



1456 - 1956 – a Comparison

Erika Papp Faber

Like a giant magnet, Hungary has always drawn foreign attacks on its people and territory. One of these, the Turkish attack of 1456, invites comparison with the Russian onslaught of 1956 for various reasons. In both cases, foreign people from a distant land tried to subjugate the Hungarians, to make them slaves to their designs. In 1456, it was the city of Nándorfehérvár (known as Belgrade since the dictated Treaty of Trianon of 1920), located on the Danube at its confluence with the Száva River, which took the brunt of the attack. In 1956, it was mainly Budapest that had to withstand the invader...



1456, in which he called for a prayer crusade, asking that church bells be rung at noon and that the Angelus be recited by all Christians for victory over the Turks.

The Prince of Serbia promised to help with manpower, and the King of Naples was asked to attack the Turks by sea. Other Italian princes were each to furnish 10,000 men. The Duke of Burgundy and the Pope were also expected to send troops. Time passed, and the Turks advanced rapidly, but none of the promised troops arrived. In a last-ditch effort, Hunyadi János and the Franciscan friar John Capistrano, who jointly led the defenders of Nándorfehérvár, sent desperate appeals to potentates, barons and prelates of Europe, to come to their help. Needless to say, no outside help materialized. Neither did any help from abroad come to relieve the beleaguered Hungarian Freedom Fighters 500 years later.

In 1456, the number of the Turkish forces was put at 150,000, with the defenders numbering about 18,000. In 1956, the Russian troops invading Hungary were estimated by the American embassy in Budapest to number 200,000, with 4,600 tanks within the country, and another 1,000 tanks ready outside the borders. They were faced by nine Hungarian divisions and 700 tanks.

The defenders of Nándorfehérvár were



peasants, students, priests, monks and workingmen, armed merely with bows and arrows, scythes, pitchforks and slingshots. They also had a very few small cannons, which were nothing as compared to the unusually large number and size of Turkish armaments. In 1956, facing the Russian onslaught, the Hungarian defenders consisted mostly of students, even children, armed with nothing more than "Molotov cocktails" (bottles filled with gasoline, and having a burning rag for a wick), as opposed to the well-equipped Russian armored tanks. They also had a few firearms and some guns captured from the Russians. With these, and with the desperation of defending their homeland, they stopped and destroyed Russian tanks and

After they conquered Constantinople in 1453, a large Turkish army, under Mohamed II, began moving up the Balkans towards Hungary. The threat to all of Europe was obvious. Once they had breached the ring of the Carpathian Mountains, there would be no further geographic obstacle standing between them and Western Europe. They would have to be stopped before they entered the Carpathian Basin. Clearly, Hungarian forces alone would not be sufficient to stop them. Reinforcements were promised by Pope Callistus III, who in 1455 called for a crusade to present the Turks with a united front. He went so far as to pledge his miter and his plate to raise money for a fleet. In addition, he issued his *Bulla Orationum* on June 29,

brought them to withdraw... although only temporarily, for a few days.

At Nándorfehérvár, the battle turned in Hungary's favor with the improvised stratagem of hurling burning brushwood saturated with pitch, powder and sulphur down on the attackers who were climbing the walls of the fortress. Many Turks were fatally burned. In addition, a good part of the Turkish fleet was sunk by the simple expedient of releasing boats loaded with sand, which then crashed into their ships. The attack lasted a week. In the end, Mohamed II had lost 40,000 of his best soldiers. He marched off, during the night, leaving many dead and fatally wounded behind. Their withdrawal was also temporary, albeit of a somewhat longer duration: they did not return to occupy Hungary for another 70 years.

After the withdrawal of the Turks from Nándorfehérvár, the pestilence broke out due to the thousands of unburied corpses. Hunyadi János succumbed to the disease on August 11th. **John Capistrano** held out until the fall, **dying on October 23rd, 500 years to the day of the outbreak of the Hungarian Revolution and Freedom Fight!**

According to the Central Statistical Office, an estimated 2,500 Russian soldiers were killed in the 1956 Uprising, and an equal number of Hungarians lost their lives. But these numbers are difficult to determine either way. At any rate, both 1456 and 1956 prove that Hungarians, using their innate tenacity and creativity, will defend their native land against a foreign aggressor to their last breath, and that even when eventually trampled underfoot by overwhelming forces, their moral victory eclipses their defeat. *Gloria Victis!* Glory to the Defeated!

A harcba induló Dávid éneke - David's War-Song

Kocsis Gábor

Poetry flourished in the darkest Communist prisons, where people were confined and tortured for "political incorrectness". Despite the fact they had to scrounge scraps of paper to write on, many poems were written, and a fraction of them survived the constant surveillance and searches. These were published in collected form in the West in 1973. Here is one such poem taken from the "Füveskert" volume.

Parittyámban a kő az Úr neve ...
Elöttem szürke, sok páncélú rémség,
Mögöttem árnyék hadsereg,
Fölöttem orkán, fergeteg,
És öngyilkos kísértés!

De parittyámban kő az Úr neve!
A számon győzni bízó, büszke ének -
Barát, ellenség mind nevet,
Hahó! De én mégis megyek!
És semmitől se félek!

Hisz parittyámban kő az Úr neve!
Legkedvesebb juhom megöltem érte,
Bőréből készült szíj-remek,
Forgóparittyája fergeteg,
Suhanj! Az Úr ígérte.

Hogy parittyámban kő az Ő neve...
Már nem nevensz, ijesztés durva szobra
Fölöttem fények erdeje,
S kezemből sújt az Úr neve
Páncélos homlokodra!

The stone in my sling is the name of the Lord...
Before me are hosts in grey horror of mail;
Behind me an army of shadows stands pale;
Above me, a thunder-storm, heavy with hail,
Would tempt me to suicide-stabs if I fail!

But stone in my sling is the name of the Lord!
From my lips come the strains of proud victory's song;
Let the enemy laugh, for he will not laugh long;
Haha! But I march in despite of their throng!

Why the stone in my sling is the name of the Lord!
For leather, I slaughtered my dearest sheep,
From a strap of his skin a fierce missile can leap.
Whiz on! For the Lord has proclaimed from the deep
That His name is the stone in my sling.

At last you've stopped laughing, you monument horrid!
Above me is flashing a forest of light,
And the name of the Lord, from my hand, in its flight
Has shattered the mail of your forehead!

Translated by Watson Kirkconnell

Kocsis Gábor was born in Szeged in 1932. He was prohibited from attending the university in 1951, accused of "political heresies". He spent two years in forced-labor camps, and one year in a mine. Some of his poems were included in the "Füveskert" volume of prison poetry from Vác, published in the US in 1973. Kocsis left Hungary in 1956.

It's a small world!

Margaret Német

I had a most interesting encounter with a Hungarian young lady in Ibarra, Ecuador. I am a Székely from Háromszék, Transylvania (Erdély). I emigrated to the USA in the 1970's, and worked and raised a family in New Jersey. After I retired to Vieques, Puerto Rico in 2008, I purchased a summer home in the small Sierra town of Cotacachi, in the Imbabura province of Ecuador, in order to get away from the Hurricane Season in PR.

Cotacachi is about 30 km from Ibarra, the capital city of Imbabura province. While in Cotacachi, I occasionally go to grocery shop to the Ibarra store of the Ecuadorian supermarket chain Supermaxi. I almost fell over in surprise, when at one time I heard Hungarian spoken next to me while browsing the aisles at the Supermaxi. I managed to mumble an introduction to the lovely young couple who spoke Hungarian.

Melinda Pálfalvy, the young lady from Budapest, married her Ecuadorian husband Miguel, while the latter was working in Hungary. They had two boys in Budapest. Five years ago they decided to settle in Ibarra, Miguel's hometown. They opened a Hungarian themed bar, "Kocsma", in the very heart of Ibarra, and were running the business and raising the boys in Ecuador. Both boys and Miguel are bilingual, Spanish and Hungarian. It was real interesting to communicate in my Székely-influenced dialect and their transplanted Hungarian. We became good friends... because... It Is A Small World!

A magyarokhoz

Kónya Lajos

Főváros, meghajtom fejemet előtted!
Most lettél e forró napokban honommá,
hogy hűségből vére menő vizsgát tettél.
Áldjon meg téged a magyarok istene!
Nem szántad magadat halomra lövetni,
magasra emeled háromszínű zászlónc.
S a megcsúfolt címert szivedre öltötted,
zengvén a szép Himnuszt, az évekig némát.
Verje meg az isten, veretlen ne hagyja,
lobogó hitünket ki lábbal tiporta
s az idegen fegyvert ölésünkre hozta!

Fiatalok, vulkán felcsapó lángjai,
amit ti tettetek legendába illő!
Láttam szép fejetek fegyverre hajolva
tankok rátok szegzett tűzokádó torkát.
Ültetek füstölgő falakon, csapzottan,
farkaszemet nézve hősen a halállal.
Március fiai, októberi ködben,
éjszaka útjain lobogó szép fáklyák!
Verje meg az isten, veretlen ne hagyja,
lobogó hitünket ki lábbal tiporta
s az idegen fegyvert ölésünkre hozta!

Irodalmi Újság 1956. november 2

This homage to the Budapest Freedom Fighters was published during that brief ten day interval of freedom before the Russians returned in force on November 4th 1956. Note the date of the publication.

Áldott légy, magyar nép, ki a zsarnok ellen
megkínzott szívedet az utcára vitted,
ropogó gerinccel egyenesedtél fel,
az emberség délceg szavait kiáltva,
véreddel írtad a szabadság nevét –
áldott legyen fényes forradalmad, nemzet!
Őseidhez méltó tetteid sugárzón
vetődnek a világ elborult egére.
Verje meg az isten, veretlen ne hagyja,
lobogó hitünket ki lábbal tiporta
s az idegen fegyvert ölésünkre hozta!

Halottak glóriás menete, ti küzdők,
s ti ártatlan, békés, himnuszra nyílt ajkú
zászlólengetők! Jaj, hogy mindig a zászlót
s zászlótarót lőtte a janicsár fegyver!
Testvéreink, hősi halottak, zokogva
tépjük le szívünkről a vigasz kötését:
vétkes, ki feledni képes életek
lengedező lángját, végső lobbanását!
Verje meg az isten, veretlen ne hagyja,
lobogó hitünket ki lábbal tiporta
s az idegen fegyvert ölésünkre hozta!



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Apple fritters (Alma pongyolában)

2 eggs
2 tsp sugar
1 ¼ cup milk
½ cup white wine (optional)
pinch of salt
1 2/3 cup flour
1 ¼ lbs sharp flavored apples
About 2 cups oil for deep frying
Ground cinnamon and
confectioners' sugar

Beat together the egg yolks and sugar until frothy. Add the milk, wine and a pinch of salt. Add the flour little by little, beating constantly, until the mixture has a thick liquid

consistency. Beat the egg whites until stiff, and fold carefully into the batter mixture. Peel and core the apples, and cut into ¼ inch thick rings.

Heat a generous quantity of oil until bubbling. Dip the apple rings into the batter, then drain off the excess and fry in the oil until golden.

Sprinkle with cinnamon and sugar, and serve hot.



My Hungarian-American Story: An Interview with Steve Jakab—part II

Bob Kranyik, Assisted by Joseph Ull

This is the second part of Bob Kranyik's last interview. We ran the first part in the September issue of Magyar News Online. In it, Stephen Jakab described how his parents came from Tiszalok to the West End of Bridgeport, where he was born. Here is the rest of his story.

I went off to Fairfield Prep. My parents gave me two choices: go to Fairfield Prep or learn a trade at Bullard Haven Technical School. So I went off to Fairfield College Preparatory School, a young, private school run by the Jesuit Order, located in Fairfield, on a hill overlooking Long Island Sound in the distance.

I graduated from Prep in 1958, entered Fairfield University, and graduated in 1962. I had been accepted at other schools with residential housing, but my mother said "no". Like many in my generation, I was a commuter who ate and slept at home. Few had the luxury of living on campus.

Father Dutrum, one of the Jesuit faculty members, convinced my parents that I should become an engineer. However, it was not my "cup of tea", and I changed my major to General Science. A good friend of my mother's from the Western Grill helped me to get a summer job at Lycoming, an aerospace manufacturer in Stratford, Connecticut. I worked at Lycoming throughout the Vietnam War. In 1965, I married my wonderful wife, Carol, and we had our son Stephen. Since I was not cut out to be an engineer, I was given a position in recruiting engineers all over the United States and Europe. I was "on the road" three out of four weeks each month. In 1969, I took a new position at Data Products in Stamford, Connecticut. After two years of rapid growth, our company hit a downturn.

One day, my boss took me to lunch and suggested that I start looking for another job, since things were slowing down. That is how I ended up at Fairfield University, finishing out my career as Associate Vice President of Administration. Most of my work was in Personnel/Human Resources and



that was what I knew most about. However I also became very involved in other areas such as Security, Athletics, Physical Plant and other areas. Of course, at that time there were many Jesuits there who made Fairfield very special to all of us. Many of them became and still are close friends. It was a great 30 years for me, my wife, Carol, and our son, Stephen.

Memories and Lessons of My Early Years Among the Hungarians

I'll try to describe to you what the "Hunktown/West End" experience contributed to my memories, makeup, my character, and the way that I, Steve Jakab, developed in life. First, "Hunktown" was a neighborhood in the truest, most spiritual sense of the term. It was a community of like-minded people who cared for each other, who were proud to be together, and who genuinely enjoyed helping each other. They had values and ethics that helped mold young people like me into adults who were proud to have been born and raised in Hunktown, and who carried those same values and ethics into their

adult lives.

I still remember the men as being true gentlemen – tipping their hats (yes, they all wore hats), holding doors open for women, and just being there to lend a hand to anyone who needed help. They worked hard, they were tough, and in many cases, drank hard. It was common for the factory guys to go straight to the tavern from work for a few shots and beers, and then head home. They walked home, yes, walked. I don't remember many people who owned cars. We walked everywhere. However, I did have a bicycle, and rode that all over.

The Hungarian-American women were ladies. Many of them worked in the factories and restaurants, like my Mom. Some worked in stores locally or in downtown Bridgeport, but they worked. They also took care of the house, cooked, managed the children, and often managed the family finances.

These men and women were solid in character and beliefs, and were dedicated to making a better life for their families and in general for the neighborhood. They were good citizens and fine people, and they showed tremendous respect for each other, and were "classy" in so many ways. Yes, there were a few troubled relationships, often due to alcohol or financial problems, but these relationships got worked out most of the time. There were very few divorces, as I remember, even when marriages were not good ones. Divorce was a big "no-no" in the West End.

The Hungarians loved to picnic, whenever and wherever they could. They picnicked in people's backyards, at St. Stephen's Grove – anywhere. There was always "*sütni szalonna*", *kolbász*, fresh vegetables, wonderful rye bread (which you can't find easily anymore). And, of course, there was "*pálinka*" – lots of *pálinka*. My father and a few close friends used to make wine, lots of it, and they would slaughter pigs and make their own *kolbász*, *hurka*, and even *szalonna*. The best!

One thing that made those DP's (displaced persons, as the immigrants who arrived after World War II were

called) was that they were truly proud to be in America and they worked so hard to make this country a better place. They learned English on their own, or as in my parents' cases, went to English classes. My Mom caught on quickly – lots of Americans went after my Mom's cooking and baking. So she picked up the language more easily. She was a star in many ways (I will tell you about it someday). My Dad never became really proficient in English because most of the customers in the barbershop were Magyars and spoke Hungarian to him.

I fondly remember some of the American-born Hungarians – Jimmy Karafa, Gabby Zavory, Bert Csaky (got me into stamp collecting), to name a few, who were much older than me. They worked at speaking some Hungarian – poorly in most cases, but they tried. I loved those guys. They were tough, bright, and so friendly. They took care of me, and especially my mother in many ways. They hung around the Western Grill, played cards and had a good time after work, during lunch hour, and on Saturdays.

The Hungarians enlisted or were drafted into military service. My dad was drafted, but he was classified "4F" and so was not taken. But, he later told me how upset he was about not being able to serve "his country". Finally, religion was an integral part of our lives. Most people went to church or to synagogue. I went to the Protestant Church with my Dad, and to the Catholic Church with my mother. It was wonderful.

Author's Postscript:

Having done quite a few interviews of Hungarian-Americans to expand our knowledge of immigrant history, I must say that this interview was not only one of the most informative, but also one of the most enjoyable that I have done. The three of us – Steve Jakab who was being interviewed, Bob Kranyik, who did the interviewing, and Joe Ull who handled the tape recording – found that we had so many things in common. All three of us had roots in the West End (Steve and Joe actually lived there, while Bob Kranyik's family had moved to Fairfield

by about 1912, although he attended church on Bostwick Avenue at the Holy Trinity Byzantine Rite Church). All three of us are able to carry on a decent conversation in the Magyar tongue, with much of the capability involved being developed in us by our parents and grandparents, and for Bob and Joe, that capability being extended by the Hungarian School at Fairfield Woods Middle School in Fairfield .

Steve, on the other hand, had to learn English when he went to St. Stephen's School. During the summer months he attended Hungarian Summer School at the First Hungarian Reformed Church on Pine Street (his father's church). All three of us attended and graduated from Fairfield College Preparatory School in Fairfield, with two of us going on to graduate from the then fledgling Fairfield University. Yes, Steve and Bob were "Stags" from Fairfield U. while Joe Ull was a "Purple Knight" from the University of Bridgeport, having graduated in the field of engineering.

The three of us marveled at the common ground we covered, in full view of Black Rock Harbor, on whose periphery our ancestors had lived, in the West End and Black Rock. Our "Hungarian-ness" had been reaffirmed!

Robert Kranyik had been Dean of the Education Department at the University of Bridgeport, a Professor Emeritus, and first Editor of Magyar News Online. He passed away on August 24th (see the September issue of Magyar News Online).

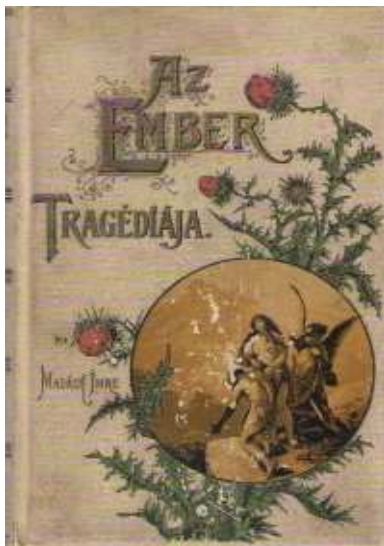
Did you know...

... that an anniversary of sorts occurred earlier this year, that of the first – albeit limited – publication of Madách Imre's "Tragedy of Man"? It came into its own only after his death (1864), when, having been translated into all the European languages, it swept the world stage. This work placed Madách next to Petőfi as having garnered the most international literary recognition.

Although Madách Imre finished his philosophical play "Az ember tragédiája" ("The Tragedy of Man") in 1861, it appeared only in 1862, 150 years ago. However, it was not placed in general circulation at the time. Only members of the *Kisfaludy Társaság* (literary society) received it as a bonus for their membership dues that year. "The Tragedy of Man" has been compared to Milton's "Paradise Lost", since both deal with the creation and fall of man and the devil's role in it. Madách questions the reason for human life, and whether there is any meaning for the human struggle. In this play, Ádám is depicted, after the Fall, as dreaming of human progress and achievement, and considering himself freed from God's rules, he begins to pursue his own glory.

In its 15 scenes, Madách's character Lucifer, in a series of dreams, takes Ádám through history, with Ádám assuming the roles of various historic characters. Every scene demonstrates that Ádám's dreams are either flawed or unattainable. Eve appears in each to refresh his spirit, and so he goes on chasing his futile ideas.

As the play progresses, Ádám is presented as becoming older and older, and he becomes aware of Lucifer as his guide only towards the end. His aging indicates his increasing wisdom, as well as a growing burden of hopelessness. In the final scene, Ádám finds himself in a future ice age. Awaking from this last dream, he declares that the future is hopeless, and his only choice now is to kill himself to prevent the development of the human race. But at the last minute, Eve appears, happily announcing that she is pregnant. At this, Ádám falls to his knees, admitting that God has defeated him. God rebukes Lucifer, and in that famous last line, admonishes Ádám to "struggle on, and trusting trust!"



The Szőnyi István Museum in Zebegény

Erika Papp Faber

When exploring the scenic village of Zebegény above the Danube Bend, it is worthwhile to visit this small, cozy museum.



Tucked away in a side street in Zebegény is Szőnyi István's home, now turned into a charming small memorial museum. Szőnyi, born Schmidt István in 1894, was a painter and print-maker. His family changed the name to Szőnyi in 1898.

He entered the Budapest Academy of Fine Arts in 1913, and his mentor, Ferenczy Károly, took him and several others to the Nagybánya artists' colony. After his military service in World War I, he became a member of the so-called „Nagybánya School”. His early works were influenced by „The Eight” (considered the most important avantgarde artistic group in Hungary at the beginning of the 20th century), and in particular by Uitz Béla. Since his political sympathies lay with the brief Communist regime set up in 1919, he was expelled from the Academy.

Szőnyi held his first one-man show of post-impressionistic paintings in 1920,



and exercised great influence on his younger contemporaries. From the beginning he also exhibited great talent in creating etchings. He moved to Zebegény in 1923, and his painting took a more lyrical turn. His chief subjects were the scenes around Zebegény, and the lives of the local people. „Village Covered with Snow” and „Burial at Zebegény” are two of the best-known of his works. Szőnyi's first wife had died early, leaving him with one daughter who was raised by one of his sisters. He remarried in 1924, and they had a son and a daughter.

During World War II, Szőnyi joined the resistance, and with the assistance of his family, helped numerous Jewish people by providing them with shelter and false papers. For this, the State of Israel posthumously awarded him and his family a Yad Vashem prize in 1986. During the siege of Budapest in 1945, Szőnyi's apartment and studio there were destroyed by bombs. His son also died the same year as a result of sickness.

After the war, Szőnyi was named president of the Hungarian Arts Council. Following the elections of 1945, he was one of the dozen personalities invited by the national assembly for a two-year stint as parliamentary representatives. In 1949, he was awarded the Kossuth Prize.

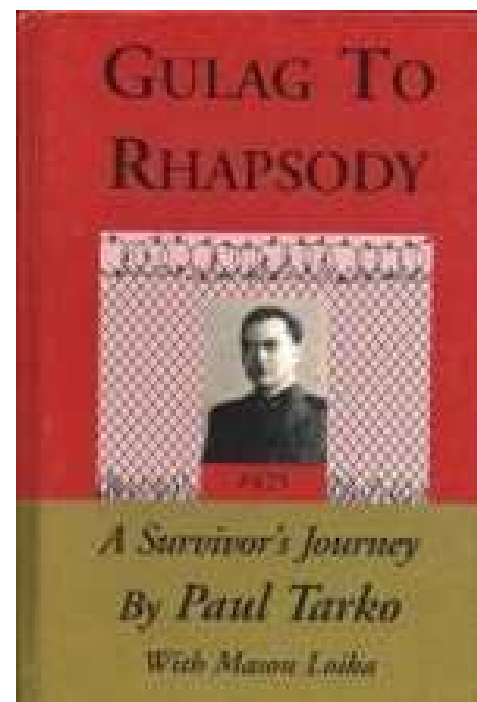
He died in Zebegény in 1960. This museum is not daunting – it is a charming village house, with many of the original furnishings, which just

happens to have been an artist's studio.

Erika Papp Faber is Editor of Magyar News Online.

GULAG TO RHAPSODY: A Survivor's Journey

Martha Matus Schipul



Gulag to Rhapsody : A Survivor's Journey by Paul Tarko, Tarko Publishing, Windsor Locks CT, manufactured by King Printing Company 2002 is available through Amazon.com.

continue

GULAG TO RHAPSODY: A Survivor's Journey

Martha Matus Schipul

When reading Paul Tarko's breathtaking account of surviving a Siberian hard-labor camp during WW II and his family's narrow escape from Hungary during the '56 Revolution, and finally his successful founding his own company in the United States, I could not help but wonder what makes a survivor, that is, what qualities allow someone to prevail when so many others could not?

According to Charles Darwin, the key to survival is adaptability, the ability to modify one's behavior to thrive in a changing environment. Paul had an idyllic childhood in the little town of Nagylak in eastern Hungary on the Romanian border in the 1920's and 30's as the only child of the railroad station master. Paul's parents raised him in an apartment in the train station. Among his favorite activities were swimming and fishing in the Maros River. He had his share of youthful high jinks, like getting into the Communion wine when he was an altar boy. "My life in Nagylak was romantic, picturesque, imaginary, fanciful, and idealistic, with enough of rough-and-tumble savvy to take care of myself." He credits his grandmother, who ran her own business, as his model for self-sufficiency.

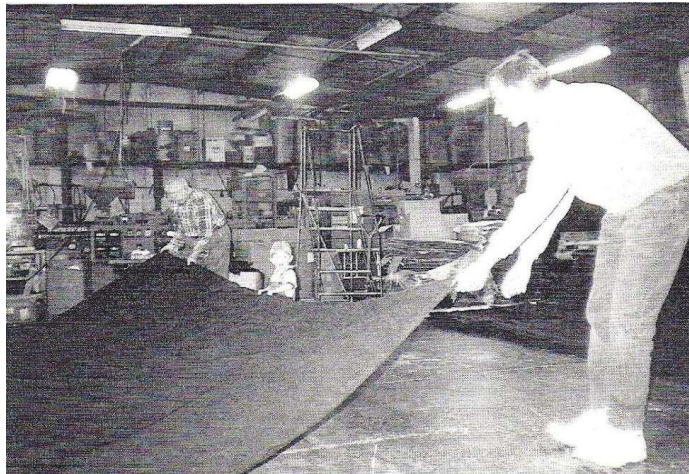
Foregoing university although he was a very good student, he went to work at his cousin's lumber mill in the Carpathians where he enjoyed the fresh mountain air and dense forests, and he learned the important skill of leadership. The advent of WWII drastically changed his happy life. After being drafted into the Hungarian army, he found the conditions relatively civilized. However, once the Nazis overran Hungary, he was forced to fight the Russians. He was cap-

tured and transported in a filthy crowded cattle car to a slave labor camp in Siberia where he faced temperatures well below zero, insufficient clothing, starvation

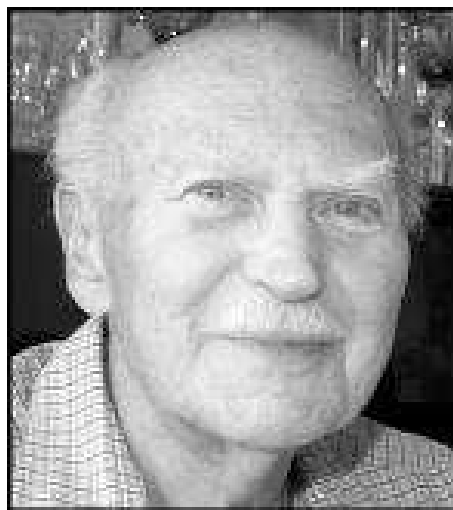
food, his here-to-for robust physical condition, and his realization of the importance in maintaining personal hygiene kept him from the suffering the fate of so many of his fellow prisoners.



Tarko family at Nagylak Railroad Station. From left to right, Paul at age 17, Papa, Mama, Grandma, Baba and Geza.



From left to right, Paul Sr., Ryan and Paul Jr., three generations of the Tarko family at work.



tured and punishing work breaking rocks for railroad building. Many others quickly succumbed to the horrendous conditions, but Paul's ingenuity in finding

Through good luck or the providence of God, he narrowly escaped execution, and finally he was freed by Stalin's decree. He returned home to Hungary to the astonishment of relatives and friends who had given him up for dead when they had heard he was captured by the Russians.

He was married and the father of a baby boy in October of '56 when the Soviets overran Budapest where he was working as a chemist. As a survivor, Paul could see the handwriting on the wall and realized that only bad things would happen if he decided to stay in the country he had so desperately yearned for while a prisoner in Siberia. Once more, he barely escaped with his life when he and his young family fled over the Austrian border. After spending a short time in the Austrian Alps, they migrated to Cleveland, Ohio, a hub of Hungarian immigration where his wife's brother lived. Paul quickly set about to learn English because he realized that was the ticket to a good job in the U.S. He soon found work as a textile technician. He thereafter worked in Philadelphia, and finally settled with his family in the Hartford Connecticut area where he decided to start his own chemical and plastics research company, which is still in successful operation.

As the story unfolded, I felt a terrible sense of dread. How could anyone survive Siberia under those abysmal conditions? Yet I knew he did, since this was, after all, an autobiography. And to survive so splendidly, as the president of his own company in what was a foreign land! I found the book to be dramatic and at times heart-rending, and well worth reading, if nothing but to put a face on the struggles of the Hungarian people in the twentieth century. Paul Tarko died December 15, 2007. Luckily, he left behind his story which lives on to inspire and remind us to never take our freedom for granted.

This book was reviewed by Martha Matus Schipul, a member of the Editorial Board of Magyar News Online.

Októbernek elsején

In the old days, the first of October was the traditional day for recruits to be inducted. Since the term of enlistment was so long (depending on the era, it could be as long as 8 years!), the young men would really take farewell of their families, whom they might never see again.

Októbernek, októbernek
elsején
nem süt a nap
Csíkkarcfalva mezején.
Elbúcsúznak a madártól
s az ágtól
azután a
csíkkarcfalvi lányoktól.

Az Isten is katonának
teremtett,
az a jámbor pap is
annak keresztelt,
az is leszek, míg a világ
világ lesz,
míg az égen
egy ragyogó csillag lesz.

On the first of October
the sun does not shine
on the field of Csíkkarcfalva.
I bid farewell to the bird (s)
and tot he branch (es),
then to the
girls of Csíkkarcfalva

God too created me
to be a soldier,
that saintly priest also
christened me that,
that's what I'll be as long
as the world lasts,
as long as there will be
a shining star in the sky.



Csíkkarcfalva fortress-church

Csíkkarcfalva – a town in Csík County, Transylvania, with an 11th or 12th century fortress-church on a hill above the town. The church was renovated in 1448 with funds donated by János Hunyadi, who became the hero of Nándorfehérvár (see article „1456 – 1956” elsewhere in this issue). The church’s surrounding walls were added in the 15th – 16th centuries, and are the highest such protection in Csík County. The walls, still standing today, surround a spacious grassy area that could accommodate the village population in time of siege. There is a gallery on top. Facing the valley, there are only slits in the gallery’s outside wall, for defense. An additional protective wall was built in the 17th century. These walls were necessary because of the continuing incursions of the Tartars, whose last raid occurred in the 18th century.

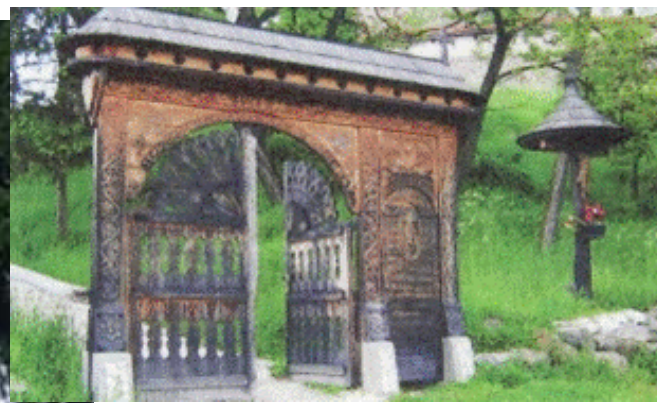
októbernek - folksy way of saying "októbernek"

csíkkarcfalvi – note that this is spelled with a small "cs", because it is an adjective!

madártól – in typical Hungarian fashion, the singular stands for the plural

míg a világ világ lesz – phrase often used in folk tales too, to indicate the notion of "forever"

míg az égen egy ragyogó csillag lesz – same meaning as above



Bő szüret

Vida József

Kurtafalvi szőlőhegyen
Szüretelés nagyban megyen,
Azaz hogy csak menne nagyba,
Ha nem hagyták volna abba.
Hajaha!
Most jó még csak a java!

Megkezdették, annyi igaz,
Ebben volna egy kis vigasz,
Folytatnák is, a mint illik,
Ha vón szőlő tudniillik.
Hajaha!
Most jó még csak a java!

Üres a tő, gyéren hajta,
S a mi kicsi volt is rajta,
Leolvasták azt régóta,
Kit a madár, kit a róka.
Hajaha!
Most jó még csak a java!

Csak három fűrt maradt rajta,
Az is holmi veszett fajta
Olyan kemény, oly savanyú
Csupán nyulat lőni való.
Hajaha!
Most jó még csak a java!

Egy a papé lett belőle,
Ki majd beteggé lett tőle
Másik jutott a kántornak;
Könyei még most is folynak.
Hajaha!
Most jó még csak a java!

Présbe került a harmadik,
S szoritották három napig,
De csak nem jött annak leve,
Hanem a prés megrepede.
Hajaha!
Így maradt el a java!



Hungarian Mosaic - Hungarian Wines IV

During the 1980's Claudia and Joseph Balogh wrote, edited and presented an informative radio series in the Bridgeport, Connecticut area as part of the weekly program featuring Rózsi and László, very well known and respected Hungarian musicians. The Hungarian Mosaic focused on a variety of topics of interest to Hungarian Americans and were pleased to present another of the topics.

The wine growers of the Somló region drew up some regulations to safeguard the reputation of their wines. This happened in 1752, and all those concerned about this wine wish they could still be enforced. The penalty for doctoring Somló wine, or to bring wine from another region into a Somló wine cellar was a fine of 12 *forints* or 25 blows with a stick. In those days, 12 *forints* was a lot of money, but it was a better choice than the blows with a stick.

What is so special about Somló wine? Well, Somló Hill is the smallest wine-growing region in Hungary. It lies just below the southern tip of Lake Balaton, emerging out of the flatland like an oasis in the desert. It is an old volcano made of basalt and its peak rises only about a thousand feet above the surrounding lands. This is about the height of the Twin Towers in New York.*

Somló Hill, not obstructed by anything, receives the cooling breezes of the Alps and of the Balaton Uplands. This breeze slows down the ripening process of the grapes, making it possible for the specially rich aromatic substances to develop.

The Roman Legion was smart enough to pick this place to plant selected vines, laying the groundwork for a thousand years of continuous vine-growing.

As a matter of fact, Somló wine became famous much earlier than the wines of Tokaj. To begin with, King Stephen founded a monastery here. During medieval times, the serf had to pay the landowner one tenth of the yield of the best grape varieties, and 12 buckets of wine per plot from other

sections of the Hill. King Ladislas praised the French cellerman, a monk at the abbey, for his wine efforts. King Matthias also awarded this wine to his famous Black Army at battle sites to keep the men in good spirits. Cardinal Tamás Bakócz, Archbishop of Esztergom, a former serf himself (who was famous for ostentatious displays of wealth, such as fitting his horses with golden horseshoes), delighted his guests with wine from Somló Hill. Furthermore, the commander of Ferenc Rákóczi's forces indulged in great bouts of wine drinking here while the Gypsy girl, Cinka Panna played the Rákóczi Song on her violin for Vak Botyán. Among foreign royalties we find Queen Victoria of England as one of the best customers of Somló wine. Today, the wine cellar is a sort of Fort Knox, supervised by three government agencies, accounting for every drop of the best wine. The most common varieties on the Hill are the *Olaszrizling*, *Ezerjő* and *Mézesfehér*. People attribute significant therapeutical qualities to the Somló wines. They say that it cleanses the kidneys, gets rid of anemia, and helps the appetite, with no side effects. They also claim that this wine is the cause of more boys than the national average being born in this region.

Whether for these reasons, or for no reason at all, it is worth the effort to have at least one glass of Somló wine in a lifetime. The memory will surely last a lifetime.

This is Claudia Margittay-Balogh putting a glass of Somló wine instead of a chip into the Great Hungarian Mosaic.

**Aired May 22nd, 1983*



Somló Hill

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