

Summary Ph.D. Thesis

**Towards New Shores**  
**A Minority's Search for Egress; Intellectual and Political Trends**  
**in Délvidék and the Establishment of the Hungarian Party**  
**(1918-1923)**

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## I.

The thesis deals with the history of Hungarians in Délvidék (Southlands) between 1918 and 1923 as a monography based on newspaper articles of the time, sources from the Szabadka Archives and Hungarian, Serbian, Croat and English language literature.

Historical and colloquial Hungarian language interprets "Délvidék" as all former Hungarian territories, except for Croatia, annexed to Yugoslavia, i.e.: Bácska, Banat, Syrmia, Baranya and Medjmurje County. Prior to the change of authorities started in 1918 and ultimately ended in 1920, Vajdaság (Vojvodina) had not existed as an administrative and territorial unit, except for a short period during the Voivodeship of Serbia and Banat of Temeschwar from 1848 to 1860. Vajdaság (Vojvodina), as an administrative unit established in 1920, comprised the western part of the annexed Banat, Bácska and the triangle of Baranya (Baranja). After World War II, the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, established after 1945, did not include the Baranya-triangle, annexed to Croatia in the meantime; however Syrmia became part of it. The author uses the notions of "Délvidék" and "Vajdaság" respectively in the above indicated, dual system of coordinates.

The dissertation's central part elaborates the aftermath of World War I since 1921 in view of the Hungarians in Délvidék, until the extension of civil rights onto the Hungarian minority of Yugoslavia, i.e. from the first stage of their minority strategy and searching egress until their first attempts in political activity, i.e. the 1923 elections. Emphasising this brief period is justified not only by the topic, i.e. the exploration of the minority's egress from the aspect of the history of mentalities, but also - by taking the opportunity of applying micro-historical examination - the theme, simply, requires diminished sizes both in chronological and in geographical sense. At the same time, the primary nature of the thesis is not micro-historical, undoubtedly however, it is still such in a sense, that the author focused his attention to a smaller region of the Yugoslav state, to Vajdaság (Vojvodina) and within that, on occasions, to a specific intellectual community, Szabadka (Subotica), since this city was one of the centres of Hungarians in Délvidék, where their political, economic, social and cultural changes happened, where they sought for egresses and organised themselves politically, thus providing a good model and presentation of the policy and views

applied by the new state towards minorities.

Basically, the author departed from the thesis, that the destiny of minorities is essentially defined by their wider environment, where changes were going on irrespective of the minority, though they had serious, decisive effect on the minority's everyday life and strategy on maintaining minority identity, aims and opportunities. The thesis attempted to take into consideration these coordinates and sought the answers to the questions about how did the Hungarians in Délvidék, who became a minority against their will, react to them after 1918? What theoretical and practical alternatives of the minority life did they formulate in those early years? Was there arguing and about what issues? What was the outcome of these debates?

Thus, it was aimed at exploring and analysing the scope, which then defined, more precisely, restricted the organisational opportunities of Hungarians in Délvidék and set out the limits - which in most cases were very tough - of minority life. By putting Oszkár Jászi and János Dettre in the focal point, the thesis provides a detailed presentation of the debates that had been going on in the early years of self-organisation and points out the fundamental dilemma, which meant the relation to and alignment with majority parties in issues of organisation. Besides examining various alternatives, the author also attempted to analyse the motivation of the actors of the period and to assess the decisions made. Beyond examining the possible scopes of minority organisation, he also analysed the impact of Jászi's concept both on Hungarian and Serb political circles and presented in details János Dettre and László Grábel's reflections on it.

Based on the analysis of the researched period, the author concluded, that one of the internal - Hungarian-Hungarian - key questions of the Hungarian minority political life, being organised in the early 1920s, was how to ease ideological and social tensions existent mostly within intellectuals and the middle class. Finding an answer to this question was made difficult also by the dualist minority policy of the new state, which often was, beyond class-related antagonisms, straightforward chauvinist and in a number of cases it made the community's political awakening impossible by demonstrating extreme Serb nationalism. By analysing the programme of the Hungarian Party from the period of its formation, the author concluded, that, under such double pressure, the dual doctrine of the assertive minority Hungarian fight against class and nationalist oppression was suggested by János Dettre and developed by László Grábel.

The paper devotes significant attention to the presentation of the Serbian parties' views on Hungarians and from this aspect it attempts to give an answer to the question about the ideological prism, through which the Serbian political elite looked at the minority, first and foremost, Hungarian issue, about the specific responses to it and what communication techniques were applied towards the Hungarians.

An emphasised role is given to violence- so typical of the era, likewise to the presentation of espionage litigations and to the detailed mapping of atrocities against the Germans, besides the Hungarian minority.

In the context of the Hungarian minority's social, economic and structural changes and the transformation of the middle class and the impact of agrarian reforms, the position and role of the Jews in that period is also stressed. Furthermore, the paper seeks to answer the question of why wasn't it possible for different nations, especially Germans and Hungarians, to cooperate politically in the new state.

The author attempted to present in his work many former thinkers and leaders of the Hungarians from Délvidék, most of whom have been forgotten by now.

## II.

Beyond the use of the literature, the dissertation, first and foremost, builds upon basic researches. The issues of the *Bácsmegyei Napló*, a newspaper considered liberal in the period, published between 1921 and 1923, likewise other Serb and Hungarian papers and the sources of the Szabadka Archives make up the dissertation's fundamental source base.

Archival research chiefly focused on the city's administration fund "(Gradsko poglavarstvo 1918-1941) F:47". Within that, the author had examined in detail the archives of the lord lieutenant's, the mayor's, the public notary's and the chief of police's office. Files no. F:045 (Okružni Sud Subotica (1919-1941) of the District Court are less extensive but contain information essential for the thesis. There, the author mostly researched material relating to various crimes against the state, materials of espionage litigations and materials relating to the execution of sentences.

With regard to newspapers, besides *Bácsmegyei Napló*, in Szabadka, the author researched *Hírlap*, which later became the "voicepipe" of the Hungarian Party, and *Bacvanin* and *Neven*, the journals of local Bunjevac and Croats, often rather nationalist in tone. He also researched "*Fáklya*", published in Bečskerek (Zrenjanin), the papers close to the Radical Party "*Vojvodina*" published in Versec (Vrsac), the Catholic and also strongly right-winged Hungarian "*Délbácska*" from Újvidék (Novi

Sad) and “Vidovdan” edited by Dobrosal Jevdjovic, also known as the “voicepipe” of the Yugoslav ideology.

The author also made efforts to review the papers from Belgrade and those, which represented specific papers typically reflecting the period and its public mindset. As to the papers from Belgrade, the author mostly relied on “Politika”-papers close to the government – and “Novi List”, the ultra-conservative “Pravda”, “Radikal” edited by Stojan Protic, “Samouprava” – known as the official paper of the radical party, likewise “Tribuna”, another radical paper and the Official Journal of the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs. The author reviewed international responses to the 1923 election in The Times, from London, accessible via the internet.

The paper was written by combining the principle of arrangement in thematic and chronological sequence. Besides Hungarians, the Jewish and German minorities are also articulately presented in the paper, because the destiny of these three nations and the exploration of their possible cooperation seemed logical in view of the period.

### III.

The dissertation’s structure takes into account the theme, indicated in the title, i.e. a minority’s search for egress, intellectual and political trends in Délvidék and the establishment of the Hungarian Party. At the same time, it also attempts to set the raised issues in an as broad as possible system of coordinates and to approach them from many directions.

Chapter One elaborates on the historiography of the theme. The author examined in detail and presented studies on state history, theory of state, ideologies and parties published so far. He especially examined the published works of Hungarian authors on minority issues but also analysed the views of Serb historians about this question. The historiographic summary provides a review of some of the most important works, published so far, on the issue of the Hungarian-Yugoslav diplomatic relations and also presents studies dealing with minority-protection covenants. This chapter deals with the literature on the history of the press and local history in details.

Chapter Two focuses on the period of the change of authorities and has been broken down to nine sub-chapters. Based on the literature, the author presents the territorial, social, ethnic and economic relations of Hungarians in Délvidék prior to 1918, the internal division of the Hungarian community and the local effects of the

interior policies of the time.

Then, he analyses the process of building the state of South Slavs, the issue of state apparatus structure, by devoting special attention to the minority policy of the new state, to parties, which developed such policy and to the presentation of the theoretical roots and everyday practice of it. He explores in details the structure of the state of South Slavs in process, presents the basic considerations of decision-makers and the institutional system of the new state. With the aim to provide transparency and comprehensibility of the further study, he also deals with the issues of adopting the constitution and, based on archival sources, he attempts to show the weaknesses and operational troubles of the new power on local levels.

From this perspective, he presents the most important interior policy elements and milestones of the Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs and the Hungarian-Yugoslav diplomatic relations, in order to assess their effect on Hungarians in Délvidék. The chapter also lays out the strike of railroad workers in 1919 and 1920, which may be correlated to Hungarian revisionist efforts, moreover, with the plans on armed liberation, likewise the espionage lawsuit of György Varga, which will be elaborated in the further text.

As assessed in the thesis, the period of the new state's consolidation raised a number of such questions to be answered even for the political elite of the South Slav state, in which the parties in opposition and with opposite interests could not reach an agreement. The issue of state system and the process of adopting the constitution had already in 1919-1920 projected a permanent crisis in interior politics, which characterized the first Yugoslav state as long as its disintegration in 1941. The duel of the Serbs in favour of centralisation and mostly Croats, who preferred decentralisation resulted in the victory of powers dominated by Serbs due to the numerical majority and the success of the policy of division, thus the constitutional order of the new state shifted towards the direction of centralisation.

In the same chapter, the author thoroughly lays out those social, economic and cultural structure changes, which defined the political and economic power of the Hungarian minority and their opportunity for advocacy respectively. Beyond using the already indicated literature, the thesis provides new data from the author's own researches about the process of forming the Hungarian community's social and economic structure, specifies retaliative measures exerted against the middle class and presents the effect of the agrarian reform and the education policy on Hungarians.

The author concludes that the land reform covering the whole country, thus Vajdaság (Vojvodina) as well, was a social and not a political issue. However, political considerations were dominant in the new territories taken into possession, especially in Vajdaság (Vojvodina) from the very beginning of this process. Before the change of authorities, the Hungarian community's vast majority were peasant farmers without land and small farmers, hence their exclusion from the land reform, beyond the unfavourable trends in agrarian relations, resulted in the impossibility of earning for bare living and in the further lost of their social positions, already teetered. Expulsions, which were going on parallel to that process, beyond changing ethnic proportions, led to the gradual decline of the middle class. Thus, from the perspective of the new state, the weakening of the Hungarian community's economic power was successful and rapid.

The front attack against the Hungarian school system, undoubtedly serving its curtailment, even more, its elimination, was, all in all, a long and emotionally traumatic process for the Hungarian community. The introduction of the name analysis system and highlighting various measures of segregation – besides the artificial, top-to-bottom induced erosion of the Hungarian community's intellectual level - were but series of measures aimed at the ethnic separation of the, first and foremost, Jewish, then of the already assimilating German communities from the Hungarian community. Despite that, in the 1921/22 school year, there were still 5 Hungarian-language grammar schools, 11 public schools and 141 elementary schools with 60 000 Hungarian pupils in Vajdaság (Vojvodina).

In view of the above mentioned, the author have concluded that one of the key victims of the nationalisation of territories, controlled by the new power, a process parallel with centralisation, were Hungarians living on the territory of Vajdaság (Vojvodina). He also points out, that – although the new power had successfully eliminated the Hungarian administrative structure in the early years of taking over the control – setting up the new system was progressing slowly and labouredly, due to poor and lacking staff and corruption. The unification of the overall legal system had not happened in the examined period.

As the author assesses, the political scope of minority, self-organising Hungarians was restricted into a rather narrow space by the power-related considerations of the two largest Serbian parties, the Democratic Party and the Radical Party. He examined their ideology, attitude towards minority issues and constitutional concepts with the

aim to elucidate the theoretical and practical search of Hungarian leaders for egress, the motivation behind it and the direction of it. In addressing the minority policy of the new ruling elite, the author tackles the issue of opting and presents in detail the power's policy in that regard, while by giving specific examples, he illustrates the power's considerations, motivation and legal techniques applied in this relation.

The backbone of the thesis is Chapter Three and its fourteen subchapters. The author gives a detailed presentation of the local press, which played a crucial role in organising the Hungarian Party, with special focus on *Bácsmegyei Napló* and especially pointed out that this daily from Szabadka, beyond raising practical, action-inspiring thoughts, was the first to outline the scope of Hungarians in *Délvidék*, who had become minority, likewise the direction and alternatives of their possible organisation. He made a distinct analysis on the role and position of Octobrist emigrants, who played an essential role in the work of the daily paper and presents in detail Oszkar Jászi's publications in the paper relating to the Aster Revolutions and the Hungarian Republic of Councils. The author reflects on the view of the Hungarian government in relation to the Octobrists and emphasises at the same time, that the Octobrist emigrants were not a compact community, in the political sense of the world, and in their future-related views there were significant deviations. The author have reached the conclusion, that policy-makers in Belgrade could use only that part of the Octobrists for their own purposes, who, either because they were compromised, or because of their own belief, assumed to cooperate with the Yugoslav policy-makers and did not want, or were not able to be aware of the position and destiny of Hungarians, who became a minority in *Délvidék*.

The other part of the Octobrist emigrant group, presumably larger in number and gathered mostly around János Dettre and the *Bácsmegyei Napló*, took a different path. From the early beginnings, they were committed to the intellectual, cultural and political development of Hungarians in Vajdaság (Vojvodina), played a leading role in the tough work of stimulating people and in drawing up specific concepts. Intellectuals, with radical and liberal past and gathered around the *Bácsmegyei Napló*, won themselves an outstanding position not only in the political mobilisation of Hungarians, but also in creating its minority literature.

Besides the Octobrists, the author provided a special space to some milestones of the Jewish community in *Délvidék* in that period. By mapping the Jewish community's path-search under new circumstances, he lays out the almost forgotten



fact of the state's atrocities and those techniques of power, by which the new state attempted to separate the Jews from the Hungarian community.

He particularly presents the arguing within Jewish intellectual circles, the searches for strategies, which - likewise the case of the Hungarian community - led to serious cleavages. The conflicts climaxed in early 1922, in relation to declaring national identity. Jews, likewise other minorities were doomed to follow an inescapable path, which was aggravated by the emotional battles of realising the status of double minority, i.e. national and confessional, and the series of administrative and official measures of the new state, which often exceeded the rigorousness carried into effect against the Hungarians and which they were compelled to endure, because, firstly, they were Hungarians, secondly, Jews and thirdly, Hungarian Jews.

Two options had been outlined in debates, - often indulging in personalities-, led in the first half of 1922, with regard to the Jews' future strategy to follow. The first one urged the maintenance of status quo and tightening the links of Jews to Hungarians. Its advocates perceived the Jews in Délvidék as different from Hungarians only in religion, not in nationality, sentiments and culture. The representatives of the second alternative urged the complete setting apart of Jews from Hungarians and defining them as a separate nation and also, advocated their own political activity and even the creation of the independent Jewish state. Though assimilating to the Slav majority did not emerged as a possible alternative, the leading representatives of Jews took into consideration that the new situation would undoubtedly lead on a long run to divergence from the Hungarians and adapting to the civilisational cultural circle of the new authorities.

Eventually, on this dual inescapable path, the most outstanding representatives of the Jewish community committed themselves to the first option and took active part in preparing Hungarian minority policy-building, in the intellectual debates, moreover, they were in the first lines during the establishment of the Hungarian Party.

In the continuation, the author elaborates on Oszkár Jászi's programme from late 1921 and János Dettre's answers to Jászi's suggestions. He closely follows up the emerging debate between the two in the issue of "what's next?", whereof the basic point of collision was the view on the political positioning of Hungarians. Oszkár Jászi did not consider an independent Hungarian party relying and politicizing on minority bases in December 1921. He was of the opinion, that Hungarians, based on their class position, should become members of the large, country-wide Slav parties.

To the contrary, János Dettre was decisively for creating an independent Hungarian party, he consistently and decisively refused any membership in any Serb party, moreover, he was the first to specifically encourage the Hungarians in Délvidék to organise themselves.

The next chapter addresses the circumstances that preceded the initiation of the independent Hungarian party. The author attempts to answer the type of the impact the Aster Revolution, the Hungarian Republic of Councils and the counter-revolution that followed – besides the change of powers – made on Hungarians in Délvidék, likewise the impact of ideological differences in the way of thinking of Hungarian intellectuals, and why and how had the wounds of the unsettled recent past influenced the remained minority Hungarian elite, which was re-organising itself. Relying on literature, he presents Budapest's stand in the issue, and then, in relation to political activation, the author points out that, Hungarians in Délvidék, who became a minority by the change of authorities, were fully deprived of their rights in the first phase of creating and building the new state, i.e. the period from the interregnum until January 1922, thus they could not participate in the political life of the new state. Fundamentally, this delay in political organisation, thus, was due to external pressure of circumstances. The citizenship of Hungarians in Délvidék was regulated by an optional law valid as long as 26 January 1922. Activism, or political organisation and passivism, the issue of how to get strengthened culturally, meant a serious expansive strength for the intellectuals, who were for the first time compelled to face with minority life and all its challenges. The debate, which had broken grounds with elementary strength in the first half of 1922, in its fundamentals, manifested the meditation of the Hungarian political elite in Délvidék, actually, its inability to make decisions, and was not an opinion and stream generated by the Octobrist emigrant intellectuals.

At the same time, it also indicates, that in the researched period, one of the internal - Hungarian - Hungarian – key questions of the Hungarian minority political life was how to ease ideological and social tensions existent mostly within intellectuals and the middle class. Finding an answer to this question was made difficult also by the dualist minority policy of the new state, which often was, beyond class-related antagonisms, straightforward chauvinist and in a number of cases it made the community's political awakening impossible by demonstrating extreme Serb nationalism.

The author explores the responses of the Yugoslav political elite to the Hungarian party in organisation and, in order to understand them, analyses this elite's situation during the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and evaluates this issue in the relation of the Serb-Croat conflict as well.

The destiny of Hungarians compelled to live as minority in Délvidék was, essentially, influenced by the two biggest parties of the Serbian political elite to the largest extent. The Radical Part, embodying the political programme of the Serb elite and middle class, in the context of state law, advocated the realization of the greater Serbia programme. Although integrated Yugoslavism was in the focus of the Democratic Party's ideology, essentially, it also represented the enforcement of great Serbian hegemonistic ambitions. Hence, there were no significant deviances between the two larger Serb parties in relation to the Hungarian issue. Fundamentally, both parties concentrated on totally breaking the dominant positions of the Hungarians, and the Serb parties' leaders, Pašić and Davidović, tended only secondly to grant minimum minority rights assumed by international covenants.

Thus, both parties rejected that Hungarians, and also all other minorities, organise themselves in independent political parties, and, on top of that, they manipulated by all means even the granting of the right to vote, despite the fact, that this right is an individual and not a community right, and took it with serious reservations, striving to prevent its extension firstly by legal means, later by brute force.

After the political organisation of the Hungarians, the Serb political elite attempted not only to divide and break their political elite, but also to turn against each other different Hungarian social classes. The extremely naive, politically non-educated, very often intimidated lower social classes basically tended to cooperate with and fit in unconditionally in large numbers– which meant giving up their own identity – in cases, when their existence was solely dependent on the benevolence and support-policy of the state.

Beyond territorial distance, the Hungarians' scope of cooperation with the political elite of the new authorities was also aggravated by the fact that the main power, fighting for decentralisation, i.e. the Croatian Peasant Party, led by Stjepan Radić, was not, eventually, a peasant movement, but a Croat nationalist one, hindering great Croat ambition behind republicanism and federalism. For Hungarians, who became minority, backing up the Croat issue would have not brought along – quite the contrary, it would have set to minimum – equality and the opportunity of the so much

desired free economic and cultural development.

Disclosing the specific process of organising, the author presents in detail the period between the establishment of the Hungarian Party' Szabadka (Subotica) branch organisation on 12 February 1922 and the foundation of the Countrywide Hungarian Party in Zenta (Senta) on 17 September 1922. Upon reflecting on the meeting with Prime Minister Paščić, the author gives details on the forms of physical and legal violence against the Hungarian community, he presents what points of collision emerged within the party being organised as an effect of such measures in the issue of „what steps to take next“.

He discusses in a special chapter and with new data the espionage lawsuit of György Varga, presented in the literature in detail, and supported by archival sources; he reconstructs the political lawsuits and arrests of the period. Relying on factual numbers, he demonstrates, that 40 arrestment were enforced in Subotica (Szabadka) alone in 1922 in charges of crime against the state, capital treasons, espionage, attempt to “demolish” constitutional order and other political crimes.

Besides the description of the Hungarian Party' foundation on 17 September 1922 in Zenta (Senta), the author supplemented the already known facts with the description of the violent actions in Zenta (Senta) after the establishment and, then, analysed the Hungarian Party's programme, which was, essentially, made by László Grábel based on János Dettre's outlines. The author believes that, in a period involving many debates and painful searches for egress, on the long run, the Dettre-Grábel tandem produced a lasting and all-time valuable work. The Hungarian Party's programme and strategy, along the opportunities and realities of the times, strove to pool under the same banner Hungarians of the community counting half-a-million members and attempted to ease traditional antagonisms and tensions among various Hungarian social classes. It took massive intellectual efforts to answer those questions, which fell outside the circle of legal obligations granted by the peace treaties and the protection of the Hungarian language.

Though its demands and objectives were taken from the past in many aspects, there was a lack of mid- and long-term development concepts in the programme of the Hungarian Party, since it moved in an inescapable path. It urged and demanded solely immediate measures, but as to its strategy, it was, essentially, a modern, forward looking document. In the given social and political atmosphere, it took enormous emotional battles and conflicts (and was also burdened by ultimately polarized

Hungarian intellectuals in the issue of “what steps to take next?”) to overcome the mindset – lost long-long time ago – prevailing in the prior 1918 period, and to formulate a rudimentary new line of advocacy, which synthesizes the bases of minority politicising and the dual concept of the minority’s assertive fight against class and nationalist oppression.

Developing the first minority strategy was not only limited to minimum rights required by the peace treaties, the covenant on minority protection, signed by the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs and those granted by the constitution of the new state. Many of its elements – autonomy, proportional employment, just to mention few of the most known ones – went beyond and exceeded these rights and have been living as basic criteria of present day minority strategies.

From this aspect, the actors of the period – as the author sees it – identified properly, that only such a programme would have been appropriate to stop the economic, social and intellectual erosion of Hungarians. The time, the place, the social and political atmosphere made it impossible to develop a progressive, institution-oriented programme in a period, when tens of thousands were compelled to leave their homeland, while the lower, but also the broadest, social classes refused the internal systems of both the kin state and the new state, and simultaneously, increasingly more people were looking for the way of cooperation with the authorities, moreover of assimilation. Having been in the grip of times and circumstances, besides the review and elimination of the most elementary violations of rights, a strategy, which covers the whole of the minority Hungarian community and stops its material, intellectual and legal decline was the only alternative.

Regarding the period of the Hungarian Party’s organisation, the author points out, that the fundamentals of the political organisation of Hungarians were not laid by the members of the traditional elite of the period before 1918, i.e. those who lived and politicized in the spirit of *Extra hungariam non est vita*, those who requested it, hence, enjoyed the support of the kin state in this respect, but by those, who they disdained, moreover, detested, i.e. those with civic and radical past and liberal, Jewish and Octrobist roots.

The last, fourth chapter of the thesis comprises three subchapters. With respect to the period after the establishment of the party, the author examines the history of the Hungrain party in relation to the 1923 elections. He follows up the whole process of negotiations between the Radical Party and the Hungarian Party aimed at cooperation

during elections, examines the events behind the scenes and the motivators of decisions in this regard.

In his assessment, the political leaders of Hungarians were right in realizing, that, in the constellation of the internal relations of political powers, the cooperation with the Radical Party would mean the only possible alternative. From this cooperation, the Hungarian Party expected that the attacks against the Hungarian education system would be stopped and the right to vote would be granted. Already at the beginning of the negotiations, they had to face the fact, that no substantive progress could be achieved in view of the education issue and that the cooperation could serve, at best, only the achievement of granting the right to vote. It took relatively long time for Hungarian politicians, who had just started to get familiar with the Byzantine style of politicizing, to realize - after getting over their naivety - that Belgrade looked at them not only as unequal partners, but also distrusted them, and, ultimately, the radicals did not want to help the Hungarians to have their legitimate representation, and, essentially, they were still interested in overwhelming, defeating the Hungarian political organisation and considered the granting of the voting right only in cases, when the Hungarians – according to the pact - had assumed not to have their own candidate, but support the ruling party. Thus, this configuration had incorporated failure and defeat already in its beginnings. The public debates, which emerged after that in *Hírlap* and *Bácsmegyei Napló* – which are both discussed by the author in detail – were, cardinally, realizations of the overall situation rooted in helplessness and bitterness.

Upon following up internal affairs, the author focuses his attention on the waves of violence in the period. He presents one of the protagonists of these events, namely, the Progressive Yugoslav Nationalist Youth Movement, established in Split on 25 January 1922, which changed its name in May 1922 to ORJUNA (*Organizacija jugoslovenskih nacionalista - Yugoslav Nationalists Organisation*), when it also adopted its new statute, under which the organisation pooled not only youth.

The founders of ORJUNA were members of the Democratic Party's bellicose wing and Svetozar Pribičević's followers. In its early years, this para-military organisation was massively supported in Dalmatia, because of their territorial demands from Italy. The first president of Orujna was Marko Nani, however the organisation's role increased significantly after February 1922, when the Croatian poet, Mirko Korolija (1886-1936) took over its managing. Beyond the Italian threat to Dalmatia, the

adoption of the so called “Obznana”, i.e. Proclamation on the protection of the Yugoslav State, in 1920, which prohibited the operation of the Yugoslav Communist Party, also contributed to the establishment of Orjuna. Orjuna was founded with the aim to protect the state from communism, separatism and irredentism.

As the para-military organisation of the Democratic Party, it was the unconditional follower of Yugoslav unitarianism. In many respects, it had borne the features of a Fascist organisation, it cooperated with the Chetnik organisations of the time and the military Narodna Odbrana (People’s Defence) organisation. Integrated Yugoslavism was in the heart of their ideology. According to this ideology, the three tribes (Serbs, Croats and Slovenes) make up the whole Yugoslav nation and any differences between them should be eliminated by all means, or else, everything should be done to “*eradicate from the society those elements, which hamper the existence of the state and the unity of the nation.*” At the time of its establishment, Orjuna applied the instruments of terror against the different-minded. Its members were organised in troops of ten, which executed armed attacks against the alleged or real enemies of the system. Besides their attacks against Hungarian and German minorities, they had daily clashes with the Croatian Nationalist Youth (Hrvatska Nacionalna Omladina – HANAO).

ORJUNA’s operations and terror were directed by Dobroslav Jevđević and mostly hit Zenta (Senta), Szabadka (Subotica) and Újvidék (Novi Sad). The author holds that, the authorities’ responses to the violent deviations – however strengthless they may seem for the posterity – also point out, that, after some time, when it had lost its influence on the development of affairs, Belgrade started to look at Orujna’s activities with displeasure, however failed to take up specific measures to curb the violence.

Besides presenting the actions of ORJUNA, the author also describes the cruelties of local authorities and the terror against the German minority. Likewise with regard to 1922, he also summarizes in relation to 1923 the espionage lawsuits, and indicates the number of heads of charges in matters of capital treason, espionage, attempt to demolish the state’s constitutional order and other political crimes.

The last chapter of the dissertation deals with the period after the Hungarian Party decided to ignore the elections. In this chapter, the author stressedly seeks the answer to the question about the absence of political cooperation between the minorities, first and foremost, Hungarians and Germans.

Besides the irredentist accusations against the Hungarians, the Hungarian-German

cooperation was unfavourably affected by the “Hungarisation” of Germans during the rule of Hungarian authorities. The Germans, due to their numerical proportions, own culture and national identity, could not generate such debate as was the case with Jews, thus the Germans, from the early beginnings, positioned to advocate their own national identity. In the new state, where political forces – except for the communist party – organised themselves solely along protecting the interests of a single nation, one of the vital and strategic goals and interest of the German Party was to stop “Hungarisation” and to re-Germanise those who had already assimilated. Presumably, a Hungarian-German cooperation would have a detrimental effect on that. Eventually, the contradiction of interests led to the divergence and separation of Germans from Hungarians. Apart from that, German school classes were also closed, physical violence, intimidation and assimilation processes directed from the top affected them as much as they did the Hungarians and Jews.

The author ended his researches with the question whether the Hungarian-speaking community, after the fiasco on 1923 elections, was strong enough to break down the barriers of birth, wealth, employment and social differences.

He deemed that the answer to this question is negative, because class differences within a micro-community had demonstrably stronger tensile strength than the cohesion assumed by the fact on the existence of cultural community. Nevertheless, he believes that even after ninety years, it is too early and too dogmatic to argue over this question in relation to a period, when Hungarian schools were massively closed down, the Hungarian language was not used in public administration at all and the Hungarian masses were either excluded from or made impossible to exercise their political rights. Anyhow, by 1923, there were individuals – in a significant number – whose national awareness was “chilled down” to indifferent by intimidations, threats, failures or aspects of individual comfort. Through the ability of human adaptation, the first signs of assimilation, though not in linguistic sense, but with respect to thinking and acting, appeared at an incredibly quick pace.