

**ABSTRACT OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS**

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The Connection of the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence of the Year 1956 to  
Transcarpathia



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2008

The topic of my PhD thesis is: The connection of the Hungarian revolution and war of independence of the year 1956 to Transcarpathia.

Among the great amount of Hungarian events through its history the revolution of 1956 stands out. It was the revolution which influence crossed the borders of Hungary and aroused the whole world's interest.

“October 23, 1956, is a day that will live forever in the annals of free men and nations. It was a day of courage, conscience and triumph. No other day since history began has shown more clearly the eternal unquenchability of man's desire to be free, whatever the odds against success, whatever the sacrifice required.”<sup>1</sup>

“The story of Hungarian democracy represents the triumph of liberty over tyranny. In the fall of 1956, the Hungarian people demanded change, and tens of thousands of students, workers, and other citizens bravely marched through the streets to call for freedom. Though Soviet tanks brutally crushed the Hungarian uprising, the thirst for freedom lived on.”<sup>2</sup>

“The 1956 Hungarian Revolution was the first tear in the Iron Curtain. Hungarians from all walks of life rose up against insurmountable odds to fight the brutal Soviet-installed Hungarian communist government. Thousands died fighting, others tortured and executed, while 200,000 were forced to flee.”<sup>3</sup>

I have chosen this topic because nonetheless in Hungary and in West-European Countries a lot of books, publications appeared concerning this historical period of Hungary , in the press of East-European countries and mainly in Ukraine and Transcarpathia those kind of writings has just started to appear what can give some imagination about the Hungarian events of those days.

Looking through the bibliography of this time, I have noticed that the events concerning the revolution both Transilvania and Slovakia were deeply searched but the Transcarpathian link was absent- except of some personal recollection.

The main aim of my PhD thesis is to show the Transcarpathian connection to the revolution through the printing-press, local specialized bibliography, oral history, archival material.

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<sup>1</sup> President John F. Kennedy, on the first anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution.

In: [http://www.americanhungarianfederation.org/news\\_1956.htm](http://www.americanhungarianfederation.org/news_1956.htm)

<sup>2</sup> President Bush issues a proclamation honoring the 1956 Hungarian Revolution (10/18/2006)

In: [http://www.americanhungarianfederation.org/docs/AHF%20NEWS%20RELEASE\\_2006-10-18\\_Bush1956\\_ENGLISH.pdf](http://www.americanhungarianfederation.org/docs/AHF%20NEWS%20RELEASE_2006-10-18_Bush1956_ENGLISH.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> In: [http://www.americanhungarianfederation.org/news\\_1956.htm](http://www.americanhungarianfederation.org/news_1956.htm)

To write my thesis I used the following methods: analyzing documents, texts, printing-press, none-written information, statistics, observation, spontaneous, structural, focus-team, mixed, deep and life-way interview.

From the beginning of the middle of 1980-s in Ukraine and as well as in Transcarpathia the revaluation of the past started. Historians begin to work on topics which until the end of the soviet regime were taboos and were forbidden. To this topics belong the war of independence of 1956 too.

This important event until this time were not deeply studied, there were no in-depth studies at all, just some interviews with local inhabitants. That is why to write all kind of Transcarpathian connection to Hungarian revolution is very important, current and new. Linking these new data to well-known Hungarian and other nations' researches they can widen our knowledge about this historical period a lot, because the local aspects have lots of unknown facts for the historians.

Unfortunately it is very difficult to make research in our territory, because the personnel of the archives are still the same people as were in the Soviet Union and most of the materials are not allowed to search, and only a few historians have the opportunity to look into the documents. Most of the materials are still undercover.

The Soviet regime made everything in order to keep in secret that fact that the Hungarian revolution was the first armed challenge against the Soviet Union.

The thesis is made up of seven chapters.

The first chapter tells about the history of Transcarpathia after the second world war.

In the second chapter we talk about what local inhabitants could read in local newspapers in the year of 1956 and 1957 about the Hungarian heroic but at the same time tragic events. The articles what appeared in the newspapers were talking about the brutalities of the revolutionists, about how they "killed the peaceful communists, soldiers and hung them in the square", but there is almost nothing written about the truth of those days.

It is the first attempt to show what the printing-press write about the every day events of the revolution.

First articles about the revolution appeared not long after the revolution had broken out. At the end of the 1956 and at the beginning of 1957 more than 200 articles dealt with the events. There were cases when more than 2-3 articles were published in the same newspaper.

Local papers at that time were under the influence and supervising of the Communist Party.

The bibliography what appeared were mostly the collection of the articles appeared about the events of the war of independence.

From the third chapter we can get to know what kind of unknown documents are hold in the Transcarpathian County Archive. They are mostly court cases, judicial documents. From them we can get to know that there were Hungarian groups in different parts of Transcarpathia what tried to help their Hungarian brothers. These groups wrote leaflets on which, for example, they wrote lines of Hungarian famous poems, and spread them among Transcarpathian inhabitants increasing their attention.

Immediately after the revolution the military tribunals in Ungvár started. The interpreter at the court were Transcarpathian Hungarian people.

Speaking about Transcarpathian reflection of Hungarian revolution we should emphasis that there were no armed actions or fights in our territory and in many cases for very small attempts people were sent to prison. They do it in order to scare and alarm people and to prevent serious actions.

A 95 members committee were sent to towns and villages by Communist Party. Their task was to talk to people and make them understand and see the Hungarian events from their point of view. They explained the political program of the newly established Hungarian Revolutionary Worker-Peasant Government.

The fourth chapter is the oral history. It contains the local inhabitants personal remembrance about those tragic days. How they felt, how they tried to help their Hungarian brothers and sisters.

This chapter also contains the recollection of those Transcarpathians who had to cross the Hungarian-Soviet border and go against their own nation. They were soldiers, doctors, interpreters, drivers, etc.

The fifth chapter deals with the hostly-debated question of the Hungarian Revolutionary Worker-Peasant Government.

According to my research this Government Summon was written in Moscow in two languages, both in Hungarian and Russian. Than it was touch up by Laszlo Balla and read into the radio in Ungvar. The Soviet power had to say that the Government was established in Hungary otherwise it would not be accepted as the government of Hungary, because it was not formed in Hungary, so it is not a legal one.

The sixth chapter deals with the deportation of Hungarian revolutionists to the Soviet Union. This part of the thesis tells about that fact, that Hungarian revolutionists were sent to prisons of the Soviet Union, mostly to Ungár, Sztrij, Drohobics, Csernovci etc.

According to the I. Szerov 4000-5000 people were arrested and sent to prisons.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 2007, Victor Juscenko, the president of Ukraine gave a list of names of 3000 imprisoned people to László Sólyom, the President of the Hungarian Republic.

In the seventh chapter there are detailed information about the soviet attack against the Hungarian nation. It is about the Soviet intervention.

The Soviet intervention, codenamed "Operation Whirlwind", was launched by Marshall Ivan Konev. The five Soviet divisions stationed in Hungary before October 23 were augmented to a total strength of 17 divisions. The 8th Mechanized Army under command of Lieutenant General Hamazasp Babadzhanian and the 38th Army under command of Lieutenant General Hadzhi-Umar Mamsurov from the nearby Carpathian Military District were deployed to Hungary for the operation. Some rank-and-file Soviet soldiers reportedly believed they were being sent to Berlin to fight German fascists. By 9:30 p.m. on November 3, the Soviet Army had completely encircled Budapest.

As American historian Johanna Granville explained: *"It is now known that Soviet leaders decided on October 23 to intervene militarily. Soviet troops executed Plan Volna ("Wave") at 11:00 P.M. that same day. The next morning a radio broadcast announced that Nagy had replaced András Hegedüs as prime minister. On October 25, János Kádár, a younger, centrist official, replaced Gerő as first secretary. However, this first Soviet intervention did not solve the original political problem in the country. New documents have revealed that the Kremlin initially decided on October 28 against a second military intervention. But on October 31, they reversed course and launched a more massive intervention (Operation Vikhr, or "Whirlwind"). During the night of November 3, sixteen Soviet divisions entered Hungary. Fighting continued until mid-November, when Soviet forces suppressed the resistance and installed a pro-Soviet government under Kádár."*<sup>4</sup>

After announcing a willingness to negotiate a withdrawal of Soviet forces, the Politburo changed its mind and moved to crush the revolution. On November 4, a large Soviet force invaded Budapest, killing thousands of civilians. Organized resistance ceased by November 10, and mass arrests began. An estimated 200,000 Hungarians fled as refugees.

For 12 days in 1956, the Hungarian people caught a fleeting glimpse of their independence. Armed with little more than a love of liberty, the impatient patriots of Hungary rose up against the mighty Soviet empire.

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<sup>4</sup> Johanna Granville, *The First Domino: International Decision Making during the Hungarian Crisis of 1956* (College Station, Texas : Texas A + M University Press, 2004), pp. 94-124.; Granville, Johanna: Hungarian Revolution. In: Encyclopedia of Russian History, 2004. The Gale Group Inc. <http://www.encyclopedia.com>

Fifty years ago the Hungarian revolution, this important political event shook the world.

The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 was the first major anti-Soviet uprising in Eastern Europe and the first shooting war to occur between socialist states