

# *Cultural Cooperation between Hungary and Yugoslavia (1945–1948)*

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## *Continuing Past Connections*

Hungary's relations with the Southern Slavonic peoples are rooted in history, similarly to their connections with their other neighbors. Many of the Serbian poets, writers and scientists grew up and were educated in Hungary. Most of the Serbian books produced in the eighteenth–nineteenth centuries were printed in Hungary. The great reformer of Serbian language and spelling, Vuk Karadjic, was bound to Hungarian culture by strong ties. Mihály Vitkovics was a Serbian and Hungarian poet at the same time. The creator of Serbian musical culture, Cornel Stankovic, was born in Buda and educated in Hungary. Western cultural influence was often relayed to Serbia through Hungary. Hungarian–Yugoslav relations were free of many of the adverse factors that burdened Hungary's relations with some other countries, because there were not serious animosities between Hungarians and Southern Slavonic peoples. The Serbians, for instance, had significant cultural associations, and a vivid intellectual life in Hungary. During World War I the activity of Serbian cultural life in Hungary, understandably, diminished. It was soon revitalized after the war.\*

During World War II very serious tensions were generated between the two countries, mostly as a result of mistakes committed by Hungarian political and military leaders as well as by Serbian guerilla bands. These tensions, however, did not have a fatal and irreversible effect on postwar connections. Despite the fact that Yugoslavia finished the war as a victor and with a very high international prestige, the Yugoslav government did not exploit their superiority over Hungary, apart from several instances of retaliations and showdowns right after the end of the war. It was probably not a decisive factor in the attitude of the Yugoslav Government, but Hungarians also participated in the war of liberation conducted by the Yugoslav Communist Party, and it may have played some role in shaping Yugoslavia's policy in connection with Hungary. From December 1944, Tito's Yugoslavia was open to Hungarians, and no further retaliations were tolerated by the Yugoslav leadership. Thus Yugoslavia became receptive to the policy

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\* The history of the Hungarian–Yugoslav connections and the situation of the Hungarians in Yugoslavia are analyzed by Enikő A. Sajti in many of her books and studies.

developed by the political forces united in the Hungarian National Independence Front, declared to the general public by the Provisional National Government in Debrecen in December 1944. Hungary expressed her intentions to enter into good relationships with every democratic country, especially with those in the Carpathian Basin. Yugoslavia demonstrated the most encouraging attitude to the Hungarian initiatives.

In 1945, when Hungary was internationally isolated, the benevolence and tolerance of Yugoslavia to Hungary was not particularly overshadowed by past atrocities committed on both sides. Good Hungarian-Yugoslav relations were supported by the fact that Yugoslavia was the only one of the successor states of Austria-Hungary which provided cultural and political rights to the ethnic Hungarian minority.

### *The Foundations of the Good Relationships*

Yugoslavia's policy contributed to the emerging cooperation of the nations of the Danube Valley right from the beginning. In this process the federation of Yugoslav communists played an outstandingly important role. The communist Yugoslav Government did not approve of retaliations, and any manifestation of national intolerance, but acknowledged and provided for the rights of the Hungarian national minority almost from the very end of the war. After the war Yugoslavia made efforts to improve and reinforce its relations with her neighbors. In her connections with Hungary, Yugoslavia did not emphasize the frictions and animosities of the past, but the necessity of establishing and reinforcing new connections, that would lead to cooperation between the two nations. Yugoslav domestic and foreign policy played a positive role in eliminating Hungary's international isolation.<sup>1</sup>

Yugoslav cultural policy also contributed largely to the rapprochement of the two nations. From the aspect of spreading Hungarian culture and education it was of utmost importance that the situation of the Hungarian ethnic minority was satisfactory in Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia ensured the conditions necessary for the development of the Hungarian press. In December 1944 Hungarian papers, journals and magazines were published in Újvidék. The social and cultural magazine *Híd* (*The Bridge*) had a circulation of 3,000-4,000, and *Ifjúság Szava* (*The Voice of the Youth*) was published in 10 thousand copies. The agricultural journal *Föld* (*The Land*), had a circulation of 5-7 thousand. In addition to all this, there was a Hungarian publishing house in Újvidék.<sup>2</sup>

In June 1945 the Hungarian Cultural Association in Yugoslavia, the largest autonomous Hungarian cultural and social organization, was established in Új-

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<sup>1</sup> S. Balogh, *A népi demokratikus Magyarország külpolitikája 1945-1947*. [Foreign policy of Hungary, 1945-1947] Budapest 1982, 38.

<sup>2</sup> *Országgyűlés naplója*, I-III. Hiteles kiadás. Atheneum Irodalmi és Nyomdai Részvénytársulat Könyvkiadója, Budapest, 1948. [Journals of Parliament] II., 75.

vidék.<sup>3</sup> The Cultural Association coordinated the work of the local organizations, book publishing and distribution, and the organization of literary events. The creation of the Cultural Association demonstrated that the pre-war era of oppression of Hungarians was finally replaced with equality. The activities of the Cultural Association were initially extended to the area of the province Vajdaság (Voivodina), but in the summer of 1947 it was granted nationwide authority. Thus it became possible to organize and develop Hungarian cultural centers in areas where it had previously not been possible.<sup>4</sup> As a result of the policy of national equality, Hungarian schools and faculties were opened. It was in Yugoslavia where the situation of the Hungarian ethnic minority was the most satisfactory of all the successor states. Positive tendencies are clearly indicated by statistics: out of 7,600 people, one studied in Hungarian language at school in 1937, whereas in 1947 one out of 30 people was a Hungarian pupil or student studying in his or her native language.<sup>5</sup> Between the two world wars Hungarians mostly had four-grade elementary schools. In the 1939–40 school year the Hungarians had 150 elementary schools with a total number of 25,255 pupils. Many of the Hungarian schools did not have Hungarian teachers, so although the school was officially regarded as a Hungarian one, the teachers hardly spoke any Hungarian. In the same academic year only one of the upper secondary schools had Hungarian sections, with a total number of 359 students and 10 Hungarian teachers. One of the teacher-training colleges of Belgrade had a Hungarian section, where three Hungarian teachers taught 57 students. Before 6 April, 1941, 15 new teachers graduated from this college. Right before World War II a total of 150 ethnic Hungarian teachers worked in the Vajdaság province.<sup>6</sup>

The lack of qualified teachers was one of the gravest problems in the field of culture in post-war Yugoslavia. They intended to solve the problem by launching regular training courses. 250 such courses were organized.<sup>7</sup> In the 1945–46 academic year there were 732 Hungarian sections at the elementary schools, with a total of 34,782 pupils. The number of secondary schools also increased. There were 145 Hungarian sections in the 6 lower and 3 upper secondary schools, with 6,082 students. This figure is worth comparing with the 1939–40 statistics, when not more than 359 students learned at Hungarian secondary schools.<sup>8</sup> In the 1946–47 academic year 9,364 students studied at the 49 lower and 3 upper secondary schools in Szabadka, Zenta and Nagybecskerek. In addition to this, there were two teacher training institutions in Szabadka and Újvidék with a total of 409 students, a teachers training college in Újvidék, a college of

<sup>3</sup> *Magyarország történeti kronológiája*. [A historical chronology of Hungary] ed. F. Glatz, Vol. 4/II, Budapest 1982, 75–76.

<sup>4</sup> *Journals of Parliament*, II, 76.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>6</sup> I. Szeli, *A magyar kultúra útjai Jugoszláviában*. [The ways of Hungarian culture in Yugoslavia] Budapest 1983, 117.

<sup>7</sup> *Journals of Parliament*, II, 74.

<sup>8</sup> *Magyarország történeti kronológiája*, 4: 1023; Szeli, *A magyar kultúra útjai*, 117.

trade and commerce at Nagybecskerek, and an industrial and commercial vocational school in Szabadka.<sup>9</sup>

Besides education, theatrical life was also lively in postwar Yugoslavia. A positive feature of Yugoslav democracy was that the cultural rights granted to the minorities included that of celebrating the national holidays of the minorities concerned. In pre-war royal Yugoslavia these rights had only been partially granted. It had been, for instance, only allowed to organize amateur theatrical performances in some towns. After 1945 the ethnic Hungarians living in Yugoslavia had a government-subsidized theatre in Szabadka. The government provided an annual support of 2,5 million dinars (YUD) to the Hungarian theatres. The support was guaranteed by the Yugoslav Constitution, which did not only provide a possibility for a beginning, but also protected development once it had begun.<sup>10</sup> It was as a result of this that Gyula Kállay was encouraged to write in the November 25, 1945 issue of *Szabad Föld* that the ethnic Hungarian minority in Yugoslavia had more rights after 1945 than ever before in its history.<sup>11</sup> Out of the 5,300 illiterate Hungarians 4,000 learned to read and write.<sup>12</sup> On May 16 the Skupstina (the Yugoslav Parliament) made a new effort to recognize and grant the rights of the Hungarian minority by involving two of their representatives in the work of the Parliament.<sup>13</sup>

### *Political Parties and Social Organizations*

Hungary also took measures aimed at removing the barriers between the two countries. A pro-Yugoslav association was established in Szeged in April 1945, in order to promote friendship between the two countries and contribute to cultural cooperation in the Danube Valley. The members of the association believed that the Southeast of Europe constituted one cultural unit, it was essential to learn about the culture of our neighbors, especially that of the Serbians,<sup>14</sup> in order to be able to live side by side as friends. The political parties appreciated the positive Yugoslav gestures. At the conference of the Hungarian Communist Party the exemplary initiatives by the Yugoslavs were warmly welcomed.<sup>15</sup> The program of the National Peasants' Party also appreciated the measures Yugoslavia had taken on behalf of friendship and cultural development of the various nationalities living in the same region.<sup>16</sup> *Kis Újság* (*The Small Paper*) of the Smallholders' Party published an article, according to which out of the countries of the Danube Val-

<sup>9</sup> *Journals of Parliament*, II, 74.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>11</sup> *Szabad Nép*, 25 November 1945.

<sup>12</sup> Szeli, *A magyar kultúra útjai*, 115–116.

<sup>13</sup> *Nemzetgyűlés naplója*, I. Hiteles kiadás. Atheneum Irodalmi és Nyomdai Részvénytársulat Könyvkiadója, Budapest, 1946. *Journals of the National Assembly*, I, 39.

<sup>14</sup> *Szabad Nép*, 13 April 1945.

<sup>15</sup> *A Magyar Kommunista Párt és Szociáldemokrata Párt határozatai, 1944–1948*. [Decrees of the Hungarian Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party] Budapest 1967, 82.

<sup>16</sup> Sándor Balogh–Lajos Izsák: *Pártok és pártprogramok Magyarországon: (1944–1948)*. [Parties and party programs in Hungary, 1944–1948] Budapest 1979, 226.

ley it was in Yugoslavia where Hungarians were treated with the warmest sympathy.<sup>17</sup>

A major milestone in the development of Hungarian-Yugoslav cultural relations was that a workers' choir of a hundred members and a Macedonian dance ensemble came to Budapest at the invitation of the Workers' Cultural Association.<sup>18</sup> The Hungarian-Yugoslav Association, established on October 1 1945, played a dominant role in promoting and intensifying cooperation between the two countries. József Rex, Secretary General of the Association identified the most important elements of the mission of the new organization as follows: maintaining and further developing Hungarian-Yugoslav friendship and introducing Yugoslav culture, music and literature in Hungary. Rex and the leadership of the Association also wanted to establish close ties with the cultural organizations of Yugoslavia, especially with the Hungarian Cultural Federation. The goals of the Association also included the translation of Hungarian cultural products into the languages of Yugoslavia and their dissemination in the neighboring country.<sup>19</sup>

The Association had plans for publishing a journal. At the end of 1945, the Balkans Committee, originally established in 1940, started to work again. The Balkans Committee was resurrected in order to correctly inform the nations of the Balkans about the role of Hungary in World War II, and to present Hungary's new social, economic and cultural order to these countries.<sup>20</sup> The political and cultural rights guaranteed to the Hungarians in Yugoslavia provided a foundation for the relations of the two countries which was welcomed by all responsible politicians and which also served as a basis for an even more intensive relationship in the future. The next positive development was that on September 25, 1946, Yugoslavia entered into diplomatic relations with Hungary.

Yugoslavia's positive politics in relation to the ethnic Hungarians was not only appreciated by politicians in Hungary, but the general public also received this policy very favorably. Local branches of the Hungarian-Yugoslav Association were created at various points in Hungary. A local branch was established in Debrecen on 30 June 1947. Zoltán Tildy, President of the Republic of Hungary, and Karlo Mrázovic, Yugoslav Ambassador to Budapest appeared at the event, which indicated the importance both countries attributed to the friendship between them. The ambassador emphasized in his speech that Yugoslavia was committed to developing good relations between the two nations. This was the general Yu-

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<sup>17</sup> *Kis Újság*, 28 July 1945.

<sup>18</sup> *Szabad Nép*, 25 September 1945; *Szabad Nép*, 30 September 1945.

<sup>19</sup> Gyula Moór was the chairman of the Association. *Magyarország történeti kronológiája*, 1023; József Rex's letter to the Cultural Department of the Ministry of Education. Presented by Győző Vinnai in "A Magyar-Jugoszláv Társaság Története," [A history of the Hungarian-Yugoslav Society] *Tiszatáj* 36:2 (1982).

<sup>20</sup> Vinnai "A Magyar-Jugoszláv Társaság története"; idem "Adalékok a Magyar-Jugoszláv Társaság történetéhez," [Contribution to the Hungarian-Yugoslav Society] *Acta Nyíregyháziensis* (1987).

goslav approach experienced at all official occasions when the relationships of the two neighboring countries were discussed.<sup>21</sup>

In the second half of 1945 Hungarian cultural diplomacy regarded the creation of the conditions for the international introduction of new Hungarian culture as a priority. The Tildy Government that was established after the elections attributed special significance to connections between Hungary and her neighbors in the spirit of mutual understanding. In his speech delivered in the Parliament on November 30 the Prime Minister made it clear that the Hungarian Government had given up all former imperialistic politics once and for all, and would never lay claim to any privilege in the Carpathian Basin.<sup>22</sup> Ferenc Nagy's Government that followed Tildy's cabinet also believed that the Republic of Hungary had really got rid of all chauvinistic attitudes of the past that had caused so much trouble, and the Hungarian nation was determined to find the ways leading to brotherly coexistence with the neighboring nations.<sup>23</sup>

For all democratic parties in the government creating the conditions of friendship and cooperation with the neighboring countries was a top national priority. They therefore supported the efforts aimed at cooperation, and all parties in the coalition emphasized the importance of cooperation.<sup>24</sup> Hungarian cultural policy, open to the world, was to treat the relationship with the neighboring countries with preference. This is what Dezső Keresztúry pointed out in his press conference on February 9, 1946. He called the attention of his audience to the special attention Hungary needed to pay to expanding her cultural connections with foreign countries, especially with those in the Danube Valley.<sup>25</sup>

Márton Horváth, on behalf of the Communist Party, made a emblematic contribution. In his belief cultural relationships with the neighboring countries were to be forged in the spirit of the fight against the false notion of "cultural superiority". Horváth found it possible to make efforts beneficial not only to Hungarians but also to their neighbors.<sup>26</sup> If ever put into practice, his ideas, involving a break away from the negative approaches of the past and taking mutual advantages and national interests into consideration, would have largely contributed to a high standard of cooperation in the Danube Valley.

Essays in the column "Jószomszédság" (Good Neighborhood) of the periodical *Emberség* (Humanity) indicated the attention focused on Central Europe. The magazine, unfortunately, did not have a long life. Similar writings appeared in *Újszántás* (Freshly Ploughed Land).<sup>27</sup> An important step in the process of Hungary's approach to its neighbors was that the Government accepted a proposal put for-

<sup>21</sup> *Magyarország történeti kronológiája*, 1030; *Szabad Nép*, 1 July 1947.

<sup>22</sup> *Journals of the National Assembly*, I, 23–25.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 370.

<sup>24</sup> *Journals of the National Assembly*, I, 82, 90, 406, 450; *Népszava*, 13 January 1946; *Kis Újság*, 30 January 1946; *Népszava*, 20 January 1946.

<sup>25</sup> *Szabadság*, 10 February 1946.

<sup>26</sup> *Szabad Nép*, 12 May 1946.

<sup>27</sup> *A magyar irodalom története, 1945–1975*. [A history of Hungarian Literature, 1945–1975] ed. M. Béládi et al. 4 vols. Budapest 1981–1990, 1: 72.

ward by István Balogh, Under-Secretary of State, regarding the education of national minorities on 5 January 1946. According to the new resolution, members of national minorities were to receive their education in their own native tongue.<sup>28</sup>

### *The Results of the Cooperation*

The Hungarian Government appreciated the friendly gestures of Yugoslavia, which not only took the interests of the ethnic Hungarians into account, but also paid attention to Hungarian culture in general. On the Hungarian side, these gestures were regarded as a token of good partnership. The democratic Hungarian parties believed that cooperation was not simply fruitful for both nations, but that they were destined to cooperation, as without it neither one was able to survive and prosper.<sup>29</sup>

After the war literature was the field of culture that was able to introduce a nation to another in the most efficient way. Its importance was recognized by Hungarian authors who raised their voice against factors that hampered cooperation between neighboring nations. They emphasized the common fate of Hungary and Yugoslavia when they condemned those who spoiled the relationships between the two nations in a chauvinistic way. At a meeting of the Board of the Hungarian Writers Association, in January 1946, Lajos Zilahy requested the Board to present a draft resolution at the next Board meeting in order to denounce and condemn reactionary and chauvinistic operations.<sup>30</sup>

At an exceptionally interesting afternoon concert, organized at his home, Dezső Keresztúry emphasized that Hungarians and Southern Slavs finally found the way leading to each other. A gala concert at the Academy of Music was also put in the service of expanding Hungarian-Yugoslav friendship and cooperation. Field Marshall Tito's declaration of April 1946, in which he talked about his sympathy to Hungarians, was regarded as an expression of confidence and friendship.<sup>31</sup> The Hungarian press paid special attention to Hungarian-Yugoslav relations. The newspapers wrote about the development of the bilateral connections, and published positive opinions about Yugoslavia where the possibilities of education and social progress were open for the Hungarian minority.<sup>32</sup>

Hungary also took steps in order to improve the cultural possibilities and facilities of the Croatian and Serbian minorities living in her territory. In the field of settling the educational issues of national minorities the first thing to be accomplished was to provide for the native language education of the Southern Slavs,

<sup>28</sup> *Kis Újság*, 8 January 1946; *Magyar Közlöny*, 1946, no. 12.

<sup>29</sup> *Journals of the National Assembly*, I, 25; *Szabad Nép*, 25 November 1945. The importance of the Hungarian-Yugoslav cultural connections is indicated by the fact that five out of the scholarships offered by the National scholarship Council on 23 August, 1945, were for Yugoslavia. *Magyar Közlöny*, 1945, no. 108; The Ministry of Education offered 8 scholarships in Yugoslavia in the 1945-46 academic year. *Ideiglenes Nemzetgyűlés Naplója*, 1945, p. 41.

<sup>30</sup> *Szabadság*, 19 January 1946; *Kis Újság*, 3 March 1946.

<sup>31</sup> *Kis Újság*, 27 February 1946; *Szabadság*, 14 March 1946; *Szabadság*, 3 April 1946.

<sup>32</sup> *Szabadság*, 31 March 1946; *Szabadság*, 17 April 1946.

who had demonstrated friendship and loyalty to Hungary. Native language education was going on in 48 schools in 1946. The Minister of Education Dezső Keresztúry made the utmost efforts to solve the question of minority education in a fair and democratic way.<sup>33</sup>

The good connections between Hungary and Yugoslavia made it possible that the first bilateral cultural agreement Hungary entered into was made with the Vajdaság (Voivodina) province of Yugoslavia, mostly populated by Hungarians. Radivoy Badidovic's non-official visit to Hungary was intended to improve cultural cooperation between the two nations. The head of the Department of Education of the Vajdaság wished to obtain a first-hand impression about the situation of culture and education in Hungary, thus contributing to the cultural connections between the two countries. Introduction of Southern Slavonic literature in Hungary also began in 1946. Gyula Illyés wrote an essay about the poet of international reputation, and a martyr of the partisan war, Ivan Goran Kovacic, in the literary journal *Válasz (Answer)*. Zoltán Csuka undertook the task of introducing Southern Slavonic literature to the Hungarian readers. László Hadrovics wrote a book about the history of Yugoslavia, entitled *A szerb nép és egyházak a török uralom alatt (The Serbian People and Churches under the Turkish Rule)*. The book was published by the Teleki Institute.<sup>34</sup>

The Hungarian-Yugoslav relations were positively evaluated by politicians and journalists alike. It was natural that the press of the HCP wrote about Yugoslavia in an appreciative manner. The January 28, 1947, issue of *Szabad Nép*, for instance, wrote about the immense cultural program Hungary's southern neighbor implemented among the ethnic Hungarians.<sup>35</sup> The Foreign Minister (Smallholders' Party) János Gyöngyösi, not surprisingly, first talked about Yugoslavia in his speech in Parliament on March 20, 1947. The head of Hungarian diplomacy found it important to pay special attention to Yugoslavia because its southern neighbor was determined to exclude disturbing elements of the past from the new bilateral relations and place emphasis on cooperation. Special relationships with Yugoslavia served as a model for Hungary's connections with other countries, in which the situation was not always satisfactory, and sometimes definitely a poor one.<sup>36</sup> Dezső Sulyok, an MP of the Liberty Party, also evaluated Hungarian-Yugoslav connections in an advantageous way.<sup>37</sup>

The press continued to publish positive articles about Yugoslavia. *Szabad Nép* wrote about Hungarian-Yugoslav friendship for the umpteenth time on April 20, asking for further expansion of economic, cultural and political connections.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>33</sup> *Szabadság*, 13 February 1946; *Szabadság*, 4 April 1946.

<sup>34</sup> *Szabadság*, 7 September 1946; *A magyar irodalom története, 1945–1975*, 1: 70; D. Kosáry, "The Idea of a Comparative History of East Central Europe: the Story of a Venture," in D. Deletant, H. Hanak, eds, *Historians as Nation-Builders: Central and South-East Europe*, London, 1988, 135.

<sup>35</sup> *Szabad Nép*, 28 January 1947.

<sup>36</sup> *Journals of the National Assembly*, VII, 49.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>38</sup> *Szabad Nép*, 10 April 1947.



According to the April 20 issue of *Szabad Nép*, Hungarian-Yugoslav cultural relations entered a new phase of mutual understanding in which the foundations of long-term prospective connections and close cooperation were to be laid down.<sup>39</sup>

Hungarian political forces appreciated Yugoslavia's positive attitude to Hungary and spoke very positively of the cultural and political rights granted by the Yugoslav Government to the ethnic Hungarians. Ambassador Zoltán Szántó spoke on the Hungarian radio in July 1947 and expressed his belief that ethnic Hungarians in the Vajdaság were not threatened by Slavonification, as their cultural rights were protected, and they were represented in public life and local politics in accordance with their number. He mentioned as an example that 50,000 ethnic Hungarian children learned at schools in their own native language, and the cultural life of Hungarians was full.<sup>40</sup>

One of the most important tasks of the Hungarian Government was cultivating the friendship that developed between Hungary and Yugoslavia. Gyula Ortu-tay therefore travelled to Belgrade on July 22, 1947 in order to make preparations for the Hungarian-Yugoslav cultural agreement. As there was no major conflict between the parties, they planned to sign the agreement in August of the same year.<sup>41</sup> This, however, did not take place, but the relationship between the two countries remained successful. It is exemplified in a speech by Lajos Dinnyes in Parliament on October 7, 1947, in which Dinnyés used the warmest words about Yugoslavia, where Hungarians were fully encouraged to use their political rights.<sup>42</sup> This opinion of the Prime Minister was not a mere formality, as he did not speak equally positively about Romania in the same speech.

### *Signing and Ratifying the Cultural Agreement*

The agreement governing Hungarian-Yugoslav cultural relations was signed on October 15, 1947, when a government delegation, led by the Prime Minister, travelled to Belgrade. The agreement, set out in Hungarian and Serbo-Croatian languages was signed by Erik Molnár on behalf of Hungary, and Marjau Stilinovic on behalf of Yugoslavia. The cultural agreements made in the autumn and winter of 1947 were primarily the results of the "shaping" uniform interests of the people's democracies, manifested in Cominform. The Hungarian-Yugoslav agreement was an exception to this, and the agreement itself was different from the other such contracts as it was based upon good relations of pre-war times and was a culmination of a successful cooperation. As it had been worded well before the foundation of Cominform that took place on October 7, 1947, Cominform interests were not directly incorporated into the text. It was therefore not so "over-ideologized" and "over-politicized" as many other agreements of those times. It is therefore justified to state that the Hungarian-Yugoslav Cultural Agreement was a "normal" document of cultural diplomacy, rooted in the good relationships

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<sup>39</sup> *Szabad Nép*, 20 April 1947.

<sup>40</sup> *Szabad Nép*, 13 July 1947.

<sup>41</sup> *Szabad Nép*, 23 July 1947.

<sup>42</sup> *Journals of Parliament*, I, 46.

between the two countries from 1945 to 1948, and one which included realistic objectives. In the case of this agreement it was not necessary to conceal contradictions for ideological reasons dictated by the alleged unity of the people's democracies, it was not necessary to idealize the relations for political-ideological aspects. Post-war realities and the spirit of the agreement were not in contradiction.

The governments of Hungary and Yugoslavia entered into the agreement in order to improve good relationships between their nations, to learn about each other's culture. This document was based upon good bilateral connections and mutual good will. The agreement consisted of 6 articles. In Article 1 the Parties declared that they would mutually treat each other with the warmest good will and courtesy in the field of scientific, literary and cultural connections. Article 2 proposed setting up cultural institutes in order to learn more about each other's culture. In Article 3 the Parties agreed to set up a Joint Committee for the implementation of the objectives set forth in the agreement. The Committee, consisting of a Hungarian and a Yugoslav section, was to have two headquarters: one in Budapest and one in Belgrade. Representatives of the most important cultural, political and scientific organizations were delegated to the Hungarian section, together with the leaders of the cultural and educational institutions of the ethnic Southern Slavonic population living in Hungary. In accordance with the agreement, the Committee was to have meetings as needed, but at least twice a year, in towns mutually agreed upon alternately in Yugoslavia and Hungary. Article 4 specified the tasks of the Joint Committee. The tasks included preparing proposals to the two governments. The responsibility of the governments, in turn, was to take the necessary steps in their own countries in the shortest possible time. Article 5 contained the tasks and responsibilities of the joint subcommittees. One of the priorities was establishing university and college departments of philology, history, geography, sciences and in every other field that was expected to contribute to learning more about the other party.

The Agreement contained enclosures regarding the exchange of researchers, teachers and students, and supporting training going on in all school types, granting scholarships, and promoting the cooperation of scientific, scholarly and educational institutions in the two countries. The Agreement also provided for the support of students' studies in the other country. In order to achieve that, they proposed contracts that were to regulate the mutual acceptance of entrance examinations, secondary and higher education certificates and academic degrees. Hungary and Yugoslavia intended to make it possible for their researchers and scholars to visit institutions in each other's countries. The Agreement proposed the continual exchange of publications in sciences, scholarly studies, culture and arts. Supporting the contacts between educational institutions, libraries and public collections in the two countries were also included in the objectives of the Agreement

Parties to the Agreement committed themselves to promoting the translation of works in sciences, arts and literature, and to the mutual protection of copyrights and royalties. The two countries attributed great importance to making the exchange of art exhibitions, theatrical exhibitions, movie films, audio recordings

and radio programs easier. In order to know and understand each other better, a paragraph of Article 5 dealt with excursions and sports events in each other's countries. The Parties committed themselves to establishing press agencies in their own territories for the press and radio of the other country. The point of the agreement that declared that Parties would make efforts to support the culture of the national minorities living in their territories was particularly important. Article 6 declared that the agreement was to be confirmed as soon as possible, and the documents of ratification were to be exchanged in Budapest. The next step was to request the registration of the agreement at the secretariat of the United Nations Organization. The agreement was to come into effect on the date when the documents were exchanged and was to remain in effect for five years. If neither party terminated the agreement in writing at least six months before its expiry date, it was to remain in effect for another five years, then for another five years until one of the parties intended to terminate it.<sup>43</sup>

Signing and ratifying the agreement took place after the Cominform had come into being, so the Hungarian-Yugoslav Cultural Agreement was given an ideological dimension, similarly to other cultural agreements made between people's democracies, but it was only observed in the press, and did not affect the agreement itself. On October 16, *Szabad Nép* wrote that the agreement not only connected intellectual people to each other and served the purpose of cultural cooperation, but it was a means for working people in Hungary and Yugoslavia to become better acquainted with each other's progressive and class-conscious traditions as well.<sup>44</sup>

On December 3, 1947 Foreign Minister Erik Molnár put forth the Hungarian-Yugoslav Cultural Agreement, signed in Belgrade on November 15 of the same year, for ratification in Parliament. On December 4 Géza Losonczy submitted the report of the Foreign Affairs Committee.<sup>45</sup> Losonczy, in his speech, welcomed the agreement as one serving the interests of "people's democracy." In his opinion one of the priorities of the young Hungarian democracy should be cooperation and alliance with the progressive forces in the world in order to preserve and reinforce peace and democracy.<sup>46</sup> Géza Losonczy, who made his speech on December 5, also pointed out that the Hungarian-Yugoslav Cultural Agreement was to be a link in a chain of agreements.<sup>47</sup> On the same day, Marton Horváth emphasized the priority of political aspects. He first gave voice to his conviction that the Parliament rarely saw bills that met a uniform and univocal acceptance as the one the Hungarian-Yugoslav Cultural Agreement did. He believed that the agreement expressed the wish of the people of Hungary. In that he was right, but the Communist politician found the agreement primarily important from the aspect

<sup>43</sup> UMKL-XIX-I-1e. 1947-158213; The Hungarian-Yugoslav Cultural Agreement was signed in Belgrade on 15 October 1947. *Diplomáciai és nemzetközi jogi lexikon*. [Lexicon of diplomacy and international law] Budapest 1967, 466.

<sup>44</sup> *Szabad Nép*, 16 October 1947.

<sup>45</sup> *Journals of Parliament*, II, 72.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

of the emerging people's democracy. Horváth regarded the agreement as the first step leading to a treaty of friendship and mutual assistance. In his opinion the agreement was to radically change Hungary's foreign political positions.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to the communist politician, representatives of other parties also told their opinion about the agreement. György Lupkovits, on behalf of Smallholders' Party, warmly welcomed the agreement.<sup>49</sup> József Fischler, a social democratic politician made a speech on December 5. In his opinion, the House was discussing an agreement, the importance of which was rooted in history and cultural history, rather than in politics or people's democracy. In this situation the responsibility of the Parliament was eliminating all obstacles from the way of the two neighboring nations' rapprochement. He expressed his conviction that the agreement ensured undisturbed cultural relations between the two countries.<sup>50</sup>

Pál Szabó joined those who emphasized the historic significance of the agreement. The politician of the Peasants Party pointed out that the Parliament had the opportunity to make up for a-hundred-year-old mistakes.<sup>51</sup> Sándor Bálint, on behalf of the Democratic People's Party also supported the agreement. The well-known professor of ethnography also warned that there was still a lot to be done in the field of revealing connections between the two nations in ethnography and history. Bálint declared that the Democratic People's Party was ready and willing to support all initiatives that served the improvement of Hungary's relations with the neighboring countries, and through it, the benefit of the ethnic Hungarians living beyond the borders of Hungary.<sup>52</sup>

Antal Rab, in his comments, also answered the remarks of Sándor Bálint regarding the situation of the ethnic Hungarians. The Communist MP believed that the cultural agreement would contribute to the cultural development of Hungarians living in Yugoslavia and that of the Southern Slavs living in Hungary. The point of the agreement the speaker found particularly important was the one related to the educational facilities and possibilities of the Hungarians in Yugoslavia and the Southern Slavs in Hungary.<sup>53</sup>

Erik Molnár also made a speech in the parliamentary discussion of the agreement on December 5. According to the Foreign Minister, the purpose of the agreement was in serving the cultural rapprochement of the two countries, eliminating former animosities, making it possible for nations to learn more about each other.<sup>54</sup> Among the communist politicians who disclosed their opinion about the document, Erik Molnár was one of the few who did not approach the agreement in an exaggeratedly over-politicized way. He also pointed out that the agreement had a political dimension, but he approached the issue from the side of the ethnic Hungarians living in the Vajdaság. Here Erik Molnár explained why

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 86-87.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

Yugoslavia was the first country with which Hungary made an agreement. The reason was that it was in Yugoslavia where the ethnic, civilian and political rights of the Hungarians were provided for in the most advanced way, and the possibilities of development were ensured for the Hungarians in this country.<sup>55</sup> This was also the reason why all parties in the Hungarian Parliament supported the agreement.

President Tito's visit to Hungary on December 6, 1947 was an important milestone in the development of good Hungarian-Yugoslav relations.<sup>56</sup> As communist politicians regarded the cultural agreement as a foundation for a treaty of friendship, it was not surprising that the Committee of Foreign Affairs submitted to the Parliament the Hungarian-Yugoslav Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance for ratification on January 9, 1948. The Treaty was signed in Budapest on December 1947.<sup>57</sup>

After signing the Treaty with Yugoslavia, some events representing the friendship of the two nations took place. Such was the invitation of Southern Slavonic dance and song ensembles to the final of the national folk music competition, organized by the Hungarian Cultural Association. An exhibition entitled "Work and Class Struggle in Yugoslavia" was opened in Pécs on May 9, 1948. A Yugoslav play was staged in Szeged in May. In May and June Serbian politicians and authors were celebrated in Hungary.<sup>58</sup> This friendship was important for Yugoslavia as well. The papers published articles about the War of Independence in 14 columns.<sup>59</sup> Hungary demonstrated the exemplary connections with Yugoslavia by conferring the Hungarian Order of the Republic upon Deputy Prime Minister Eduard Kardelj, and Foreign Minister Staneje Simic.<sup>60</sup>

The relationship in 1948 appeared to be problem-free. There was no indication that the most fruitful cooperation in the Carpathian Basin would soon be disrupted and the two countries would look upon each other as desperate enemies, as a result of a new policy dictated by the Soviet Union, through the "resolutions" of Cominform and its consequences in Hungary.

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>56</sup> *Szabad Nép*, 7 December 1947.

<sup>57</sup> *Journals of Parliament*, II, 367.

<sup>58</sup> Institute of Political Studies (PTI) Arch. 274. f. 21/71.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Magyar Közlöny*, 1948, nos. 133-134.