

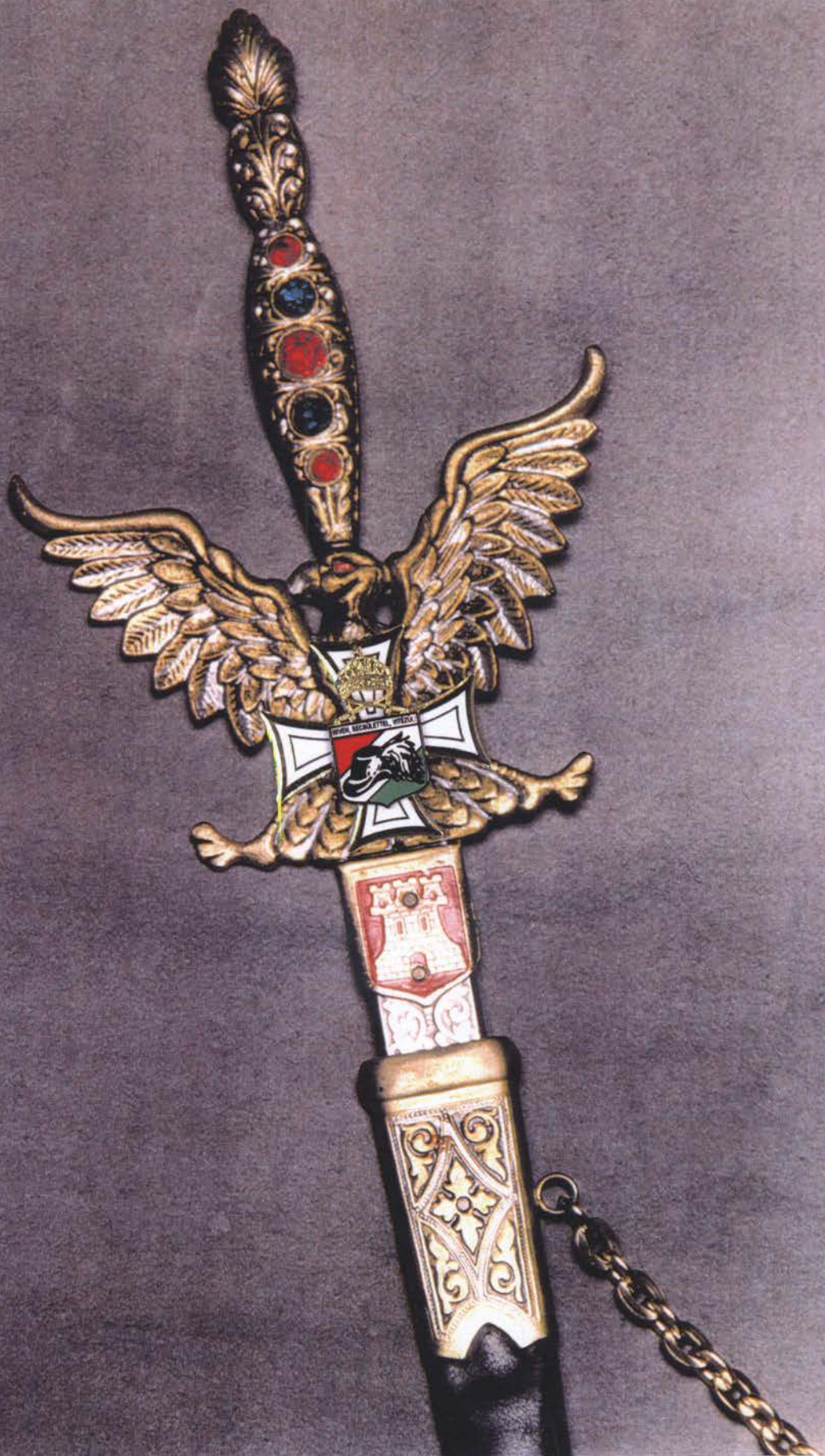
*A short history of the Royal Hungarian*

# ***GENDARMERIE***

*Magyar Királyi Csendőrség.*

*After 64 years of splendid service of law and order,  
dissolved in 1945 by the communist usurpation.*

***Gabriel vitéz Kiss  
Central Commander  
Hungarian Gendarmerie***



## The Royal Hungarian Gendarmerie

### Preliminaries

#### Austrian Gendarmerie in Hungary

In 1849, Hungary lost its War of Independence against Austria. The country was guided by Imperial Orders, one of them established a law enforcement body called Gendarmerie of the Austrian Empire. It consisted of sixteen gendarme regiments, from which five were stationed on the territory of Hungary. Its main duty was to control the public and "...checking of every popular movement in Hungary." The official language for those regiments was German, their personnel recruited from Austrians and Czechs. The force was organized along strict military lines. All orders were given by the central government of Vienna through its Minister of Defense and Interior with the knowledge of the Inspector-General of the Gendarmerie<sup>20</sup>.

After seventeen years of Absolution "with the wise and patient leadership of Francis Deák...the Compromise of 1867 re-established parliamentary government not only in Hungary but in Austria as well. It assured Hungary's constitutional independence involving public law and autonomy."<sup>21</sup>

#### Royal Hungarian Gendarmerie in Transylvania

At the Compromise's disposition the Austrian Regiments in Hungary were dissolved except the Transylvanian. Its subordinates were divided between Austria and Hungary. The selection,

training, discipline, and other military matters came under the authority of the Austrian Minister of Defense, for police service of Hungarian Minister of Interior. The Hungarian Parliament made yearly objections against this incomplete solution. Whereupon the emperor-king Franz Joseph in 1876 relinquished the Transylvanian Gendarmerie to the Hungarian Parliament, which changed its name and official language to Hungarian. At the same time he transferred Louis Schatz, a loyal Austrian gendarm lieutenant-colonel, to chief administrator of the gendarme section of the Ministry of Defense at Budapest.<sup>22</sup>

#### Establishment

##### Law of 1881, III

Since the old type of decentralized County Police--similar to the Sheriff's Department in the United States--were not able to keep law and order in Hungary, the Hungarian government decided to establish a gendarme corp for the whole country, including the Transylvanian Gendarmerie.

For the preparation of the establishing law and Service Regulations of a Hungarian Gendarmerie, the Government authorized at the Ministry of Defense Louis Schatz and Louis Jekelfalussy,-- who represented the Minister of Interior. The Bill was passed by the Parliament, became the Law of 1881 III and step-by-step the new Hungarian Gendarmerie took over its duties of the countryside.

The recruitment, training and starting of police work for the new districts was made by the commandant of the Transylvanian Gendarmerie, Franz Török, who had nine years of police administrative experience at the Austrian Gendarmerie.<sup>23</sup>

#### Organization and Administration

The organization of five districts--and the additional three others established by the Law of 1905 VII--followed the pattern of the Transylvania Gendarmerie. Each had a gendarme colonel or lieutenant colonel as commandant, under him were two or three wings, each covered the territory of two or three counties. Under the wing commandant were two or three squadrons each having fourteen to eighteen gendarme posts. In 1925 the wings were renamed to sections, and the squadrons to wings. This organization was to remain unvaried until the end of World War II. The posts were the real law enforcement units, spread all over the country, their men patrolled in pairs day and night their assigned territories. Their duties were threefold: a) patrolling on foot or horseback to talk with people and to supervise the convicted criminals; b) taking care of the courts, district attorneys', and county officials' legal requests connected with law and order; and c) investigate the crimes which they observed, ordered by the post leader or reported to them by the local population. It was prohibited for patrols to enter restaurants, bars, hotels, or private homes without an official order or invitation by the owner to prevent crimes or secure

evidence. Everyone had a legal right to lodge a complaint against the behavior of gendarmes, therefore, they were obligated by the law to show their ID's, or tell their names and location of their post if requested by somebody.<sup>24</sup> Between 1939 and 1941, some neighbouring territories--having overwhelmingly Hungarian populations--returned to the country. As a consequence of this, the number of gendarme districts increased from nine to ten.

The jurisdiction of the Gendarmes was to enforce the laws in the countryside, like the Sheriff's Department in the United States. In cities the law enforcement was conducted first by the City Police and later by the recently established centralized State Police forces.

Contract Law Enforcement. The Law of 1882 X authorized the Minister of Interior to make contracts with those cities, which wanted to enforce the laws and administrative regulations with the Gendarmerie. By 1960, sixteen cities had changed by contracts their own police to the gendarm system.

Selection. Directives of Hungarian Royal Gendarmerie of 1881, was the first, which prescribed the requirements for admission of gendarmes (NCO's) into the institution. The person who volunteered to the corp must be: a Hungarian citizen; between the age of 20:40; unmarried or divorced without children; a minimum of 163 cm high; have a very good knowledge of the Hungarian language, reading, writing and arithmetic; excellent character; and perfect mental and physical health.<sup>25</sup> The

Organizational and Service Regulations of 1941 followed the above mentioned requirements, but added 6-8 years of formal education and must be loyal to the country. At the beginning the selected men were on probation for six months. This time was spent on special education and training first at the wing and later at the district headquarters. At the end of the probationary period, the gendarmes had to pass the final examinations to be a permanent member of the corp. They signed an obligation for three years of service, which was renewable yearly.

Training. In 1909 the government organized a special school for the instruction and training of the new gendarmes. The school was located at Nagyvárad, where the new building had 15 classrooms, 45 dormitories, officer and gendarme dining rooms, a cafeteria, a barbershop, a bowling alley, etc. (After World War II, Rumania was reinstated into its possession of the largest Hungarian gendarme school.) The gendarme officers were educated at the new building of the Gendarmerie on Bösörményi Street, which was built in 1901 when the Parliament passed the Law of 1899 XXIX. The Instruction-period was six months, which was raised in the early thirties to twelve months.

Housing. The unmarried members of the gendarme posts lived at their headquarters, and the students of schools at dormitories. Everywhere there were kitchen facilities and cooks, the expense of meals were paid by the gendarmes themselves.<sup>26</sup>

Tension. The officers and gendarmes had a good pension system. After ten years in service it was 40% of their salary, which grew by 2% with each year of additional service.

Superintendent. In 1894, the King appointed Ferenc Török to be the first superintendent of the Hungarian Gendarmerie.

Gendarm Section at the Ministry of Interior. For central services and identical management of law enforcement in 1904 a gendarme section was established within the Ministry of Interior. Its first head was gendarm colonel Paul Kosztka. The authority and responsibility of the section was regulated by ministerial orders.

### III. ERA of Revolutions

#### Heavy Tribulations

Around the turn of the century, some units of the Gendarmerie got a few tragical duties, when the civil administrators--instead of remedying the problems--confronted the units of gendarmes, state police and/or army with striking workers on the Great Hungarian Plain, and unhappy voters at the city of Élesd. Unfortunately, the gendarmes had no jurisdiction to refuse the execution of the administrative orders<sup>27</sup> which made a bad impression on the population.

In 1912, a larger unit of Gendarmerie was transported to Budapest to back up the State Police against the turbulent and violent crowd.



Besides these tragic services, in 1893 the gendarmes helped the health authorities to stop the cholera-epidemic; during the first decade of 1900 they rescued individuals from flooded areas, where Gyula Csizsár alone saved twenty-seven lives; at conflagrations they helped in fire-fighting and rescued persons who were trapped in the burning thatched houses. Between 1908 and 1918 the king and the Hungarian administration distributed 575 different decorations among those who endangered their life in rescue operations.<sup>28</sup>

#### Gendarmes in the First World War

From 1867 law and order was kept **for** the Hungarian Armed Forces through the "regimental gendarmes". Its members were selected from and trained by the Army Regiments. At the request of the Minister of Defense, from 1894 the Hungarian Gendarmerie had to transfer--for the length of wars--9 officers, 129 foot and 204 mounted gendarmes for military police duties. This contingent was raised throughout the First World War, which paralyzed the upholding of law and order in the country.<sup>29</sup>

On June 10, 1914, the heir to the crown of the Monarchy and his wife were killed by a serbian student. A month later, the First World War was started. When in 1915 the Austrian-Hungarian Army occupied Serbia, Hungarian gendarme units were transferred there for public safety services, staying there until the end of 1918.

When the Russian Forces reached the territory of Hungary in the Spring of 1915, and Italy declared war on the Monarchy in the same year, the general staff had to utilize more gendarmes for "Military Gendarme" (Police) services. Consequently, the manpower of the Gendarmerie in Hungary decreased greatly. The shortage was replaced by soldiers belonging to the secondary-reserve. These men--without any law enforcement training--were not able to give much help to the Gendarmerie. In addition to regular duties, the administration issued a lot of new decrees in connection with the changing war situation, which made a larger workload for the Gendarmerie. The Corps, for example, had to take care of different language-speaking refugees who escaped from the war zones; to supervise the quarters, employment and behavior of the great number of war prisoners;<sup>30</sup> to control wandering gypsies; to prevent the evasion of wartime fixed prices; to check the compulsory delivery of church-bells for military purposes, etc.

As a consequence of the shortage of trained gendarmes, the main cities did not have sufficient peace-keeping forces for revolting or revolutionary situations. Budapest, for example, had stationed only one gendarme company, which was filled mostly with <sup>w</sup>trained secondary reserved soldiers. The manpower of the State Police was no better either.

#### October Revolution

During the year of 1818, on the front lines communist-oriented agents incited against the continuation of fighting and on October 26th, the emperor-king asked armistice

for his countries. These facts disorganized the military lines and many officers and soldiers deserted their positions. Hungarian soldiers in large numbers went to Budapest where on October 31, blazed out a revolution. The first three days of it were purely military actions, the workers taking over its leadership later.<sup>31</sup>

On the evening of October 31, the Prime Minister, Steve Tisza, after disarming his guards, was killed by a group of ten soldiers. Its leader was Captain István Csernyák. His group consisted of one first lieutenant, two ensigns, three leathernecks and three reserve soldiers.<sup>32</sup>

For pacification of the Revolution, the King appointed graf Mihaly Karolyi for Premier of Hungary, who in the name of the Social Democratic Party came into power. The Gendarmery remained neutral and continued its duties. The Károlyi regime hired sixty-four candidates who went to gendarme school, graduated and were employed in March 1919.<sup>33</sup>

#### Hungarian Soviet Republic

After a month of struggle, on March 19, the social democrats and communists reached an agreement to fuse the two parties and assumed power. They established a Revolutionary Council and its President Béla Kun started to build up a Soviet Republic with his forty-five people's commissars. For defending the country, the new regime established the "Red Army" and for keeping law and order, the "Red Guard."

The first departmental order of the Interior People's Commissars put the previous police organizations into reserve position, and established a political commission to select for re-enlisting from them experienced officers and men.<sup>34</sup> According to private information they also organized a gendarme batallion near the city of Kecskemét, but a couple of weeks later it was disarmed by the political police as unreliable. (After its collapse--who were employed by the communist regime--had to prove their political behavior before they got reassignment in the National Army, Gendarmerie or Police.)

The Red Army had a political section also, its commandant--Joseph Cserny--studied the methods of political police in the Soviet Union. His "Lenin Boys" arrested Oscar Fery gendarme general, John Melinka and Alexander Dorhy gendarme lieutenant-colonels and two days later hung them on the pipes of the sewer system of their headquarter's basement. The same night--July 21, 1919--they threw them into the Danube.<sup>35</sup>

On March 26, 1919, the Revolutionary Council with its No. IV statute, established Revolutionary Military Tribunals. Their members--can be without any qualifications--might arrest, judge, hang, or execute everybody who violated the Revolutionary Council orders or were "enemy of the proletariat." The Tribunals might make trials anywhere and anytime without any further investigation. Appeal was not possible, and they had to execute the decisions immediately. The most ruthless leader of the

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Eastern tribunal was Tibor Szamuely from whom--after collapse, the communist regime--Austrian government denied the right of political asylum. When he tried to escape into Austria under a pseudonym, the Austrian gendarm tried to arrest him, he committed suicide. He was buried at the village of Savanyukut. Today he is a national hero of Hungary.<sup>36</sup>

### Gendarme Victims

Based on official reports and court judgments, Dr. Albert Váry listed 590 persons who were killed or executed by the communist regime which lasted 133 days. Among them were twenty-seven gendarmes: one lieutenant-general, two lieutenant colonels, one captain, one first lieutenant, six warrant officers, four post leaders, eleven sergeants, and one gendarme. Váry stated that his list is not complete because he was not able to discover how many persons were killed within the Red Army and the disannexed territory of Hungary, or died in consequence of heavy tortures.<sup>37</sup>

### Counter Revolution

As the political terror of the "Lenin Boys" and the Revolutionary Tribunal increased, the opposition also grew. Those, whose life or interests became in danger, tried to seek protection or left the communist dominated areas of Hungary. During the month of May 1919, these individuals joined together in the city of Szeged and under the protection of the occupying forces of the French army, established a rival government for

overthrowing the communist regime of Hungary. Julius Károlyi became the Prime Minister, Admiral Nicholas Horthy, Minister of Defense and Tibor Eckhardt the first under-secretary.<sup>38</sup> The military and gendarme personnel joined the national movement in large numbers. When the Rumanian Army reached Budapest, the communist regime collapsed on August 1, 1919, and its leaders escaped from Hungary.

### White Terror

The large scale volunteering of Army officers to the Hungarian National movement gave birth to the establishment of independent officer's detachments. They first did it for higher prestige, later for limitation of the manpower of the Army by the peace-treaty, called them to "gendarme battalions," like: "Prónay-, Héjjas-, Ostenburg Gendarme Reserve Batallion" and "Technical University Gendarme Battalion." Their organization and discipline were so loose, that they were able to take revenge for communist atrocities. The behavior of some detachments did more damage than good, their brutality produced foreign propaganda against Hungary and postponed the re-establishment of the inner order and balance of the country.<sup>39</sup> Others, who underlined the disproportionately larger number of Jewish persons joined to the Peoples' Comissars, took sides with anti-semitists. "A great part of the assimilated Jewry however preserved its loyalty to the country, some of them falling victims to the Terror."<sup>40</sup> At the invitaiton of the Hungarian government, English and American

commissions went to Hungary, studied the criticized actions, registered that the basis of the atrocities were anti-communist and not anti-semitism.<sup>41</sup>

The Hungarian Gendarmerie did not participate in any "purification," contrarily, investigated and indicated the illegal actions of the suspected "white officers."<sup>42</sup>

The illegal labelling of the army detachments and their atrocities badly hurt the prestige of the Gendarmerie since the population was not able to distinguish between gendarmes and detachments' officers. Therefore, in 1927, the Minister of Interior ordered by the Organizational and Service Regulations of 1927, that persons transferred to support the gendarme corps, were not authorized to use gendarme names and uniforms.

## IV. The Mutilated Hungary

### Heavy Losses

On February 16, 1920, after the Rumanian Army left Budapest, the National Assembly elected supreme commander Nicholas Horthy to the post of regent of Hungary who marched into the capitol with his "White Army". On July 4, 1920, the Peace Treaty of Trianon--which was not ratified by the Senate of the United States--was signed. By this treaty, Hungary lost two-thirds of its territory, more than 60% of its population, all gold, silver, iron ore, salt mines, and 90% of its forestry. In addition, it had to pay a heavy war damage compensation.

In 1921, King Charles IV tried to establish a confederation from the different states of Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy. He returned twice for a short time to Hungary, but his efforts were not successful.<sup>43</sup>

### Consolidation

In 1920, four gendarne districts were disbanded. The Law of 1922 VII subordinated the remained corps solely to the Minister of Interior, although it kept its military discipline. Between 1922-1925, Hungary exchanged its convicted communists with the prisoners of war held by the Soviet Union.<sup>44</sup>



## Modernization

In the thirties, Hungary started to improve its Gendarmerie. But because of the poverty of the country and the world depression, the modernization was slow.

Its first step was, when in 1929 three traffic control units were established to patrol the highway between Budapest and the Western border of the country. The gendarmes used motorcycles with side-cars, traveled forty km-s per hour, and were obligated to give first aid to injured persons. After six years of experience, the traffic gendarme service were expanded to the whole country.

In 1930, four investigation units were established with 2-3 officers and 8-10 men. Their main duties were to support the local gendarme units with laboratory work and review the major crimes of importance. Later every gendarme district received one smaller or larger investigative group.

During the years of the thirties, a short-wave radio network was introduced. Direct communication was established between the Minister of Interior and gendarme districts, but the gendarme posts had only receiving stations.

In 1940 railroad and in 1942 water gendarme units were developed. Headquarters of the first located in larger railway junctions, and of the second on Lake Balaton. In 1943 the corps had three motorboats, each of them with four gendarmes on its deck, who were obligated to give directions to lost watermen, tug

in the wrecked vessels and help in every manner to those whose lives were in danger on the stormy waters.

### Enlargement of the Country

Between September 29 and 30, 1938, the representatives of Great Britain, France, Italy, and Germany held a conference at München for returning German populated territory from Czechoslovakia to Hitler's Third Reich. After two days, the München Agreement united the Sudaten-land with Germany.

In addition, the four big powers wanted to have another meeting, to solve the problems of Hungarian and Polish populations living behind the border of neighbouring Czechoslovakia. On October 28, 1938, Great Britain and France drew back from the consiliation committee, delegated their authority to Germany and Italy.<sup>45</sup> This was a defective decision which moved the neutral Hungary toward Italy and Germany. So they got around the first and second "Vienna Agreement" which in 1938 gave back peacefully from Czechoslovakia, and in 1940 from Rumania some heavily Hungarian populated areas.

After some border incidents with the Czech Army units, Hungary occupied the territory of Ruthenia in 1939.

In 1944, when Germany offended Yugoslavia, Croatia became an independent state. Then the Hungarian Army entered into Bachka, the heavily Hungarian populated territory between the rivers of Danue and Tisza.

## Homecoming

With the Hungarian Army, some gendarme units marched also into the reoccupied lands. There were parades, with flowers, speeches, tearful eyes, and triumphal arches, which symbolized a real "homecoming".

The manpower of the Gendarmerie was not adequate for the growing territory of the country. It had to withdraw officers and men from the existing gendarme districts and establish new ones for the obtained territories. To fill up vacancies, the corps accepted gendarmes and policemen from the new areas, who--besides Hungarian--spoke the language of the local population also.

In the Western area of Bachka major Árpád Zámory was ordered with two hundred gendarmes to establish the necessary posts in the county for law enforcement purposes. His group stopped first in the city of Szabadka, where he organized his headquarters. Then Zámory instructed his gendarmes in the following way:

We came home! You have to win the confidence of the population, regardless of their race, creed or native language. Do not forget to develop good relationships with the older generation, who remember us from the pre-war years. You are also obligated to handle everybody with equality, patience, and understanding. 46

Then the posts--the small gendarme units--started to find their villages, their new homes, where they would take care of law and order, and help in solving the population's daily legal problems.

## V. The Tragic Years

### Bombardment of Hungarian Cities

On June 26, 1941--five days after the war broke out between Germany and the Soviet Union--Hungarian cities of Kassa, Munkács, Raho, etc., were bombarded by unknown planes. The aggressors were not identified, the eye witnesses and written sources gave contrasting opinions. Three generals: the Chief of Staff Henrich Werth, Minister of Defense Charles Bartha, and Ambassador of Hungary in Berlin Dominic Sztójay urged for energetic actions. The Chief of Staff and the Minister of Defense stated the war would be short, if they stayed out of it, the country would be at a disadvantage beside Rumania and Slovakia. Others, three civilian ministers--Keresztes-Fischer, Bánffy and Vargha--opposed declaration of war.<sup>47</sup>

The Council of Ministers failed before its decision, to order fact-finding examinations, although at Kassa there were gendarme and police units, and in addition, from Budapest they were able to order out several special investigators.

Despite this, the majority of the Council of Ministers accepted the war against the Soviet Union, and the Regent declared it without previous approval of the Parliament.

### Eastern Battlefields

At the next day, the first Quick Army Corps were mobilized, left for the East to take part in the battles. Later it was

exchanged with the Second Hungarian Army, which were destroyed in the battles at River Don. After the big defeat in January 1942, the Hungarian Army mainly participated as an occupying force in Ukraine.

The Corps of Gendarmerie did not fight in the territory of the Soviet Union. Some of its small units were subordinated to the headquarters of the higher commands where they served as prescribed by the "Service Regulation for the Field Gendarmerie."

Besides small manpower of "military gendarmes", every larger army unit organized from its own manpower "regimental gendarmes," whose duties were prescribed by their army commandants,--who in case of necessity--may use them for military police duties also.

The other non-professional army units, the "Gendarme Service Battalions" (which served beyond the battlefields) were organized from older reserve soldiers, who guarded railroads, depots, and in case of emergencies, served as military police officers.<sup>48</sup>

#### Military Search in Bachka

After six months of reoccupation of Bachka, the communist partisans started to take sabotaging actions. More and more harvested stacks of wheat and hemp were set on fire, more and more farms were burned down. They blew up railroad lines and bridges, even offended small military and gendarme units and killed them.

When the partisans broke up a border guard and gendarme units near a farm, the Army ordered three battalions under the

leadership of military colonel, Leslie Deák, to search around the area for partisans. After this, the military commander, Lieutenant-General Francis Feketehalmy-Cydner concentrated from the vicinity military, gendarm and police forces in the City of Ujvidek, for searching for partisans. The suspected persons were screened by a committee, headed by army Brigadier General Joseph Grassy. Those who were sentenced to death, executed by first lieutenant of river force, Gustavus Korompay, who gave an order to cut a hole on the ice of the Danube river and to shoot the prisoners into the water. In addition, some military truck drivers avoided the screening committee, took the assembled persons directly to the Danube where they were executed.<sup>49</sup>

The number of victims were determined differently which might be more or less between 1200 or 2900. After the search, the Chief of Staff accepted the report of the military commander. The gendarmes had to report the usage of their firearms to the military tribunal of the Gendarmerie, who recommended impeachments of suspected officers.<sup>50</sup> The military tribunal of Budapest sentenced four military and one gendarme officers to death and eleven gendarme officers to imprisonment for failing in their supervisory obligations. The Hungarian Parliament voted yearly 12 million Pengos for the victims of Ujvidek.<sup>51</sup>

The leaders of the massacre escaped to Germany, who after the war, were executed in Jugoslavia with other persons who cooperated with the Hungarian regime.

The forced performance of illegal military orders of the army generals hurt the reputation of the gendarmerie, whose mission was the enforcement of laws.

#### Attempt to Prevent Soviet Occupation

As soon as Nicholas Kállay became Prime Minister in March 1942, he contacted the Western Allies in Istanbul through Anthony Ullein-Reviczky--a Hungarian diplomat-- whose father-in-law was a retired British consul general. According to Kállay:

Our official representative in Istanbul was our consul general Desiderius Ujváry. Veres was specially attached to Ujváry for the purpose of his mission. On August 17, 1943, these two informed Mr. Sterndale Bennett, the British minister, representing the Allies, of Hungary's readiness to surrender to the Allies...if Anglo-American troops reached the frontiers of Hungary.

The other diplomat of Kállay was George Bessenyei, a Hungarian minister in Bern, who negotiated with American delegates, Mr. Royal TROYAL Taylor and Allen W. HULLES. The Allies suggested: "...when Italy changed sides that Hungary should jump out (at a moment when the British and American troops were five hundred miles from our frontiers...). We could not undertake to commit a suicide that would have benefitted no one."

In the United States Otto Habsburg--who was invited several times to the White House by President Roosevelt--and Tibor Eckhardt--representative of Regent Horthy--were working hard on

Hungary's occupation by English and American troops.<sup>52</sup>

Unfortunately they were not successful.

English colonel, Charles Telfer Howie, who escaped from a German POW camp, was harbored in Hungary. On September 20, 1944, Regent Horthy invited him and a Hungarian colonel-general, Steve Náday, and authorized them to ask the commander of the English Army--fighting in Italy--to send English-American troops for occupation at least to Western Hungary. The Gendarmerie was prepared and ready for the cooperation with the Western Allies.

Sir Henry Maitland Wilson commanding officer of the Mediterranean, and Mark Clark of the 5th American Army wanted to continue the offensive toward the Great Hungarian Plain.

In Italy, they selected Hungarian speaking officers and men for deployment in Hungary. On their uniform was a badge with the Hungarian coat-of-arm and "Hungary-Magyarország" inscription. However, President Roosevelt forbade execution of this plan, and ordered Clark's divisions to support the "Operation Anvil", that is, for landing in South France.<sup>53</sup>

After President Roosevelt's order "Anvil plan," Regent Horthy sent lieutenant-general Gabriel Faraghó--the Superintendent of the Gendarmerie--and his delegates to Moscow and got armistice from the Allies. On October 15th, he proclaimed his action, but the arrow-cross-hearted most high ranking staff officers opposed and sabotaged the term of agreement.<sup>54</sup> The Germans kidnapped his only son, forced him to withdraw from state



affairs, took him under "protective custody" somewhere in Germany. At the same time, with the help of the SS, Francis Szálasi, head of the arrow-cross party became the "leader of the nation," and the war was going on against the Soviet Union until the occupation of the last piece of land of Hungary.

### German Occupation and Deportations

Hitler, on March 15, 1944, invited Horthy for a meeting at Klessheim, where they discussed the withdrawal of the Hungarian army from the Soviet territories. On March 1, the Regent with his Chief of Staff, Minister of Defense, and Secretary of State arrived for the discussion, where in private consultation Horthy rebuffed Hitler's accusation and the occupation of Hungary. Before the train of the Regent returned back to Hungary, eleven German divisions possessed Hungary.

With the occupying forces also arrived large "Geheimstadtspolizei" (GESTAPO) and SS units. On the next day, Adolf Eichman, the commandant of "Judendezernat" called together the leaders of the Jewish people, stated he was the only authority in every Jewish matter in Hungary. He would defend them against everybody, if they would satisfy his wishes. He asked discipline and work, for which they would get the same salary as the other workers. All these restrictions would be ended at the end of the war.

The promises of Eichman never were fulfilled. Moreover, he started to put the Jews into concentration camps (ghettos), then

deported them outside from Hungary. "According to information received up to and including June 20, 1944, 427,000 Jewish people, that, is about half of the Hungarian Jews, had to suffer the terrible order of deportation."<sup>55</sup>

"In the arrangement for deportation, Eichmann acted in Hungary after his proven method applied all over Europe."<sup>56</sup>

His troops--appeared at the collection procedures, ghettos and deportation of Jewish and other non-Jewish Hungarians--supervised and carry out Eichmann's tested methods. They made films of the deportation procedures, which were projected in neutral European countries to show the inhumanity of Hungarians and the philanthropical behavior of Germans.<sup>57</sup> The film failed to compare the forced behavior of the Hungarians with the last procedures of Germans made by their own free will.

#### Deployment of the Gendarmes

On August of 1944, the Soviet Army reached the Southeastern border of Hungary. For defense of the country, the Minister of Defense--besides army units--quickly assembled gendarme groups also with its light armament. Lieutenant Colonel Paul Fekete, Captain Tibor Szelevényi and their gendarmes were the first victims of Gendarmerie on the territory of Hungary.

The government used, in large numbers, the gendarme forces at the city of Nagyvárad, in the Northeastern Carpathian Mountains, at Budapest and at the lake of Balaton. According to the official estimate, the Corps lost about fifty percent of its

officers and gendarmes. Their graves are spread all over the country.

The war for Hungary was ended on April 4, 1945 when its last city was occupied by the Soviet Army. Those who were afraid of the Soviet Army and the new communist controlled government, escaped to Austria and Germany. One part of them emigrated to receptive countries, the others returned to Hungary.

With a new treaty, Hungary lost its territory which mostly returned peacefully before World War II. In addition, it had to pay a large war damage compensation to Soviet Russia.

#### Disbanding of the Gendarmerie

While the war was still on and the Soviet Army near Budapest, some authorized person at random rounded up a group of volunteers in order to set up a "Provisionary Hungarian National Assembly" in the city of Debrecen. For collecting individuals, the Red Army loaned some trucks and drivers. On December 21 and 22, 1944, the Assembly, besides others, authorized the "Provisional National Government" (set up under one of the Regent's general, the Superintendent of the Gendarmerie and a third army general), to establish a centralized law enforcement agency for the whole country.

In March 1945, prime minister Béla Miklós publicized his 1960/1946 HE. decree. In this, the "National Government registers the responsibility of the Hungarian Gendarmerie--as a corps--dissolves its institution and disbands its organization."

With this decree, the gendarmes lost their professional jobs, pensions and their right to work in public service, Unless they were able to prove at the "Peculiar Justificatory Committee for ex-gendarmes" that they: 1. participated personally and efficiently in the anti-German movement; 2. turned against the Hungarian laws and orders; or 3. gave help to democratic (communist) organizations. The ex-gendarmes appeared in large numbers at the Committee, but only a few were cleared.

## VI. Responsibilities

### Preface

The role of the Hungarian Gendarmerie in objectionable events and their circumstances may be analyzed purely by the limited reliable sources of the Western World. In the future--after the secret documents are made public--a detailed reevaluation will be necessary by scholars, who may determine the advantages and disadvantages of the ex-Hungarian Gendarmerie. The most important and criticized events are the following.

### Responsibility of Local Governments

The courts, public prosecutors, leaders of counties and their districts may call on the Gendarmerie for services determined by the law. In these cases, 24-25 year-old inexperienced honorary district administrator with a Ph.D. might order to dissolve worker's strikes, or political gatherings by gendarmes, who were obligated to do it without asking the real reason. These problems came up with official actions of executors for overdue taxes and private debts also. The local population forgot the plainclothes administrators, but the actions of the uniformed gendarmes remained in their minds.

### Responsibility for Military Search

The search of a territory is the mission of the competent police and gendarme force. This was acknowledged by the fact that the assistant police chief, Joseph Tallian, and the gendarme

lieutenant colonel, Louis Gaál, were asked by the military leaders for the preparation of the search-plan. In spite of this, the Ministers of Defense and Interior ordered a mutual search in the city and its neighborhood of Ujvidék. The three high ranking officers, one lieutenant general, one brigadier general and one colonel, took over the leadership. They had no experiences in the field of searches, mixed together the army-gendarme-police units without determining exactly the duties and responsibilities of the troops.

When the military leadership ordered "revenge" actions, most gendarme officers--who were afraid of the reaction of the military tribunals--sabotaged the unlawful orders of the generals.

The bloodshed might have been avoided, if: 1. the Minister of Defense and of the Interior, had authorized the police and gendarme units to search and the military to blockade the city, 2. the Superintendent or the district commandant of the Gendarmerie or his deputy had supervised the execution of the search, 3. at the search, the highest ranking gendarme lieutenant colonel had enough courage to refuse the cooperation with the Army and report its reason to the Minister of Interior.

After the search in his departmental order (115.645, eln. 20-942), the Minister of ~~Defense~~ denominated the incident to "public safety service, where the gendarme officer is the specialist, therefore, he has to vindicate to follow his

professional advice." But this ministerial order did not explain how might follow a captain or a lieutenant colonel the search regulations of the Gendarmerie against the will of a lieutenant general, and defend himself against the charge of insubordination at the military court.

If gendarmes and policemen had been authorized to execute the search without military assistance, it would not have been a massacre.

The responsibility for this shameful affair lay with local army commanders, who not only over-reacted to guerrilla harassments, but apparently wished to make an "example" of the case as a deterrent to the recurrent guerilla activities. Later, when the details of the case were learned, the culprits were brought to trial and convicted, four of them to death and the rest to imprisonment.<sup>58</sup>

#### Responsibility for Deportation

The collection, confiscation of property and deportation of the Jewish people under German direction and supervision, was made by the Hungarian Governmental administration. It happened with the knowledge of the Regent, Council of Ministers, members of the Parliament, law enforcement officers, revenue officers, and almost the whole population of the country. For the orders of different ministers, the units of the Army, Gendarmerie, Police, excise officer, county and city administrators, railroad workers, etc. were used in the execution of the "Jewish Laws."

With the Law of 1867 XVII, the Israelite inhabitants possessed equal rights with the other Hungarian citizens. In spite of this, Eichmann and his SS group misled and deceived the

Hungarian government as well as the Jewish people, of whom about fifty percent were deported from the country. Their cruel actions were extended to include Hungarian politicians, state and county administrators and even the son of the regent.

The responsibility for this catastrophe is explained by the words of Randolph L. Braham in the following way:

It appears that considerable blame falls on those who might be called onlookers--the Allies--and the neutral powers for their basic indifference to the plight of the Jews, the International Red Cross and the Vatican for their lack of urgency and insensitivity, and the local Christian population and church authorities for their apathy and passivity. To lesser extent blame must also be shared by the Hungarian and world Jewish leaders for their shortsightedness and bureaucratic/diplomatic tendencies, though their ineffectiveness reflected primarily the impotence and defenselessness of the Jewish people. Ultimate responsibility, however, must be borne almost exclusively by the Germans and their Hungarian accomplices....

While the Hungarian Jews lived for several years virtually in the shadows of Auschwitz, they had no concrete knowledge about the gas chambers and the mass murders committed in many of the concentration camps.<sup>59</sup>

#### Unexampled Impeachment

*See 47a*

The National Assembly was set up on the partly occupied territory of Hungary, where the neutral and pro-communist inhabitants stayed behind. The larger part of population--were being pro-German or afraid of the Soviet occupation--escaped to Budapest or the Western part of the country, which at that time was in the German and Hungarian hands. It is safe to say, this Assembly did not represent the opinion of the majority of the Hungarian people.



On July 8, 1944, the Regent gave an order to stop any deportation of Jewish people from Hungary. Later he informed the local representatives of Germany, that "military and gendarme units were ordered in the capitol, which - - in case of necessity - - will take up arms against any German deporting attempts." On his order a gendarme unit stopped a train near the city of Hatvan, took back 1,500 Jewish deportees to their camp; gendarme and police units saved the Jewish political prisoners of the Main Street of Budapest from being dragged out of Hungary; they guided the International ghetto against planned Nazi atrocities. /Lévai, op. cit., pp. 205, 184, 207, 256/. Beyond having stopped the deportation, the Gendarmerie did not take any actions against the Jewish population.

According to one legal principle, a law can be legally changed or abrogated only by another law. In spite of this, the Prime Minister--the military ex-colonel general--on the authorization of the Provisionary National Assembly, disbanded the Gendarmerie, which was established by the law of 1881, III. His decree was retroactive, which declared the gendarmes guilty until they were able to prove the betraying of certain laws of the previous regime.

The extremely strict order put every gendarme in the prisoners box (dock), expelled them from the "classless society," and by the exaggerated propaganda ran them down to the level of common criminals.

The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and stated: "No one shall be held guilty of any penal offense on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offense, under national or international law, at the time it was committed."<sup>60</sup>

### Epilogue

The gendarm type of law enforcement is a universally accepted institution in Europe. Among those, until the Second World War, the Hungarian Gendarmerie occupied an above average position. The negative incidents of this period may be partly due to the politics of the state, county and local governments. In addition, the enormous German pressure, unnecessarily extensive military education and training of the officers and gendarmes,

the non-jurist superintendent of the Gendarmerie made possible to use the corps at the illegal military search of Ujvidek and the deportation of Hungarian citizens.

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<sup>17</sup>Peter Deriabin, Watchdogs of Terror, New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1972, pp. 122-131.

<sup>18</sup>Cramer, op. cit., pp. 308-309.

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<sup>22</sup>Lorand Pressly, A Csendorseg Uttoroi, The Pioneer of the Gendarmerie, Budapest: Budapesti Hirlap, 1926, pp. 35-37.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 31-32.

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