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***Political Parties of Hungarian Minority in Interwar Czechoslovakia (1918-1938) – Brief Summary and Outline of the Issue<sup>1</sup>***

The article is intended to provide brief summary of the Hungarian minority political scene in interwar Czechoslovakia. The article summarizes particularly the history of main political formations of the Hungarian minority in so called First Czechoslovak Republic and their engagement in the political life of the interwar Czechoslovak state. The article includes also a summary of election results of the Hungarian minority political parties in the four parliamentary elections held in First-Republic Czechoslovakia.<sup>2</sup> The study is focused intended particularly for persons interested in modern history of Central European space to whom the historical development and selected historical moments of this region are not quite well available because of lack of knowledge of the specific national language.

***Inception of political parties of the Hungarian minority and their characteristics in nuce***

Political life of minority Hungarians in interwar Czechoslovakia got constituted in two political-ideological streams, Christian socialism and smallholder movement. The Provincial Christian-Socialist Party<sup>3</sup> (OKSzP) had formed in the course of 1919 and claimed ideological allegiance to traditions of neo-conservative Christian-socialist party of the dualistic Hungary. The party was formally constituted on 23 November 1919 and existed until 1936 when it united with the Hungarian National Party.<sup>4</sup> Bratislava, Nitra and Košice were the main centres of the initial political organization of the Czechoslovak Hungarian minority on Christian-socialist base. The first congress of the party was held on 23 March 1920 in Bratislava. From social perspective, the membership of the party consisted mainly of middle business classes and a part of industrial proletariat. The supranational orientation of OKSzP had a platform from the German and Slovak sections inside the party. Until 1925, OKSzP included as its organizational part also the Zipser German Party (*Zipser Deutsche Partei, ZDP*) established in Kežmarok in March 1920. The official press voice of the party were: *Népakarát* (1920-1925), *Nép* (1920-1937), *Magyar Néplap* (1927–1936), the Slovak-language periodical *Vôľa ľudu* and the German-language *Deutsche Zeitung*.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The parliamentary election in the First Czechoslovak Republic was held in 1920, 1925, 1929 and 1935.

<sup>3</sup> *Országos Keresztényszocialista Párt.*

<sup>4</sup> See below in the text.

<sup>5</sup> Ľubomír LIPTÁK: *Politické strany na Slovensku 1860-1989*. Archa, Bratislava, 1992. 150-152 and 171; Jiří MALÍŘ, Pavel MAREK et al.: *Politické strany. Vývoj politických stran a hnutí v českých zemích a*

The political-ideological base of the OKSŽP program consisted first of the principles of papal encyclic of Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum novarum* from 1891, and later of encyclic of Pope Pius XI, *Quadragesimo anno* from 1931. The party defended particularly social and political-economic interests of Catholic population in Slovakia and of Catholic Church. The main goal of the program of the party in social area was to ensure social stability of the society on the base of Christian solidarity that should guarantee elimination of undesirable social commotions in socially weakened postwar society. Thus it offered an alternative to the social-democratic solution of current society-wide problems. In the economic area, OKSŽP opposed parcelling of agricultural land within the adopted land reform<sup>6</sup> and penetration of Czech capital to Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia. It defended the national-cultural interests of national minorities in Slovakia, particularly the Hungarians, by the requirement of language and cultural equality at all levels of social-political life. Full assurance of the rights of – not only – Hungarian minority should be guaranteed by territorial autonomy of Slovakia, urged by the party from the mid-Twentieths. But OKSŽP supported parallelly the fulfilment of international-legal commitments of Czechoslovakia also towards Carpathian Ruthenia and asked also the government to implement immediately the autonomous self-government of that most easterly situated part of the republic.<sup>7</sup> In 1922 already, it supported the bill on autonomy of Slovakia in the Parliament, submitted to the legislative body by the Slovak People's Party<sup>8</sup>, later Hlinka's Slovak People's Party<sup>9</sup> (*HSLŠ*).<sup>10</sup>

The second most powerful political direction of the Hungarian minority in interwar Czechoslovakia, the national-smallholder direction, was based on the ideology of prewar Countrywide Party of Independent and of the farmer party of

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Československu 1861-2004. Volume I. Period 1861-1938, Brno: Supplement, 2005. 926-927 and 916; Béla ANGYAL: *Érdekvédelem és önszerveződés. Fejezetek a csehszlovákiai magyar pártpolitika történetéből 1918-1938*. Fórum Intézet (Forum Institute), Liliium Aurum Könyvkiadó, Galanta - Dunajská Streda, 2002. 42-43. 58 and 66. *A (cseh)szlovákiai magyarok lexikona 1918-tól napjainkig* (Internet project), Fórum inštitút pre výskum menšín, Šamorín, Slovensko, <http://www.foruminst.sk/>, *Lexikon*, entry: *Országos Keresztényszocialista Párt and Népakarat*.

<sup>6</sup> The land reform in Czechoslovakia was declared in April 1919. The land reform was preceded by Act No. 32/1918 Coll. from 9 November 1918 on attachment of large farms [see *Sbírka zákonů a nařízení státu československého* (hereinafter referred to only as Sb. z. a n.), Volume 1918, Praha, 1918. 22]. The actual land reform was declared by Act No. 215/1919 Coll. from 16 April 1919 on attachment of major land properties (see Sb. z. a n., Volume 1919, Praha, 1919. 289–290. All land properties over 150 hectares of agricultural land should be attached in order to be redistributed to smallholders and landless peasants. Allocation of land was governed by Act No. 81/1920 Coll. from 30 January 1920 on allocation of attached land and regulation of relation to land, i.e. the so called Allocation Act, see Sb. z. a n., Volume 1920. Praha, 1920. 135-145). But the land reform was used not only to solve social issues in the country, but in a lot of cases to change purposefully the national composition of the population in areas with homogenous national minorities when the attached land was allocated to incomers, i.e. to Czechs or Slovaks.

<sup>7</sup> The international-legal Commitment of Czechoslovakia to constitute the autonomous self-government of Carpathian Ruthenia was fulfilled in November 1938 only.

<sup>8</sup> *Slovenská ľudová strana*.

<sup>9</sup> *Hlinkova slovenská ľudová strana*.

<sup>10</sup> LIPTÁK: 153-154. MALÍŘ - MAREK: 927. ANGYAL: 43.

1848.<sup>11</sup> The Hungarian Smallholder Party<sup>12</sup> (MKP) became its carrier. Komárno and Rimavská Sobota were the organizational centres of formation of the national-smallholder political direction of the minority Hungarians in Slovakia. The founding meeting of the party took place on 17 February 1920 in Komárno, and the first party congress was held only after the first Czechoslovak parliamentary election, on 24 May 1920. From 1925, the party existed under the name of Hungarian National Party. The central press voice of the party was: the *Barázda* weekly (1920–1938). The opinions of the party were expressed also by *Magyar Újság* and the *Az Est* newspaper of Košice, bought by Szent-Ivány, the party president.<sup>13</sup>

While the Christian-socialist party was focused on voters with Roman-Catholic religion, the Hungarian Smallholder Party focused preliminarily on the population of protestant religion. It relied mainly on middle classes in the country, i.e. on middle and richer farmers. Unlike OKSzP, the smallholder party focused exclusively on members of the Hungarian minority. The backbone of the MKP program was the defence of rights and interests of the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia, or the requirement of full right of self-determination. It saw the solution of national, educational, religious and language issues in adequate reorganization of self-government on nationality principle. It applied the interests of the Hungarian minority also in its requirements from the area of economic life. It demanded own, i.e. Hungarian economic chambers, financial institutions and cooperative organizations. In the economic field, MKP asked the state to provide for freedom of enterprise and efficient state help to small and middle agricultural classes and traders. The MKP refused the land reform too, considering it an effort to redistribute the land purposefully in favour of the majority population. In consequence of its exclusive focus on the Hungarian minority, it refused the program of Slovak autonomy in the Twentieths, as it was urged by the Slovak autonomists and supported also by the Christian socialists. The Hungarian smallholders were afraid that the „centralized” autonomy of Slovakia would not provide sufficient space to ensure the national, cultural and economic rights of the Hungarian minority. Therefore the party did not vote for the bill of Slovak autonomy prepared by Hlinka’s autonomists in the parliament in 1922, unlike the Christian socialists. It revised its attitude only in the end of the Twentieths, when it integrated the requirement of autonomy in its program, in a form that was not inconsistent with the ideas of the Slovak autonomists any more.<sup>14</sup>

In February 1920, a third political formation of the Hungarian minority was established in Komárno – the Hungarian National Party (*Magyar Nemzeti Párt*). But the initial position of that political party was very restricted. First, the party did not continue any traditional prewar political stream, and second, both above stated parties were successfully filling almost all space in the emerging Hungarian minor-

<sup>11</sup> *Országos Függetlenségi és '48-as Gazdapárt*.

<sup>12</sup> *Országos Magyar Kisgazda, Földműves és Kisiparos Párt (Magyar Kisgazda Párt)*.

<sup>13</sup> LIPTÁK: 158-159. MALÍŘ – MAREK: 932-934. ANGYAL: 57. 65 and 134. *A (cseh)szlovákiai magyarok lexikona...*, <http://www.foruminst.sk/>, *Lexikon*, entry: *Magyar Nemzeti Párt and Barázda*.

<sup>14</sup> LIPTÁK: 161-162. MALÍŘ – MAREK: 933. ANGYAL: 65.

ity political scene already. The base of its program consisted, besides the defence of the rights of all national minorities, also in unification of all the Hungarians. It was therefore not surprising that the Czechoslovak authorities called the program principles of the party incompatible with the principles of the constitution and refuse to register the party.<sup>15</sup>

### ***First parliamentary election in 1920***

The first parliamentary election in interwar Czechoslovakia was held on 18 and 25 April 1920. The political representation of the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia first hesitated whether to participate in the election or to boycott it. Budapest dealt with similar dilemma, first calling the Hungarian minority politicians to ignore the election. But at the meeting of Jenő Lelley, the OKSzP president, with top constitutional officials of Hungary, Sándor Simonyi-Semadam, the prime minister, and Miklós Horthy de Nagybánya, the regent, the highest head of the country, it was decided that the political representation of the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia would participate in the election. The main political representatives of the minority Hungarians criticized particularly the fact that the election was implemented in a time when the border of Czechoslovakia still had not been confirmed because the peace treaty with Hungary still had not been signed at that time.<sup>16</sup> Both Hungarian parties protested openly against the fact that „*the Czech state power performed the highest manifestation of political life, the election to the National Assembly on the territories separated from Hungary at a time when their affiliation still had not been legally decided*”.<sup>17</sup>

As the MKP had been registered by the Czechoslovak authorities approximately a month before the election and that the registration process of the Hungarian National Party was uncertain, the three Hungarian minority political parties initially negotiated of joint support to the list of candidates of the Christian socialists. Nevertheless, the unexpectedly quick registration of MKP thwarted the unified coop-

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<sup>15</sup> ANGYAL: 57 and 62.

<sup>16</sup> The peace treaty with Hungary was signed on 4 June 1920.

<sup>17</sup> A) Magyar Országos Levéltár (hereinafter referred to only as MOL), K 64 (Politikai osztály rezervált iratai 1918–1944) – 1 (csomó) – 1919–1920 – 7 (tétel) – 168/res./1920, *Jelentés a felsővidéki magyar és magyarbarát tót pártok cseh ellenes politikai szervezkedéséről és kívánalmairól* (report on the activity of Hungarian and pro-Hungarian Slovakian parties in Slovakia and on their demands; document without dating, contains only month and year – June 1920 – its reception at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kingdom of Hungary, see fol. 260, p. 2), extent of the document: fol. 254-260 / pp. 1-7. According to the document, the OKSzP president should have come to the conclusion, after the meeting with the Hungarian prime minister, that the participation of political representation of the Hungarian minority in the Czechoslovak election was their patriotic duty. The concerned meeting took place probably in February 1920 (compare fol. 254). B) Compare the speech of the OKSzP deputy on behalf of both Hungarian minority parties in the debate on the government program of the first Czechoslovak government, compiled on the base of the results of the parliamentary election at the 3rd meeting of the National Assembly on 2 June. [*Těšnovisecké zprávy o schůzích poslanecké sněmovny Národního shromáždění Republiky československé*. IVth term of office. Meetings, sheets 1-13 (from 26 May 1920 to 10 July 1920). Volume I, 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, 2 June 1920, *Řeč posl. dra Ékese Körmenydyho*, pp. 33-34, or p. 34.]

eration of both main Hungarian minority political parties, leading in the end to their pre-election competition instead of mutual cooperation.<sup>18</sup> So the situation on the Hungarian minority political scene was virtually analogical to the conditions on the German minority political scene consisting of seven parties that ran against each other, with two exceptions.<sup>19</sup> The situation was at least summarized in that sense by the summary report of the German Embassy<sup>20</sup> on the Czechoslovak political scene in 1920. The report for Berlin stated that the Hungarian minority political parties in Czechoslovakia, in spite of virtually identical economic program and national goals, ran against each other analogically to the German parties.<sup>21</sup>

OKSzP ran in two electoral districts in Slovakia, Nové Zámky and Košice.<sup>22</sup> MKP ran only in the Nové Zámky electoral district. OKSzP was the unequivocal winner from the two running Hungarian minority parties, having got almost 140 thousand votes for the Chamber of Deputies<sup>23</sup> and 100 thousand votes for the Senate.<sup>24</sup> Such result meant 5 deputy mandates and 2 senator offices.<sup>25</sup> MKP got 26 and a half thousand votes for the Chamber of Deputies<sup>26</sup> and 40 thousand votes for the Senate.<sup>27</sup> Both results brought one mandate in each chamber of the Parliament to

<sup>18</sup> MOL, K 64 – 5 – 1922 – 7/II – 105/res./1921, *Jelentés a szlovenszkói országos Keresztény Szoc. Központ 1920 működéséről* (document without dating), fol. 63-67, or fol. 64/3.

<sup>19</sup> From among of the seven German minority political parties, only the German National Party and the German National Socialist Workers' Party created a joint list of candidates and received about 330 thousand votes from total number of about million and a half of votes given to German parties in the election to the Chamber of Deputies in 1920. [Compare *Deset let Československé republiky* (hereinafter referred to only as DLČS), First volume, Prague: Vláda Republiky československé, 1928. 292.]

<sup>20</sup> The report was not sent from Prague Embassy but from Vienna Embassy. See the following note.

<sup>21</sup> *Deutsche Gesandtschaftsberichte aus Prag. Innenpolitik und Minderheitenprobleme in der Ersten Tschechoslowakischen Republik* (hereinafter referred to only as DG, Prag), Teil I. Von der Staatsgründung bis zum ersten Kabinett Beneš 1918–1921. Berichte des Generalkonsuls von Gebtsattel, des Konsuls König und des Gesandten Professor Saenger. Ausgewählt, eingeleitet und kommentiert von Manfred Alexander, Veröffentlichungen des Collegium Carolinum, Band 49/I, München 2003, doc. No. 204, Übersicht über die politischen Parteien und deren Presse in der Tschechoslowakei, Wien, den 20. Juli 1921, 494-517, or 512.

<sup>22</sup> It ran for the first parliament election under the name of Hungarian and German Christian-Socialist Party (*Magyar és Német Keresztényszocialista Párt*), in the effort to create counterweight to the Hungarian-German Social-Democratic Party on the pre-election political scene.

<sup>23</sup> Exactly 139 355, i.e. 2,25% of all the votes cast. (Compare DLČS, p. 292.) In the election for the Chamber of Deputies, 6 200 032 votes were cast in total. (Compare *ibid.*)

<sup>24</sup> Exactly 100 658, i.e. 1,93% of all the votes cast. (Compare *ibid.*, p. 293.) In the election for the Senate, 5 226 811 votes were cast in total. (Compare *ibid.*)

<sup>25</sup> Jenő Lelley, János Jabloniczky, János Tobler (replaced by Viktor Palkovich in 1922), and Lajos Körmendy-Ékes became the first OKSzP deputies. József Szent-Ivány, the future president of smallholders was elected on the OKSzP list of candidates too. Ferenc Kopernyczky and Jenő Károly Schmidt were elected to the senate for OKSzP. The OKSP legislators created their independent deputy club in the Chamber of Deputies; until June 1922, also the smallholders József Szent-Ivány and Kálmán Füßy were its members, later creating an independent two-member smallholder deputy club. In the Senate, both OKSzP senators sat separately in the German senator clubs – Kopernyczky in the club of the German Christian Social People's Party and Schmidt in the club of the German National Party. The deputy club of OKSzP was presided by Jabloniczky and the deputy club of MKP Szent-Ivány. [Compare *Národní shromáždění Republiky československé v prvním desetiletí (1918–1928)* – hereinafter referred to only as NS RČS v prvním desetiletí, Praha, 1928. 1231 and 1234-1235.]

<sup>26</sup> In total 26 520, i.e. 0,43% of all the votes cast. (Compare DLČS, p. 292.)

<sup>27</sup> In total 40 302, i.e. 0,77 % of all the votes cast. (Compare *ibid.*, p. 293.)

the party.<sup>28</sup> So in total, both Hungarian parties sent 6 deputies and 3 senators to the Czechoslovak National Assembly.

### ***First half of the Twentieths – vain attempts for joint way***

In the period after the first parliamentary election, both political subjects representing the interests of the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia focused on final completion of building of their party apparatuses, on expanding their member and voter bases and particularly on establishing themselves on the political scene of the new state. Although there was rivalry and competition fight even after the parliamentary election between OKSzP and MKP, tendencies for joint coordination of political actuation of both parties soon emerged in the Hungarian minority political scene too. Particularly József Szent-Ivány, the MKP president, was the driver of mutual cooperation. But also Budapest encouraged OKSzP and MKP to cooperate from the beginning. It called the representatives of both Hungarian minority parties also to broader cooperation with pro-Hungary-focused Slovak parties.<sup>29</sup>

The first expression of such efforts and of the wish of institutionalization of co-operation not only of the Hungarian opposition parties in Slovakia consisted in the establishment of Joint Committee of United Slovak and Carpathian-Ruthenian Opposition Parties<sup>30</sup> on 7 December 1920. It consisted of OKSzP, MKP, Union of Hungarian Parties in Carpathian Ruthenia, Zipser German Party and from 1921 also the Hungarian Law Party.<sup>31</sup> The Joint Committee was lead by Béla Szilassy, later acting president and senator of the Hungarian National Party. Its goal consisted in close cooperation of the involved parties in order to create unified political line of national minorities in Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia and to ensure their stronger political weight on the Czechoslovak political scene. The central point of political cooperation of the parties was to push through the right to self-determination and autonomous organization of Slovakia. The following year, in February 1921, also the eight-member Executive Committee of Joint Committee

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<sup>28</sup> On the list of candidates of MKP, Kálmán Füßy got to the Chamber of Deputies and István Hangos to the Senate. Senator István Hangos was replaced by József Ficza after his death in 1922.

<sup>29</sup> The representatives of the emerging political scene of the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia were told that personally by the Hungarian diplomat Péter Matuska. Compare MOL, K 64 – 1 – 1919–1920 – 7 – 478/res./1920, *Union of Democratic Control megalakulása Cseh-Szlovákiában* (report of the Hungarian diplomat Péter Matuska on his personal meeting with the representatives of Hungarian minority political parties in Karlovy Vary in Czechoslovakia in November 1920, dated 25 November 1920), fol. 402–407, or 404 (p. 2). At that meeting, the Hungarian diplomat confirmed at the same time that the Hungarian government was ready to support even the other political party of the minority Hungarians in Czechoslovakia, i.e. the smallholders, financially and morally. (Compare *ibid.*)

<sup>30</sup> *A Szlovenszkói és Ruszinszkói Szövetkezett Ellenzéki Pártok Közös Bizottsága.*

<sup>31</sup> *Magyar Jogpárt.* It was a smaller liberal civic party focused on urban voters. It was established on 18 September 1921 in Košice and László Szalay became its president. It existed until 1925 (see further, the actual text). (Compare ANGYAL: 72. LIPTÁK: 168. MALÍŘ – MAREK: 940. *A (cseh)szlovákiai magyarok lexikona...*, <http://www.foruminst.sk/>, *Lexikon*, entry: *Magyar Jogpárt.*)

was established. The Executive Committee was lead by Lajos Körmendy-Ékes, the OKSzP deputy. One year later, in February 1922, also the Central Office of the Joint Committee seated in Lučenec was established to guarantee the efficiency of joint cooperation. The Central Office provided particularly for technical-practical background of the activity of the Joint Committee. From 1 June 1922, the Prágai Magyar Hírlap newspaper, published until 1938, became the press voice of the united opposition parties.<sup>32</sup>

In 1924 and 1925, Szent-Ivány, the MKP president, suggested creation of a unified political party of the Hungarian minority on the Czechoslovak political scene. The above stated Joint Committee of Opposition Parties was to be the source of the unified political formation; its restructuring was to lead to its gradual transformation into a political party. Szent-Ivány's fusion efforts from the mid-Twentieths resulted only in transformation of MKP into a new political subject called Hungarian National Party<sup>33</sup> (MNP) that was established on 18 October 1925. Originally, it should have been the heading for the unified Hungarian political party, but OKSzP refused to merge with MKP. Only the small Hungarian Law Party joined MNP. József Törkölly was elected president of the party. But József Szent-Ivány stayed the factual party leader virtually during its whole existence.<sup>34</sup>

It was the Hungarian Smallholder Party or the Hungarian National Party, that started move towards the activistic policy. Szent-Ivány, the MNP president, called publicly for realistic policy of national minorities and alternative of possible participation of political representatives of national minorities in the government in the press in 1925. His goal consisted in establishing common cooperation with those German minority parties in Bohemia whose political program was not under influence of Great German ideas.<sup>35</sup>

Jenő Lelley, the president of Christian socialists, flirted with the idea of activistic policy as well. But unlike MKP or MNP, the activistic efforts in OKSzP did not find broad support, nevertheless causing serious disagreement in the party. In the course of 1924, two camps created in OKSzP; the pro-activistic around Lelley, the party president, and counter-activistic around Oszkár Petrogalli, the director of Central Office of Joint Committee of United Slovak and Carpathian-Ruthenian Opposition Parties. But in the end, the disagreement in the party resulted in the victory of the counter-activistic group that put its candidate Géza Szüllő on the top of the party. He was elected new party president on 25 August 1925. Lelley's group responded to it by establishing the independent West-Slovakian Christian-Socialist Party<sup>36</sup> on 27 September 1925.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> ANGYAL: 65-67 and 72. LIPTÁK: 154-155. 162.163 and 214-216. MALÍŘ - MAREK: 930.

<sup>33</sup> *Magyar Nemzeti Párt.*

<sup>34</sup> ANGYAL: 114-118 and 120-124. LIPTÁK: 163-164. MALÍŘ - MAREK: 935. A *(cseh)szlovákiai magyarok lexikona...*, <http://www.foruminst.sk/>, *Lexikon*, entry: *Szent-Ivány József.*

<sup>35</sup> Prágai Magyar Hírlap (hereinafter referred to only as PMH), 1925, volume IV, No. 145 (888), 1 July, pp. 3-4 or p. 3, *Szent-Ivány József a nemzeti realpolitika új útjáról.*

<sup>36</sup> *Nyugat-szlovenszkói Keresztényszocialista Párt.*

<sup>37</sup> ANGYAL: 112-113 and 116-118.

The reasoning of the representatives of the Hungarian minority on the activist policy on the eve of the second parliamentary election constituted logical consequence of their establishment on the Czechoslovak political scene and particularly of the awareness of the fact that the new arrangement of Central Europe was final already, although they did not agree to it. Thus some of them started asking whether it would be perhaps more beneficial to the Hungarian minority to adopt realistic policy instead of negative opposition policy.<sup>38</sup>

### ***Second parliamentary election in 1925***

OKSzP and MNP run separately also for the second Czechoslovak parliamentary election in 1925. But only OKSzP run for the election individually. MNP started the way towards implementation of realistic policy, creating joint list of candidates with the Sudeten German Party, Bund der Landwirte (BdL). MNP and BdL agreed also post-election cooperation and creation of a joint parliamentary clubs.<sup>39</sup> Besides, the voter basis of MNP was strengthened with the voters of ZDP that had terminated cooperation with OKSzP and joined organizationally the Hungarian National Party.<sup>40</sup> Although the two biggest political parties of the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia ran against each other again, they managed to conclude an agreement that MNP would run only in four electoral districts for the Chamber of Deputies and only in two electoral districts for the Senate, in order not to worsen the election chances of OKSzP in Slovak districts. OKSzP ran for the Chamber of Deputies in all of the seven electoral districts and for the Senate in all of the four electoral districts in Slovakia.<sup>41</sup> There were also new political subjects of the Hungarian minority, running for the second Czechoslovak parliamentary election. The most significant of them were: the West-Slovak Christian-Socialist Party of Lelley, former OKSzP president, that made a list of candidates only in the electoral district of Nové Zámky, and the Provincial Farmer Party,<sup>42</sup> that ran in two electoral districts, the district of Nové Zámky and the district of Košice.<sup>43</sup>

The second parliamentary election for the National Assembly of the Czechoslovak Republic was held on 15 November 1925. OKSzP did not defend the first place from among the two biggest political parties of the Hungarian minority. The party

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<sup>38</sup> ANGYAL: 120-121.

<sup>39</sup> NS RČS v prvním desetiletí (1918-1928), p. 1231.

<sup>40</sup> The transition of the Zipser Germans to MNP was caused particularly by the different confessional orientation of ZDP and OKSzP. While OKSzP was a Catholic party, the Zipser-German Party was a Protestant party, similarly to MNP. (Compare LIPTÁK: 171.)

<sup>41</sup> MOL, K 64 – 12 – 1925 – 7 – 444/res./1925, top-secret report on the meeting of Szent-Ivány and Szüllő at the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Budapest with the state secretary at the Hungarian Ministerial Presidium, Count György Prónay and the under-secretary of the Hungarian Foreign Minister, the Extraordinary Envoy and Plenipotentiary Minister, Count Sándor Khuen-Héderváry at the end of October 1925, sent to the Hungarian envoy to Prague, Szilárd Masirevich, fol. 1–4, or fol. 1 (p. 2) or fol. 3 (p. 1-2).

<sup>42</sup> *Országos Paraszt Párt*. The party was established on 21 September 1921 and its president was Vince Mikle; it focused on rural farmer population. For this political party in general see ANGYAL: 118-120.

<sup>43</sup> ANGYAL: 120 and 126.



received almost 41 thousand votes less than in the parliamentary election of 1920.<sup>44</sup> It was voted for by 98 thousand voters in total.<sup>45</sup> And it got about 86 thousand votes in the election for the Senate.<sup>46</sup> OKSzP lost one mandate in the Chamber of Deputies, so it got 4 deputy offices. The party retained two senator offices.<sup>47</sup> On the contrary, MNP was markedly strengthened, getting 6 mandates in total, instead of former one mandate in the Chamber of Deputies. It was strengthened also in the Senate by two mandates, having 3 senator offices in total now.<sup>48</sup> So MNP became the clear winner of the electoral duel of the two biggest Hungarian minority parties.

Lelley's West-Slovakian Christian-Socialist Party failed in the election. It got only 17 thousand votes in the election for the Chamber of Deputies<sup>49</sup> and almost the same number of votes in the election for the Senate.<sup>50</sup> The Provincial Farmer Party got markedly less votes in the election. Its list of candidates was voted for by 4 and a half thousand voters<sup>51</sup> in the election for the Lower Chamber and 4 thousand voters for the Upper Chamber.<sup>52</sup> The two political parties ceased to exist after the election.<sup>53</sup>

### ***Second half of the Twentieths – from the activist efforts of MNP to joint electoral list of candidates***

The discrepancies between OKSzP and MNP escalated even more after the second parliamentary election. Both parties diverged more and more in the following months. MNP started the way towards realistic policy and OKSzP applied consequent opposition policy. But the MNP president saw „empty irredentism” in it and did not consider it suitable for „reasonable and successful policy” for the benefit of the interests of the Hungarian minority, seeing even potential future destruction of the Hungarian minority in consequent opposition policy.<sup>54</sup> On the contrary Szüllő, the OKSzP president, considered the activist policy weakening of the complex defence of national interests of the Hungarian minority at the expense of

<sup>44</sup> In total exactly by 40 972 votes. (Compare DLČS, p. 294.).

<sup>45</sup> Exactly 98 383, i.e. 1,39 % of all the votes cast. (Compare *ibid.*).

<sup>46</sup> Exactly 85 777, i.e. 1,41 % of all the votes cast. (Compare *ibid.*).

<sup>47</sup> Compare *ibid.*, 294-295.

<sup>48</sup> The deputies for OKSzP were: Géza Szüllő, János Jablonyiczky, Miklós Fedor and Lipót Gregorovics. The party was represented in the Senate by: Géza Grosschmid and Lajos Franciscy. MNP was represented in the Chamber of Deputies by: József Szent-Ivány, Kálmán Füßy, Endre Korláth, János Holota, Gyula Koczor and Andor Nitsch (ZDP). In the Senate by: József Törköly, János Richter and Ferenc Egly. [Compare NS RČS v prvním desíletí (1918-1928), pp. 1231-1234 and 1236-1237.].

<sup>49</sup> Exactly 17 285, i.e. 0,24 % of all the votes cast. (Compare DLČS, p. 294.).

<sup>50</sup> Exactly 17 521, i.e. 0,29 % of all the votes cast. (Compare *ibid.*, p. 295.).

<sup>51</sup> Exactly 4 512, i.e. 0,06 % of all the votes cast. (Compare *ibid.*, p. 294.).

<sup>52</sup> Exactly 4 050, i.e. 0,07 % of all the votes cast. (Compare *ibid.*, p. 295.) The small unimpressive Hungarian Carpathian-Ruthenian trader party got the lowest number of votes from among all parties both in the election for the Chamber of Deputies and in the election for the Senate. Their electoral result was 1 094 and 1 438 votes, i.e. 0,02 % of all the votes cast in both cases. (Compare *ibid.*, pp. 294 and 295.).

<sup>53</sup> ANGYAL: 133. MALÍŘ – MAREK: 929 and 941. LIPTÁK: 170 and 169.

<sup>54</sup> PMH, 1926, volume V, No. 9 (1047), 13 January, front page, editorial by József Szent-Ivány, *Reálpolitika*.

some issuable economic advantages.<sup>55</sup> It was obvious that within possible activist policy, rather economic than significant and far-reaching national-cultural concessions could be reached much more successfully.

Both Hungarian minority parties ended on opposite sides of the barricade in the Parliament. On the base of the pre-election agreement with BdL, the MNP deputies joined the deputy club of activist German agrarians and traders.<sup>56</sup> On the contrary, OKSzP refused any participation in any deputy club unifying any Hungarian parties and representatives of Sudeten Germans. Szűllő pointed out that the autonomous self-government of Slovakia would never be in interest of the Sudeten Germans, and therefore he defended political partnership exclusively with Slovakian autonomistic political parties.<sup>57</sup>

The diametrically different political position of both parties manifested itself very quickly in the Parliament, when voting about a quite important government proposal concerning the issue of duty rates for imported agricultural commodities in mid-1926. While MNP supported the government proposal within the realistic policy, considering exclusively its practical positive impact on the national, i.e. also on the small corn producers from the Hungarian regions of the republic, although the rates disadvantaged markedly the Hungarian crop export to Czechoslovakia, OKSzP voted against on the base of its generally opposition attitude. The OKSzP president referred in that connection to the central political line of his party, from which he derived its general attitude against the government, i.e. to the exclusive defence of preservation of the Hungarian national identity of the Hungarian minority against the assimilation efforts of the majority nation that – as Szűllő expressed it – did not depend on how many hellers<sup>58</sup> the crop price would increase in Czechoslovakia.<sup>59</sup>

While the Christian socialists with their consistent opposition policy became completely isolated in the parliament, the MNP legislators turned into significant political players on the minority activist political scene after some three months of unsuccessful existence of post-election government of the agrarian Antonín Švehla. That time, the form of the new governmental coalition, i.e. whether the so called all-nation coalition or whether social democracy would or would not partici-

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<sup>55</sup> PMH, 1926, volume V, No. 35 (1073), 12 February 1926, p. 3, *Szűllő Géza a magyar pártok kooperációjáról*.

<sup>56</sup> Vereinigter Parlamentarischer Klub des Bundes der Landwirte, der Deutschen Gewerbeartei und der Ungarischen Nationalpartei. The joint deputy club had 24 members at the beginning, and the joint senate club had 12 members. (Compare NS RČS v prvním desetiletí (1918-1928), pp. 1202-1203)

<sup>57</sup> MOL, K 64 – 17 – 1926 – 7 – 229/pol./1926, *Szentiványi tárgyalásai a csehszlovák kormányval*, secret report of the Hungarian envoy to Prague, Szilárd Masirevich, from 4 December 1926, or the protocol from the meeting of the joint committee of MNP and OKSzP from 22 November 1926 (included in a broader document, 582/res./1926), fol. 2-11 (fol. 12-22, copy), or fol. 4-5, or pp. 2-3.

<sup>58</sup> Heller is the term for a coin valued at 1/100 of crown (koruna), which was the currency of Czechoslovakia. Crown is also the currency of today's Czech Republic and it was the currency of Slovakia until it introduced euro in 2009.

<sup>59</sup> PMH, 1926, volume V, No. 173 (1211), 3 August, pp. 2–3, or p. 2, *Szűllő Géza a vámkérdésről, a magyar kisebbség nemzeti politikájáról és a magyar-csehszlovák viszonyról*.

pate in the government, could depend also on MNP.<sup>60</sup>

The different manners of voting of both Hungarian parties in the issue of agrarian duties, their mutual rivalry and activism of MNP unsettled Budapest too. The turbulent relationships and the conflicting attitudes of OKSzP and MNP were called harmful for the whole Hungarian minority by Count István Bethlen, the Hungarian Prime Minister, at his meeting with the presidents of both Hungarian minority parties in Budapest in August 1926. The Hungarian Minister President drew Szent-Ivány's attention to the fact that the support to the government by MNP should not become permanent. In order to warm up the relationships between both political parties, it was agreed to establish a joint committee with participation of the presidents of both political parties. This committee was to settle the conflicting issues between both political parties.<sup>61</sup>

But MNP ended in delicate situation within its execution of proactivistic realistic policy. Although joint list of requests of both partner political parties was agreed at the meeting of the joint parliament club of MNP and BdL on 1 October 1926 and BdL was to use that list to condition its joining the government, to which it had been called by the negotiating civic parties,<sup>62</sup> the German agrarians, in the end, joined the new Švehla's coalition government together with the German Christian Socials unexpectedly on 12 October, without having consulted such step with MNP. Szent-Ivány called that step of BdL putschist, but MNP stayed in joint deputy club with the governmental BdL. After uncertain promises of BdL that, as governmental party, it would ask the government uncompromisingly also the fulfilment of the Hungarian demands, MNP proceeded to negotiate directly and separately with Švehla, the Prime Minister. Although MNP, in order to continue the initiated negotiations with the Prime Minister about its demands, decided not to participate in the parliament voting about the governmental proposal of the state budget for 1927, its negotiations with the Prime Minister ended unsuccessfully. The position of MNP was weakened also by the fact that in the end, the government was joined also by Hlinka's Slovak People's Party in January 1927.<sup>63</sup> But

<sup>60</sup> The broad, so called nation-wide coalition of Antonín Švehla, the Prime Minister, created after the second parliamentary election on 9 December 1925, did not last till the spring, and after the early withdrawal of social democrats and national socialists, it was replaced by Jan Černý's caretaker government on 18 March 1926.

<sup>61</sup> MOL, K 64 – 17 – 1926 – 7 – 395/res./1926, *A Szüllő és Szentiványi között létrejött megállapodás*, secret report of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Hungarian legation to Prague, sent on 11 August 1926, with additional minutes of meeting of the presidents of MNP and OKSzP, Szent-Ivány and Szüllő, with count Bethlen, the Prime Minister, in Budapest on 4 August 1926, fol. 1-6, or fol. 4-5 (pp. 1-3).

<sup>62</sup> MOL, K 64 – 17 – 1926 – 7 – 201/pol./1926, *A csehszlovákiai magyar nemzeti párt álláspontja egy többségi kormányzópártban való részvételét illetőleg*, top secret report from the Hungarian envoy to Prague to the Hungarian Foreign Minister from 4 October 1926 (included in a broader document, 504/res./1926), fol. 31-36 / pp. 1-5 plus annex (fol. 35-36).

<sup>63</sup> In 1923–25, HSLS with its opposition activity and political initiative based on its postulate of territorial autonomy for the Slovak part of the republic became the greatest political force in Slovakia, which was confirmed also by the results of the parliamentary election in 1925 when the party got the highest possible number of votes in parliamentary election. HSLS got votes from almost 490 thousand voters, which constituted 34 % of all the votes cast in Slovakia. (Compare DLČS, p. 294.)

that weakened also the position of OKSžP that defended ardently the autonomy of Slovakia. Under such circumstances, the relationships between BdL and MNP soon chilled and the different political interests of the Sudeten Germans and the Slovakian Hungarians including the Zipser Germans finally lead to disintegration of the joint deputy club of BdL and MNP on 14 July 1927. That put an end to MNP's effort for realistic policy, within which the party also did not refuse participation in the government.<sup>64</sup>

### **Third parliamentary election in 1929**

The experience acquired by the representation of both Hungarian minority political parties, OKSžP and MNP from their acting on the political scene of the Czechoslovak Republic during the past almost ten years started to direct both parties slowly but surely to mutual political cooperation. The first relatively significant cooperation of OKSžP and MNP occurred at the occasion of the third parliamentary election declared for 27 October 1929.<sup>65</sup> It was the first time when both Hungarian parties run a joint list of candidates.<sup>66</sup>

About 275 thousand voters cast their votes for the joint list of candidates of the Hungarian parties in the election for the Chamber of Deputies<sup>67</sup> and about 234 thousand voters in the election for the Senate.<sup>68</sup> Based on such election results, the parties acquired 15 mandates in total in the National Assembly, 9 in Lower and 6 in Upper Chamber. Both parties had received 7 mandates each in the National Assembly. The fifteenth mandate fell traditionally to Andor Nitsch,

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<sup>64</sup> Compare MOL, K 64 – 17 – 1926 – 7 – ibidem (see the footnote No. 62); MOL, ibidem, the above stated document 229/pol./1926, fol. 2-11 (fol. 12-22, copy), particularly fol. 3 and 5 / pp. 1 and 5; MOL, ibidem, 497/res./1926, or 205/pol. 1927, *A német polgári pártok belépése a kormányba*, top secret report of the Hungarian envoy to Prague to the Hungarian Foreign Minister from 14 October 1926, fol. 1-4 / pp. 1-5; MOL, ibidem, 498/res./1926, or 206/pol./1926, *Szűllő képviselő információi a pöstyéni ülésről és az új kormányalakításról*, secret report of the Hungarian envoy to Prague to the Hungarian Foreign Minister from 14 October 1926, fol. 1-3 (pp. 1-3); MOL, ibidem, 21. cs., 7. t., 332/res./1926, or 117/pol./1927, *A magyar nemzeti párt kiválása a „Bunde der Landwirte“-vel alkotott blokk-ból*, secret report of the Hungarian envoy to Prague to the under-secretary of the Hungarian Foreign Minister, the Extraordinary Envoy and Plenipotentiary Minister, Count Sándor Khuen Héderváry from 11 July 1927, fol. 214-215 (pp. 1-3; fol. 216-217, copy); NS RČS v prvním desíletí (1918-1928), pp. 1231-1232. The MNP deputies created an independent deputy club on 2 December 1927. (Compare ibid., pp. 1232 and 1236.).

<sup>65</sup> The early election was held because of the disintegration of the civic coalition, caused by the conflict between the members of the agrarian and the people's parties.

<sup>66</sup> PMH, 1929, volume VIII, No. 218 (2143), 25 September, pp. 1-2, *A magyarság pártjainak kiküldöttei megegyeztek a választási együttműködés kérdéseiben*; ibidem, No. 225 (2150), 4 October, pp. 1-2, *A magyar kisebbségi harc történelmi napja Ótátrafüreden. A magyarság pártjai ratifikálták a választási egységet és készek egy hatalmas német-magyar-szlovák-ruszin választási blokk megalakítására*.

<sup>67</sup> Exactly 257 231, i.e. 3,48 % of all the votes cast. [Compare Československá statistika (hereinafter referred to only as ČSS) – Svazek 70, Řada I. (Volby, sešit 4) Volby do poslanecké sněmovny v říjnu 1929. Praha 1930, p. 9.].

<sup>68</sup> Exactly 233 772, i.e. 3,62 % of all the votes cast. [Compare ibid.]

the ZDP president.<sup>69</sup>

But in spite of the joint list of candidates, both parties did not create joint parliamentary clubs in the National Assembly at the beginning. The OKSzP deputies made an independent deputy club in the Chamber of Deputies, and in the Senate, its representatives appeared as guests in the senator club of the German Christian Social People's Party. MNP together with ZDP created a joint deputy club with the German trader party both in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate.<sup>70</sup> Even Budapest tried to remedy the situation. It exerted pressure on both parties to create finally a joint parliamentary clubs in the National Assembly. In the end, Budapest succeeded. The agreement of creation of the joint parliamentary clubs of OKSzP and MNP and the Zipser Germans was adopted on the joint meeting of both party presidents with Count Bethlen, the Hungarian Prime Minister, in Budapest in February 1930.<sup>71</sup> The agreement was fulfilled on 17 March 1930 when both parties declared the establishment of a joint deputy and senate club in Bratislava, or on 28 March 1930 when the joint parliamentary clubs were actually created in the National Assembly. Géza Szüllő, the OKSzP president became chief of the joint deputy club, and Béla Szilassy, the MNP senator became chief of the senator club.<sup>72</sup>

Additionally to OKSzP and MNP, another, new, Hungarian minority political subject ran for the third parliamentary election. It was the Provincial Smallholder, Craftsman and Workman Party<sup>73</sup>. The party was established before the election for the land local governments in 1928 at the instigation of discontent smallholders from *Žitný ostrov* region<sup>74</sup> who were not satisfied with the opposition role of MNP and with its political line that did not meet the demands of the smallholders on whom the party had originally leaned. Although the party got more than 13 and a half thousand votes in the election for the land local governments, it failed in the parliamentary election in 1929, getting only less than seven thousand votes. So the party did not succeed in establishing itself on the Hungarian minority political scene and ceased to exist gradually.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Compare *Národní shromáždění Republiky československé v druhém desetiletí (1928–1938)* – hereinafter referred to only as NS RČS v druhém desetiletí, Praha 1938, pp. 930-931. OKSzP was represented in the Chamber of Deputies by János Dobránszky, Miklós Fedor, Károly Hokky, János Jablonyiczky and Géza Szüllő and in the Senate by Rudolf Böhm (in 1933 replaced by Karl Kreibich) and Géza Grosschmid (in 1933 replaced by József Keresztury). MNP was represented in the Chamber of Deputies by János Holota, József Szent-Ivány and József Törköly and in the Senate by Kálmán Füßy, Endre Korláth, János Richter (in 1934 replaced by Imre Varga) and Béla Szilassy. (Compare *ibid.*)

<sup>70</sup> Compare *ibid.*, pp. 927 and 930-931.

<sup>71</sup> Compare MOL, K 64 – 37 – 1930 – 7 – 52/res./1930, fol. 1–7, or fol. 2–3, 5 a 6 (letter of Gábor Apor, the head of the political department of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, to Szilárd Masirevich, the Hungarian envoy to Prague, from 22 February 1930; the letter should be burnt down after being read).

<sup>72</sup> Compare *ibid.*, PMH 1930, volume IX, issue 64 (2285), 18 March, front page, *Közös parlamenti klubot alakított az országos keresztényszocialista párt, a magyar nemzeti párt és a szepesi német párt.*

<sup>73</sup> *Országos Kisgazda-, Iparos és Munkáspárt.*

<sup>74</sup> *Csallóköz* in Hungarian.

<sup>75</sup> ANGYAL: 158-159. LIPTÁK: 171. MALÍŘ – MAREK: 941; A *(cseh)szlovákiai magyarok lexikona...*, <http://www.foruminst.sk/>, *Lexikon*, entry: *Országos Kisgazda-, Iparos és Munkáspárt.*

### ***Turn of the Twentieths and Thirtieths – the beginning of a new era***

The turn of the Twentieths and the Thirtieths was a significant landmark in the political life of the Hungarian minority political parties in Czechoslovakia. One of the factors that influenced the events in the party structures of the Hungarian (not only) minority parties at that time consisted in the pressure of the newcoming generation that was not satisfied with the results achieved by the minority policy in the Twentieths. The young generation manifested stronger national delimitation towards the majority, consolidating their negativistic attitude against the official policy of the Prague government. That trend was supported also by the burdensome economic situation caused by the impact of the worldwide economic crisis on the state economy.

But even Budapest started showing interest in change in the structures of the political parties of the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia in early Thirtieths. On 16 August 1931, the long, ten-year era of Count István Bethlen as Prime Minister ended in Hungary. Together with him, the political circles that had assisted the origins of political life of the Hungarian minority in interwar Czechoslovakia and the establishment of its existing political representatives in the social-political life of the Czechoslovak state left the head of the state. New expectations arrived with the new political crew in Hungary. The new leaders of Budapest did not relate the expectations to meritorious political personalities of the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia.

The position of Géza Szűllő, the president of OKSzP, was markedly shaken by Bethlen's withdrawal from the office of the Hungarian Prime Minister. It was obvious in autumn 1931 already that Szűllő would not stay long at the head of the party. At the same time, the favourite of the Budapest government for the office of president of OKSzP became known. It was Count János Esterházy, aged only thirty, political newcomer who had not held any office in the OKSzP party structures till then.<sup>76</sup>

OKSzP was paralyzed in early Thirtieths also by serious disagreements inside the party, caused by the opposition behaviour of the representatives of the Catholic clergymen who opposed Szűllő openly. Unlike Budapest, interested in creation of a unified Hungarian minority political party in Czechoslovakia, the Catholic priests engaged in the OKSzP party structures criticized the attempts of the party president to cooperate more closely with the predominantly protestant MNP. That was unacceptable for the Catholic priests from OKSzP. According to the interested Roman-Catholic clergymen, the ideological difference between OKSzP and MNP was so strong that any attempt for unified political front of the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia would not lead to

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<sup>76</sup> At least the reports of the Czechoslovak police authorities refer to it. Compare the Slovenský národný archív (hereinafter referred to only as SNA), Policajné riaditeľstvo Bratislava (hereinafter referred to only as PR), box No. 239, doc. No. 16955/31 (*Kraj. kresť. soc. strana – situácia zpráva.*), confidential report of the police director in Bratislava to the presidium of the Provincial Office at the same place (sent also to the presidium of the Ministry of the Interior in Prague) from 30 October 1931, fol. 154-155, or 154 / pp. 1 and 2.

success but, sooner or later, to serious conflict within OKSzP.<sup>77</sup>

Due to new circumstances in the party and the changed policy of Budapest, Géza Szűllő resigned from the office of OKSzP president on 18 August 1932, referring to health reasons. The motives of Géza Szűllő's forced resignation from the office of president of the Hungarian Christian Socialists are summarized in the report of the Police Direction of Bratislava. The main cause of Szűllő's withdrawal should have been the fact that „...the Hungarian government had denied him further support because he had not succeeded in effectuating the union of opposition parties in spite of binding promise ...”.<sup>78</sup> The five-member presidential committee was entrusted with temporary party direction. János Esterházy became its member, becoming also official candidate for the office of OKSzP president.<sup>79</sup> But the Roman-Catholic priest wing did not agree with Esterházy's candidacy. They proposed the priest Lajos Franciscy as the new president of the party, although the interest of Budapest in Esterházy's assuming the party direction was pointed out.<sup>80</sup>

The interest of the new Hungarian governmental crew in Esterházy could result from their possible belief that Esterházy's county origin and his belonging to an old Hungarian aristocratic family could guarantee also stabilization inside OKSzP and reconciliation of the conflicting „civic” and „clerical” fractions inside the party, although the clergy wing was against Esterházy's nomination. Nevertheless, if such hypothesis could be assumed, the Budapest government could have betted particularly on the traditional close relationship of the Church with the aristocracy. But indisputably, one of the main political arguments of Esterházy's support by Budapest could be particularly the guarantee of continued Szűllő's political line tending to closer cooperation of Hungarian parties, that could finally lead to the creation of a unified political party of the Hungarians in Czechoslovakia.<sup>81</sup>

It was probably the ex-president Szűllő who saved Esterházy's being elected OKSzP president. The election of the new party president was held on 14 December 1932. The ex-president of the party suggested Esterházy to be elected president and Franciscy honorary president of the party. Finally, the election ended in favour of János Esterházy. He was elected unanimously to the head of OKSzP and Lajos Franciscy to the office of honorary president of the party.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Compare SNA, PR, ibidem, doc. No. 16613/31 pres. (*Maďarské strany na Slovensku – situačná zpráva.*), confidential report of the police director in Bratislava to the presidium of the Provincial Office at the same place (sent also to the presidium of the Ministry of the Interior in Prague) from 23 October 1931, fol. 152-153, or 152 / p. 2.

<sup>78</sup> SNA, PR, ibidem, the above stated document No. 16955/31, fol. 154 / pp. 1-2.

<sup>79</sup> PMH, 1932, volume XI, issue 200 (3013), 2 September, front page, *Öttagú bizottság fogja vezetni az országos keresztényszocialista pártot az ősszel esedékes pártkongresszusig.*

<sup>80</sup> Compare SNA, PR, ibidem, doc. No. 10510/32, (*Kraj. kresť. soc. strana – informácie.*), confidential police report to the presidium of Provincial Office in Bratislava on the meeting of the executive committee and the presidium of OKSzP (sent also to the presidium of the Ministry of the Interior in Prague) from 7 September 1932, fol. 195-197, or 195-196 / pp. 2-3.

<sup>81</sup> Compare SNA, PR, ibidem, fol. 195 / pp. 1-2.

<sup>82</sup> PMH, 1932, volume XI, issue 285 (3098), 15 December, p. 3, *Egyhangúlag Esterházy Jánost választották meg a párt országos elnökévé.* Compare also SNA, PR, box No. 238, doc. No. 16034/32 prez. (*Krajinská kresťansko-sociálna strana, informácie*), top confidential report of the

Personnel revivalist process took place also in MNP. But it did not bring such a dramatic intervention in the party leadership as in OKSžP. One of the causes consisted in the fact that the party was not weakened by faction conflicts. Andor Jaross, the acting president of the party and deputy to the Land Assembly in Bratislava, was taking over the political baton from older generation step by step. Although Jaross, unlike Esterházy, the new OKSžP president, had been member of the party presidium from 1925, he did not rank among the leading political personalities of MNP. The influence of Budapest governmental circles can be probably assumed in case of his career growth in the party as well. Jaross' marked political advancement in the party was started in January 1932 when he began organizing the youth section within the existing party structures in MNP. Until 1933, Jaross had gradually worked his way up to one of the leading personalities of the party. On 15 May 1933 Jaross was elected acting president of the party, to replace the resigning senator, Béla Szilassy. So together with Törköly, the party president, and the factual political party leader, Szent-Ivány, Jaross became member of the factual closest political leadership of MNP.<sup>83</sup>

### ***Attempts to create finally a broader autonomistic bloc with HSĽS***

In early the Thirtieths, both Hungarian minority parties maintained identical autonomistic policy already, which constituted suitable initial base for negotiations with the Slovak autonomists. HSĽS did not stay long in the civic coalition, leaving the government in 1929, before the parliamentary election. After the third parliamentary election, the party went into full opposition again. So negotiations on creation of a broader autonomistic bloc with strong political mandate could get to the order of the day. Also the political representatives of the Hungarian minority parties participated in the negotiations. Also Budapest had an enormous interest in joint cooperation of the Hungarian minority parties and HSĽS, calling and even charging the political representation of the Hungarian minority parties in this sense.<sup>84</sup>

But the promising political negotiations between the political representation of the Hungarian minority parties and HSĽS from the end of summer 1931 did not lead to joint cooperation in the end.<sup>85</sup> The possibility of closer cooperation be-

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police director in Bratislava to the presidium of the Provincial Office at the same place from 19 December 1932 (sent also to the presidium of the Ministry of the Interior in Prague), fol. 546-560, or 549 / particularly p. 4.

<sup>83</sup> ANGYAL: 188-189.

<sup>84</sup> Compare e.g. SNA, PR, box No. 240, doc. No. 993/33 pres. (*Krajinská kresťansko-sociálna strana, informácie*), top confidential report of the police director in Bratislava to the presidium of the Provincial Office at the same place from 23 January 1933 (sent also to the presidium of the Ministry of the Interior in Prague), fol. 617-620, or 619.

<sup>85</sup> Compare the police report of the negotiations of the Hungarian minority politicians with the representatives of HSĽS from 15 September 1931 in SNA, PR, box No. 239, doc. No. 15203/31 pres. (*Kresťansko sociálna strana – žilinské porady dňa 15.9. 1931*), top confidential report of the police direction in Bratislava based on the reports of the presidium of the police direction in Košice to the



tween the Slovak autonomists and the Hungarian minority parties was undermined now particularly by the radicalization of the coming younger generation of Slovaks sympathizing with the autonomistic movement. That generation, unlike the older generation of Slovaks, was oriented not only against Czechs but also against Hungarians. The possibility of joint cooperation between HSLS and the Hungarian parties was weakened also by the personal antagonism of Szüllő, the OKSzP president, and Hlinka, the HSLS president. Confidential police reports reveal that Szent-Ivány's MNP was more open towards HSLS and seemed much more engaged in the joint negotiations with HSLS at that time, although there was confessional difference between both parties.<sup>86</sup>

The new president of the party, great advocate of the Catholic Church, Esterházy, should constitute new guarantee of final implementation of united cooperation of the Hungarian parties with the autonomistic HSLS. Esterházy's election to new OKSzP president and the priest Franciscy's election to honorary president ensured the desired reconciliation with the priest wing of the party, which was desirable not only from the perspective of the party integrity. The priest wing of OKSzP could also assist markedly to convince the Slovak Catholic clergy, which had considerable influence in HSLS, in favour of the united Slovak-Hungarian bloc.<sup>87</sup> Big hopes were reportedly pinned on the joint action of the Slovak and Hungarian Catholic clergy and it was expected that „*that action will be crowned by result and that the Slovak clergy will force HSLS to cooperate with the Hungarian parties.*”<sup>88</sup> Nevertheless, the reality was different in the end. The Slovak autonomists and the Hungarian parties did not establish closer pre-election cooperation that time either.

### ***Hungarian minority political scene and Sudeten Germans in the first half of the Thirtieths***

Additionally to the negotiations of the Hungarian minority parties of joint political cooperation with the Slovak autonomists,<sup>89</sup> probing negotiations of political officials of the Hungarian minority were held also with the political representatives of the Sudeten German minority. The search for possibilities of joint cooperation of the Hungarian minority parties with the Sudeten Germans were reopened because of the new international-political circumstances of the first half of the Thirti-

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presidium of the Provincial Office in Bratislava from 23 September 1931 (sent also to the presidium of the Ministry of the Interior in Prague), fol. 134-135.

<sup>86</sup> Compare SNA, PR, ibidem, doc. No. 17852/1931 pres. (*Mad. kresť. soc. strana – schôdzka zemského výkonného výboru v Žiline*), top confidential report of the police direction in Bratislava based on the reports of the presidium of the police direction in Košice to the presidium of the Provincial Office in Bratislava from 13 November 1931 (sent also to the presidium of the Ministry of the Interior in Prague), fol. 159-164, or 159-161 / pp. 2-6.

<sup>87</sup> The presidium of the Provincial Office in Bratislava was alerted to that also by the report of the police director at the same place. See SNA, PR, box No. 240, quoted doc. No. 993/33 pres., fol. 617-620, or 617.

<sup>88</sup> Ibidem, fol. 618.

<sup>89</sup> Negotiations were held also with the Carpathian-Ruthenian autonomists.

eths, related particularly to Hitler's strengthening position in Germany and his taking of power in 1933 and to the fact that the Hungarian foreign policy started searching a new ally in Hitler's Germany, particularly after Gyula Gömbös' becoming Prime Minister in Budapest. Particularly Germany was enormously interested in joint cooperation between the Hungarian and German minority political scene.

Just before Hitler was appointed German Chancellor, broad negotiations on the possibilities of joint cooperation of both minority camps not only in Czechoslovakia took place in early January 1933 in Berlin, under participation of Kálmán Kánya, the Hungarian envoy to Germany and future Hungarian Foreign Minister. The Hungarian minority parties in Czechoslovakia were represented by Szűllő at the negotiations. According to the Czechoslovak police sources, the core of the Berlin negotiations consisted in the issue of joint action of the Hungarian and German parties in the relevant states, and the negotiation should lead to preliminary agreement of establishment of special joint political headquarters, probably under the auspices of the German Foreign Ministry, for the involved minorities, so that their political representatives could proceed jointly on the international forum.<sup>90</sup>

But in the end, the agreement of concrete closer and more organized cooperation between the Sudeten Germans and the Slovak Hungarians did not become reality, due to the different political goals and interests of both opposition minority camps. The contacts of the opposition Hungarian minority parties and the Sudeten Germans ended only at the level of parliamentary contacts and mutual oral support – not essentially concrete – within the parliamentary debates.

#### ***Fourth parliamentary election in spring 1935***

The Hungarian minority parties ran for the second time a joint list of candidates for the next parliamentary election held on 19 May 1935. The parliamentary election in 1935 was at the same time the first parliamentary election in which the Hungarian minority parties, OKSzP and MNP, ran also in the electoral districts in the historical lands of the Czechoslovak Republic, i.e. in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> SNA, PR, ibidem, doc. No. 1614/33 pres. (*Krajinská kresťansko-sociálna strana – informácie*), top confidential report of the police director in Bratislava to the presidium of the Provincial Office at the same place from 9 February 1933 (sent also to the presidium of the Ministry of the Interior in Prague), fol. 622-625, or 622.

<sup>91</sup> In the historical lands of the Czechoslovak Republic, 14 256 voters in total voted for the Hungarian unified list of candidates, which represented 0,3 % of all the valid votes cast there. Toward the election results of the Hungarian parties in the historical lands of the Czechoslovak Republic in more details see Andrej TÓTH: *Count János Esterházy, the Chairman of the United Hungarian Party in the debate of parliamentarians of the Czechoslovak National Assembly in 1938, the fatal year of the first Czechoslovak Republic (Esterházy's criticism of Czechoslovakia in the year of the Munich Agreement)*, Öt Kontinens, Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, Budapest, 2009. 429-455 or 431. There is a mistake in the English translation in pages 431, 432, 433, 436 and 437 – there is written: „the joint Hungarian-Sudeten-German candidate list” but there should be written: „joint Hungarian-Zipser-German candidate list” instead.

The joint statewide list of candidates of the Hungarian minority parties got about 292 thousand votes in the fourth election for the Chamber of Deputies<sup>92</sup> and about 260 thousand votes in the election for the Senate.<sup>93</sup> Although the Hungarian parties got slightly more votes than in the election of 1929, they obtained 14 mandates in total in the National Assembly, i.e. one mandate less than in the third term of office. They had 9 mandates in the Chamber of Deputies and 5 mandates in the Senate.<sup>94</sup> Both Hungarian parties created joint parliamentary clubs with the Zipser Germans in the National Assembly again.<sup>95</sup>

### ***Election of Masaryk's successor to the office of President of the Republic in December 1935***

On 14 November 1935, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, the ill long-standing President of the Republic, announced publicly his abdication one month in advance. The presidential election was set for 18 December 1935. The abdicating Masaryk suggested Edvard Beneš, the Foreign Minister, as his successor. Bohumil Němec nominated by the right-wing parties became his rival candidate.<sup>96</sup> As the chances of the candidates of both political camps were balanced at the beginning, the subsequent month ran under the sign of intensive and difficult political negotiations. The legislators of both Hungarian parties represented in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate of the National Assembly had cast empty ballots in presidential elections so far, pointing out their opposition or negativistic political line also in that form. Nevertheless, both Hungarian minority political parties ended up in a completely new role in connection with the election of Masaryk's successor. It was obvious now that thanks to the current political situation, relevant political negotiations could take place also with Hungarian parties.

There was not much time left for political negotiations. Several days before the actual presidential election no one of the presidential candidates still could not be sure of victory. Only five days before the very act of presidential election, Beneš therefore decided to turn to the Hungarian minority political scene. On 13 December, Beneš met Esterházy, the OKSzP president, in order to ascertain the possibility of support to his presidential candidacy also by the legislators from the Hungarian minority.<sup>97</sup> Beneš's broader joint meeting with the representatives of the Hungar-

<sup>92</sup> Exactly 291.831, i.e. 3,55 % of all the votes cast. [Compare ČSS – Volume 134, Series I (Elections, Issue 5) Volby do poslanecké sněmovny v květnu 1935. Praha 1936, p. 9.].

<sup>93</sup> Exactly 259.832, i.e. 3,57 % of all the votes cast. [Compare *ibid.*].

<sup>94</sup> Compare NS RČS v druhém desetiletí (1928-1938), pp. 928 and 932.

<sup>95</sup> Compare *ibidem*. János Esterházy, Augustin Petrášek, Géza Porubszky and Géza Szüllő were deputies for OKSzP and Károly Hokky, Miklós Pajor and Imre Turchányi got to the Senate. MNP was represented in the Chamber of Deputies by János Holota, Andor Jaross, Endre Korláth, József Szent-Ivány and Andor Nitsch (ZDP) and in the Senate by Kálmán Füßy and József Törköly (in 1937 replaced by Béla Szilassy). Szüllő stayed president of the deputy club and Törköly president of the senator club; in 1937 he was replaced by Szilassy, the former president of the senator club from the third term of office (Compare *ibid.*, p. 932.)

<sup>96</sup> But Němec withdrew his candidacy just before the election.

<sup>97</sup> MOL, K 64 – 62 – 1935 – 7 – 869/res. pol. Szüllő's „*aide mémoire*“ on the course of the political negotiations of the Hungarian minority Parties with Beneš and the attitude of the Hungarian

ian minority parties, Esterházy, Szüllő and Jaross, took place one day before the presidential election, on 17 December. The representatives of the Hungarian parties submitted their conditions under which they would be ready to support Beneš, the Foreign Minister, in the presidential election. The Hungarian parties required particularly: 1) creation of an independent Hungarian education department, 2) introduction of a rule for construction of state budgets that would consider the percentage representation of Hungarian nationality in the Czechoslovak Republic when preparing the individual state budget items, 3) stoppage of all politically motivated legal processes, 4) yearly subsidy to Hungarian theatres, cultural clubs and economic associations, 5) establishment of a Hungarian university.<sup>98</sup> Beneš expressed reportedly helpfulness to those proposals and promised support to the submitted demands of the Hungarian parties. At Beneš' instance, Esterházy elaborated and submitted a more synoptic memorandum summarizing the demands of the Hungarian minority parties in eighteen items.<sup>99</sup>

In the end, the Hungarian minority parties behaved pragmatically in the presidential election, supporting Edvard Beneš, in spite of their negative attitude to the leading personalities related to the origin of the constitutional conception of

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parties to Beneš' candidacy for president (Beneš megválasztása; the document was handed over probably by Szüllő; it was registered on 28 December 1935), fol. 4-7 / pp. 1-3, or fol. 4 / p. 2. [The document is included in the archive file on the confidential political report under No. 872/res. pol. on the attitude of the Czechoslovak Hungarian minority parties concerning the issue of the presidential election; the document is signed personally by János Wettstein, the Hungarian envoy to Czechoslovakia; for the doc. see fol. 1-3 / pp. 1-6. Esterházy is mentioned in the report under the code name of „Asztalos”, Jaross under the code name of „Pál” and Szüllő under the code name of „Éva”. Fol. 1-24 (the whole archive file.)].

<sup>98</sup> Compare MOL, K 64 – 62 – 1935 – 7 – 840/res. pol., document not specified in more detail, registered at the Foreign Ministry on 23 December 1935 (The document is included in the archive file on the confidential political report under No. 872/res. pol. on the attitude of the Czechoslovak Hungarian minority parties concerning the issue of the presidential election), *ibid.*, fol. 8-9 / pp. 1-2.

<sup>99</sup> See e.g. SNA, PR, box No. 253, doc. No. 3514/36 (*Maďarské opozičné strany.*), confidential report of the police director in Bratislava to the presidium of the Provincial Office at the same place from 18 March 1936 (sent also to the presidium of the Ministry of the Interior in Prague), summarizing also the Hungarian demands from the relevant memorandum, fol. 154-157, or fol. 154 / p. 2 – fol. 155 / p. 3. The Hungarians required: establishment of Hungarian vicariate at each bishopric; solution of the issue of state citizenship; solution of language issue; authorization of import of Hungarian books; establishment of Hungarian department at each ministry, lead by an official of Hungarian nationality; provision that each citizen with Czechoslovak citizenship of Hungarian nationality could use the Hungarian in state institutions including courts and make filings in Hungarian; adaptation of salaries of religious teachers so that 75 % of the wages were covered by the state; direct participation of political representatives of the Hungarian minority in creation of the state budget; preservation of the realschule in Levoča; establishment of Hungarian grammar school in Užhorod; establishment of Hungarian departments at Prague and Bratislava University and appointment of two university teachers of Hungarian nationality as university professors; establishment of Hungarian department at the land education council in Bratislava; establishment of Hungarian department at agrarian council in Slovakia; dissolution of Hungarian groups of Czechoslovak political parties; stoppage of support to subsidized Hungarian press (*Magyar Újság, Új Közlöny*); establishment of a subsidiary of the Provincial Office in Košice and appointment of one vice-president of Hungarian nationality; establishment of Hungarian teacher institutes in Bratislava and in Užhorod; provision for adequate subsidizing of agricultural and economic institutions and other special cultural associations.

interwar Czechoslovak Republic, among whom Beneš had indisputably ranked, and turned away from the alliance with the radicalizing representatives of the civic bloc. So it was the first time when they did not demonstrate their political negativism by casting empty ballots, as the deputies and senators of the Sudeten German Party (SdP),<sup>100</sup> the strongest political subject of the most numerous Czechoslovak minority, Germans, did. The Hungarians took activist attitude within the presidential election, regardless from the policy of their closest potential political partner, HSzS who had supported the civic, so called December bloc lead by right-wing agrarians, or their presidential candidate, virtually until last moment.

### ***Last years of existence of the First Czechoslovak Republic***

The first half of 1936 on the Hungarian minority political scene was under the sign of restored efforts to unify both Hungarian parties into one subject. MNP or Andor Jaross, its president, was the main instigator of the efforts to merge both Hungarian parties again. He called the Hungarian minority parties to unification through the Prágai Magyar Hírlap newspaper unexpectedly on 10 January 1936.<sup>101</sup> In spite of the persisting diverging opinions between the representatives of both political formations of the creation of a unified political party, an agreement was achieved that time, and the presidiums of both parties declared merger of OKSzP and MNP into one political party in March 1936 already.<sup>102</sup> The united political party of the Czechoslovak Hungarian minority was officially established in Nové Zámky on 21 June 1936. The merged party usually acted under the abbreviated name of United Hungarian Party (EMP).<sup>103</sup> Andor Jaross became president of the party and János Esterházy became acting president of the party.<sup>104</sup>

Even after the merger of the two Hungarian minority political parties into one political subject with stronger political mandate, the Hungarian issue stayed behind the German issue in the more and more tense years of the second half of the Thirtieths. The Czechoslovak government focused on solution of the national question particularly with regard to the issue of the German minority that was more and more categoric in its demands. The position of the Czechoslovak Hungarians depended rather on the political pressure exerted on the government by the Sudeten Germans and by the Slovak autonomists. So the Hungarian minority stoked the overpressurized political boiler of the second half of the Thirtieths always rather additionally and in markedly less amount, as compared to the Sudeten German party. The statewide and land deputies of the Hungarian minority proceeded to the first considerably

<sup>100</sup> Sudetendeutsche Partei.

<sup>101</sup> PMH, 1936, volume XV, No. 7 (3856), 10 January, front page, *Csehszlovákia magyarságához!*

<sup>102</sup> PMH, 1936, volume XV, No. 59 (3908), 11 March, pp. 1-2, *Megalakult az Egyesült Országos Keresztényszocialista és Magyar Nemzeti Párt* and ibidem, No. 60 (3909), 12 March, pp. 1-2, *A magyar nemzetiek egyhangúlag határozták el a pártfúziót.*

<sup>103</sup> *Egységes Magyar Párt*, full name: *Egyesült Országos Keresztényszocialista és Magyar Nemzeti Párt*

<sup>104</sup> PMH, 1936, volume XV, No. 142 (3991), 23 Juni, pp. 1-4, *Érsekújvár nagy történelmi napja. Tízezres tömeg újongása mellett megalakult az Egyesült Párt.*

radical step only in mid-September 1938, declaring the right of national self-determination of the Hungarian minority and requiring plebiscite in the issue of the future of the Hungarian areas on 17 September.<sup>105</sup>

In spite of the priority of the German issue, backed up by the strengthening and more aggressively behaving Hitler's Germany, there were attempts of the Czechoslovak government to hold closer negotiations with the top political representatives of the Hungarian minority. After more than half a year, on 11 September 1936, Beneš met János Esterházy, the leading political personality of the Czechoslovak Hungarian minority again. A surprising moment of the meeting was the president's offer for Esterházy to join the government in the office of minister without portfolio. But the acting president of EMP refused the offer, requiring the fulfilment of Beneš' promises given to the political representatives of the Hungarian minority before the presidential election at the end of 1935.<sup>106</sup>

During the stressed years of the second half of the Thirtieths, the political representatives of the Czechoslovak Hungarian minorities asked the Czechoslovak government to meet their requirements and to correct the injustices against the Hungarian minority, claimed by them, through memorandums of state authorities. On 1 September 1936, the Hungarian legislators submitted to the government a memorandum requiring full respecting of the language law and of the decree towards the Hungarian minority, as well as reduction of the condition of at least twenty-percent share of the national minority in the population of judicial districts for the use of the minority language in official contacts to ten-percent limit.<sup>107</sup> In spring 1937, the Hungarian minority politicians elaborated an extensive memorandum called „*Injustices done to the Czechoslovak Hungarians*”, concerning the cultural, Church, economic and political life.<sup>108</sup> Early 1938, another extensive memorandum containing sixty-seven items was handed over by the Hungarian parties to the Prime Minister and president of the republic at the same time.<sup>109</sup>

But the first meeting ever between the political representatives of the Hungarian

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<sup>105</sup> PMH, 1938, volume XVII, No. 214 (4657), 18 September, front page, *Az önrendelkezési jog alapján békés megoldást kíván a magyarság.*

<sup>106</sup> MOL, K 64 – 70 – 1937 – 7 – 606/res./1936, Esterházy's minutes of meeting with President Beneš, held in Topolčianky on 11 September 1936 (see 606/res.pol./1936 dated 15 September 1936, fol. 9-20 / pp. 1-12). The document is enclosed to the secret report of the Hungarian vice-consul to Bratislava, Gyula Petravich, from 15 February 1937 No. of 128/res./1936 (*Mátyás látogatása Benesnél és tárgyalásai Sramekkel*, fol. 6-7; „*Mátyás*” was one of the code names for János Esterházy in the correspondence of the Hungarian Ministry).

<sup>107</sup> MOL, K 64 – 66 – 1936 – 7 – 593/res.pol./1936, *Előterjesztés a magyarságot képviselő törvényhozóknak a kisebbségi nyelvhasználati sérelmek és követelések tárgyában*, fol. 1-10 / pp. 1-10. The memorandum was handed over by János Esterházy (see the note written with pencil in upper left corner, fol. 1 / p. 1.)

<sup>108</sup> MOL, K 64 – 70 – 1937 – 7 – 280/res.pol./1937, *A csehszlovákiai magyarság sérelmei*, fol. 1-17, or 3-17, or 16 / pp. 1-14. The document is dated 5 May 1936 and it is a typewritten copy.

<sup>109</sup> MOL, K 64 – 75 – 1938 – 7 – 43/res./1938, *Memorandum*, the document is not dated and it is a typewritten copy, e.g. fol. 1-12 / pp. 1-12. The memorandum was handed over by Andor Jaross (see the note written with pencil in upper part, fol. 1 / p. 1.).

minority and the Prime Minister in the internally tense years of the second half of the Thirtieths occurred only in the first half of 1938. First an initial informative meeting of both sides took place in March, continued by more detailed negotiation on 29 June 1938. For EMP, Esterházy, Jaross, Szüllő and Korláth participated in the June meeting with the Prime Minister. Milan Hodža, the Prime Minister, assured the Hungarian minority politicians that the Hungarians will acquire the same space and the same solution as the Sudeten Germans within the prepared solution of the national issue in Czechoslovakia. The last Prime Minister's meeting with the Hungarian minority politicians was held on 1 September 1938. The Prime Minister of the Czechoslovak government informed Jaross and Esterházy about his conception of the national self-government and assured the political leaders of EMP that he would consult them in that matter. So there was almost no time left for constructive solution of the already very delicate national issue.<sup>110</sup>

In spite of the increasing weight of the national issue on the modulation not only of the internal conditions of the state, the two biggest national minorities in Czechoslovakia did not establish closer, bloc or institutionalized political cooperation not even in the second half of the Thirtieths. A serious barrier to the possible closer relationships between the political subjects of the two biggest national minorities, EMP and SdP, consisted e.g. in the different view of the political representatives of the Hungarian minority on the method of fight for the rights of the minorities. Another essential obstacle to closer cooperation of the Sudeten Germans and the Czechoslovak Hungarians consisted also in the aggressive propaganda of SdP in Slovakia among the Zipser Germans, frowned upon both by the top representatives of the Party of Zipser Germans and by EMP. Particularly the expansivity of SdP in Slovakia was discussed at mutual meetings of the representatives of both political parties, i.e. EMP and SdP. It was the case also at the meeting of Szüllő, Jaross and Esterházy with Henlein, the SdP leader, and Karl Hermann Frank, his deputy, on 11 May 1937, at which the EMP representatives protested categorically against the expansive policy of SdP in Slovakia. The declared wish of the SdP leaders of institutionalization of free cooperation of both parties stayed only a wish of the Sudeten Germans, and the common meetings resulted only in agreement of further free cooperation of both parties at parliament level and of support to the bills of arrangement of minority conditions in the country, submitted by Henlein's party.<sup>111</sup> So the contacts of the politicians of both minorities continued to stay only at informative level. That was the level at which also the next meeting of SdP and EMP representatives was held on 24 May 1938. Only

<sup>110</sup> MOL, K 64 – 79 – 1939 – 65 – 597/res.pol./1938, or 18/fón./1938, *Bizalmas iratok felterjesztése*, report of the Hungarian envoy to Prague to the Hungarian Foreign Minister from 4 July 1938), fol. 89-98, or 92-95 / pp. 1-3 (*Melléklet a 18/fón. 1938 sz. jelentéshez*), additional minutes of meeting by deputy Endre Korláth (see fol. 92); MOL, K 64 – 75 – 1938 – 7 – 777/res./1938, or 28/fón./1938, *A Magyar Párt vezetőségének tárgyalása Hodža miniszterelnöknél*, secret report from the Hungarian legation to Prague to the Hungarian Foreign Minister from 2 September 1938, fol. 1-5, see fol. 3-4 (pp. 1-2).

<sup>111</sup> Compare MOL, K 64 – 70 – 1937 – 7 – 299/res.pol./1937, document without detailed name (the document was ceded to the Foreign Ministry from the Minister Presidency on 12 May), fol. 1-3 / pp. 1-3.

Henlein and Esterházy reportedly participated in it.<sup>112</sup>

Thus the particular interests of the national minorities allowed further only unbound, rather uncoordinated and spontaneous cooperation in the National Assembly, based on only one joint platform of their opposition political line, the effort to reorganize the cultural-political rights of the national minorities. So that very general joint political base of the opposition minority national parties and autonomists could be implemented only in form of more or less mutually supportive declarations in the parliament, in public or in press. Also the joint front of the Czechoslovak Germans, Hungarians, Slovaks and Poles, declared in September 1938 on the base of joint agreement on acute need of constitutional rearrangement of the state and new arrangement of the national issue constituted only apparently united action.<sup>113</sup>

At the end of summer 1938, the days of the First Czechoslovak Republic were virtually numbered. The persistence and uncompromisingness of the political leaders of the German minority at the negotiations with the Czechoslovak government excluded the possibility of any positive solution to the internal political crisis in the country. The steadily escalating demands of SdP paralyzed all joint negotiations of the representatives of the Sudeten German Party and the government. The western allies turned away from Prague too. The internal political crisis in Czechoslovakia, affecting also the international-political atmosphere in Europe, resulted in signature of the Munich Agreement on 29 September 1938. In that agreement, the representatives of Great Britain and France, together with Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy, forced Czechoslovakia to cede the Sudeten German territories to Hitler's Germany.

As from September 1938, the political representatives of the Czechoslovak Hungarian minority stood openly on the base of revisionism that had replaced the autonomistic political line of the party, in consequence of the new internal and external political circumstances. On 7 October 1938 the Hungarian National Council was established and its representatives, including the main political leaders of EMP, required their participation in the unsuccessful Czechoslovak-Hungarian negotiations on the revision of the joint state border, that took place from 9 to 13 October 1938 in Komárno.<sup>114</sup> Nevertheless, thanks to the completely different political line of EMP, order and peace was preserved in the southern parts of Slovakia even in autumn of the very stressed year 1938, and so the Czechoslovak government did not have to declare state of emergency in the affected parts of Slovakia, as it had to do in the German borderlands in Bohemia.

The Czechoslovak-Hungarian negotiations on cession of southern parts of Slovakia to Hungary stayed without result. So the provision of the supplement to the Munich Agreement, which alerted Czechoslovakia that if the Hungarian issue in

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<sup>112</sup> See MOL, K 64 – 75 – 1938 – 7 – 473/res.pol./1938, confidential report of the Hungarian legation to Prague from 24 May 1938, fol. 1-3, or 2-3 (fol. 4-5, second copy of the report).

<sup>113</sup> See e.g. PMH, 1938, volume XVII, No. 206 (4649), 9 September, front page, *Magyar-német-szlovák-lengyel egységfront Prágában*.

<sup>114</sup> MOL, K 64 – 75 – 1938 – 7 – 1455/res./1938, request of the Hungarian National Council from 13 October 1938 for participation of its delegates in the Czechoslovak-Hungarian negotiations in Komárno, fol. 163.



Czechoslovakia was not solved by agreement within three months, the very representatives of the four powers would do it, was not fulfilled. So the Czechoslovak-Hungarian conflict was finally solved by arbitration award from 2 November 1938.<sup>115</sup> The Czechoslovak Republic had to cede a considerable part of the territory of southern and eastern Slovakia including south-western part of Carpathian Ruthenia to Hungary.

The first Vienna arbitration from November 1938 put an end to the two decades of political organization of the Czechoslovak Hungarian minority in the First Republic. During the whole period of existence of Czechoslovakia, the central political parties of the Hungarian minority maintained opposition policy. In spite of the flirt with activism particularly in the second half of the Twentieths, the political representation of the Hungarian minority and the government did not find common ground during the whole two decades of interwar Czechoslovakia. The Hungarians did not join the government even in the hot times of the first years of the second half of the Thirtieths. The Hungarian minority defended consistently the cultural-social and economic interests of the Hungarian minority on the political scene of the First Czechoslovak Republic. But their political fight for defence of the interests of the Hungarian minority always took place in the legal limits and they never assumed any extra-political aggressive, provocational and destructive practices, as the Sudeten Germans lead by Konrád Henlein's radicalized SdP did. They saw adequate future of the (not only) Hungarian minority in consistent autonomous rearrangement of Czechoslovakia, not in revision of borders. They tended to support revisionism only at the very end of the First Republic.

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<sup>115</sup> So called first Vienna arbitration.

