CHAPTER XIV

EXPULSION – THE SWABIANS IN PRESENT DAY HUNGARY

The turbulent period immediately following the war was – as indicated in the previous chapter – a time of chaos, uncertainty and trial for the Swabians. This period may be divided into three phases. The first one consisted of deportations to the Soviet Union by the Red Army, at once the land was taken. The second was marked by the expropriation, internment and dispersion of the Swabians by the Soviet-controlled new Hungarian regime. The third and heaviest blow to Hungary’s Germandom was the so-called “final settlement of the German problem” – the wholesale expulsion of the Swabians from Hungary.

As to the latter, plans concerning such an action were revealed already in April, 1945 when Marshal Voroshilov, the Russian chairman of the ACC prompted the new Hungarian government to undertake preparations for the mass expulsion of the Volksdeutsche. According to Kertész, at that time a high ranking official in the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and an eyewitness to the events in question, “the Russian argument was that the removal of the Germans would be a great benefit to Hungary, because it would relieve the country from a dangerous fifth column and would eliminate once and for all the possibility of German interference in Hungarian domestic affairs through the pretext of protecting a German minority.”

The Communist Party, which of course enjoyed the full support of the Soviets and was therefore already at that time the greatest force in the Hungarian administration, was together

with the National Peasant Party (a quasi-Communist organization) eagerly seconding the Soviet demand. The Smallholders Party "strongly opposed the idea of a wholesale expulsion of the German minority, arguing that Hungary should not imitate the racial theories of Hitler, nor adopt the doctrines of collective responsibility." "Only those should be made to go who had proved their disloyalty by declaring themselves of 'German nationality' in the census, or by joining the Volksbund." ¹ The other parties were, in however lukewarm a way, also against indiscriminate expulsion that would employ the principle of collective guilt. Finally, at the meeting of the Council of Ministers on May, 1945 it was agreed "that only the disloyal Germans should be deprived of their citizenship and, after the confiscation of their property, expelled from Hungary .... The official note of the Hungarian government addressed to the government of the Soviet Union on May 26, 1945 set forth that 'it would be necessary to transfer from Hungary those Germans who became the servants of Hitlerism and traitors to Hungary's cause because this would be the only way to assure that the German spirit and oppression could not dominate the country any longer.' The same note stated that the number of such Nazi-Germans might be 200,000–250,000." ²

The weak opposition of the Hungarian government, the latter dominated by the pro-expulsion Communists and fully controlled by the Russian occupational forces, was eliminated by the Potsdam Agreement of August 2, 1945.³ The Agreement was the last of the great landmarks of inter-Allied policy concerning the affairs of the principal enemy, Germany and it supplemented previous understandings reached by the Big Three (the United States, United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union) at Teheran and Yalta. Among the various topics of this agreement was the expulsion of German populations from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.⁴

¹ Schechtman, Postwar Population Transfers ... p. 278.
³ On the Potsdam Agreement, its background, its motivating forces, the legal and other aspects of the protocol, etc., see Paikert, op. cit., pp. 8–22.
⁴ According to Kertész: "At the Potsdam Conference, in a surprise move, the Soviet delegation proposed that the provision for the expulsion of the Germans from Hungary should be inserted into Article XIII, which dealt with the expulsion of the Germans from Poland and Czechoslovakia. Thus, the Soviet policy maker had obtained Western endorsement of the expulsion ...." Kertész, op. cit., pp. 185, 186.