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**Targeted by the Hungarian State Security.
South Slavs and Ethnic Hungarians from Vojvodina
in the Baja Triangle, 1948–1953***

ABSTRACT: The escalation of the Soviet–Yugoslav conflict had a fundamental impact on the South Slavic minorities in Hungary, too. They were generally regarded by the state security and law enforcement agencies as unreliable and as “Tito's fifth column.” The State Protection Authority (Államvédelmi Hatóság, ÁVH) began closely monitoring the villages of the Baja Triangle and the South Slavs living there. They were considered unreliable elements and it was assumed that because of their ethnicity, all of them would support Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav leaders in the conflict. However, their relations to the ÁVH were rather complex. This article highlights some aspects of this complex relationship in the so-called Baja Triangle border region, which had primary importance from a state security perspective. Based on Hungarian archival documents, this article attempts to reveal the criteria used and the tasks for which the South Slavs living here were to be recruited. Then, it examines the trials against South Slavs. It also focuses on those Hungarians who moved from Yugoslavia to Hungary in the final years of or shortly after World War II. As they originated from Yugoslavia, they were considered unreliable by the State Protection

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Authority just like the South Slavs. The article briefly touches upon their fate after 1953, too.

KEYWORDS: South Slavic minorities in Hungary, Baja Triangle, Minorities and State Securities, Soviet–Yugoslav conflict, Hungarian–Yugoslav relations

The escalation of the Soviet–Yugoslav conflict in the summer of 1948 marked a fundamental turning point in the development of Hungarian–Yugoslav party and state relations. Years of intense rapprochement were followed by a period of dramatic alienation. Hungary renounced all treaties, conventions, and agreements with its southern neighbour, severed economic ties, expelled Yugoslav diplomats from its territory, border incidents became a daily occurrence, the possibility of a military attack on Yugoslavia was raised, and a smear campaign was launched against Tito, the “chain dog of imperialism.” After the conflict became public (June 28, 1948), pressure was immediately intensified on the Serbian, Croatian, and Slovenian minorities in Hungary. Members of the South Slavic minorities were generally regarded by the state security and law enforcement agencies as unreliable and as “Tito's fifth column.” They lost their privileged status, their ethnic organizations were disbanded, teachers were dismissed from their jobs, and many were expelled from the Hungarian Working People's Party (Magyar Dolgozók Pártja, MDP) during membership reviews. Many were interned without any reason, detained without trial, or sentenced to long prison terms on trumped-up charges. This was especially true for South Slavs living in the so-called Baja Triangle.

This triangle-shaped region, which covers an area of 1,245 km² and includes about 20 settlements (including Baja with a population of 30,000), was located right next to the Hungarian–Yugoslav border. In the territory of Trianon's Hungary, a total of 48,143 people identified themselves as South Slavs by mother tongue (the vast majority were Croats, Bunjevci and Šokci, with a smaller number of Serbs and Slovenes). In relation to the total local population, the largest proportion of South Slavs in Hungary lived here: According to official data, they formed 11.2 of the population in the Baja district, and 7.7 percent in the Bácsalmás district.¹

¹ Tóth Ágnes, „A „nagypolitika” erőterében. Délszlávok Magyarországon 1945–1948”, In *Magyarok és szerbek a változó határ két oldalán, 1941–1948. Történelem és emlékezet*,

As a result of the Soviet–Yugoslav conflict,² the Baja triangle had primary importance from a state security perspective. This was partly because the villages around Baja were located directly along the country's south border, thus forming a region bordering Yugoslavia, and partly because of the relatively high number of South Slavs living there. But also because after World War II, the South Slavs living here were particularly vocal in expressing their demands and asserting their interests (the question of land distribution, local and parliamentary representation, extensive educational and ethnic rights).³

However, it would go beyond the scope of this study to cover all aspects of the relationship between the State Protection Authority (Államvédelmi Hatóság, ÁVH) and the South Slavs living in the Baja Triangle. Based on documents preserved in the Historical Archives of the State Security Services, in the first chapter I attempt to reveal the criteria used and the tasks for which the South Slavs living here were to be recruited. In the second, more detailed chapter, I examine the trials against South Slavs, and in the third chapter, I focus on ethnic Hungarians who moved from Yugoslavia in the final years of World War II and after the war. As they originated from Yugoslavia, they were considered

szerk. Bíró László és Hornyák Árpád (Budapest: MTA BTK Történettudományi Intézet, 2016), 341, table 3.

² For the causes and consequences of the Soviet–Yugoslav conflict: Leonid Gibianskii, „The Soviet Bloc and the Initial Stage of the Cold War. Archival Documents on Stalin's Meetings with Communist Leaders of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, 1946–1948”, *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, iss. 10 (1998): 112–134; Leonid Gibianski, „The 1948 Soviet–Yugoslav Conflict and the Formation of the 'Socialist Camp' Model”, in *The Soviet Union in Eastern Europe, 1945–1989*, eds. Odd Arne Westad, Sven Holtsmark, Iver B. Neumann (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 26–46; Jeronim Perović, „The Tito–Stalin Split. A Reassessment in Light of New Evidence”, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, no. 2 (2007): 32–63; Svetozar Rajak, „The Cold War in the Balkans, 1945–1956”, in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, vol. I, eds. Melvyn P. Leffler, Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 198–220.

³ For the history of South Slavs living in the Baja Triangle Between 1945 and 1956: Péter Vukman, „A bajai háromszögben élő délszlávok és a változó magyar–jugoszláv kapcsolatok (1944–1956)”, *Századok*, no. 5 (2024): 951–977; Péter Vukman, „Land Reform, Collectivization, Hungarians and South Slavs in the Baja Triangle (1945–1956)”, *History in Flux*, no. 1 (2024): 123–141; Péter Vukman, „Border, Identity, Everyday Life. The South Slavs of Gara in State Security Documents (1945–1956)”, *Études sur la région méditerranéenne – Méditerrané Tanulmányok*, numéro spécial (2023): 251–264; Péter Vukman, „Living in the Vicinity of the Yugoslav–Hungarian Border (1945–1960): Breaks and Continuities. A Case Study of Hercegszántó (Santovo)”, *History in Flux*, no. 1 (2020): 9–27.

unreliable by the ÁVH, just like the South Slavs. Finally, considering the limited sources available, I briefly touch upon their fate after 1953.

At the beginning of my study, I must also clarify some terminology. Most of the South Slavic minorities in the Baja Triangle belonged to the Bunjevci, Serbs can be found only in Baja and Hercegszántó. As a result of the wars against the Ottomans, the Šokci, another ethnic Croatian subgroup, settled in Hercegszántó. In protest the Magyarization activities of the Hungarian Catholic Church, they converted *en masse* to the Serbian Orthodox Church at the end of the 19th century. Later, three-quarters of them returned to the Roman Catholic Church, while the remaining quarter still consider themselves Serbian.⁴ As the sources most often used the term South Slavs (*délszláv*) collectively for the different South Slavic communities (Serbs, Croats, Šokci, Bunjevci and Slovenes) in Hungary after 1945, this practice will be used in this study. I only use distinctive ethnic terminology when the context absolutely requires it. In my study, I use the South Slavic names according to the rules of Hungarian spelling, as they appear in the sources.

*The Hungarian Working People's Party and
the South Slavic minorities after 1948*

In its draft program on the spring of 1948, the MDP formulated the following principles: “For the nationalities living in the country (South Slavs, Romanians, Slovaks, etc.), the Party guarantees full citizenship rights, free development of their progressive national cultures, education in their native languages, complete freedom for their democratic cultural, social, and political organizations, and freedom of cultural exchange and contact with their

⁴ For the history of the Bunjevci: Robert Skenderović, *Povijest podunavskih Hrvata (Bunjevaca i Šokaca) od doseljavanja do propasti Austro-Ugarske Monarhije* (Subotica: Zavod za kulturu vojvođanskih Hrvata, Slavonski Brod: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2017); Mihály Mándity, *A magyarországi bunyevác-horvátok története*, (Kecskemét: Bács-Kiskun megyei Tanács, 1989); István Iktóty, *Bunyevácok* (Baja: Bunyevác Kulturális Intézet, 2019); Dénes Sokcsevits, *A magyarországi horvátok rövid története* (Budapest: Croatica, 2021), 23–37; For the Croatian nationhood of Bunjevci in Hungarian historiography, see: Dénes Sokcsevits, „A horvátság csángói: a bácskai bunyevácok a horvát, a magyar és a szerb nemzeti integrációs törekvések ütközőpontján”, in *Mozaikkockák déli szomszédaink történetéből*, ed. Dénes Sokcsevits (Budapest: Rubicon, 2022), 75–86.

mother nations living in neighbouring countries.”⁵ Adopted on August 15, 1949, and promulgated five days later, the first written constitution in Hungarian history dealt with the nationalities living in the country in only one place. Paragraph 3 of Article 49 declared: “The Hungarian People’s Republic guarantees to every nationality living on its territory the possibility of education in its mother-tongue and the fostering of its national culture.”⁶

However, these principles remained on paper in relation to the South Slavs. Following the outbreak of the Soviet–Yugoslav conflict, Hungarian–Yugoslav party and state relations became frosty, and as a result, the South Slavs became suspicious and unreliable in the eyes of the authorities, and collective stigmatization awaited them. The consequences of the international conflict and the Rákosi regime’s minority policy measures, which covertly promoted assimilation, had a combined effect in their case. Rákosi and his followers (like other countries in the socialist camp) created a potential enemy image of Tito and Titoist Yugoslavia, and the South Slavic minority was put under direct pressure.

Although after 1945 it became possible in principle for South Slavs to be educated entirely in their native language, the vast majority of the South Slavic population did not request the introduction of this, partly because of the significant differences between the literary language and the local dialects, partly because there was a lack of trained teachers with a good knowledge of the language, but also because parents wanted to avoid their children being stigmatized for embracing their South Slavic national identity. The fact that ethnic teachers were arrested one after another, except for those who managed to flee to Yugoslavia in time, had a negative impact, as did the fact that the authorities equated South Slavs and the so-called “Titoists”.⁷ The mistrust was mutual, and the party leadership did not push for improvements in the educational situation of the South Slavs. At a meeting held on March 2, 1949, at the Ministry of Religion and Public Education, it was decided that “special attention must be paid to Titoism and chauvinism in South Slavic education.

⁵ „A Magyar Dolgozók Pártjának programnyilatkozata”, *Szabad Nép*, 9 May 1948, 13.

⁶ *Magyar Történeti Szöveggyűjtemény 1914–1999*, vol. 2, szerk. Romsics Ignác (Budapest: Osiris, 2000), 20.

⁷ The local functionaries of the MDP in the Baja Triangle were also aware of this problem; Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Bács-Kiskun Vármegyei Levéltára (MNL BKML) XXIII. 212. 1. d. 106–18–1/1951. sz. Kecskemét, 1951. április 21.

We must be careful not to support our political enemies through the implementation of nationality policies.”⁸ On August 3, 1950, the Agitation and Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the MDP proposed that nationalities should be given the opportunity to learn more about the culture of their mother country through education in their literary language. However, as they emphasized, these do not apply to the South Slavs.⁹

Since the associations of the ethnic minorities – including the Democratic Alliance of South Slavs in Hungary (Magyarországi Déslávok Demokratikus Szövetsége, MDDSZ) – were organized on an ethnic basis, they clearly contradicted class-based ideology. When the party-state was established, many in the MDP questioned whether ethnic associations were necessary at all.¹⁰ The Mass Organizations Department of the Central Committee of MDP also addressed the issue and stated at its meeting on June 25, 1949, that there was no need for associations representing the interests of ethnic minorities, their work should be limited entirely to the cultural sphere, their grassroots organizations should not be further developed, and their central functions should be gradually transferred to the Ministry of Public Education and the Ministry of Culture.¹¹ Almost a year later, on April 12, 1950, the MDP decided that the local organizations of the MDDSZ in the counties bordering Yugoslavia should be dissolved without a separate resolution.¹²

The daily life of the South Slavs living in the Baja Triangle became particularly difficult from the late spring of 1950. Using the assassination of Imre Kiss, the MDP secretary in Lengyelkápolda in Csongrád County, as a pretext, the Secretariat of the MDP decided to create a border zone at the Hungarian–Yugoslav border at its meeting on 18 January 1950. The 15-kilometre border zone included the Baja Triangle almost entirely, so that from 1

⁸ Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára (MNL OL) XIX–I–1–r, Jegyzőkönyv a kultuszminisztérium vezető kollégiumának 1949. március 2-i üléséről. 1949. március 2.

⁹ MNL OL M–KS 276. f. 86. cs. 53. ő. e. 1. Az Agitációs és Propaganda Pártkollégium ülése. Budapest, 1950. augusztus 3.

¹⁰ István Fehér, *Az utolsó percben. Magyarország nemzetiségei 1945–1990* (Budapest: Kosuth, 1993), 148; Loránt Tilkovszky, *Nemzetiségi politika Magyarországon a 20. században* (Debrecen: Csokonai Kiadó, 1998), 144.

¹¹ MNL OL M–KS 276. f. 67. cs. Javaslat. Nemzetiségi munkánk néhány hiányosságának megjavítására. Budapest, 1949. június 25.

¹² MNL OL M–KS 276. f. 54. cs. 94. ő. e. Jegyzőkönyv, 1950. április 12.

July it was only possible to enter with a special pass. Residents were issued permanent residence cards, and those local residents who were branded as “class enemies” or “belonging to hostile social groups” had to be expelled, including Hungarian citizens with land possession in Yugoslavia, those who had resettled from Yugoslavia after 1945, those of South Slavic origin, especially South Slavic teachers, Greek Orthodox priests and those with family or friends in Yugoslavia.

The expulsion of the 2446 people considered most dangerous to “national security” from the Hungarian–Yugoslav border was already ordered on 22 June. The deportations started in the Baja Triangle, in Hercegszántó. This was followed by a further wave of expulsion on the night of 21 to 22 November 1951 and 19 December 1951.¹³ Although the deportations did not ultimately affect large numbers of South Slavs, it was an excellent way of reinforcing their fears. Unfortunately, we have no data on the exact number of South Slavs displaced. According to a Yugoslav estimate from 1958, about 5,000 South Slavs living in Hungary were arrested, 60 of whom were convicted and a further 2,200 deported.¹⁴

From 1950 onwards, the county reports received by the Agitation and Propaganda Department of the MDP regularly reported an improvement in relations between the party, the police and state security forces and the South Slav minority. However, sometimes even the authors of the reports were forced to admit that the South Slavs remained fearful, passive, reluctant to talk about Yugoslavia and did not want to take a clear stand or voice their thoughts on Hungarian–Yugoslav relations. Suffice it to quote the words of the peasant woman from Katymár who, almost desperately, expressed her problem to a member of the MDP who was investigating the situation on the spot: “What else do they want from us, we are getting ahead in production, peace loans [békekölcsön], council elections, the [forced] deliveries [beszolgáltatás] and we are joining the téesz [cooperatives], and what else are we to do? We have agreed to go up to comrade Rákosi and ask him that if we are not reliable, they should put us over the border or create peace for us.”¹⁵

¹³ Orgoványi István, „A déli határsáv 1948 és 1956 között”, *Bács-Kiskun megye múltjából* 17 (2001): 256–264.

¹⁴ Arhiv Jugoslavije (AJ), Centralni komitet Saveza komunista Jugoslavije (507), XVIII–K.13/18, Jugoslovenska nacionalna manjina u Mađarskoj, 1958, 60.

¹⁵ MNL OL M–KS 276. f. 89. cs. 186. ő. e. 4. Feljegyzés, 1950. július 29.

*Criteria and difficulties in recruiting agents
among South Slavs in the Baja Triangle*

The ÁVH began closely monitoring the villages of the Baja Triangle and the South Slavs living there immediately after the Soviet–Yugoslav conflict escalated. Mood reports and background studies were prepared on individuals considered “nationalist,” “chauvinist,” “Yugoslavophile,” and, of course, “Titoist.” Of course, these labels were not exclusively applied to local South Slavs; any criticism of Rákosi or the system, or any comment on economic difficulties (increased tax burdens, compulsory deliveries, collectivization) was sufficient for stigmatization. Like the South Slavs, Hungarians living here who had fled Yugoslavia at the end of World War II and in the years that followed, became unreliable due to their Yugoslavian citizenship. Both groups were regarded as “Tito’s fifth column” and were suspected of acting as potential intelligence agents, undercover agents, and spies for the Yugoslav state security services in the region. To monitor them and dismantle their (presumed) network, the ÁVH itself employed informants and recruited agents to infiltrate their circles or entrusted them with tasks to be carried out on Yugoslav territory.

Based on the surviving state security files, it is not possible to form a comprehensive picture of how many people were employed as intelligence agents, informants, or agents, nor of how effectively they carried out their work. In some cases, documents covering only a short period of time, a few months at most, have survived, indicating the specific tasks assigned to those currently employed and the number of meetings between the informants, the agents and the ÁVH officers. These documents also seem to indicate that the establishment of the agent network was not always successful. Based on specific recruitment proposals, we can form a picture of the criteria used for recruitment, the qualities that made a person suitable for agent work, and the specific tasks they were assigned in each case. In general, recruitment was often based on pressure while in other cases ideological identification with the Rákosi system was the basis for recruitment. It was an advantage if someone was of South Slavic nationality or originated from Vojvodina, knew Serbo-Croatian, and had connections among the South Slavic minorities or among immigrants from Yugoslavia. It was not a disadvantage if someone owned

land near the border, as this allowed them to observe what was happening near the border and the movements of the Yugoslav border guards, nor was it a disadvantage if someone was well known in the community, had prestige among the locals, and was trusted by the population. It was particularly advantageous if someone met many people through their occupation, for example, if they were a pub owner, as after a few glasses of wine or a couple of shots of brandy, anyone could easily become talkative. I will illustrate this with a few typical examples.

István Barbalics, a 36-year-old resident of Vaskút, was recruited as an informant in October 1949 based on pressure. In his case, it was a particular advantage that many people frequented his bakery and, as a person of Slavic origin, he was presumably able to easily establish contacts among the South Slavs, from whom he could obtain information about their outlooks, their connections in Yugoslavia, and illegal border crossings. Reports on his recruitment also provide some insight into the national identity and assimilation of the informants. Although Barbalics was of South Slavic origin, he no longer spoke the language and did not express any pro-Tito sentiments. As he himself put it, he had been raised as a Hungarian and wanted to live as one.¹⁶

The ÁVH also wanted to recruit Gábor Vermes, the municipal clerk of Bácsszentgyörgy, as he lived only 400 meters from the border line, was in constant contact with the local South Slavs, and was popular among them because of his political views. His task was therefore to monitor their mood and their statements about Yugoslavia and the Hungarian leadership, but his estate so close to the actual border line also gave him insight into who was involved in smuggling.¹⁷

On principle, it was recommended that István Gorjanác, a small landowner from Hercegszántó, be recruited in August 1950. He was to provide information on the mood of the local small and medium-sized farmers and their views on the Korean War that broke out recently.¹⁸ Although it would have been “expedient and necessary” to recruit István Gálity, also from Hercegszántó, as he was a tavern keeper and knew many people and could have

¹⁶ Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára (ÁBTL) 3.1.5. O–9555. 149, 150.

¹⁷ ÁBTL 3.1.5. O–9557. 39.

¹⁸ ÁBTL 3.1.5. O–9553.141.

provided regular information about the mood in the village, this was not permitted in the end. His brother had been convicted of espionage for Yugoslavia, making him a problematic figure.¹⁹ (In other cases, it was precisely such family ties that were used to exert pressure during recruitment.) In the spring of 1951, István Dujmov, a 21-year-old native speaker of Bunjevac dialect living in Gara, was recruited as an informant on ideological principle. Because the ÁVH still did not have an adequate network of informants in the village, Dujmov was considered particularly suitable for recruitment among the South Slavic youth. He accepted the task, but his written reports were completely useless, and as it turned out, his job (he spent three days a week as an accountant in the surrounding villages) was not ideal, so in mid-September, they broke off contact with him.²⁰

On occasion, the ÁVH used their language skills and connections with relatives and friends in Yugoslavia to find suitable candidates among the South Slavs for intelligence work in Yugoslavia for the ÁVH. In February 1953, they began to take a serious interest in István Csizmity, who was born in Hercegszántó in 1922 and came from a family of smallholders. Csizmity's parents opted for the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in 1926, and their son followed them to Bački Breg in 1930. He stayed in the village for a few years only, moving back to Hercegszántó with his mother and sister in 1941. Like many other South Slavs, Csizmity joined the Hungarian Communist Party in 1945 and became actively involved in party work, eventually being elected organizational secretary. Following the 1948 decision of the Information Bureau, he gave several speeches at public meetings condemning Tito and the Yugoslav leadership in accordance with the expectations of the authorities. He was popular among both ethnic Hungarians and South Slavs in the village. Other members of his family had returned in the meantime to Yugoslavia. As a dual landowner, he himself owned land in Bački Breg. Based on his background, personal characteristics, family circle, and language skills, Csizmity seemed suitable to the ÁVH for employment as an intelligence agent. His first assignment was to recruit someone living in the village of Darda (now in Croatia, north of Osijek). The recruitment was approved in early

¹⁹ Ibid, 137.

²⁰ ÁBTL 3.1.5. O–9556. 430, 442; Based on the context, the second document was probably created in October 1951.

September 1953. However, the usual conversation did not go as expected. Csizmity stated that he did not know anyone in Hercegszántó with hostile leanings and that he himself wished no harm to anyone. He also said that he would not know what to do if a Yugoslav spy showed up at his home at night. Based on all this, the officer was convinced that recruiting him would not be practical, since, as he explained, Csizmity “lives in an environment where people consciously strive to undermine our people’s democratic system [...] the reality is that he is a strong South Slavic nationalist and only pretends to be active in the party.”²¹

The above recruitments also suggest that caution was warranted and that care had to be taken about who said what to whom and when. In the tense political climate, everyone became suspicious: it was enough to meet or exchange letters with relatives living across the border to easily be considered an UDB spy. The atmosphere of intimidation was further reinforced by the arrest of local leaders of the South Slavic community and ethnic teachers who played an important role in community life and the preservation of national identity. Many fled to Yugoslavia to escape arrest, internment, and imprisonment, which of course put their immediate family members, relatives, and friends who remained in Hungary in a difficult position and exposed them to harassment by the authorities.

Arrests and show trials among the South Slavs in the Baja Triangle

Following the discussion of a report on political work among South Slavs, the Secretariat of MDP decided on February 14, 1951, that, in cooperation with the ÁVH, a number of show trials should be staged, either on site or in Budapest, in public.²² However, even before this, the South Slavs living in the Baja triangle had already been convicted on trumped-up charges, particularly those who had served as partisans in the Yugoslav army at the end of World War II, local functionaries of the MDDSZ, and South Slav teachers. The biographies of the South Slavs I reviewed who were detained on charges of espionage for Yugoslavia have many similar features. Almost all of them were farmers, of peasant origin or had a background in small-

²¹ ÁBTL 3.2.4. K-687. 51–56; ÁBTL 3.2.4. K-687. 86–89.

²² MNL OL M-KS 276. f. 54. cs. 131. ő. e. Jegyzőkönyv, 14 February 1951.

scale crafts. Due to their family background and South Slavic ethnicity, they benefited from the new social order that emerged after World War II. They benefited from land distribution, were able to pursue careers as nursery and elementary school teachers, which were still held in high esteem in the rural society of the time, and became involved in shaping local politics and public life. After 1948, all this became a disadvantage for them. They were placed under surveillance and incriminating information was gathered on them. As in many other trials of the time, the concept behind their cases was developed, although due to a lack of sources, it cannot be reconstructed in full detail. It can be stated with certainty, however, that the ÁVH attempted to create links between the individual cases and connect them to well-known Yugoslav diplomats or minority politicians who played a decisive role in the development of Hungarian–Yugoslav relations between 1945 and 1948. In the end, these trials were not used for propaganda purposes, but they proved to be an excellent means of intimidating and cautioning members of the local South Slavic communities.

A good example of this is the case of minority leader Pavle Vujity. Vujity was born in Gara in 1912 into a poor peasant family of Bunjevci origin. After completing six years of elementary school, he worked as a cowherd and swineherd. At the turn of 1944 and 1945, when the villages around Baja were under Yugoslav partisan occupation, Vujity also joined the partisans.²³ After his demobilization, he returned to Garan. He received his share of the land distribution and quickly became involved in politics, joining the Hungarian Communist Party (Magyar Kommunista Párt, MKP) in 1945. The MKP had particularly close ties with the South Slavs living in the Baja Triangle. While the local Hungarian population generally voted for the Smallholders' Party in parliamentary elections, the South Slavs voted for Communist Party candida-

²³ His actions were by no means unique. After the liberation of the Baja triangle, many people joined the Yugoslav partisans. A 1958 Yugoslav report mentions 18 young people from Katymár and 39 from Gara who fought in the Yugoslav troops; AJ, 507, XVIII K. 13/18, Jugoslovenska nacionalna manjina u Mađarskoj, 86–88; Based on his own research, Stjepan Velin identified 98 partisans by name, most of whom came from Gara (43) and Hercegszántó (30). Eighteen from Katymár, three from Bácsalmás, and four from Csávoly joined the partisans; Stjepan Velin, „I oni su dali svoj udio... Bački Bunjevci, Šokci i Srbi u NOV Jugoslavije”, u: *Iz naše prošlosti (Studije)*, ur. Mišo Mandić, Marin Mandić (Budimpešta: Poduzeće za izdavanje udžbenika, 1979), 60–63.

tes as early as 1945.²⁴ In several settlements, South Slavs made up the majority of MKP members.²⁵ In the parliamentary elections of August 31, 1947, Vujity's name appeared on the MKP's list for the Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun and Bács-Bodrog counties, but he did not win a seat in parliament.²⁶ At the same time, Vujity became active in minority politics. From 1946, he was a member of the Anti-Fascist Front of Slavs in Hungary (Magyarországi Szlávok Antifasiszta Frontja, MSZAF, a forrunner of MDDSZ) and later the MDDSZ where he held leading positions until June 1948 (president of the Executive Committee and member of the local organization's leadership).²⁷

Vujity repeatedly expressed his pro-Yugoslav views even after June 1948. His surveillance began in September 1948 at the latest, but the documents do not reveal when exactly he was arrested or on what charges. The ÁVH did not begin to deal with his case in earnest until the spring of 1950. At first, Vujity denied that he had any agent connections with the former national secretary of the MDDSZ, Milán Ognyenovics, who had been convicted in the Rajk trial in September 1949, or with the Sombor headquarters of the UDB.²⁸ However, the ÁVH had the appropriate methods at its disposal to uncover the "truth." On April 12, 1950, Vujity confessed that between January and May 1949, he had regularly passed information to the Yugoslavs monthly. His reports concerned the number of soldiers stationed in Gara and the local police forces, their armament and activities, the measures taken by the authorities, and the abuse and grievances suffered by the local South Slavs.²⁹ The concept started to take shape and grew in significance: five days later, he also testified about his connection to Lazar Brankov.³⁰ starting in 1946, they met

²⁴ MNL OL XIX-J-1-k-(1945–1964)–Jugoszlávia–16/c sz.n./1956 (22. d). Feljegyzés. A magyarországi délszláv nemzeti kisebbség helyzete, undated.

²⁵ MNL OL M-KS 274. f. 16. cs. 118. ő. e. 176–178. Jelentés. Budapest, November 1945; Ibid, 25. cs. 55. ő. e. 35. Kimutatás, h. n, September 1946. szeptember; Ibid, 21. cs. 107. ő. e. 39–41. Hrinják János népnevelő községeiről szóló jelentések, undated; Ibid, 67. Jelentés, h. n, 28 November 1947.

²⁶ „A Magyar Kommunista Párt képviselőjelöltjeinek névsora”, *Szabad Nép*, 1 August 1947, 5.

²⁷ ÁBTL 3.1.9. V–747. 3, 33.

²⁸ Ibid, 75.

²⁹ Ibid, 3.

³⁰ Lazar Brankov served as a diplomat assigned to the Yugoslav mission attached to the Allied Control Commission. He emigrated in the autumn of 1948 and became the leader of the Cominformist émigré community in Hungary. In September 1949, he was sentenced

several times in the Yugoslav mission's building in Budapest, where Vujity reported on the events in Gara and the mood of the South Slavs.³¹ Brankov's testimony was also used to uncover their relationship. (It is not entirely clear whether Brankov, who was serving a life sentence in the Rajk trial, was interrogated again at that time or whether the relevant incriminating passages were taken from an earlier interrogation transcript. In a note dated April 2, 1950, Brankov stated that he personally knew Vujity, who was considered popular and influential enough at the Yugoslav mission to maintain contact with the South Slavs living in the Bajai Triangle through him. However, given his high position in the South Slavic minority organizations, they did not want to use Vujity as an agent.³² A day later, this had already been summarized as follows: "Due to the line he pursued in the MDDSZ, [Vujity] was a de facto political agent of Tito's Yugoslavia."³³

At the trial held in May 1950, the Szeged County Court sentenced Vujity Pavle and his chief accomplice, Ljubinkó Gálity, a Greek Orthodox parish priest from Hercegszántó, and Milorád Dikiczki to several years in prison, István Mándity, Raduljob Zsizskovics, and István Simics to three years of forced labour. Their case was certainly appealed, and a second trial was held, where the court increased the sentences: Vujity was sentenced to nine years in prison for spying for Yugoslavia.³⁴ Yugoslav sources also reveal that Gálity was ultimately sentenced to six years in prison, Zsizskovics to four years, and Mándity to three years.³⁵

to life imprisonment in the Rajk trial. For more information on Lazar Brankov's activities in Hungary: Péter Vukman, „Egy jugoszláv diplomata Magyarországon (1945–1949): Lazar Brankov”, *Századok*, no. 4 (2014): 959–981; Péter Vukman, „Lazar Brankov: the First Leader of the Cominformist Émigrés in Hungary and 'Tito's most determined agent.' A Life Between Two Emigrations (1949–1956)”, *Securitas imperii*, no. 1 (2023): 98–122; For the history of Cominformist emigrants in Hungary: Péter Vukman, „*Harcban Tito és Rankovics klikkje ellen*”. *Jugoszláv politikai emigránsok Magyarországon (1948–1980)* (Budapest, Pécs: ÁBTL, Kronosz, 2017); Péter Vukman, „Social Composition and Everyday Life of Cominform Emigrants in Hungary (1948–1980)”, *Istoriya 20. veka*, br. 1 (2018): 133–146; Péter Vukman, „Political Activities of Ibeovci Emigrants in Hungary (1948–1953)”, *Tokovi istorije*, no. 3 (2017): 35–58.

³¹ ÁBTL 3.1.9. V–747, 11.

³² *Ibid.*, 72.

³³ *Ibid.*, 74.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

³⁵ AJ, 507, XVIII–K.13/18, Jugoslovenska nacionalna manjina u Mađarskoj, 115.

In addition to the trials against minority leaders, there were also trials against South Slavic teachers. After 1945, Yugoslavia repeatedly demanded that the Hungarian government ensure the widest possible provision of mother-tongue education for the South Slavic population in Hungary as one of the conditions for the normalization of bilateral Hungarian–Yugoslav relations. State-run South Slavic schools were opened one after another, and in 1946 and 1947, teacher training courses were launched in Pécs to alleviate the shortage of teachers. After the outbreak of the Soviet–Yugoslav conflict, the teachers who graduated from these courses became enemies, “Titoist propagandists.”

Of the approximately 50 South Slavic teachers employed in 1948, more than 20 were interned or sentenced to prison. In October 1949, Mátyás Kovacsics, a teacher from Bajaszentistván (and member of the MKP and local secretary of the MDDSZ), was sentenced to eight years in prison on charges of espionage. Three other people were sentenced to between four and ten years in prison in his trial: István Kovacsics, József Termák, and Ferenc Kirchner.³⁶ The case of Mátyás Kovacsics is also interesting because his arrest may have been a part of the preparations for the Rajk trial. As part of the emerging concept, Kovacsics made incriminating statements against Milán Ognyenovics in July 1949, who would later become the sixth defendant in the Rajk trial. The possible connection between the two cases is also indicated by the fact that his name appears in the indictment of the Rajk trial as Matije Kovácsóvics, in support of Ognyenovics’ alleged espionage activities.³⁷

Moreover, István Majsztrovics, a teacher in Gara, Katymár, and then Szemely (Baranya County), was sentenced to four years in prison in 1950 on charges of espionage, distributing pamphlets, and illegal possession of weapons,³⁸ Alajos (Lázó) Babics from Gara was sentenced to ten years, and Márk Filákovics from Hercegszántó was interned. Before his internment, Márk Filákovics lived in constant fear and suffered from nervous breakdowns.³⁹ In the case of Dácsin Danica, a teacher in Csávoly, the Special Council of the People’s Court in Budapest, on October 31, 1949, found her guilty of active participation in a conspiracy to overthrow the people’s democratic state order

³⁶ ÁBTL 3.1.9. V–77951, 118–119.

³⁷ *Rajk László és társai a népbíróság előtt. 40 év távlatából (...)*, közread. Tibor Zinner (Budapest: Magyar Eszperantó Szövetség, 1989), 20.

³⁸ ÁBTL 3.1.9. V–55356, 53, 56.

³⁹ ÁBTL 3.1.5. O–9553/3, 89.

and sentenced her to one year in prison. and as an additional punishment, she was banned from exercising her political rights for 10 years and had all her property confiscated. Both the defence and the people's prosecutor appealed the verdict. On February 13, 1950, the National Council of People's Courts of Second Instance increased Dácsin's main sentence to one year and eight months.⁴⁰

Due to intimidation, more South Slavic teachers left their jobs or fled to Yugoslavia, and parents, fearing that their children would be labelled "Titoists," did not dare to send them to schools where they could be taught in their native language. As a result, the number of students attending South Slavic schools in Bácsalmás, Felsőszentiván, Csávoly, and Katymár declined to zero or a handful.⁴¹

At its hearing on August 21, 1950, the Szeged County Court of First Instance sentenced nine residents of Katymár of South Slavic ethnicity, aged between 25 and 50, to long prison terms for crimes of espionage, distribution of foreign propaganda material, and concealment of weapons. Szaniszló Kubatov, József Vujevics, István Majsztrovic, János Ispánovity, János Milánkov, János Matos, István Csupity, Péter Gunity, and Bertalan Matos received between two years and six months and six years of forced labour or imprisonment.⁴² A recurring element in their biographies is that in the final years of World War II they fought as partisans in the Yugoslav army. In October 1944, Vujevics organized his own partisan detachment of approximately 30 people and served as the personal bodyguard of the Hungarian-born partisan general Kosta Nađ.⁴³ Almost all of them were members of the MKP. According to the charges, they helped spies cross the border. Farmers living near the border, with good local knowledge and often

⁴⁰ ÁBTL 3.1.5. O–9697/1, 44–45.

⁴¹ AJ, 507, XVIII–K.13/13, 17, Izveštaj, 11. decembar 1957; There were other reasons why parents enrolled their children in Hungarian schools. Their decision was influenced by the fact that Hungarian schools were generally better equipped and many did not have a sufficient knowledge of the literary language.

⁴² Péter Vukman, „A magyar–jugoszláv párt- és államközi kapcsolatok hatása a magyarországi délszláv és a jugoszláviai magyar kisebbség helyzetére (1945–1953)”, in *A jugoszláviai magyarok eszme- és politikatörténete 1945–1989*, szerk. Márk Losoncz, Krisztina Rácz (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2019), 152–153.

⁴³ ÁBTL 3.1.9. V–365. 8–9; ÁBTL 3.1.9. V–366. 6–7.

owning properties at the other side of the border, may indeed have been well suited to this task. From 1949 onwards, a regular spy war developed between the two countries, although there are contradictory data in the sources regarding the number of enemy agents caught. According to the ÁVH, 91 Yugoslav agents were captured in 1950 and 66 a year later. The 1951 report of the National Border Guard Command mentions a slightly higher number, 74 UDB agents, 63 of whom were apprehended on the Hungarian–Yugoslav border. A year later, a total of 83 agents were caught crossing the border, and in 1953, thanks to the easing of tensions, border guards arrested 43 UDB agents. Today, it is difficult to determine the exact number of spies and whether every single case involved actual espionage.⁴⁴

Spying was not limited to the Baja Triangle; similar activities can be observed in the Slovenian villages along the Rába River near the present-day Hungarian–Austrian–Slovenian border. One of the best-known cases is that of Krisztina Bedics from Rábatótfalu. In ten days, 22 people were arrested in connection with her case. In March 1950, ten people were released, but another eleven were interned. On October 26, 1950, the Budapest Military Court sentenced Krisztina Bedics to 15 years in prison.⁴⁵ The sentence was upheld by the Military High Court on February 26, 1951. Citing changed international circumstances, the authorities recommended in August 1956 that her sentence be suspended.⁴⁶ Two further spy trials were staged in the Rába region in the first half of the 1950s. István Talabér was arrested on May 16, 1951. He was charged with treason and a year he was sentenced to death. In the trial of Mária Lázár, a seamstress from Felsőszölnök, held in 1953, she was convicted of disloyalty, illegal border crossing and abetting illegal border crossing, and 15 other people were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 1 to 12 years.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ ÁBTL 3.2.5. O–8–014/4. 226, MNL OL XIX–B–10. 1951. 18. d. 349. ő. e, 1952. 17. d. 314. ő. e. and 1953. 15. d. 190. ő. e.

⁴⁵ ÁBTL 3.1.9. V–10043, 251–253.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 266–267.

⁴⁷ Ágnes Nagyné Sziklai, „Vendvidék a Rákosi-korszakban”, in *Trezor 2. A Történeti Hivatal évkönyve 2000–2001*, szerk. Gyarmati György (Budapest: Történeti Hivatal, 2002), 188; Attila Kovács, „A magyarországi szlovének a magyar–jugoszláv kapcsolatok tükrében, 1945–1956” in *Magyarország és a Balkán a XX. században. Tanulmányok*, szerk. A. Sajti Enikő (Szeged: JATEPress, 2011), 76.

Hungarians from Vojvodina targeted by the State Protection Authority

According to a statistical survey conducted at the end of 1946, of the 267,340 people who fled or were expelled to Hungary from neighbouring countries during the last months or shortly after World War II, 84,800 came from Yugoslavia.⁴⁸ Some of them settled in the villages of the Baja Triangle, although their exact number is unknown. The ÁVH viewed people from Yugoslavia and those with connections there with suspicion (whether they were ethnic Hungarians or not) after 1948. Just like the South Slavic minority, they became “Tito’s fifth column”. Those who left Vojvodina could also come to the attention of the state security services as sources of information and through their perceived or actual espionage activities.

Miklós Keller, born in Subotica in 1922, trained as a tailor between 1936 and 1939. He worked in Belgrade until the summer of 1940, then returned to Subotica. In 1942, he was taken into forced labour and was captured by the British in Germany in April 1945. He arrived in Hungary from captivity in May 1947 and wanted to return to his parents in Subotica. Since the Yugoslav authorities did not allow him to enter the country, he settled in Csikéria. The increasingly tense relations between the two countries from the summer of 1948 made it difficult to maintain contact with his relatives in Yugoslavia, therefore, he decided to return to Yugoslavia. However, his attempt to cross the border (in December 1948) failed. The Yugoslavs captured him and immediately interrogated him at the UDB office in Subotica, then recruited him under pressure. His specific task was to gather information about the local mood in Csikéria, on the border guards, and the number of soldiers stationed nearby. According to the charges, his father was also recruited by the Yugoslavs and was even designated as his son’s contact person.⁴⁹ Miklós Keller was soon captured by the police on Hungarian territory. In January 1951, he was still under arrest.⁵⁰ The archival sources provide no further information about his fate. Thus, we do not know whether the allegations against him regarding espionage for Yugoslavia were proven, whet-

⁴⁸ A. Sajti Enikő, *Impériumváltások, revízió, kisebbség. Magyarok a Délvidéken 1918–1947* (Budapest: Napvilág, 2004), 347–348.

⁴⁹ ÁBTL 3.1.5. O–9528, 585/2–585/8.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 585/1.

her he was convicted, and if so, what sentence was imposed on the young man in his early thirties.

The alleged espionage activities of Sándor Györfi, born in Bezdan in 1907, also take us back to 1949. His family's paprika mill was nationalized after World War II. In early 1947, he fled Hungary, leaving his family behind, and settled in Csátalja. As the Soviet–Yugoslav conflict escalated, he attracted the attention of the ÁVH, which may have been influenced by the fact that his daughter was known to be working at the Ministry of Industry in Belgrade. Györfi had already visited Yugoslavia illegally on one or two occasions, and in February 1949 he crossed the border on a mission. However, he did not return to Hungary until the end of June; according to his own account, he did not dare to cross the reinforced border, and during his attempt on June 4, he was captured by Yugoslav border guards. In the prison in Sombor, he met several people who had escaped from Hungary and were on their way to Western Europe, and he provided information about this and the reinforcement of the border on the Yugoslav side to the Hungarian authorities. His story was met with disbelief by the state security services, but it was suggested that instead of arresting him, he should be employed as a double agent.⁵¹ However, no further information is known on this case; the background report on him compiled in May 1951 makes no mention of his conviction or further employment.⁵²

Regardless of whether they were recruited, ethnic Hungarians from Vojvodina could serve as sources of information both for Hungarian state security and the local population. For example, Imre Petike, a 47-year-old resident of Riđica, visited Hungary several times in the second half of 1948 (primarily in Gara and Bácsszentgyörgy) as a dual landowner. In June 1948, he reported to the ÁVH about, among other things, the economic difficulties in Yugoslavia (“you can’t buy anything for money”) and anti-Hungarian actions (the Serbs and the resettled dobrovoljci⁵³ constantly forced members of the Hungarian minority to do forced labour).⁵⁴ Six months later, he mentioned further reprisals against ethnic Hungarians: the people of Riđica were

⁵¹ Ibid, 174, 176, 317, 320–324.

⁵² ÁBTL 3.1.5. O–9558, 141–142.

⁵³ *Dobrovoljci* were volunteers for the Serbian army during World War I who were settled in Bačka and Banat in interwar period. After the Hungarian occupation of Bačka in 1941, they were exiled from there and resettled again by Yugoslav authorities in 1945.

⁵⁴ ÁBTL 3.1.5. O–9557, 315.

being forced to harvest potatoes 30 km away, and Hungarian double landowners had to report to the partisan command. Rumours spread among the local people that the Yugoslavs would order the closure of the border in December 1948.⁵⁵

The years of normalization (1953–1956)

Following Stalin's death (March 5, 1953), the slow normalization of Hungarian–Yugoslav relations⁵⁶ brought hope to the South Slavs that the grip of the ÁVH would ease and that prisoners and internees would be released. However, the resolution of the ordeal of the persecuted South Slavs proceeded rather slowly. In many cases, they were not even allowed to return to their original homes. Both those affected and the Yugoslavs repeatedly raised the issue of rehabilitation of those sentenced to prison and interned in show trials. On June 23, 1956, the Yugoslav embassy drew attention to the problem in a memorandum, listing in detail that, according to their information, seven members of the South Slavic minority were still being held in prisons, including Gábor Pijukovics from Bácsalmás, who had been sentenced to eight years in prison on September 18, 1950, for anti-democratic activities, and József Benda, who had been sentenced to ten years on July 25, 1950, for anti-democratic activities. They also protested because Alajos Babity, a teacher from Garai who had spent six years in prison, of being forced to sell milk at the local agricultural cooperative after his release.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Ibid, 320.

⁵⁶ Some useful summaries on the Soviet–Yugoslav normalization: Vladimir Lj. Cvetković, *Pogled iza gvozdene zavese. Jugoslovenska politika prema zemljama narodne demokratije u susedstvu 1953–1958* (Beograd: INIS, 2013); Svetozar Rajak, *Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in the Early Cold War. Reconciliation, Comradeship, Confrontation, 1953–1957* (London, New York: Routledge, 2011); On Hungarian–Yugoslav normalization: Marelyn Kiss József, Ripp Zoltán, Vida István, „A szovjet–jugoszláv és a magyar–jugoszláv kapcsolatok a diplomáciai levelezés tükrében”, *Múltunk*, no.1 (2001): 233–284; A. Sz. Sztikalin, „A szovjet–jugoszláv közeledés és a magyar belpolitikai helyzet (1954–1956 nyara)”, *Múltunk*, no. 1 (2003): 208–234; Katarina M. Kovačević, „Jugoslovensko-mađarski odnosi 1953–1956” (Doktorska disertacija, Univerzitet u Beogradu, Filozofski fakultet, Odeljenje za istoriju, 2018).

⁵⁷ MNL OL M–KS 276. f. 65. cs. 207. ő. e. 359–362. Emlékeztető. Budapest, 23 June 1956.

The “main characters” of my study were also released during this period, although little information is known about the circumstances and the further course of their lives. On April 6, 1957, the Presidential Council pardoned Mátyás Kovacsics for the remainder of his sentence.⁵⁸ After his release, he was able to return to Mohács. He found work as a delivery man at the local brickyard store there, and in May 1957, he was employed by the city council as a folk culture lecturer.⁵⁹ On September 1, 1957, he and his brother submitted a joint request for a retrial, arguing that during their interrogation in 1949, false documents had been presented to them as genuine, they had been beaten and tortured by the ÁVH during the interrogations, and the minutes had been compiled in a manner that was completely different from reality, distorting the facts.⁶⁰ The last known information about him is that he was the principal of a school in Mohács in 1966.⁶¹ The date when Pavle Vujity was released is not clear from the documents; all that is known about his fate is that in October 1957, the Presidential Council pardoned him from the adverse legal consequences of his criminal record.⁶²

SUMMARY

As the Soviet–Yugoslav conflict unfolded and the Hungarian–Yugoslav relations started to deteriorate, the ÁVH began closely monitoring the villages of the Baja Triangle and the South Slavs living there. They were considered as unreliable elements and it was assumed that because of their ethnicity, all of them would support Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav leaders in the conflict. However, their relations to the ÁVH were rather complex. The ÁVH not only keep a close eye on them, but they also recruited informants, spies and agents among them. Although it is not possible to form a comprehensive picture of how many people were employed as intelligence agents, informants, or agents, nor of how effectively they carried out their work, but as the different examples in this article shows, they had different characteristics that made them suitable to spy on their local environments or carry out tasks in

⁵⁸ ÁBTL 3.1.9. V–107981, 16.

⁵⁹ ÁBTL 3.1.9. V–77951, 108.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 109.

⁶¹ ÁBTL 3.1.9. V–107981, 18/8.

⁶² ÁBTL 3.1.9. V–747, 43.

Yugoslav territory. It was certainly an advantage if someone was of South Slavic nationality or originated from Vojvodina, knew Serbo-Croatian, and had connections among the South Slavic minorities or among immigrants from Yugoslavia, owned land near the border, if someone was well known in the community, had prestige among the locals. To intimidate the local communities, the ÁVH arrested, interned and sentenced the South Slavs in long prison terms, especially if they were teachers in the minority elementary schools, were members and local leaders of the MKP and MDDSZ. The ÁVH also tried to relate these trials to the Rajk trial or nationwide known figures. The ÁVH were suspicious of those ethnic Hungarians who originated from Vojvodina, too. It also recruited them as spies and informants, too. Just like the South Slavs, they were also labelled as “Tito’s fifth column”. Their rehabilitation was protracted, and in many cases their cases were only dealt with after the suppression of the 1956 revolution, during the Kádár era, although sources are very sparse regarding the further developments in their lives. Over time, even the internal security services no longer considered it important to monitor their daily lives. Their lives returned from the turmoil of history to the privacy of the private sphere.

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Резиме

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НА МЕТИ МАЂАРСКЕ ДРЖАВНЕ БЕЗБЕДНОСТИ. ЈУЖНИ СЛОВЕНИ И МАЂАРИ ИЗ ВОЈВОДИНЕ У БАЧКОМ ТРОУГЛУ, 1948–1953.

АПСТРАКТ: Заоштравање совјетско-југословенског сукоба оставило је дубок траг и на јужнословенске мањине у Мађарској. Државни органи безбедности и органи реда уопштено су их сматрали непоузданима и означавали као „Титову пету колону“. Државна управа за заштиту (Államvédelmi Hatóság – ÁVN) започела је појачан надзор над селима у Бачком троуглу и над Јужним Словенима који су тамо живели. Они су третирани као непоуздани елементи и полазило се од претпоставке да ће, због своје етничке припадности, сви подржавати Југославију и југословенско руководство у сукобу. Међутим, њихови односи са АВХ-ом били су знатно сложенији. Овај чланак осветљава поједине аспекте тог сложеног односа у такозваном пограничном подручју Бачког троугла, које је из перспективе државне безбедности имало прворазредни значај. На основу мађарске архивске грађе, рад настоји да открије критеријуме на основу којих су овдашњи Јужни Словени регрутовани, као и задатке за које су били ангажовани. Потом се анализирају судски процеси вођени против Јужних Словена. Посебна пажња посвећена је и етничким Мађарима који су се из Југославије преселили у Мађарску у последњим годинама Другог светског рата или непосредно након његовог завршетка. Како су потицали из Југославије, и они су, попут Јужних Словена, у очима Државне управе за заштиту сматрани непоузданима. Рад се укратко осврће и на њихову судбину након 1953. године.

КЉУЧНЕ РЕЧИ: јужнословенске мањине у Мађарској, Бачки троугао, мањине и државна безбедност, совјетско-југословенски сукоб, мађарско-југословенски односи

Како се совјетско-југословенски сукоб развијао, а мађарско-југословенски односи почели да се погоршавају, Државна управа за заштиту (Államvédelmi Hatóság – ÁVH) започела је појачан надзор над селима у Бачком троуглу и над Јужним Словенима који су тамо живели. Они су сматрани непоузданим елементима и полазило се од претпоставке да ће, због своје етничке припадности, сви подржавати Југославију и југословенско руководство у том сукобу. Међутим, њихови односи са АВХ-ом били су знатно сложенији. АВХ их није само пажљиво надзирала, већ је међу њима регрутовала и доушнике, шпијуне и агенте. Иако није могуће створити потпуну слику о томе колико је људи било ангажовано у својству обавештајних сарадника, доушника или агената, нити колико су ефикасно обављали своје задатке, примери наведени у овом раду показују да су поседовали различите карактеристике које су их чиниле погодним за шпијунирање у локалном окружењу или за извршавање задатака на југословенској територији. Свакако је била предност ако је неко био јужнословенске националности или је потицао из Војводине, ако је знао српскохрватски језик и имао везе међу јужнословенским мањинама или међу исељеницима из Југославије, ако је поседовао земљу у близини границе, био познат у заједници или уживао углед међу локалним становништвом. Ради застрашивања локалних заједница, АВХ је хапсила, интернирала и осуђивала Јужне Словене на дугогодишње затворске казне, нарочито у случајевима када су били учитељи у мањинским основним школама или чланови и локални функционери Мађарске комунистичке партије и Демократског савеза јужних Словена у Мађарској. АВХ је такође настојала да ове процесе повеже са Рајковим процесом или са личностима познатим на националном нивоу. АВХ је била сумњичава и према етничким Мађарима који су потицали из Војводине. И њих је регрутовала као шпијуне и доушнике. Као и Јужни Словени, и они су били означавани као „Титова пета колона”. Њихова рехабилитација била је дуготрајна и у многим случајевима њихови предмети су разматрани тек након гушења револуције 1956. године, у време Кадарове ере, иако су извори о даљем току њихових живота веома оскудни. Временом чак ни органи унутрашње безбедности више нису сматрали важним да прате њихов свакодневни живот. Њихови животи су се, из вртлога историје, вратили у оквире приватне сфере.