Silence, Cultivation, Cultural Heritage: strategies of identification in discourses on the "German past" in Hungary

Máté Zombory

research fellow, Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences

matezombory@yahoo.com

Abstract

From the perspective of historical sociology, this essay discusses the social conditions of German identification in Hungary after the Second World War. It focuses on the discursive logic of collective guilt and justice that was institutionalised in 1944-1948 through the empirical analysis of Hungarian nationality politics and public utterances in the context of international (European) discourses on the past that have influenced Hungary since the 1980s. The essay proposes a historical periodisation according to typical configurations of discursive constraints and strategic identifications and thus explains the reasons why the problem arises today as the "memory of expulsions".

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The "German past" has recently become an important issue both to the social sciences and humanities and to the larger (European) political public.[1] The social interest in the "German past" usually unfolds around the expulsion of around 12-14 million ethnic Germans of East Central Europe after the Second World War ended on the continent (Douglas, 2012). It typically arises as "memory", that is, as a past that hasn't been kept alive and transmitted so it has to be dealt with: researched and commemorated. Or, that is the same, as a past that hasn't passed so it is necessary to deal with it in those societies affected by the historical event. If we look through the seven decades that passed after the end of the war we find that this sort of problemitisation (Foucault, 1998) is a fairly new phenomenon. The reason why this question comes up as "a memory" and especially as the memory of forced migration in the second half of the 1940s is the primary object of this study exploring from a historical perspective the social conditions of remembering the "German past".

The complex operations of forced relocation of Germans after the second WW were executed according to the modern nation-state paradigm (Gellner, 1983) as an internationally supported attempt to resolve and prevent social conflicts on the continent. Although they were executed by force of states, they cannot be treated as part of distinct national histories. What is more, as an important means in the laboratory of social planning, forced population transfer was one of the political repertoire by which the gigantic international attempt to profoundly reorganise the geopolitical space of the continent was undertaken (see Mann, 1999, Münz, 2002). The fact that forced migration has become another source of conflict in the upcoming years and decades is another question. The point here is that besides the history of population movements, there is the history of their afterlife: how these operations were addressed, discussed, or remembered in the course of time. This metahistory (White, 1973) of the "German past" seems to be as complex and complicated as the events of forced relocation themselves. The discursive field of addressing the "German past" in Europe scattered into pieces both by the iron curtain and by the different capitalist or socialist nation-states. Not to speak of the history of knowledge production that determined the way this question was raised and dealt with.

All this makes extremely hard to write the history of the "German past" in a comprehensive manner. In the following, I will confine myself to the case of Hungary when looking at how public discourse constrained cultural (self-)representation as being of German origin since the end of the war. To bridge the gap between this national context and the inherent international feature of the expulsions, I will investigate the Hungarian case in a close connection with the larger transnational (European) context of the social relation to the past.

Although the discursive history of constructing the problem of the "German past" has apparently epistemological significance, it would be insufficient to reduce the empirical investigation to the production of (social scientific) knowledge. It would exclude the possibility of studying the social conditions of knowledge production that influences scientific interest as well. I will rather be interested in the archaeology of knowledge (Foucault, 1969) and the conceptual history (Koselleck, 1985) of the "German question", that is, the historical development of the discourse on Hungarian Germans, commonly called as "Swabians" (denomination with also a pejorative connotation since 1945). In order to define precisely my object of study, I will examine first the emergence of scientific knowledge production on Hungarian Germans since it enables to explore the discursive conditions of speaking publicly

about the topic, or in another words, the socio-political problems that academic knowledge production intended to deal with.

Questions that academic studies on Hungarian Germans wished to answer

When scholars, mostly historians, for the first time after the war began to deal with the subject of Hungarian Germans around 1970, the main conceptual framework was that of nationalities.[2] The overall international popularity of this subject, together with the softening of ideological control in the country had favourable effects on academic projects dealing with German nationality. In parallel with a less ideological assessment of the interwar Horthy-regime in general, the main topics of academic investigation were the interwar nationality politics in Hungary, with great emphasis on cultural and political institutions of ethnic Germans and their relations to German imperial politics (Á. Tóth, 2010). Thus one of the most acknowledged historians of the "first generation", Loránt Tilkovszky published on SS recruitments in Hungary (Tilkovszky, 1974) and on *Volksbund der Deutschen in Ungarn*, founded in 1938 (Tilkovszky, 1969, 1978). In his volume on Volksbund (see also Spannenberger, 2002), the author calls for treating the subject from an unbiased perspective in a scientifically objective manner since earlier works addressed it either as the background of the resettlements or as part of a Volksbund-apologetics blaming the nationalism of the Hungarians (Tilkovszky, 1978, pp.355-356). His earlier work on SS-recruitments also served to contribute to the objective judgement of the role of domestic Germans (Tilkovszky, 1974, pp.5-10). For Tilkovszky, the question arose thus in relation to the resettlement of the German population from Hungary since one of the main justifications of the population transfers happened to be the activity of the Volksbund. József Komanovics addressed the subject of Volksbund together with the role of the opposing Loyalty Movement among Hungarian Germans (Komanovics, 1974).

Another leading historian of Hungarian Germans during this period, István Fehér begins his article titled "Data and facts from the history of Germans of Hungary from the liberation until the Potsdam conference" with the factual statement that 220000 people of German nationality live in the country. Then he continues: "With their honourable and diligent work these Germans take an active part in the struggle for socialism" (Fehér, 1979, p. 39); moreover, he

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[2] On Hungarian Germans in a Hungarian and German historiographic context, see Seewann, Gerhard – Sitzler, Kathrin, 2000, p. 156–180.

adds, they consider Hungary as their definitive homeland, and recognise the system as their own. Fehér emphasizes that there is a biased picture about the recent past of the German nationality necessitating that "we should explore [this past] according to the reality, and eliminate nationalist remnants" (Fehér, 1979, p. 39). The author declares that "the past of Germans is an inseparable part of Hungarian history", and that he wishes to provide insight into the "most complicated months, days of this past". In Fehér's article the German past is explicitly addressed (as history) of which the most important period is that of the resettlements. The fact that the author commences his argument with the trustworthy and honourable nature of the German nationality implies that the biased picture of this category of people was believed to be quite the opposite in the 1970s. Fehér, who authors the first monographic treatment of resettlements (Fehér, 1988), must have had the same intention of giving an objective picture on the role of the Germans in Hungary when researching the Loyalty Movement that opposed Hitlerian orientation. He sets off his argument with the following: "Even under the cruel Nazi domination there was a healthy part of our domestic Germans, loyal to Hungary until the end, who took up the fight against the imperial plans and the politics of the Volksbund" (Fehér, 1983, p. 7). Here again, the author speaks against the view of Hungarian Germans as the ill part of population that served foreign imperial interests before and during the war. The healthy part was loyal to Hungary, and part of the society. The concept of nationality enabled precisely to address the non-exclusionary cultural belonging of Hungarian Germans that the title of one of Tilkovszky's books formulated as "German nationality – Hungarian patriotism" (Tilkovszky, 1997). Until today, this pattern remained the most important one in Hungarian scholarship on the Germans in Hungary, even if scholarly vocabulary changed – for instance the concept of nationality was replaced by that of minority and identity (on the "double identity" of Hungarian Germans, see Bindorffer, 2005).

Both Fehér's remark on the elimination of nationalist remnants, echoing the earlier state promoted ideological discourse on eliminating the remnants of fascism, and the insistence on the socialist engagement of the German nationality indicate the limits of academic freedom. It is also telling that Sándor Balogh's excellent work on resettlements appeared as a chapter of a book entitled "The foreign policy of the Popular Democratic Hungary 1945-1947" (Balogh, 1982). Despite the ideological constraints influencing public discourse on Hungarian Germans, which could result "red tails"[3] in the text or in the rhetoric of concealing the

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[3] "Red tail" is a common expression in the 1970s and 1980s to a visible indication of ideological commitment usually in the publication's paratext to deflect the attention of censors.

subject, the issue has become a legitimate and acknowledged field of research in Hungarian academia by the 1970s. If we take a closer look at the argumentative strategies, such as calling for an "unbiased picture", a "scientifically objective manner", the "balanced treatment", the "objective judgement of Germans in Hungary", or the emphasis on "data and facts", it turns out that these scholarly works intended to change the way Hungarian Germans are viewed and treated in the country. They wanted to intervene in the contemporary regime of social perception, giving a real, that is, non-ideological and morally-emotionally balanced representation of the problem. But what was exactly this problem? Not the memory of the expulsions, to be sure, although it had much to do with those historical events. The significance attributed to "good Germans", those who remained loyal to Hungary, and to the "guilty ones", represented by the Volksbund, proves that the "German question" consisted of precisely determining the responsibility of the Germans in Hungary before and during the Second World War. The history of resettlement was thus subordinated to a moral issue: it is addressed as the consequence of the collective punishment of Hungarian Germans. At the same time the issue was highly political: in a discursive sense the stake of speaking publicly about the history of Hungarian Germans was to resignify (Butler, 1993) the identity category of "fascist nation" ideologically and normatively imposed on Hungarians of German origin after the war. This identification was at the same time exclusionary and stigmatising: it identified the subject both as non-Hungarian and as guilty.

Indeed, Hungarian historiography on the "German past" was almost obsessed with the question of responsibility. Since the beginning, the main issue has been to clarify the responsibility and "objectively" assess the role of the different agents: the Swabians, the Hungarian state and the Great Powers. As mentioned above, first attempts strove to tone the picture of Hungarian Germans officially imposed by the regime and thus precise their responsibility during the war. However, the question of to what extent the Hungarian state was responsible for the exclusion of its own citizens happened to be as important as the anti-Hungarian deeds of the Swabians. Ágnes Tóth, one of the leading historians of the field even speaks about a widely shared Potsdam-legend dominating early historiography that still haunts the scholarship (Á. Tóth, 2010). According to this legend, Hungary executed the forced population transfers under the constraint, even command of the winning Allied Powers. This statement of course enables to diminish the responsibility of the state. Using archival sources not available before, works after the fall of state socialism intended to precisely determine the role of the sate in not only the implementation but also in the decision

of excluding "the Swabians" from the country and the political community. Recent works argue that instead of being compulsory dictates to Hungary, resolutions of the Potsdam agreement were rather tended to be interpreted as such by Hungarian authorities (Marchut, 2014, pp.185-205). The great emphasis put on the question of responsibility in historiography was manifested in the decades long debate on the appropriate concept of what happened between 1946 and 1948: resettlement, expulsion or population transfer? Today in the academic field there seems to be a consensus on the responsibility of the agents, primarily of Hungary, but the same cannot be said for the larger public where for instance judgements radically differ among Hungarian Germans in Hungary and in Germany.

In order to situate scholarly knowledge production in the larger context of public discourse on Hungarian Germans, in the following I will focus on the history of the power relation between discursive constraints and strategies of identification as German in Hungary since the end of the war. I will rely on two empirical levels of discourse. On the one hand, I will take into consideration debates on Hungarian Germans, personal accounts of the past and public activities in those historical periods in which there more or less existed a political public sphere. On the other, I will analyse the historically changing state policy towards Hungarian Germans. This latter is important for those historical periods lacking political public sphere, and also for determining the room officially accorded for resisting stigmatising identification. As it will be shown later, until the end of state socialism the exclusive agent of nationality policy was the state since in the Eastern Bloc there was no regional or bilateral regulation on national minorities (Föglein, 2000, pp.92-121).

In this study public utterances – whether scholarly or not – are interpreted as strategic acts in the history of the discourse about Hungarian Germans. The main constraint influencing German identification, as the above analysis of the early historiography shows, was that of the application of the collective guilt principle. I will thus focus only on the discursive logic of collective guilt and justice in the construction and maintenance of cultural belonging: on how the identity category of "guilty German" was imposed on the one hand, and on strategies of opposing this stigmatising identification on the other (on this approach see Zombory, 2012). First I discuss the process through which the principle of collective responsibility was institutionalised in Hungary. This is what will be later addressed in different ways as the question of Hungarian Germans. Second, I define periods in the history of the discourse characterising each one by a particular configuration of normative constraints and opposing strategies of identification.

Institutionalising the collective guilt principle (1944-48)

The collective punishment of the German population in Hungary had already begun before representatives of the Provisional National Government of Hungary signed the armistice agreement with the Allied Powers on the 20th January 1945. The Red Army executed a punitive action against the Germans during November and December 1944 when several tens of thousands people were taken from Hungary to lagers of the Soviet Union (Á. Tóth, 1995). On December 22 1944 the Soviet military command ordered (no. 0066) the mobilization of all active persons of German origin in Hungary for public work and reconstruction work immediately behind the front (on forced labour of Germans in the Soviet Union, see Konaszov – Terescsuk, 2004). This operation was executed with the active cooperation of the Hungarian public administration and also with the approval of the United Kingdom and the United States of America sanctioned later by the Tehran agreement.

For the new Hungarian political elite in 1944-45, as for the whole of Europe at the time, forced population transfer was completely legitimate and acceptable as a geopolitical means of stabilisation. As a matter of fact, the Hungarian government, consisted of former oppositional parties (on the so called "coalition period" in Hungarian history, see Palasik, 2011) condemning German orientation and Hungarian involvement in the war, attached the principle of punishing Germans accusable for committing war crimes to other different political issues. Thus the Agrarian reform in spring 1945 was the first in the row of state measures by which rights of the Swabians were deprived as a means of solving other problems of domestic and foreign policy (Á. Tóth, 1993, 1995). Instead of their role during the war, the reason behind the inland resettlement and internment of Hungarian Germans was rather the need to provide sufficient land for poor peasantry and for Hungarian refugees coming to the newly reduced territory of the country.

As for the resettlement of the population with German origin to Germany, the Hungarian government's behaviour was ambivalent (on the history of resettlements see also Zinner, 2004). The idea was neither new, since the conception of repopulating Germans from Hungary to Germany had been circulating in pre-1944 Hungary (see the *Heim ins Reich* policy; on evacuation plans of Germans from Hungary to Germany, see Tilkovszky 1978, pp.336-354), nor unique, since in other countries, most importantly in Poland and in Czechoslovakia, the resettlement of the Germans was also on the political agenda. The

Hungarian government and the political parties in power unanimously supported the plans of punishing the Swabians by way of resettlement, they only differed in their attitude toward how to define the population concerned, and toward the applicability of the collective responsibility principle. The ambivalence is clearly visible in the case of the inter-party conference of the political forces on 14 May 1945. On the one hand, the parties adopted the principle that "There is no Swabian question in Hungary, only the question of German fascists" which implied that the judgement of the people to be resettled would happen according to the assessment of individual political deeds. On the other hand, the same parties (with the exception of the social democrats) at the same conference agreed upon the fact of resettlement and the need to expand the population concerned as much as possible. This ambivalence, beyond the minimal ideological differences in the judgement of the principle of collective punishment, was largely due to the fact that Hungarian politicians were aware of the Czechoslovak plans of a Hungarian-Slovak population exchange. Thus the government in the international political scene did not want to suggest that it applies the same collective responsibility principle against the German population that it confronts in relation to the Hungarians in Czechoslovakia.

Certainly the Potsdam conference changed a lot since from then on it was possible to shift the responsibility to the Great Powers. Accordingly, the resolution of the Ministerial Council on 13 August defined the population to be resettled according to German nationality and not to individual acts before and during the war (Á. Tóth 1995). This circle, around 303 thousand people, due to Soviet pressure[4] was extended to the population of German mother tongue, around 478 thousand. On 22 December the Ministerial Council adopted the resolution of Imre Nagy, the Minister of the Interior, which based on the principle of collective guilt (independent ministers, and those from the Social Democratic and the Smallholders' Party opposed) (Á. Tóth, 1995). The prime ministerial decree M. E. 12330/1945 regulating the resettlement of the German population of Hungary in Germany was issued on 29 December 1945. The scope of the law fell to those who declared to be of German nationality or of German mother tongue at the 1941 census; to those who changed their already Magyarised name to German; and to former members of Volksbund and SS. A later resolution ordered on the deprivation those who had been resettled of Hungarian citizenship. The resettlement process started in January 1946 and ended in 1948.

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[4] In contrast to Poland and Czechoslovakia, in Hungary the issue of resettlement was assured to the Allied Control Commission under soviet direction.

The period between 1944 and 1948 is marked by the process through which Hungarians defined as Swabian were deprived of rights and physically excluded from the country. The national press unanimously supported the resettlement of Hungarian Germans as the one and only resolution of the "Swabian question", and similarly to the political elite, only the principle of collective guilt was debated by some (see Zielbauer, 1996; Marchut 2009). In January 1946 when resettlements from Hungary began, only 26 intellectuals expressed their opposition in a public declaration (Magyar Nemzet, 18 January 1946). The harshest promoters of the collective punishment were without fail the papers of the communist party and the National Peasant Party. On 18 April, for example, the first spoke in the name of all the Hungarians in whose eyes the Swabians are the „eternal enemy of freedom", the „foreign gendarmes who are always ready to stab the dagger from behind into the heart of the nation". The journal declared that there was no place, and mustn't be, for the „Swabian traitors of the homeland", and that the freedom of the Hungarian nation would not be assured until the nation gets rid of „these settler soldiers of German barbarism" (Szabad Nép, 18 April, 1945). The newspaper of the peasant party formulated as follows: „There is no hope that the two people could get along peacefully with each other. One of them must go, and there is no question which one is that… Swabians don't merit mercy… Let them get out of here! – as they came: with one pack on their back." (Szabad Szó, 2 April 1945) The paper of the Smallholders' Party, while opposing the principle of collective punishment, with reference to a speech of the party's Secretary-General, declared that "Indeed, mostly the Swabians are responsible for the crimes recently committed" and focused on resettlement plans from an operative perspective: "it won't be without doubt an easy task to cut half million people out from the body of the nation" (Kis Újság 18 April 1945).

I took these few examples to give an insight into the rhetoric of the national press that implemented a discourse in which the category of "Swabian" not only equals foreigner to the Hungarian nation but also guilty, barbarian, parasite. In general, the public discourse on Swabians was imbedded into the one on post-war national reconstruction and democracy according to which neither can be realised without the resettlement and punishment of the Hungarian population with German origin. Although not applied literally by all the domestic political agents, the idea of "fascist nation" and thus the practice of public stigmatisation of "the Swabians" became essentially accepted in this period. Normative public discourse on Hungarian Germans, together with the governmental measures depriving of their rights, did not tolerate opposing public German (self-)identification. The voice of Hungarian Germans

was literally withdrawn, and thus their political subjectivity. There was no room for them, neither in the political community nor on the territory of Hungary.

1. Silence (1949-1956)

The Stalinist period that began with the communist takeover and the implementation of the one party system is paradoxically marked by the gradual legal rehabilitation of Hungarian Germans. The new constitution in 1949 regulated the situation of the nationalities on the highest legal level. It declared that all citizens of the country, regardless of their nationality, are equal before the law, any discriminative differentiation according to the belonging to a nationality is legally punished, and the People's Republic of Hungary assures to any nationality the "possibility to the education and to the cultivation of their national culture in their mother tongue" (quoted by Föglein, 2000, p. 104). However, these rights were individual and not collective rights, and what was stated *de jure* did not mean *de facto* a right for the nationalities.

The regime was realistic enough to not denying totally the actual existence of nationalities in Hungary, moreover, it systematically applied the national principle as a source of political legitimacy (Mevius, 2005). There existed thus a Stalinist nationality policy that in many respects contradicted to the official ideology about the "socialist man". As the quotation above from the 1949 constitution well demonstrates, actual nationality policy was restricted to the legal use of mother tongue on the public domains of education and cultivation of culture. The paradoxical relation to the national principle is manifested in the regime's ambivalent attitude toward the issue of nationality education. It did not encourage or support the establishment of nationality schools in localities without such institutions, and at the same time it intended to prevent the depopulation of the existing ones. As a report for the ministry of religion and education put it in 1949: "this is what our interests dictate concerning our relations to the neighbouring countries, and the regulation of schooling of the Hungarians living there" (quoted by Tilkovszky, 1998, p. 144). While the Hungarian state socialist regime with one eye looked at the future classless society, with the other, it regarded the Hungarian population in the neighbouring countries with a strong national interest.

Accordingly, nationality politics that is, political activity of the nationalities was "provisionally" possible in the institutional framework of the Nationality Associations

(*Nemzeti Szövetség*). After the communist takeover, the idea came up that these organisations should be abolished, since workers should be organised on class basis and not according to nationalities but, fearing that this would lead to similar measures against the Hungarians in the neighbouring countries, the regime tolerated the already existed associations while preventing them to form local organisations (Tilkovszky, 1998). The associations were strictly controlled from above and used for "cultural work" and "political education" among the nationalities. In other words, associations of nationalities served as a means of political control and ideological mobilisation for the regime – and not as bottom-up institutions of self-organisation.

For Hungarian Germans residing in the country, the situation was even more complicated since they did not have legitimate existence neither as Hungarians nor as a nationality in 1949. Between that year and 1956, however, the laws depriving them of their rights were gradually withdrawn. Most importantly, their Hungarian citizenship was reinstated in 1950 by a decree of the ministerial council (no. 84/1950) which stated: "All those persons falling under the force of resettlement, who were no resettled, and also those whose resettlement was implemented but at the time of this decree's entering into force are residing in Hungary (...), are Hungarian citizens, and enjoy in every respect equal rights with the other of the People's Republic of Hungary." (Quoted by Á. Tóth, 2008, p. 55). Other similar measures followed, assuring rights to the German nationality: the right of using mother tongue in justice (1951-52) and in public administration (1957), voting right (1953), among others (see Föglein 2000, p. 92-121, Tilkovszky, 1998).

The most important element of the nationality policy in the period was the school program. The German nationality education program, started in the school year of 1951-52, was gradually established until 1958 (see in detail Föglein, 2006, Fehér, 1993, pp.156-157, 163-164). According to a document of the Ministry of Education, the number of primary schools in which German language was taught increased to 75 by the school year of 1954/55, to 100 one year later. There were no schools teaching in German, though (Tilkovszky 1998).

The year of 1955 can be treated as the end of the period in which legal and partial political rehabilitation of the German nationality was realised. Following the resolution of the Political Committee of the communist party (Party of Hungarian Workers, MDP), the Cultural Association of German Workers of Hungary was created in that year. The nationality association of Hungarian Germans was to pursue, according to the Political Committee, the

main goal of "drawing German workers in the building of socialism" and "organising cultural activities" (quoted by Föglein, 2000, p. 86).

I called the Stalinist period paradoxical because the gradual legal rehabilitation of Hungarian Germans did not go hand in hand with political and ideological rehabilitation. On the one hand, the official ideology followed the principle of automatism according to which even if national categories existed at present, they would disappear with the complete realisation of socialism. The theory and practice of automatism was not an anti-nationality policy but a "peculiar Hungarian branch of Hungarian nationalism" that represented the attitude of "letting them be they will vanish anyway" (Fehér, 1993, p. 139). This made political representation of nationality interests impossible in the public. Moreover, until 1955, Hungarian Germans were excluded even from the system of nationality associations that was supposed to institutionalise nationality politics. On the other hand, the discourse on "fascist nation", previously a characteristic of the left wing parties, acquired the status of official ideology in this period. Apart from the principle of automatism, this constituted the main discursive constraint of German identification. Although the system assured legitimate political existence to individuals who had fallen under the scope of the resettlement decree, it did not permit to represent political interests of the German nationality.

2. Cultivation (1957-1983)

Associations of nationalities represented the political interests of the state party toward the minority population and not the interests of nationalities toward the state. Yet the formation of the German Association marks a milestone in the discourse on the "German question" since it permitted to undertake some sort of nationality politics for those who had previously been deprived of any kind of political subjectivity. According to the resolution of the Political Committee of the state-party (Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, MSZMP) in 1958, the tasks of the associations were the following: fostering "political mass work" (that is political-ideological mobilisation) among the nationalities in order to include them into the conscious work of building socialism; spreading "socialist patriotism"; and as "social organisations", associations had to focus their activity on the "political and cultural enlightening work with socialist content" (quoted by Föglein, 2000, p. 88). Thus the public domain of nationality policy towards Hungarian Germans remained, as in the earlier period in the case of other nationalities, restricted to education and language use.

Although the system of the four nationalities' associations (South Slavic, Slovak, Romanian and German) did not change until the fall of the regime, important transformations began in the 1960s. In 1960 associations could for the first time organise their annual congress in which they could raise problems regarding the situation of the respective nationality inside the strictly reduced and party-controlled domain of political field. According to the report on the first congress, submitted to the Central Committee of the party, "in the associations of nationalities the view tends to be disappearing according to which the task of the associations is to arouse national self-consciousness" (quoted by Föglein, 2000, p. 89). The same report states that their main function is to "transmit the word of the party and the government to their workers of nationality" (quoted by Tilkovszky 1998, p. 154). Yet it is in the 1960s when public representation of folkloristic values of nationalities became general – and not only in local contexts, since the state formed the central folkloristic dance group with the contribution of the nationality associations. The central dance group was to represent both in the country and abroad that the situation of nationalities is good in Hungary, their folk culture is flourishing – yet in reality the assimilation of nationalities intensified (Tilkovszky, 1998). Reports of the associations after the congress in 1964 prove that their activity did not expand the boundaries of "culture" defined as language use and folk customs: they organised fairy tale hours of mother tongue for children, clubs for adults to practice the language of nationality and so on. They also started activities to preserve local traditions, and to spread knowledge on the culture and tradition of the homeland (that is Hungary).

This of course enabled to smuggle some elements of nourishing minority traditions into the activities of nationality associations in which even folkloristic sections were formed in 1970-72. From 1969, the associations of nationalities could directly elect their deputies to the congress, and acquired rights of consultation on different political levels. Gradually new possibilities of self-organisation opened up, and the period until the end of the system is marked by a moderate but continual decentralisation.

In 1968, the nationality policy of Hungary considerably changed. It has become obvious to the regime that assimilation shouldn't be urged among the nationalities (Seewann, 1990, 1994). A resolution of the Political Committee of the party, adopted in the same year, defined the two main problems of nationality policy in nationalism and assimilation (on the resolution see Föglein, 2000, pp.79-84). According to the new nationality political concept, the principle of automatism should be abandoned and an important new function of the nationalities is to build, maintain and nurture relations with the adjacent countries, especially with their

Hungarian populations. This new concept was called the "bridge role" of nationalities, referring to the "Leninian" nationality policy instead of the "Stalinian" one (Tilkovszky, 1998), and was supposed to represent the national interest of the Hungarian population in the neighbouring countries. Besides the pressure of Hungarian intellectuals on the party leadership, this turn was due to important international developments (the UNESCO conference in Helsinki, 1972, the UN-seminar in Ohrid, 1974, and the Final Act (Helsinki Act) of OSCE, 1975, see Föglein, 2000: 93-94, Tilkovszky, 1998: 162) which at least in principle called for the protection of minority rights and thus acknowledged that minority questions do not exclusively belong to the country of residence.

As a result, Secretary-General János Kádár declared at the XIth congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party in 1975 that „Our aim is that the German, Slovak, South-Slavic, Romanian and other nationalities living in our homeland, and the population of Hungarian nationality in the neighbouring countries form a bridge between our countries" (quoted by Tilkovszky, 1998, p. 163). The so called "bridge role" principle in Hungarian nationality policy aimed at indirectly representing the national-ethnic interests of Hungarians in the adjacent countries by demonstrating the "right treatment" of nationalities on Hungarian territory. For Hungarian Germans this meant, together with results of Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, the possibility to build and maintain relations with the German states.

In legal terms the end of the Kadar-era could be located in 1989 when the new constitution declared national minorities as constitutional elements of the state, it assured their collective participation in public life, the possibility to nurture their own culture, language, and the right to education in the mother tongue. This periodisation would be misleading however, since significant transformations, both regarding nationality policy and public discourse, began already in the beginning of the 1980s. For instance, education in the language of nationality became possible in 1985, and it was the state-party that started drawing up the law on nationalities that was adopted in 1993. The change of political regime in 1989 doesn't constitute a definitive rupture: although political measures of retrieval were taken afterwards, in discursive terms the transformation had begun much earlier.

1983 seems to be a more significant milestone in the discourse on Hungarian Germans when György Aczél (secretary of the Central Committee and actually the director of cultural life in Hungary in 1956-1988) gave a speech at the congress of the Association of Hungarian Germans, condemning the principle of collective responsibility and the way the German

community had been made into scapegoats. He explicitly denied the existence of "fascist peoples" (quoted by Tilkovszky, 1998, p. 170) and thus publicly broke with the conception according to which the treatment of Hungarian Germans after the war was justified and right. This gesture before the locally elected deputies of Hungarian Germans put an end to the official ideological imposition of the "fascist nation" label.

In sum, official nationality policy remained ambivalent in the sense that the Hungarian national category was institutionalised by the state (,,socialist patriotism", symbolic representation of Hungarians in the adjacent countries, etc.), but the public use of national-ethnic categories that is, "nationalism", was forbidden and normatively sanctioned. While institutional regulation of nationality policy gradually gave more and more space for public German identification, particularly after 1968, at the same time it still kept the stigmatizing label of "fascist nation" justified. It is not surprising then, that time to time the party faced the problem of "political passivity" of Hungarian Germans in comparison with other nationalities.

Yet for the first time after the war public (self-)representation, a sort of quasi-political subjectivity became possible for Hungarian Germans. As argued earlier, a significant strategy of dealing with the "German past" on the national level was scholarly historiography that was indirect, allusive and non-memorial. Apart from scholar knowledge production, the main strategy of opposing stigmatising categorisation was articulating German belonging in the domain restricted to language use, education and nurturing folkloristic traditions. Because of the concept of "culture" enacted by the regime, this strategy can be called cultivation. It was thus apolitical in the sense that the use of German identity category in a public and collective manner to attain political goals was not allowed. Accordingly, cultivation only enabled the indirect and allusive dealing with the "German past" on a local level (on local contexts see for example Bindorffer, 2001, Eiler, 2011, Kovács 2004a, pp.131-281). Uncovering and practicing local ethnographic traditions together with a reduced but allowed use of German language could legitimate the existence of Hungarian Germans in the locality and could attribute "cultural values" to the German identity category and thus to oppose collective stigmatisation. However, it could not contribute to raise the problems of previous wrongdoings or to public material and symbolic reparations. The "German question" constructed through the strategy of cultivation did in a certain way address the past but only as education by presenting nostalgic folk traditions.

3. Cultural heritage (1980s – 1990s)

Besides the possibility of nationality politics in a self-determined, collective and institutional form according to the new constitution in1989 and the regulations of the 1993 law on the "rights of national and ethnic minorities", the period of the 1980s and 1990s is marked by the interaction of two social historical processes. The first is the continual existence of the discursive configuration of the Kádár-period, the second is the integration of Hungary into the European political space. The Hungarian state's relation to its population now called national and ethnic minorities is still characterised by the previously dominant strategy of internationally presenting the "right treatment" of nationalities in order to influence the policy of the neighbouring states toward their Hungarian minorities. The only difference is that this strategy is institutionalised on governmental and bilateral level, and Hungarian politicians and experts had the inclination in the 1990s to speak of a "Hungarian model" of security policy in the framework of which the questions of national minorities were raised (J. Tóth, 2000).

As for the integration of Hungary into the European political space, two developments should be mentioned. One is the political turn around the 1970s in the western part of Europe by which the orientation of political investment to change social reality shifted from the future to the past. This modernisational change is usually demonstrated with the opposition of history and memory, and with such new key concepts as presentism, musealisation, patrimony, or archive (Hartog, 2002, Huyssen, 2003, Nora 1993, 2011, Rousso, 2007). The influence of this change on how political and social problems are raised and treated cannot be underestimated. Social problems have become problems of memory, and political action aims to change the relation societies maintain with the past. Another, interrelated development of European political space is the one by which the memory of the Holocaust, after having been detached from its historical and geographical context and forming a transnational point of reference (Alexander, 2012, Levy-Sznaider, 2006), has become the central element of the founding myth of Europe as a would-be political community (Probst, 2006). The core European values are expressed and enforced through Holocaust-memory with close relation to the human rights discourse.

The integration of Hungary into the European normative order meant the interaction between the existing discourse on the "German question", cultivation and scholar knowledge production on the one hand, and the regime of commemoration and the normative Holocaust-memory on the other. Results of this interaction are clearly visible in the scholarly field where

the oral history approach and the topic of the memory of resettlements gained particular relevance during the 1980s-1990s. The commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the beginning of the resettlements in 1986 was an important event that resulted in the scientific conference held in Budapest the next year at which not only historians from Hungary and Germany participated but also representatives of organisations of expellees (Hambuch, 1988). The problematisation of the "German question" as memory of the resettlements became dominant during this period.

The question of Hungarian Germans, with the topic of resettlements in its centre, stepped into the wider national public space. The Hungarian parliament in 1990 adopted two resolutions on political reparation and relief of Hungarian Germans: one "on the remedy of the collective injuries of the German minority of Hungary" (no. 35/1990), the other "on the remedy of injuries of Hungarian citizens deported to retrieval work in the Soviet Union", or convicted by tribunals of the Soviet Union (no. 36/1990). The Hungarian parliament declared that the expulsions to the Soviet Union and the resettlements were wrongful procedures violating human rights; that innocent people suffered due to their belonging to nationality; and expressed its compassion and solidarity to the relatives. Hungarian politics adopted the conceptualisation of Europeanised Holocaust memory when interpreting the resettlements as human right violations whose subject (and their descendants) are suffering individuals. The commemorations on the 50th anniversary of the beginning of resettlements in 1996 even more expanded the scope of the subject in the national public sphere. This year is the symbolic peak of the period for numerous reasons: the popularity of the oral history approach and the interest in local histories in scholarship, the political interest on national scale, the plurality of commemorative actions both on local and national level, etc.

Instead of interpreting this process as the "surfacing of the topic previously suppressed and dealt with as a taboo" (Á. Tóth, 2010, p. 19), by giving an example of "memory work" from the 1980s, I rather focus on how normative constraints of the discourse transformed in the course of history. The following excerpt is taken from a home-made recording entitled "*Presentation of the religious and everyday life of the native population settled in* [name of the village close to Budapest], which I received on CD in the early 2000s from one of my interviewees:

"*On the 25th of (...) 1987 a small group was gathered, M. E. and his wife, at D. H.'s place. Years ago this house was the home of W. L. and his wife E. T. It was here that T. T. bandaged*

the head wound of General Görgey in 1848.[5] There is written documentation of this. Since then the building has been altered. The members of this group would like to look up and gather our ancestors' customs, songs, and prayers. In an exhibition in 1984 we showed the old objects our ancestors used and made. Unfortunately we are not able to maintain a permanent exhibition, because there is not an appropriate location for the objects. [Participants introduce themselves] *In the coming work we will rely completely on tradition, which dispenses with all manner of preparation. We gathered voluntarily at the sound of one hesitant word, and we try to convey what has remained of our forefathers' lives and of our past.*"

In the semi-public gathering of people formerly experiencing exclusion from the Hungarian political community and expulsion from Hungary are presenting to each other how everyday life looked like before. As the title of the recording shows, the subject of discussion is not "the topic" of resettlement. The title labels the category of people in question neither as German nor as Swabian but as "*native population*". Belonging to the locality is reassured by this claim, as by the strategy to represent familial history as an integral part of the canonised Hungarian national past: the "*ancestors*" took active part in the Hungarian national civic revolution and freedom fight in 1848-49 – against the Habsburgs.

The semi-public "memory work" of the group aiming at re-signifying the identity category by which their Hungarian belonging was denied and their German origin stigmatised, is exercised in the framework of cultivation: gathering and exhibiting the "*ancestors' customs, songs, and prayers*". Presenting ethnographic values aimed to counterbalance cultural devaluation through stigmatization. Yet it is important that later on the recording is distributed in a digitalized form. This refers to the process through which, particularly with the integration of Hungary into the European political space, techniques and technologies of memory such as museum exhibitions, book publishing, video and audio recordings, etc. became available to a wider public.

In the 1980s-90s discursive constraints influencing utterance considerably transformed as well. In the liberated memory political space of Hungary, determined by commemoration and Holocaust-memory, actors of different group categories claimed public recognition aiming at material or symbolic reparation of past suffering. The main strategy of political practice has become presenting the memory of past sufferings through the practice of witness testimony (Wieviorka, 2002) of the victim. In the rivalry of the victims that often culminated in the competitive calculation of suffering for instance by the number of murders, the subject

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[5] Artúr Görgey, military leader during the civic revolution and freedom fight of Hungary in 1848-1849, got his famous head wound on July 2, 1849 in the Battle of Ács.

position of being of German origin was determined by the categorisation of the Holocaust-memory paradigm: perpetrator, bystander, and victim. By the 1990s, strategies of German identification had to deal with the normative constraint of subjectification as perpetrator. In some cases, this configuration resulted in the crisis of witness testimony. One of my interviewees in the early 2000s, previously taken to forced labour in the Soviet Union, closed the narration of his life course with the following remark:

"That's how I've struggled through life. The resettlement didn't find me at home, as I said, they took me to the ... Soviet Union. I was there five years. --- I have to pause a bit here, because every time they ask me, always about this captivity, here everyone expects me to tell tales of horror. Well now I can't tell tales of horror, I'm telling the truth."

According to the narrator's expectation, the listener (and the public) wants to hear about the resettlement as the "true" historical trauma of Hungarian Germans. The truth of the life story account paradoxically contrasts the normative constraints of the commemorative paradigm pf Holocaust-memory about witness testimonies of traumatic subjects. The interviewee time to time relates his story to the norms defined by the new regime of memory, as in the case when he speaks about being put in the wagon, *"but quite sparsely"*, or when he says:

"The folk with me... Those who tell it like, minus fifty degrees, minus forty degrees... we never experienced that. No. They always, someone always adds some horror. What the purpose of that is, I don't know, I'm not adding it. Because I declare that that camp --- it wasn't a gulag. We weren't taken to a gulag, but to a camp."

Refusing to assume the subject position of the traumatised victim, the crisis of testifying to reality is clearly manifested by the fact that the verbal narration breaks and the interview ends with the interpretation of autobiographical paintings on which the interviewee re-presents everyday reality that is no longer there, to which testimony can make reference. In a picture, displaying the immediate surroundings of the birthplace of the narrator, the absence of subject position is represented in the application of a perspective that could be assumed only if the house of the interviewee didn't exist (see detailed analysis of the interview and of others, Zombory, 2012, pp.151-211).

How to represent publicly the suffering of the "perpetrator nation"? One way is what I called elsewhere self-musealisation (Zombory, 2012) according to which a German past is constructed as cultural heritage connected to Hungary. Presenting the familial-personal past as part of the history of the locality, for instance by exhibiting family photos and objects in the house of birth to a wider public, constitutes a strategic way to present publicly the cause of collective stigmatisation, that is the identity category, as culturally valuable, belonging to

Hungarian national time and space. At the same time, this sort of localisation permits representing "us" as different Hungarians, because of "our" local distinct culture.

4. Victimisation (2000s-)

Since 1989, the most important process of restructuration of European geopolitical space was without fail the enlargement of the EU. The fact that countries of the former Eastern Bloc, including those where Germans had been expulsed from, take part in the institutionalised political space of Europe, considerably changed the way we look at the forced relocation of Germans after the war. It fuelled the debate about the extent to which state and national border regulations can be exposed to criticism. The issue of expulsion came to the forefront as an important element of European history whose public re-evaluation is more than necessary. The fall of the iron curtain and the European enlargement had considerable impact also on scholarly research of the German past, most importantly the application of a transnational framework together with international cooperation. The new European discursive space enabled to shed light on the fact that forced migration movements following the war cannot be exclusively treated as national phenomena. In a sense the issue has been Europeanised. In historiography, the subject of expulsions started to be dealt with the holocaust in the same theoretic framework of forced migration (Schlögel, 2003).

In the wider European political public an extensive and animated debate started on the relation of the memory of expulsions to that of the Holocaust as the case of the controversy in the early 2000s over the intentions to create a museum, a "Centre against Expulsion" (*Zentrum gegen Vertreibung*), well exemplifies. Parallel to these developments an important transformation of German memory politics began, with more emphasis on German victimhood and suffering because of Allied bombing during the war, socialist regime, and expulsions.

In this context the memory of expulsions has been adopted into the representational canon of Europeanised Holocaust-memory (Levy-Sznaider, 2005). No longer treated as "revenge" or as the "logical consequence" of the Holocaust, it has become conceived and remembered as trauma. Karl Schlögel, for example, argues that he catastrophe of losing the "German East" is as central in recalling the history of Germans as the murder of the Jews or the war at the eastern front (Schlögel, 2003). The German historian even speaks of a "complex of

expulsion" in Germany that has to be come to terms with in a collective and public way in order to heal.

Apart from sporadic reactions (e.g. Kovács, 2004b) the waves of these debates did not really reach the Hungarian public. In the early 2000s when the questions of European geopolitics, connected to the ever closer accession of eastern countries, were raised regionally as the future status of the so called Benes-decrees that provided legal basis for the resettlement of the "Sudeten Germans" and ethnic Hungarians from Czechoslovakia, Hungary made claims only on behalf of the Hungarians of Slovakia.

A strategy of victimisation of Hungarian Germans is hardly observable in Hungary. Although commemorating the resettlements does not anymore poses such difficulties as in the 1990s, the jubilee commemorations of the resettlements in 2006 did not radically differ from those in 1996. The discursive relation of Hungarian Germans and the state seems to be balanced. The memory of resettlements has become included into the official national imagery when in 2012, the Hungarian Parliament declared 19 January, the they when the first train transporting Hungarian Germans left the country in 1946, as the commemorative day of "deportation and expulsion of Germans of Hungary". It seems that the state strives to shift national responsibility since, instead of the role of the Hungarian state administration, the parliamentary resolution refers to the "realisation of the Allied Control Council's resolution on 20 November 1945" (originally the parliament intended to create this day as the commemorative day of the resettlements). It uses the Europeanised vocabulary when saying that the "expulsions" were "severely violating human rights".

In comparison with Poland or the Czech Republic, the erection of public memorials of resettlements did not entail national political debates although local conflicts occurred.[6] "In contrast to the radical tone and formative language of political martyr memorials erected since the regime change, instead of complaining the injuries suffered and martyrdom, the message of monuments of resettlement in Hungary was rather making gently aware of the tribulations and the acceptance of the community of fate with the majority nation, the fate which was divided by force in 1945." (Boros, 2005, p. 110) The construction of the German past remains

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[6] See for instance the controversy about the monument on national (that is, Hungarian) fidelity erected in Ágfalva, a village near Sopron. In 1921 the region as a whole voted for belonging to Hungary in a referendum, however Ágfalva where the majority of population was of German mother tongue, voted for Austria. See e.g. http://derstandard.at/1323222962378/BurgenlandUngarn-Neun-Orte-ein-Stein-ein-Denkanstoss

in the national framework, localised in every case as a distinctive part of Hungarian cultural heritage.

Conclusion

From the perspective of historical sociology, this essay discussed the social conditions of German identification in Hungary after the Second World War. It argues that the study of the problem as production of knowledge about the "German past" is partial because of two reasons. First, the production of knowledge about the subject that in Hungary began in the 1970s was situated in the long term history of discourse on Hungarian Germans after the war that determined the conditions of scholarly work. Second, the problematisation of the "German question" as memory is itself a historical development that has to be explained. As a consequence, this study focused on the discursive logic of collective guilt and justice that was institutionalised in 1944-1948 through the empirical analysis of Hungarian nationality politics and public utterances in the context of international (European) discourses on the past that have influenced Hungary since the 1980s. Two interactive processes in (western) Europe were taken into consideration: the change in the "regime of historicity" (Hartog, 2002) in the 1970s and the Europeanisation of Holocaust-memory. The construction of the problem as memory of expulsions is due to the interaction of these two processes.

The essay proposes a periodisation according to typical configurations of discursive constraints and strategic identifications. In contrast to the widely accepted interpretation of the process as public speech on the "German past", previously taboo under state socialist rule, became free, it puts emphasis on how actual discursive configurations are historically determined. The stigmatising label of "fascist nation" remained in use until 1983, and the state socialist regime at the same time imposed and institutionalised the Hungarian national category while at the same time it sanctioned "nationalism" of nationalities. Since the regime acknowledged the existence of the German nationality, and it supported the promotion of its language use and education in the mother tongue, strategic opposition to this normative order was scholarly discourse on nationalities on the one hand, and cultivation on the other. Both enabled to present German identity category as valuable in a very limited and ideologically controlled public domain.

The gradual integration of Hungary into the European political space modified this configuration in a way that it was the identification as "perpetrator nation" that the normative regime of commemoration and Holocaust memory imposed. Its interaction with the previous configuration resulted in the strategy of (self)-musealisation that is, presenting the past as cultural heritage and thus resignifying the stigmatised German identity-category. This study found that the recent European and German development of victimisation that refuses the position of "perpetrator" through representing expulsions as historical trauma has not become prevalent in Hungary. At the same time it argues that national stigmatising of Hungarian Germans practically ceased by the integration of the resettlements into the official national commemorative calendar.

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