentary or in the Hussein, Van den Born, Dimovics interviews of 1984 -- it is probable that in this period the original founders and the members of the late 1940s ceased to or drastically reduced participation in either the leadership of the Society or in its activities altogether. Although an ideological and political polarization similar to what would follow the 1956 influx of refugees cannot be observed in this period, the previous leftist and socialist orientation of the active members of the Society appears to have disappeared. From the late 1940s onward, the Society demonstrates a very high level of social and cultural activity and participation of both the rank and file of the Society. This is best illustrated by an album of the Society from 1952/53, which contains photographs, printed material, and other written texts (see Küttel, Cseuz, Cseuz, Koch, Molnár). From the documentation in this album it appears that it is the particularly active youth group that initiates and vitalizes the social and cultural life of the Canadian-Hungarian community of Edmonton. The executive of this youth group consisted of Nándor J. Molnár, president; Emma Susztrik, vice-president; András Szappanos, past president; János Bata, executive secretary; Béla Bagoly, recording secretary; Albin Juhász, treasurer; Klára Halassy, István Neszméry, and István Verseggy, comptrollers. In addition to the executive, the group had several committees. The festivities' committee was headed by Antal Koch, with Dr. Béla Biró, Betty Hundza, Béla Kiss, Irma Kucsera, István Neszméry, István Németh, and Elvira Pachas as members; the cultural committee was headed by Dr. Lajos Küttel, with János Balog, Béla Bagoly, János Bata, Dr. Béla Biró, Béla Bagoly, Ferenc Ercse, Dr. Mihály Horváth, Mihály Hundza, N.J. Molnár, and Károly Szél as members; and the games and sports committee consisted of Béla Bagoly, János Kovács, and Miklós Nagy. One of the first initiatives of this group was to send a circular to Hungarian organizations in Western Europe and North and South America informing them of the activities of the "Edmonton Hungarian Cultural Society" and its youth group. At the same time they requested printed material (newspapers, magazines, journals, etc.) anywhere in the world in which Hungarians in any field of endeavor were noted. The album contains a number of newspaper clippings, i.e., the responses of immigrant Hungarian newspapers about chronicles of activities in the respective Hungarian communities. The album also contains clippings from newspapers describing the activities of the Edmonton Society (see, e.g., *Ahogy lehet -- irodalmi és kultúrális folyóirat* [Paris, January 1953] and *Kanadai Magyar Újság* [Winnipeg, 12 December 1952]).

In 1952-53 the executive and the youth group organized several larger gatherings, such as one for the purchase of a permanent home for the Society. The *Edmonton Journal* reported that about 300 Hungarians gathered in the Edmonton National Hall to raise funds for the purchase of a permanent home ("The Roving Reporter," 1 January 1953). Such a plan was obviously a necessity since the various gatherings of the Society needed to accommodate the larger numbers of the Canadian-Hungarian community and at this point had to be held in diverse locations such as the Riverdale Hall and the Labor Temple in the city. Also, the usual social gatherings of the Society, such as a traditional Hungarian dinner (e.g., *Disznótörös*), always featured cultural activities as well, such as poetry readings, musical performances, and dance. The Society staged several plays, at least twice each year. One example of these performances is documented in the 1952-53 album in detail. For instance, a play, Ferenc Csepreghy's *Sárga csikó*, had 32 actors in total: stage manager was Lajos Török, Dr. Béla Biró drilled the songs and musical parts of the play, make-up artist was Margit Ercse, prompter was Antal Koch. The Society also organized programs for the celebration of Hungarian national events, such as 15 March in commemoration of the 1848 Revolution against Habsburg domination. The following program from the cited album will give an impression of the nature and content of such events (unless indicated otherwise, all translations are mine):

1. The Hungarian National Anthem
2. Speech by the President, Ferenc Ercse
3. Elvira Pachas sings the folksong "Tele van a város akácfavirággal"
4. Ferenc Tamás recites the poem "Ki ülsz az egekben," Lajos Török sings from Pongrácz Kacsóh's "János Vitéz: 'Én a pásztorok királya,' 'A fuszulyka szára,' and 'En vagyok a bolytárgyerek'."
5. Emma Susztrik recites József Bajza's poem "Sóhajtás."
6. The Lord's Prayer sung by Lajos Török, at the piano Nándor Molnár.
7. Speech by the President of the Youth Group.
8. Hungarian psalm, recited by the choir of the Society.
9. László Gadó recites László Mécs's poem "Mégsem így gondoltam."
10. Károly Steiger plays on the cello Hungarian folksongs, at the piano Sándor Szabó: "Piros rózsza, fehér rózsza," "Akácós út," "Csak egy kislány."
11. Irén Varjú recites the poem "Adjon Isten a magyarnak."
12. János Bata recites Sándor Petőfi's poem "Talpra Magyar!"
13. Lajos Török sings from Kacsóh's "János Vitéz," at the piano Nándor Molnár: "Egy rózsaszál," "Kék tó, tiszta tó."
14. Frigyes Metzger, Reverend of the Presbyterian Congregation speaks to the Society.
15. Ilona Küttel recites László Mécs's poem "Az amazon balladája."
16. Ferenc Piri, János Balog, Mihály Hundza, and István Németh stage the sketch "Itt a piros, hol a piros."

17. Irma Kucsera, Emma Márta, István Neszméry, István Németh, Miklós Nagy, Mihály Hundza, and Miklós Hautka sing "Falu végén kurta kocsmá," adapted by Dr. Lajos Küttel.
18. Closing with the Hungarian Anthem.

The structure, nature, and content of similar festivities and the several cultural events the Society organized several times during the year were similar to the above and indicate the high level of social and cultural activity of the Society in this period. Overall, from 5 October 1952 to 2 August 1953, the Society held thirty-one events. These included eight meetings while the rest were social and cultural events (see the album of 1952-53).

The Hungarian Cultural Society of Edmonton 1956-1967

The activities of the Society in the previous period, which show such vitality illustrated by the 1952-53 album, slowly declined over the next few years. More surprisingly, this is true also for the years after the arrival of the 1956 refugees. The decline was due to a variety of factors: the years following the period attested to in the album must have been a natural slump in participation and interest. However, the lack of organization and activity after the arrival of the 1956 refugees is puzzling. One plausible explanation may be that although a large number of refugees settled in Edmonton after the 1956 Revolution, the first decade must have been spent with adjustment and the professional growth of the individual refugee, or simply put, the day-to-day existence of the newcomer, which left little or no time for cultural and/or social activities. Undoubtedly, the most dramatic event in the history of Hungarian emigration was the 1956 Revolution against Soviet domination and military occupation and against the oppression instituted by the various organs of the Hungarian Communist Party. But also in the history of Canadian immigration the Hungarians of 1956-57 take a special place: theirs was the largest group of immigrants accepted to Canada at one time and by the end of 1957 36,700 Hungarian refugees landed in Canada (see Dreisziger, Kovács, Bödy, Kovrig 206).

The involvement of Canadian-Hungarian communities across the country in aiding the federal and provincial authorities with the resettlement of the refugees was significant (see Dreisziger, Kovács, Bödy, Kovrig 206-07). In Edmonton, this response was organized and executed foremost by the Society. A committee was formed under the chairmanship of Frank Lieber, a Canadian-Hungarian lawyer and member of the Society as early as November 1956 and the committee collected \$1,000 to aid the refugees, in addition to clothing and household items. Soon the refugees began to arrive in Canada and in Edmonton. In the following years, until about 1961, the number of Hungarian refugees increased the Canadian-Hungarian population of Alberta to 15,000 and Edmonton's Canadian-Hungarian population increased to 2,225 (see Palmer and Palmer 323). The settlement of the refugees created various problems, too, for both the Hungarian arrivals and for the Canadian authorities. A report to the Edmonton Police Department from the 7 August 1957 contains a description of problems encountered by city immigration and police officers when 154 individuals were quartered in the city's Immigration Hall. The report contains a description of grievances by the refugees about inadequate food and lodging and their contention that they should not be forced to wait for release from the Immigration Hall. The problems were mainly created by the expectations of the new arrivals but also by the lack of organization to deal with the large number of refugees on the part of the city authorities ("File Memorandum," The City of Edmonton Police Department, City Archives, R.G. 11, Class 65, File 15).

The Canadian-Hungarian community at large and the Society in particular was at first preoccupied with aid to the refugees and thus a limited amount of social and cultural activity occurred. While this may be a plausible explanation for 1957 when the majority of the refugees arrived, it does not explain the subsequent years' inactivity; in the ten years after 1956 to 1966, the Society almost ceased to exist as far as its social and cultural activities are concerned. It did not have regular meetings or a regularly elected executive. The "office" of the Society was registered in the office of Frank Lieber -- above mentioned, a Canadian lawyer in Edmonton -- and who in earlier years was an active member of the Society. On the other hand, other segments of the Canadian-Hungarian community of Edmonton outside of the organization of the Society, particularly the middle-class refugees of 1956, were active in this period. The establishment of such organizations as the "Hungarian Veterans' Association" ("MHBK: Magyar Harcosok Bajtársi Közössége") in 1958 provided a political as well as ideological focus for segments of the community at large but at the same time it also created frictions among the members of the Society and others (see Szóts; The MHBK was founded in West Germany in 1948 by former officers of the Royal Hungarian Army [see Borbándi 44 and *passim*]). For a period of several years, the MHBK, politically conscious, nationalist Hungarian, and strongly anti-communist, functioned as an effective mouthpiece of the majority of Edmonton's Canadian Hungarians -- now the majority consisting of the 1956 refugees. The Society's *raison d'être* -- its mandate being cultural and non-political -- was seriously questioned in these times of political and ideological polarization between the earlier immigrants and the new arrivals of 1956-57.

The interwar immigrants, who founded the Society and now became a minority, felt that the 1956 refugees now appropriated the voice of the community, a task which was, following established democratic practices, theirs until then. The Society's membership and executive was now largely from the

1956 refugees or from such individuals who were sympathetic to the ideological and political position of the new refugees. One example of this ideological and political polarization affecting the cultural activity of the Society is the following. In 1966 a Society member proposed to invite and to arrange a tour for two artists from the Hungarian State Opera in Budapest. The executive of the Society opposed the invitation and after a vote by the membership endorsing the invitation, the executive resigned (Minutes of April 1967). The new executive approved the invitation and its financial funding. However, the turn-over of the executive re-vitalized the Society. Whether this was a result of the turn-over only or whether it was a combination of the turn-over and the general excitement in relation to the 1967 Canadian Centennial, is hard to tell. In the ensuing months the new executive initiated a membership drive which resulted in the (re)registration of about two hundred members (author's interview with Sándor Berze, 1987; Pamphlet of the Society for the Centennial; and Minutes of April and May 1967). The membership fee was set at \$5/year. The vitality and cohesion of the re-emerging Society was soon tested and the test resulted in highest marks during the celebrations of Canada's Centennial in 1967. The Canadian-Hungarian Centennial Festival was held 14-18 November 1967 and the Festival's Pamphlet shows an impressive program and the involved organization by the members of the Society: Press and publicity were the responsibilities of Ferenc Boross, Dr. Olivér Botár, and Péter Noel, stage-manager was Mihály Porcsa, costume designer for the "Toborzó Dancers" was Margaret Szél, the editor of the Pamphlet was Dr. László Takáts. An exhibition of arts and crafts was organised by János Hajnal with the help of István Igriczi. The Canadian-Hungarian Centennial Festival was under the patronage of J.W. Grant MacEwan, the Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta, Ernest C. Manning, Premier of Alberta, Marcel Lambert, an Alberta M.P., Ambrose Hollowach, the Provincial Secretary of Alberta, and Edgar Gerhart, Minister of Provincial Affairs. Guest stars of the Festival were émigré(e) celebrities such as Zsa Zsa Gabor, but also Hungarian representatives of culture from Hungary proper, such as musicians and singers Imre Magyarai, Éva Kozmáry, and Sándor Puskás. The Festival enjoyed the participation and co-operation of other Canadian-Hungarian organizations such as the choir of the St. Emeric Hungarian School under the leadership of József Hámor and Gabriella Botár, the "Toborzó Dancers" (instructor was Gizella Noel), the "Csárdás Dancers" of the Society (instructor was Zoltán Kugler). In sum, the efforts to re-vitalize the Society in the late 1960s were successful. Now, the social composition of the members had a wide range, although the leadership was aware of the difficulty to create a cultural milieu that appealed to both "labourers and university professors" (author's interview with Sándor Berze, 1987).

The objective mentioned above was difficult to meet and the consequence was that the number of professionals and intellectuals slowly decreased in the membership of the Society. But the difficulty to provide a both popular and a "high brow" cultural atmosphere was not the only reason. Many Canadian Hungarians from the middle class made a conscious effort to assimilate into Canadian society and were less interested in participating in the activities of the Society, which were designed to maintain a specific Hungarian cultural environment and to commemorate historical events of Hungary. Also, frictions between the educated stratum (a minority) and the working-class members of the Society, owing to expectations of certain behavioral patterns of both parties, resulted in a negative attitude towards the Society by many intellectuals and professionals. Frictions developed also on ideological and political lines, as mentioned, for example between the Society and the MHBK. From the available documentation and from interviews, it appears that both organizations strived for "cultural expression." However, the definition of culture was different for the two organisations. From the correspondence between the then president of the Society, Sándor Berze and the president of the MHBK, Pál Szóts, signed on both sides also by other officers of the respective organizations, it becomes clear that both ideological and personal differences precipitated the difficulties of co-operation (see letters of 10 June, 7 July, and 6 October 1967; Minutes of September 1967). The objective of the MHBK was a relentless opposition to communism in Hungary while a substantial number of the Society's membership was more interested in a less ideologically charged and more culture-oriented approach. The two positions created serious problems such as the appropriateness of invitations to artists and musicians from the People's Republic of Hungary. The MHBK negated such invitations and financial support for the visit, while the Society's new leadership maintained that it was the individual artist who is being invited, regardless of the country's political situation. They felt that the fact that the artist comes from communist Hungary is secondary to his/her status as a carrier of culture. As a consequence of these differences of opinion, after the Centennial Celebrations, the Society and the MHBK severed ties for many years to come.

The Hungarian Cultural Society of Edmonton 1967-1986

The Society remained active and productive in the years after 1967. Social and cultural events were financed through membership fees and through formal and informal gatherings where members brought their own food and drinks but paid for them again at the gathering (potlach gatherings). The Society also developed links with other Canadian-Hungarian organizations. For instance, a newsletter was issued in the Toronto Hungarian-language newspaper *Magyar Élet*, under the title *Edmontoni tü-*

kör with editors Dr. Olivér Botár and Dr. László Takáts. For several years after 1967 Károly Szél, a member of the "old guard," became president and in 1971 the Society was re-incorporated because of the Province of Alberta's revised Societies Act of 1970. The new incorporation document was issued on 4 March 1971 for the "Hungarian Cultural Society of Edmonton" (Certificate of Incorporation, Province of Alberta, No. 6219). The Society's Bylaws outline its main aims and objectives: among these of particular importance are to organize Hungarians in Edmonton and Alberta with regard to their cultural, educational, and economic interests; to inform members about Hungarian culture and history; to establish a library of books and magazines in Hungarian and English; to hold meetings, discussions, and public gatherings; the languages used in these will be English and Hungarian; to promote the spirit of friendship and co-operation among the members; to organize and educate Canadian-Hungarian youth; and to help and advise the members of the Canadian-Hungarian Community. The membership of the Society is defined as "any person Hungarian born or Canadian born and members of their family." The Board of Directors is described as consisting of "president, vice-president, executive secretary, recording secretary, treasurer, cultural officer, programme officer, public relation officer, co-ordinator of the ladies group, and two comptrollers." The Bylaws stipulate that an assistant to the recording secretary, a building supervisor, and the editor of the Society's journal may propose at the General Meeting to nominate these officers as advisors to the board without voting rights. The Bylaws also determine that the president and the executive officers are to be elected for one calendar year, in January (see the Bylaws of the Hungarian Cultural Society 1971. Signed by Karl [sic] Szél, President; Vince Varyu, Paul Kántor, and Andrew Szóts, Directors of the Board).

In 1972 Károly Szél resigns owing to his retirement and moves to British Columbia. Dr. Eugene Székely becomes the interim president while Dr. Béla Biró remains vice-president. In 1973 Dr. Béla Biró, in 1974 again Dr. Eugene Székely are presidents. In this period the membership of the Society declined again, consisting of about fifty to sixty families. This number refers to members who paid their membership fees and who were active in the weekly/monthly activities of the Society. In more general terms, and this holds for the next decade or longer, the Society's festivities and historical and commemorative celebrations actually attracted much larger numbers. At an important national historical commemoration, for example 15 March, the usual number of attending the Society's festivity was over two hundred. Some events, for example the annual "Fashion Show" of the Ladies' Group continued to be a highly successful event and the annual Hungarian fashion show in Edmonton expresses this new philosophy of cultural sharing: the culture which is shared is not a static gift from another time and place, but, rather, one which is alive and reflects the influence of both modern needs and Canadian conditions. The show has then expanded to include the participation of additional ethno-cultural groups (see Palmer and Palmer 326). The annual "Csárdás Ball," in the 1990s and early 2000 still an important and classic event of Edmonton each November, began in 1968 and started to gain a more prominent stature in the early 1970s: "Edmonton's Hungarian community also sponsors an annual Csardas Ball, which has become an important social occasion not only for Hungarians, but for many others" (Palmer and Palmer 326). The usual attendance of the Ball amount(ed)s to between 300 to 500 Canadian-Hungarian and Canadian participants. The Society's meetings and activities were at this time -- in the early 1970s -- still held at the Edmonton Inn, although the Society began to collect funds for the purchase of a permanent location. Other major achievements of the period of the 1970s included a successful publication, the *Hungarian Rhapsody*, a cookbook and, most importantly, the final purchase and renovation of a former monastery and which has then become the Hungarian House ("Magyar Ház"). The *Edmonton Journal* reported on the official opening of the Hungarian House in 1977. The article gives a short history of the Society from its beginning to the present and outlines briefly the purpose of the Society and the Hungarian House. In addition to events on the premises, the Edmonton Hungarian Cultural Society sponsors cultural evenings in other cities and shows of Hungarian fashions in Edmonton and other parts of the province. Culture Minister Horst Schmid and Mayor Terry Cavanagh participate in the ceremony Saturday (23 April 1977). Public awareness of the Society's activity is demonstrated in a more elaborate article in an issue of the journal *Alberta Heritage*. The author of the article describes the major activities of the Society in the past and mentions several active groups of the Society, such as the Ladies' Group, the Csárdás Dancers, the Hungarian Choir, etc. (see Briggs).

With the purchase and renovation of the Hungarian House the financial situation of the Society underwent a dramatic change. To put the picture into perspective, when Sándor Berze became president in 1967, the Society had in its account \$1,700. The Society's financial expenses for the Centennial Celebrations in 1967 resulted in a deficit of \$3,000 (this deficit was carried by the members of the Society's executive). In contrast, the financial statement of the Society year ending 1977 total revenues were \$127,416.50 and total expenditures amounted to \$112,975.72. This resulted in a surplus of 14,440.78 (HCS Statement of Income and Expenses for the Year Ending 31 December 1977). This change of the Society's financial situation was due to a new development in the Province of Alberta, namely, the possibility of non-profit organizations to collect Bingo revenues: non-profit organizations, ethnic and other, were awarded a certain number of bingo lottos each year, at which members of the organization did volunteer work. The net revenue became, after payments of salaries to regular em-

ployees, deductions for rent and concession, an income of the group. In addition, non-profit organizations could draw revenue from casino events as well. These were awarded similarly to these groups by the provincial government usually every three years. Thus, the yearly 10-24 dates for bingo and the 5-6 lottos in the last 10-12 years made at large the cultural and social programs of the Society possible.

Further, under the leadership of Louis Lágler in 1978, the most important issue for the Society was the creation of a Hungarian Senior Citizens' home in Edmonton. Other issues were such as the acceptance of the Hungarian Soccer Club into the membership of the Society, the renovation and expansion of the Hungarian House, and the continuation of financial support for other Hungarian groups in the city and elsewhere, for example the Calvin Hungarian Presbyterian Church in Edmonton and the Calgary-based Széchenyi Society (Minutes of February 1978 and January and February 1979). Also in 1979, the Society decided to participate in Edmonton's "Heritage Festival" and in the following years the Society remained an active group in this celebration of Edmonton's ethnic heritage. Other projects in this year included the donation of a bust of Ferenc Liszt to the University of Alberta (Jubilee Auditorium). In the early 1980s, under the leadership of Lajos Török-Both, the Society was aware that new projects would be necessary to maintain the vitality of the Society and its members' interest in participation. The re-activation of the Society's quarterly, the former *Edmonton-i tükör* (Mirror of Edmonton) now renamed *Toborzó* (Recruitment) under the editorship of Mária Ésik, became one of these new projects (Minutes of January 1980). Although the Society published in previous years infrequently a journal of sorts, the publication of the *Toborzó*, in its format and content, became a more serious enterprise. While the majority of articles in *Toborzó* were articles copied from other Canadian and Canadian-Hungarian publications, each issue contain(ed)s some specifically Canadian-Albertan texts such as poems, travel reports, historical articles, interviews or descriptions of prominent or noted Albertans or Edmontonians of Hungarian descent. Another important project was the initiation of a Hungarian-language radio programme which began broadcasting in June 1980. Plans to enlarge the Society's library were also on the agenda. There were several offers from the community to donate books and the purchase of books on an on-going basis was approved. Also, the subscription to and thus support of Hungarian-language immigrant newspapers and journals published in Canada and abroad became in this period an objective of the Society. In November 1980 the Society received government approval for the building of the Hungarian Senior Citizens' Home (Minutes of November 1980). While the early 1980s show a relatively high level of activity of the Society as far as the planning and execution of special projects are concerned, the Society was concerned with the level of participation on the part of the Society's general membership (Minutes of May 1981 and in several subsequent Minutes of ensuing years).

The Society remained financially stable in the above-described period, the main source of income remaining Bingo and the Casino revenues. Thus, the Society was able to conduct its social activities and to execute its special projects. The Bingo and the Casino revenues also made possible the discussion about a Canadian-Hungarian community centre for Edmonton. The Society, together with St. Emeric Roman Catholic Church and the Calvin Hungarian Presbyterian Church, conducted discussions concerning the possibility of such a Canadian-Hungarian centre, where the various Canadian-Hungarian organizations of Edmonton would have space for their activities (Minutes of March 1981). Further in this period, several Canadian-Hungarian organizations, for example the Catholic and Protestant churches, but also the MHBK, co-operated with the Society on several projects. Most importantly, this co-operation brought about a significant rapprochement among these organizations. Thus it came that the establishing of the said community centre was seriously discussed. Also, the possibility of a more intensive co-operation of the various groups precipitated the motion at the January 1982 Annual General Meeting that the Society should permit the enlargement of the executive by representatives from other Canadian-Hungarian organizations, such as the churches. This motion was defeated, however (Minutes of January 1982).

1982 can be described as a year when the programmes of the Society, new ideas, and the execution of new projects attested to the continuous vitality of the Society while at the same time a lack of participation on the part of the general membership, beyond the congregation at traditional holiday and national commemoration celebrations, has become a more serious issue than in previous years (Minutes of January 1982). Several ideas were proposed to remedy this situation. For example, individuals who have been members of the Society for several years, offered to contact their friends and acquaintances and to encourage them to join again the Society's membership. Other propositions included the planning of a general gathering of Western Canadian-Hungarian organizations in Edmonton (Minutes of March and April 1982). To increase the financial stability of the Society, it adopted since the early 1980s the policy of a proliferation of grant applications to federal, provincial, and municipal government agencies. These applications were aimed at the financing of special projects such as the invitation of entertainment groups from Hungary and speakers of cultural or political significance from other Canadian-Hungarian centres and from abroad. Obviously, this approach aimed at the maintenance of general membership participation. The invitation and financing of such entertainment groups and individuals did indeed materialize. To name a few examples from the period of 1980 to 1986, the

group of Zsuzsa Temesi Szabó and Zsuzsa Pálffy (Budapest), folksong performers, appeared in the Hungarian House; Erzsébet Ádám, a Hungarian artist from Transylvania (Romania) gave a presentation on Székely folk poetry and on Prince Gábor Bethlen; Éva Szörényi, an emigrée singer and entertainer, formerly member of the Hungarian National Theatre now residing in Germany, performed in the Hungarian House; Eugene Fodor, an American-Hungarian violin virtuoso, gave guest appearances in Edmonton and in the Hungarian House; Lajos Fűry and Albert Wass de Czege (USA), Tibor Tollas and Gábor László Hajnal (West Germany), and Ferenc Kúnszabó (Hungary), prominent authors, visited the Society and read from their works and George Bisztray, Chair of Hungarian Studies at the University of Toronto gave lectures at the Society. It should be mentioned here that the Society actively supported the establishment of a Hungarian Chair at the University of Toronto. George Bisztray, in his article about the history of the Chair in Hungarian Studies notes that Alberta contributed \$75,459 in addition to the total of the local Toronto and Calgary funds of \$62,000 (the total result of the Canada-wide fundraising amounted to over \$300,000) (23). Although no figures are available of the Society's contribution, it may be assumed that it was significant. Other visitors and guests of the Society included Steve Fonyo, the Canadian-Hungarian athlete on his cross-country run for cancer research and the Society presented him with a donation of \$1,000 (Minutes of April 1985).

Further projects included the Hungarian Senior Citizens' Home, whose construction neared completion, the appointment of a committee for the revision of the Society's Bylaws, and the revival of the Society's youth group (Minutes of March and May 1982). The program of offering Hungarian-language films once a month was also re-instituted and the Society donated a statue of St. Stephen, king of Hungary, to the Senior Citizens' Home. In the mid-1980s the Society, under the leadership of Dr. Fred Jajczay, focused again on avenues to re-vitalize the general membership, with particular attention to attracting young Canadian Hungarians. This concern precipitated fundamental questions about the Society's purpose, aims, and objectives. Much discussion evolved about the participation of younger members and the children of the older members. The question of the generational switch of the membership and in the Society's leadership remained a question only, however. It appeared that younger Canadian Hungarians were less committed to participation either as general members or as leaders of the Society. Another issue was the involvement of potential members such as non-Hungarian-origin spouses of members and the general public. In the Bylaws of the Society it is clearly stated that the mandate of the Society is aimed at both the Canadian-Hungarian community of Edmonton and the general Canadian public. However, for obvious reasons -- mainly language, but also the "specificity" of the ethnic culture -- the participation of the general public was at best peripheral. For this reason, the executive discussed the possibility of a more bilingual approach, i.e., a direction in which the Society should stress programs and projects aimed at an English-speaking audience as well as younger Canadian Hungarians whose first language was English (Minutes of August 1984). This issue affected the publication of the quarterly *Toborzó* as well, which until now has been published in Hungarian only. Thus, in 1984 the quarterly became bi-lingual, with about 1/4 English and 3/4 Hungarian text. Another membership issue was the concern that the annual thirty to forty new Hungarian immigrants and refugees should be assisted and drawn into the Society's membership (Minutes of January, February, and April 1984 and January and February 1985). The membership issues included an interesting precedent which illustrates the Society's mandate to propagate Hungarian culture and traditions above all without political or denominational demarcations. A visiting scholar from the University of Debrecen, Hungary, to the University of Alberta Department of Pharmacology, Dr. László Kónya, was nominated for membership in the Society and consequently admitted (Minutes of March 1986). In 1984, a Summer project, made possible by a matching fund by Manpower and Immigration, aimed at the preservation of Edmonton's Canadian-Hungarian history. The project entailed the interviewing of pre-1956 Canadian-Hungarian Albertans, mainly in and around Edmonton. The support of social and political causes in Hungary and in its neighbouring states also remained on the agenda. For example, the Society sent financial support to the "Erdélyi Papnevelő Intézet," a Catholic seminary in Transylvania, Romania, where approximately 1.5 million ethnic Hungarians live (Minutes of February and March 1986). In April 1985, the Society inaugurated the Hungarian Senior Citizens' Home (located on 12840-64 Street). The brochure of the opening ceremony attests to an impressive co-operative effort on the part of the Society and the municipal and provincial governments. Representatives of almost all Edmonton-Hungarian organizations and churches appeared at the ceremony as well as numerous government representatives (see *St. Stephen's Hungarian*). However, the plans of building a Canadian-Hungarian Centre in Edmonton unfortunately collapsed in 1985. The reasons were mainly administrative relating to differences in purchasing and grant possibilities among the participating organizations, but also due to disagreements on structural and ideological questions. The administrative problems were to be found in questions of property rights (Minutes of September 1985).

Overall, the Society continued its efforts to re-structure the purpose and objectives of the Society. In the history of the Society the active participation of the membership has been the ultimate aim. Now, since it was recognized that it will pose great difficulty to reach the same level of participation, the resources of the Society should be directed toward special "secondary cultural projects" (e.g., research projects and the funding of such). Thus, the re-direction of the Society's aims in 1985 and

1986 resulted in the planning of activities which did not require large numbers of participants. The "secondary cultural projects" included such as the establishment of a Hungarian Studies scholarship at the University of Alberta, utilizing the Province of Alberta's matching grant program and the more concentrated funding of artists' visits. However, several previously implemented projects were maintained to attract the members: for example, the weekly operation of the Mátyás Bár (the "Matthew Bar") to operate as a point of social gathering, named after Hungarian Renaissance king Matthias Corvinus, was maintained. To attract more members to these social evenings, a television was purchased. A landmark in the history of the Society in 1985 was the 10th anniversary of the "Csárdás Dancers." The following article, presenting a short history of this important group of Edmonton Hungarians, appeared in *Toborzó*:

Csárdás: Ten Years of Dance! A history of the Csárdás Dancers since 1975. This past year the Csárdás Dancers celebrated their tenth Anniversary, the climax of this celebration being a gala performance put on at the Citadel Theatre. This performance made me think of all our performances in the past, and being member of the dance group myself for these years, a lot of wonderful memories came back to me. I would have to say that travelling outside of Edmonton has to be the most thrilling aspect of performing. When I was younger the most exciting part of an out of town performance was seeing a new city, town, or country. Now as I have become older, and the trips are more frequent, the most thrilling aspect has to be the anticipation of performing well. My, how so many years of performing has made me an "old" dancer, at the ripe young age of 21. Performing in Magyarország [Hungary] has to be the ultimate thrill for any Hungarian dancer. Travelling to the country where our dances originated can be intimidating but at that time it was a pure learning experience and a lot of Hungarian dance was overwhelming. The years 1979-1981 were peak years for us. We travelled to Hungary, Vancouver, Victoria; we hosted The Second Annual Western Canadian Hungarian Folkdance Festival: and we had our own show in the Centennial Library Theatre. There have been many other memorable performances in the past ten years. There have been countless performances in the Magyar Ház (Hungarian House), in Senior Citizens homes, at Canada Day, at Heritage Days and since 1979 we have performed at the Annual Western Canadian Hungarian Folkdance Festival. We have also been guest artists at other multicultural functions. Five dancers who were dancing at the time when the Csárdás Dancers were formed in 1975 are still dancing today. One has to wonder why the five of us (Sue Biro, Liz Fodor, Steve Cseresnyes, Fritz Jajczay, and myself) are still dancing after so many years and since the majority of the original members have left. The answer is quite simple, we all feel a love and commitment to Hungarian folkdancing. We have been through so much that it seems as if dancing is a permanent part of ourselves. As one of us put it once: "Leaving the dance group would be like cutting off my right arm." Dancing is our way of expressing our heritage, and it is my sincere hope that other young Canadian-Hungarian people will feel a desire to be part of their Heritage. (Hajnal 17)

In 1986, the development of a new project -- the largest since the purchase of the Hungarian House -- began after some discussion. In February of the year the provincial Minister of Culture, Mary LeMessurier, contacted the Society about the People's Republic of Hungary's interest to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first large scale Hungarian settlement in Canada. It has been decided that it is not in the interest of the Society to co-operate with the Hungarian government. Instead, the Society proposed to the Minister to create a photographic exhibition for this occasion. The minister promised government funding for the project and the Society received a matching grant of \$20,000 from the Alberta Heritage Foundation. A former Edmontonian, Oliver Botar, Jr., at this time graduate student of art history at the University of Toronto, was contracted to research and construct a pictorial exhibition of Hungarian presence in Canada from 1886 to 1986. The completed project was officially opened and exhibited in February 1987 at the Provincial Museum of Alberta in Edmonton. The guests at the opening included several federal and provincial members of parliament, the provincial Minister of Culture, and the press. After this official opening the exhibition was sent on a cross-Canadian tour to be exhibited mainly in provincial and city museums and Hungarian-Canadian cultural centres (see Tötösy, "A 100 éves" 12).

Conclusion

By inference from Gyula Borbándi's study, *A Magyar emigráció életrajza 1945-1985* and my own experience with and study of refugee/émigré Hungarian organizations in Europe, the U.S., and Canada, the history of the Edmonton Hungarian Cultural Society demonstrates some exceptional features. The Society is not out-of-the-ordinary in its general ideology or organizational structure or in the activities it provide(d)s for its members and the general public. These are more or less standard which have been a result of and determined by the large influx of the 1956-57 refugees in West European countries, in the U.S., or in other Canadian cities where these refugees settled. The exceptionality of the Society begins with its circumstances of its founding and its longevity. The Society was formed in 1946 by Canadian Hungarians who left Hungary for economic reasons during the country's right-wing regime. This original membership base was not significantly altered by the limited influx of intellectuals and former army officers of the Horthy regime who arrived in the period of 1946 to 1957. Most middle-class (university or college educated individuals) Hungarians who left Hungary since the Second World War and settled in Canada, settled in larger, urban centres such as Toronto, Montréal, and Vancouver. In contrast, the majority of Hungarians who settled in Alberta and in Edmonton were mainly of a working-class or farming background. This is clear from the Society's membership lists, activities, minutes, etc. It is true, however, that the leadership of the Society always included a num-

ber of professionals and intellectuals. Nevertheless, the working-class composition resulted in a folk-culture orientation. At the same time the cohesion and level of continuous participation -- a problem of all émigré/refugee/ethnic organizations, Hungarian or other -- of the Society's members appeared to be more secure. In essence, this general structure of the Society remained the same in the period discussed, from 1944 to 1986. In addition, the Society's financial situation has been perhaps for the same reason more secure than that of other similar Canadian-Hungarian organizations -- mainly as a result of Alberta's provincial policy of (ethnic) community development, but also owing to the Society's financial management.

The future of the Society is difficult to predict. There are signs that there is no "fresh blood" in sight. The older generation is still active although with less enthusiasm, but their children and the limited number of younger new refugees and immigrants do not or cannot join for several reasons, e.g., language, personal interests, distance from Hungarian culture and Hungarian causes traditionally embraced by the Society, etc. There is no longer an influx of Hungarians and as said the new immigrants often do not identify with the same causes the membership of the Society identifies itself with. The Society's leadership recognized the danger of diminishing vitality and the slow disappearance of dynamic members and for this reason attempts to attract young Edmonton Hungarians were repeatedly initiated. However, it appears that the Society, even if its membership continues to be less active and if the membership shrinks, still holds great promise. This lies mainly in its financial stability: projects and programs of culture (history, literature, sociology, etc.) are possible if the organization maintains its said financial stability while with a limited active membership. As one of the oldest and most active Canadian-Hungarian organizations, the Society achieved a significant level of importance in Alberta's local and ethnic history and there are signs that it will continue to do so in the foreseeable future.

Note: The above article is a revised version of Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek, "A History of the Hungarian Cultural Society of Edmonton, 1946-1986." *Canadian Ethnic Studies / Etudes ethniques au Canada* 25.2 (1993): 100-17.

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