

Of course the statement formulated in the title is not true. Nevertheless, in the online publishing that appeared on the 18 November 2008, the journalists of the newspaper called Večernje Novosti in Beograd talk about exaggerated anti-Hungarian atrocities, respectively they write articles about the Serbs being threatened. (A day later, the journalist of the Politika (Politics) newspaper is writing about the same topic, in the same tone.) These articles have appeared with the following titles: „Tenzije na severu Bačke“(Tensions on the north side of Bácska), „Putuju da bi čuli srpski“, (They travel to hear Serbian language) (1), or „Mađarizacija Stare Moravice“ (Magyarization of Bácskossuthfalva (Stara Moravica)) (2). They relate upon the fact that the question of the anti-Hungarian intemperance in Szabadka (Subotica) is being exaggerated, furthermore the Serbs in Bácskossuthfalva (Stara Moravica) feel threatened and oppressed. As we feel that so and similar writings do not serve to the peaceful coexistence between the nations, we consider it necessary to express our opinion.

The author of the article “Tensions on the north side of Bácska” besides the public figures has also made speak the citizens in Szabadka (Subotica) as well, who did not understand what these “tensions between nations” really means.

The facts of the more than a dozen anti-Hungarian attacks in Szabadka (Subotica) (3) do not confirm the view that the relations between the nations are in the most perfect shape possible. For example from 2003 till nowadays – on the basis of the information available to us – in Vojvodina there are 234 anti-Hungarian atrocities and infringements of lawful rights documented. Among of these, in several cases the afflicted persons have suffered serious or grievous injuries, in one case the attack has taken a victim as well. However, the number of the concrete cases is much bigger than this, namely in many instances it does occur that the complainants do not dare to report the attack committed against them, or simply – because of the bad experiences – they consider it meaningless to do so. (The anti-minority attitude was also typical to the 1990s but the dictatorial regime concealed – put to silence – these cases.)

The authors of the article “They travel to hear Serbian language” are mentioning the politicians from Szabadka (Subotica), whereas the anxiety and fear is perceptible in the air as well. After this they are adding that the general feeling of anxiety – in Bácskossuthfalva (Stara Moravica) with a population of roughly 5700 people – can be read in the eyes of the some 200 inhabitants with Serb nationality.

All of these – according to the writers – have several reasons. Among others, as they are writing it, it is so because apart from the bilingual place name panels and the flag of the Republic of Serbia nothing reveals that this settlement can be found in the Republic. Furthermore, they are also writing that not once a street is named after a Serbian historical personality, all of the street

names have been “taken away” by the Hungarian kings and commanders. They are also claiming that only certain street plates were bilingual so far, but it will not be so, as they will soon be exclusively in Hungarian language and named after the Hungarian heroes. The row still does end with this: the journalists also give account of the fact that the Serbian pupils in Bácskossuthfalva (Stara Moravica) have to travel five kilometres to the neighbouring Pacsér (Pačir) because in the local school there is no place for the Serbian language. The report ends with the statement that the village has recently regained the denomination of Bácskossuthfalva which was born at the time of the “Hungarian occupation” (1941-1945), consequently these four years are disturbing from the very beginning for the non-Hungarian inhabitants.

As these questions made our association anxious, we have paid a visit to Bácskossuthfalva (Stara Moravica).

We came onto the following outcomes :

- Almost everywhere in the settlement, without exception, bilingual labels can be founded (shops, enterprises, etc.) – both in the centre and in any other point of the village. We have also found such an enterprise, where the label of the trade-sign was indicated only in Serbian language.

- From the 76 street of the settlement, we have visited 40. We did not find such a street plate on which only the Hungarian denomination would have figured (the photos about the street plates are posted on our website). On most of the plates such slogans figure that originate from the time of communism, or names that are attached to this ideology (e.g. Warrior, Frontiersman, Liberation, Marx, Lenin, Ivo Lola Ribar etc.). We talked to the secretary of the local community, who told us that they have made an application to the competent ministry for the alteration of the street names that was approved. According to this 28 street names will be changed in Bácskossuthfalva (Stara Moravica) in the near future. (Streets will be named after King Matthias, Kossuth Lajos, Széchenyi István, Vuk Karadžić, Danilo Kiš, Ivan Modrčin etc.).

Certainly the street plates will be henceforward bilingual (with the reservation that the Serbian denominations will be indicated with Cyrillic letters as opposed to the Latin letters used so far.

· We have also asked the opinion of the secretary of the local community and that of the director of the primary school in connection with the organization of education. They told us that the Serbian pupils do have to travel to Pacsér (Pačir) not because there is no place for them in the school of Bácskossuthfalva (Stara Moravica), but because the number of the Serbian pupils is so low that each section would consist of only a couple of pupil. This makes locally the arrangement of education technically impossible. It is not a negligible fact that a free bus service is taking the Serbian pupils to Pacsér (Pačir), notwithstanding the three kilometres distance can be done on the well build sidewalk and cycle track as well.

· The settlement was officially receiving the name of Bácskossuthfalva in 1912; it is called Stara Moravica from the beginning of the Serbian – Croatian – Slovenian kingdom. During the time of the Second World War the settlement's name was Bácskossuthfalva, after the amendment of the borders it became Stara Moravica in Serbian and Ómoravica or Moravica in Hungarian. In accordance with the decision of the Hungarian National Council the Hungarian denomination of the settlement has been Bácskossuthfalva since 2003 (4). We would add to this so much that when the public figures and journalists are making a remark in connection with the Hungarian denominations of the settlements in Vojvodina, they should not disregard the fact that the three units of the territory today known as Vojvodina – Bánság (Banat), Bácska (Bačka) and Szerémség (Srem) – has formed the southern part of the historical Hungary for more than a millennium (for example in the first instance we meet the name of Szenttamás in the tithe register written document).

It is clear that some malicious writings do not represent a general opinion forming vigour, but the point in issue is much more than this. Even in the era of Milošević have appeared such writings (not to mention the radio and television) that did not necessarily serve the peaceful coexistence between the nations. What is really sorrowful is that after seven years of the takeover of the "democratic" forces the situation is not better at all. Let us just think of the case when a newspaper in Újvidék (Novi Sad) has called the Hungarian young men who are condemned to 61 years of jail monsters.

In order not to occur cases of this kind in the future it is essential that the journalists and public figures relate to the question of objective exposition of facts with adequate responsiveness!

In the spirit of this endeavour we demand dr. Tamás Korhecz provincial legislatorial, administrative and national minority secretary, dr. Zoltán Jeges provincial educational secretary, respectively Svetozar Čiplić minister of human and minority rights to express their opinion.

On behalf of the Human Rights Center,

Rudolf Kiss

(1). <http://www.novosti.rs/code/navigate.php?ld=1&status=jedna&vest=131848&datum=2008-11-08>

(2). <http://www.politika.rs/rubrike/Srbija/Madjarizacija-Stare-Moravice.lt.html>

(3). <http://www.humanrightscenter.net/atrocitasok/>

(4). <http://stamoravica.co.yu>

Pictures